Maps
The map collection consists of early expedition atlases, Alaska-related historical maps such as Sanborn insurance maps, topographical maps, nautical charts, state election districts, maps of fish trap locations, and general surveys from the early 1900s. Current U.S. Geological Survey topographical maps of Alaska are located in Information Services.

Multimedia
The library houses small collections of sound recordings, videocassettes, and films, primarily related to the manuscript and photograph collections. They are available by special arrangement.

Public Service and Outreach
As time and resources are available, staff members share our special library and archival expertise with other libraries and historical agencies in the state through telephone reference, workshops, and electronic communications.

Preservation
In meeting our mandate to collect, catalog, and preserve an Alaska collection, the Library actively works to protect and stabilize Alaska's treasures for future generations. Following established handling and conservation principles, we strive to extend an item's longevity to assure that it continues to be accessible.

James Wickersham
The Wickersham Collection, Wickersham State Historic Site Collection

The Wickersham Collections, acquired through two purchases in 1941 and 1984, have significantly enriched the Alaska Historical Collections. The results of Judge James Wickersham’s early efforts to collect Alaska-related materials have aided many in their research endeavors to piece together records of Alaska's history.

James Wickersham began collecting Alaskana in 1900 after assuming his first Alaskan political post as a U.S. District Judge. He also served seven terms as Alaska’s Delegate to Congress between 1909 and 1933. Throughout his career, Wickersham meticulously scoured all avenues to collect and catalog materials related to Alaska. Having compiled a vast amount of Alaska-related materials, he authored A Bibliography of Alaskan Literature in 1927, listing Alaskan literature published between 1724 and 1924.

The State of Alaska transferred Wickersham’s personal papers to the Library after purchasing his Juneau home in 1984. As a collector, Wickersham saved unique pieces of Alaska's history. His letters, diaries, photographs, and other papers record Wickersham’s part in Alaska's transition from a district to an established territory.

Donations & Acquisitions
The Library actively solicits donations to its collections. While rare items have occasionally been purchased with special appropriations by the Alaska State Legislature, the majority of the collections are donations. The generosity of many donors has enriched and increased the research value of the collections and information available, both online and in the research room. Each year thousands of researchers consult the collections. Although the Library is forbidden by law to give monetary appraisals, some historic item donations are tax deductible. Please contact the Library if you are interested in making a contribution.
Welcome to the Alaska Historical Collections

On June 6, 1900, the United States Congress created the Alaska Historical Library and Museum. Over the last century, the Library has acquired over 80,000 items and 1,000 manuscript and photograph collections on all aspects of Alaskan history, culture, and development. Welcoming researchers from Alaska and around the world, the Library maintains a reading room for those wishing to access our non-circulating collections.

Our catalog and a selection of primary source material from the collections are found on our website at:

www.library.alaska.gov/hist

Catalog & Finding Aids

Our online catalog provides bibliographic access to published materials, ephemera, maps, and photograph and manuscript collections. Detailed inventories and guides are located in the reading room for special format and primary source materials.

Books & Periodicals Collections

The Library maintains a collection of publications, ranging from turn-of-the-century periodicals to early fiction and rare volumes on early explorations in Alaska and the Arctic. The Russian language Dolgopolov Collection focuses on Russian military and Russian-American history. Clippings and brochures files include biographies and numbered items from Wickersham's Bibliography of Alaskan Literature. The Alaska Document Depository Statute, passed in 1975, reserves the first copy of any state publication for the Library.

Photographs & Still Images

With a concentration on historical black and white photographs from such major studios as Winter & Pond, Caise & Draper, and P.E. Lars, the Library holdings reflect the vajety and progress of nineteenth and twentieth century technology, including illustrations in printed works, stereoviews, lantern slides, postcards, color slides, and prints. More than 175,000 images span every aspect of Alaskan geography, history, and culture. Approximately 8,000 black and white photographs are available on microfiche in libraries statewide and nationally. Images are also available online, including Alaska Gold curriculum at www.library.state.ak.us/goldrush and Alaska Digital Archives at vilda.alaska.edu

Newspapers

The Library maintains microfilmed newspapers from approximately 119 Alaska communities, some dating back to the purchase of Alaska from Russia. Newspaper microfilm may be viewed in the Information Services reading room or borrowed through interlibrary loan. A Guide to Alaska Newspapers in Microfilm, 1866–1998, published by the Alaska State Library for the Alaska Newspaper Project, lists newspapers by publication location and is available on our website.

Manuscripts & Records

Manuscripts are comprised of personal papers such as private diaries and correspondence of teachers, missionaries, gold seekers, pioneers, Alaska Natives, politicians, military personnel, and others. Business records of mining companies, such as the Alaska-Juneau Mining Company; storekeepers, such as Samuel Applegate of Unalaska; and canneries, such as the Alaska Packers Association, hold a wealth of information on Alaska resources and development. Although a few collections are restricted and may be viewed or photocopied only with the permission of the donor, most are readily available to researchers.

Resources

Government Publications
Manuscripts
Photographs
Multi-media
Newspapers
Periodicals
Pamphlets
Clippings
Books
Maps