

Veterans Memorial Building

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

Juneau-Douglas City Museum



Raising the 49-star flag, July 4, 1959. JDCM 97.02.001

The Veterans Memorial Building, currently home to the Juneau-Douglas City Museum was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2006. The first building in Juneau to be built entirely with public funds, it is the site of the July 4th 1959 Statehood Ceremony when the 49-star flag was officially flown in Alaska's Capital.

In honor of this long awaited day for Alaskan Statehood and our Veterans past and present, the 49-star flag is still flown at this site.

The National Register of Historic Places is the official list of the Nation's historic places worthy of preservation. Properties listed include districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that are significant in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture.

From 1951 until the mid 1980s, the Veterans Memorial Building housed the Juneau Memorial Library. In 1989, the Library expanded and vacated the building, and the Juneau-Douglas City Museum, without a home, took residence.

The Museum is open year round and offers exhibits that interpret our unique community such as a hands-on interactive mining room, Alaska Native lifestyles, a rare fish trap, digital stories about our capital city community, and a 26-minute comprehensive film *Juneau: City Built on Gold*. The Museum offers community programming, solo artist exhibits, and the Juneau History Grant.

Our gift shop features local arts and crafts, books and research by local writers, trail guides and more. Online resources include our collections, virtual exhibits and research sites such as Digital Bob, Gastineau Channel Memories and Historic Structures Database at juneau.org/library/museum.



Located at 4th & Main Streets
Phone: (907) 586-3572 Fax: (907) 586-4512
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The Juneau Memorial Library

On August 28, 1945, Juneau Rotary Club president Rev. Herbert Hillerman announced that building a library as a memorial and tribute to area veterans of the world wars would be the club's top priority. In 1946, Juneau Rotary Club leaders in the fundraising efforts B. Frank Heintzleman, B. D. Stewart, and James C. Ryan purchased the Olds family property at 4th and Main Street.

Local architects Foss and Malcolm designed the library, incorporating Neo-Classical Revival architectural elements on the reinforced concrete building. Local community organizations, such as the Alaska Native Brotherhood and Sisterhood, stepped forward with donations to construct the building. Completed in 1951, the Juneau Memorial Library was dedicated to Veterans of Foreign Wars.

At the building's dedication ceremony on November 11, 1951, Heintzleman said, "this project represents I think the finest example in this territory of community spirit and enterprise working for a cultural project to benefit old and young, rich and poor."



Juneau Memorial Library Desk, L-R Karen Sheridan, Kirsten Cashen, Mrs. Dale DeArmond, 1960. JDCM 85.22.394

1959 & 2009 Statehood Ceremony at Veterans Memorial Building

"An estimated three thousand people stood at attention as the first 49 star flag was raised in front of the Juneau Memorial Library by military honor guard on July 4, 1959. Author, lecturer, world traveler and New Yorker, Lowell Thomas was master of ceremonies. At 3:00 p.m. Governor Bill Egan spoke to the crowd while the flag was being raised."

JUNEAU DAILY EMPIRE, 1959.



Statehood Ceremony in front of Juneau Memorial Library, July 4, 1959. JDCM 88.30.007



50th Anniversary of the Statehood Celebration Flag Raising Ceremony Re-enactment, July 4, 2009. Photo courtesy of O.R. Kent.

"It is proper to recall that so many of the steps leading to statehood were taken here in Juneau, the capital of Alaska. It is appropriate, too, that we have waited until this hour to hoist, the yet, Grand Old Flag – up that pole, for this is Juneau, the capital city of Alaska. The finality of the action at this time, and at this place, definitely ties the knot that binds all communities as one over our great state."



Tlingit Community Float, July 4, 1959. JDCM 85.22.394



Filipino Float, 2nd Prize, Most Beautiful Float. JDCM 2013.41.267

EXCERPT FROM GOVERNOR W. EGAN'S SPEECH, JULY 4, 1959.