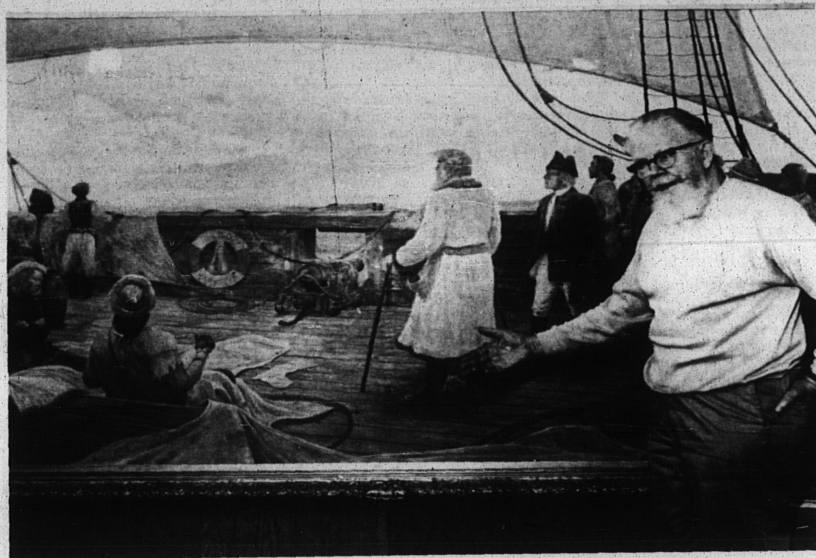


Rusty Heurlin Paintings on Exhibition in May



COLLEGE—"Rusty" Heurlin in his studio at Ester points to white-robed Vitus Bering standing on the deck of the St. Peter gazing at Mount St. Elias as the Danish explorer, sailing for the Russian czars, sees Alaska for the first time. This is the introductory canvas in a series, nearing the finishing touches, that Heurlin calls "The Great Land".

COLLEGE—The introductory canvas in M. C. "Rusty" Heurlin's monumental series of paintings "The Great Land" will be displayed on the campus of the University of Alaska during the May Commencement period.

To be housed in the alcove at the rear of the Regents Great

Hall in the Fine Arts complex and insured for \$75,000 the striking work, nine feet by five and a half feet, shows white-robed Vitus Bering getting his first intent look at Alaska during a mission of exploration for the Russian czars. The exhibit will be on display from May 10 through May 21.

Heurlin, who has won wide acclaim for his more than four decades of painting in the Arctic and sub-Arctic, had turned out oils on every subject under the "midnight sun" before completing in the 1960's a series called "The Gold Stampede".

These 15 canvases, shown with a commentary as they passed in review before audiences, were done for the Alaska Purchase Centennial Exposition of 1967 and are still on display

at Alaskaland in Fairbanks.

In his studio at nearby Ester Heurlin estimated it would take him about a month to finish "The Great Land" series, except for the last of the paintings, which deals with the Katmai

country, once dubbed "The Valley of 10,000 Smokes".

The artist, known for his meticulousness in historical detail, read widely on the earlier expeditions of Bering before beginning his canvas showing the explorer on the deck of the ship St. Peter, gazing at Mount St. Elias and the Alaskan mainland on July 16, 1741.

Even before this issue is resolved the artist is mentally at work on the third great project of his long career. This is a continuous mural of vignettes, blending into one another to provide a history of the Alaskan Native from perhaps a thousand years ago right up to today.

In his many years of painting in the Interior and the Arctic Heurlin has drawn and thrown away scores of sketches relating to Native life—both Indian and Eskimo. He finally was satisfied with a collection of about 40 which, he estimates, will be the basis for a mural stretching about 145 feet. A group of Native leaders in Barrow has expressed a wish to have the mural, once it is painted, installed in a suitable building

there.

Heurlin calls the project "Our Heritage". A great admirer of the Native's natural talents he quotes a friend who collects artifacts as remarking:

"Take any Eskimo who has grown up in the Arctic with no transportation except a boat and a dog sled, make an astronaut out of him and he would be bypassing the wheel."