

THE TRIPOD

Iditarod Historic Trail Alliance

November 2015



Thank you for renewing your membership in the Alliance. Your support will enable the Alliance to continue its work to preserve and promote the Iditarod Trail.

Also thanks to those members

who recruited a new member.

Watch your mail

Ballots for the election of board members and proxy statements for the annual meeting will be mailed soon.

Returning the proxy forms is very important, since we need 25 percent of the members present in person or by proxy to conduct the annual membership meeting.

Annual meeting

The annual membership meeting of the Alliance will be held in Anchorage on December 2-3.

December 2nd will be a workshop day for the Board and will be held at the Campbell Creek Science Center. The annual membership meeting will be held on December 3rd at the Millennium Lakefront Hotel, 4800 Spenard Road.

iTREC!

The fall workshop for the Iditarod Trail to Every Classroom (iTREC!) was held in Seward on November 6-8. The workshop included classroom work, presentations of proposed projects by the teachers and fieldtrips, including visiting the Seward



Museum (at left).

Fourteen teachers are in the program this year. They are from Nome Elementary, Girdwood School, Wasilla (Machetanz Elementary, Fingerlake

Elementary, Twindley Bridge Charter School) and Anchorage (Sand Lake Elementary, Polaris K-12, Firewood Frontier Charter School).

The spring workshop will be held in Nome.



The Iditarod Historic Trail Alliance promotes public 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, developing partnerships that foster stewardship commitments and support from land owners, local communities, organizations and others.

The trail for all seasons



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Alaska members who apply for their 2016 Permanent Fund dividend online can donate part or all of it to the Alliance through the 2016 Pick. Click. Give Program.

From the past...

"Fairbanks Daily News Miner"
February 2, 1932

IDITAROD DISCOVERER IN SEATTLE

The following account of the visit to Seattle of John Beaton, one of the discoverers of the Iditarod camp, appeared in the Seattle Times of



John Beaton

January 17, 1932:

A small, quiet, calm man, you'd never in the world take him for a fellow whose life has been one series after another of wild romantic

escapades, is in Seattle today. He has won fortunes and lost them, missed death by minutes, played cards with cut-throats, pistol- on-the-table gamblers, been locked up for winters in frozen wastes, made friends who would die for him, found gold nuggets as big as pea pods and eaten two tons of beans.

He's John Beaton, one of the two discoverers of the far-famed Iditarod mining district in Alaska.

For 34 years now, Beaton recalled yesterday in his room at the Savoy Hotel, he's been coming to Seattle, "Outside" is the way he speaks of Seattle, and each time he's been in different straits financially. One time he'd have a fortune in gold, thousands of dollars. The next, times would be hard with him.

"Mining is like that," he smiled. "It's up and down. Up and down and maybe that's part of the fascination it holds for us."

Beaton is 56 years old now. He was only 32 that famous Alaska winter

when he and Bill Dikeman, a German miner from Nebraska, "put down" 27 holes in the hard-frozen ground at Iditarod, burning them down, inch by inch, with wood fires. His hands are not as hard as they were in those days. Johnny and Bill spent that whole winter in the rich country, and when they found it so spectacularly fruitful, they staked claims for themselves and another for their friend Merton (Mike) Marston, who stayed behind working at any old job, supplying food, beans mostly, for Bill and Johnny.

Johnny and Bill started the colorful rush in 1909 to the territory in which more than 10,000 men took part. With Mike, they came out with sacks of the precious yellow gold and Beaton went into the theater business in Seattle. He bought an interest and helped build the old Strand Theater on Second Avenue. But he lost money.

He lost his family too. His wife and two young children, John Neil, four years old, and Loretta, six, were drowned in the Princess Sophia tragedy, and the icy waters of Lynn Canal swallowed some of Johnny's gold which was on board the fated ship with his family.

Ups and downs again, and soon he was filling his gold sacks. Today he is said to have amassed another fortune. Fifteen men work for him, digging gold for him now. And he has another family. Mrs. Beaton, second, and a little Neil, red-headed, six years old, and full of fun, are with him on this Seattle visit. Up in Alaska little Neil plays about in mukluks and takes his Alaskan husky dog, "Wolf," to the small schoolhouse at Flat, with him every day through the snow.

"Yes," Beaton said, "I'm happy, and I'm hoping it stays like this for a while. I'm getting a little older, you know, and the ups and downs don't come so easy anymore."

Note: In June 1945, Beaton and partner Art Shonbeck were at Gaines Creek in the Innoko district to visit their placer mine. They were on their way to the mine when Shonbeck, who was driving, had a fatal heart attack and their truck went off a bridge abutment into Gaines Creek. The truck doors jammed and it was hours before miners could retrieve the flooded truck and its two occupants.

John Beaton's funeral was held in Anchorage on June 27, 1945 at the Catholic Church. He is buried in the Anchorage Memorial Park Cemetery, located at 535 East 9th Avenue in the Catholic Tract, row 19, lot 15.

Purchase anniversary

At its December 8th meeting in Anchorage, the Alaska Historical Commission will be discussing how to involve all Alaskans in commemoration of the 150th anniversary of the Alaska purchase in 2017.

The commission will have a grant program next year for small research, interpretation and education projects for the commemoration. If you have an idea or plans for a commemorative activity, contact Jo Antonson, jo.antonson@alaska.gov or 907-269-8714