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The Iditarod Historic Trail Alliance is an equal opportunity program provider and employer.

The Iditarod Historic Trail Alliance promotes awareness of the Iditarod Trail and its gold rush and Alaska Native heritage by encouraging education programs and historical research, assisting in the protection, improvement, maintenance and marking of the Trail and developing partnerships that foster stewardship, commitments and support.

2021 Iditarod Sled Dog Race

The 2021 Iditarod Sled Dog Race will begin and end at Deshka Landing near Willow Lake. Instead of a 1000 mile run from Willow to Nome the race will be an 860-mile round trip between Deshka Landing, a popular boat launching site in the Susitna Valley, and the ghost town of Flat.

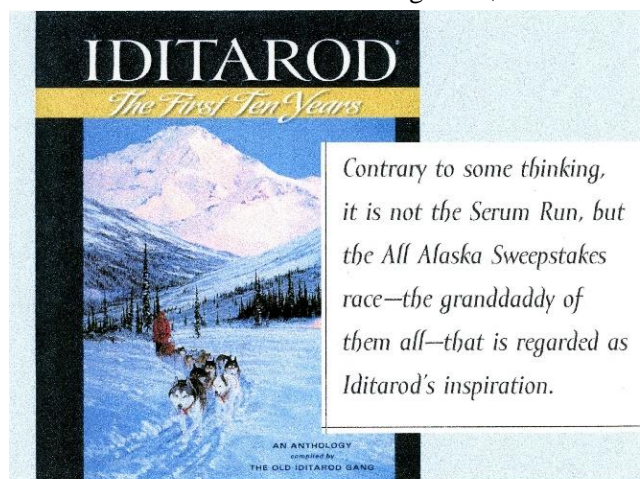
The field of 54 mushers will make two trips across the Alaska Range, Happy River Steps and the notorious Dalzell Gorge. A feat never before attempted as they travel largely on the Iditarod's traditional southern route as far as the ghost town of Iditarod where they will make a loop to Flat before returning to Deshka Landing.

While the race uses a new path for 2021, community leaders in checkpoints that will not be visited this year on the latter half of the southern route acknowledge that the decision, while disappointing, was necessary for the overall health and safety of its residents. John Handeland, mayor of Nome and an Iditarod board member said, "We support the Iditarod's decision to alter the race route for the 2021 race. We understand the circumstances and wish they were different. The burlled arches in Nome will be ready and waiting for the return of the race in 2022 for the 50th running."

The change is a part of the COVID-19 mitigation plan for the 49th annual Iditarod Sled Dog Race, under which each participant, (mushers, volunteers, staff, official media) will be required to undergo continuous testing during the 2021 Iditarod.

The round -feature of the 2021 race is like the All Alaska Sweepstakes Race (run from 1908-1917). It was the first long distance sled dog race and the inspiration for the Iditarod. The route of the race was from Nome to Candle and back, a distance of 408 miles. The distance and route were recommended by famous musher Scotty Allen, feeling that only a long race would prove who had the best team, because "endurance and stamina are what counts in the North." He said the route went "over all kinds of country, from sea ice to high mountains, with rivers, tundra, timber, glaciers and everything else in the way of mental and physical hardships en route."

Leonard Seppala, three-time winner of the Sweepstakes said, "I doubt there will ever be a dog race instituted which will so test the mettle of dogs and driver as did the All Alaska Sweepstakes."



The quote above is from page 59 of *Iditarod the First Ten Years*, an anthology compiled by the Old Iditarod Gang published in 2014.



Archives move contested

Washington, Oregon, and more than two dozen Native American and Alaska Native tribes and cultural groups from the northwest are suing the federal government to stop the sale of the National Archives building in Seattle, a plan that would force the relocation of millions of invaluable historical records to California and Missouri.

The documents include old property, military service and marriage records, court cases, tribal rolls and treaties and records of timber sales. Native American tribes have used the archive to win federal recognition, to establish their right to hunt and fish in their traditional lands and to verify their oral traditions. The files also include key records from the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II.

In 2016 when the National Archives facility in Anchorage was closed, millions of pages of documents related to the history of Alaska were moved to this facility in Seattle.

The lawsuit says the Seattle archives is ineligible for sale under the federal assets sale and transfer act which exempts buildings used for research in connection with federal agricultural, recreational or conservation programs. Among other things the lawsuit noted, the archives are used for research under federal historic preservation programs and to litigate land use, water rights and conservation issues.

The sale is opposed by all eight U. S. Senators and many Representatives from Alaska, Idaho, Oregon and Washington.

From the past...

“Iditarod Pioneer” January 1, 1911

Human Sacrifices to King Frost Multiply

Reporting the gruesome find of a frozen human carcass, which they were unable to identify, John Koschef and Alfred Sundquist arrived in Iditarod last Wednesday from the Ditna and immediately informed Commissioner Maltby and Deputy Marshal Donovan of this tragedy of the trail which must be added to the long list of the North. They had been prospecting and were on their way to Dikeman for supplies. Four miles from Moose creek, and almost within sight of a cabin, they saw a sack hanging on a tree and a pair of snowshoes leaning against the foot of it. The circumstances aroused their curiosity and after a short search in the snow they uncovered the frozen corpse.

Finding nothing about the body to identify it, they buried it carefully with snow and firs, and came on to inform the authorities. They are due to return at once in the company of Judge Maltby and Deputy Marshal Donovan. If identification is possible it will not be known for a few days.

This is the second tragedy of the kind reported in the last two weeks. On the night of December 16, George Howard, an old time Alaskan, was frozen to death on the trail between Ophir and Diskaket. He had been prospecting in the Ditna country and was on his way to Diskaket for grub with a handsled. Eddie Lund passed him with a dog team, picking up his hand sled, thinking that Howard would reach Diskaket without trouble. Becoming worried on account of Howard's non arrival that night, Billy Gray went out to look for him and found him sitting on a stump frozen stiff.

The body was taken to Diskaket by Gray and Ed Kelly, proprietor of a roadhouse there, and an inquest was held by Judge Vinal, who is on his way through to Opher.

Howard was 55 years of age and had mined in the Fortymile country in 1886. Since that time he has been in Alaska almost continually, taking in all the camps and all the stampedes. He was a printer by trade before coming to Alaska and had lived in California.

Race Across Alaska Winter Challenge

The Race Across Alaska Winter Challenge started on December 21 and continues through March 20. You can run, walk, fat bike, indoor bike, cross country ski or swim 125 miles, 225 miles, 350 miles, 850 miles, or 2,000 miles. You can log your miles, track your progress, collect virtual badges and see how you rank up to others on the leader board daily at www.raawc.com/Race/AK/Anchorage/AlaskaChallenge.