

Anchorage museum

Author targets myths about Alaska Eskimos

Dr. Ann Fienup-Riordan will present a lecture entitled "Eskimo War and Peace: A Problem of Representation" to the Cook Inlet Historical Society Jan. 19 at 8 p.m. at the Anchorage Museum of History and Art.

The presentation will cover the dichotomy between the idea of the peaceful Eskimo and the reality of traditional Yup'ik Eskimo bow and arrow warfare found in written and oral reports.

Fienup-Riordan said a number of factors have contributed to the development of the Western conception of Eskimos as naturally peaceful, including:

- The initial peaceful encounter with them.
- The extension of descriptions of Canadian Eskimos to them.
- The tendency to extend observations on Eskimo interpersonal relations to characterize intergroup relations.
- A desire to see hunting societies in general and Eskimos in particular as "an original, primitive image of ourselves."

"The point is not to replace the picture of the peaceful Eskimo with a picture of a violent one," she said. "However, to understand interpersonal violence and politically aggressive acts by Eskimos today, it is essential to understand the interpersonal hostilities and political alliances that were forged during the bow and arrow wars of the 17th and 18th centuries."

The lecture is free to Cook Inlet Historical Society members. There is a \$1 charge for non-members.

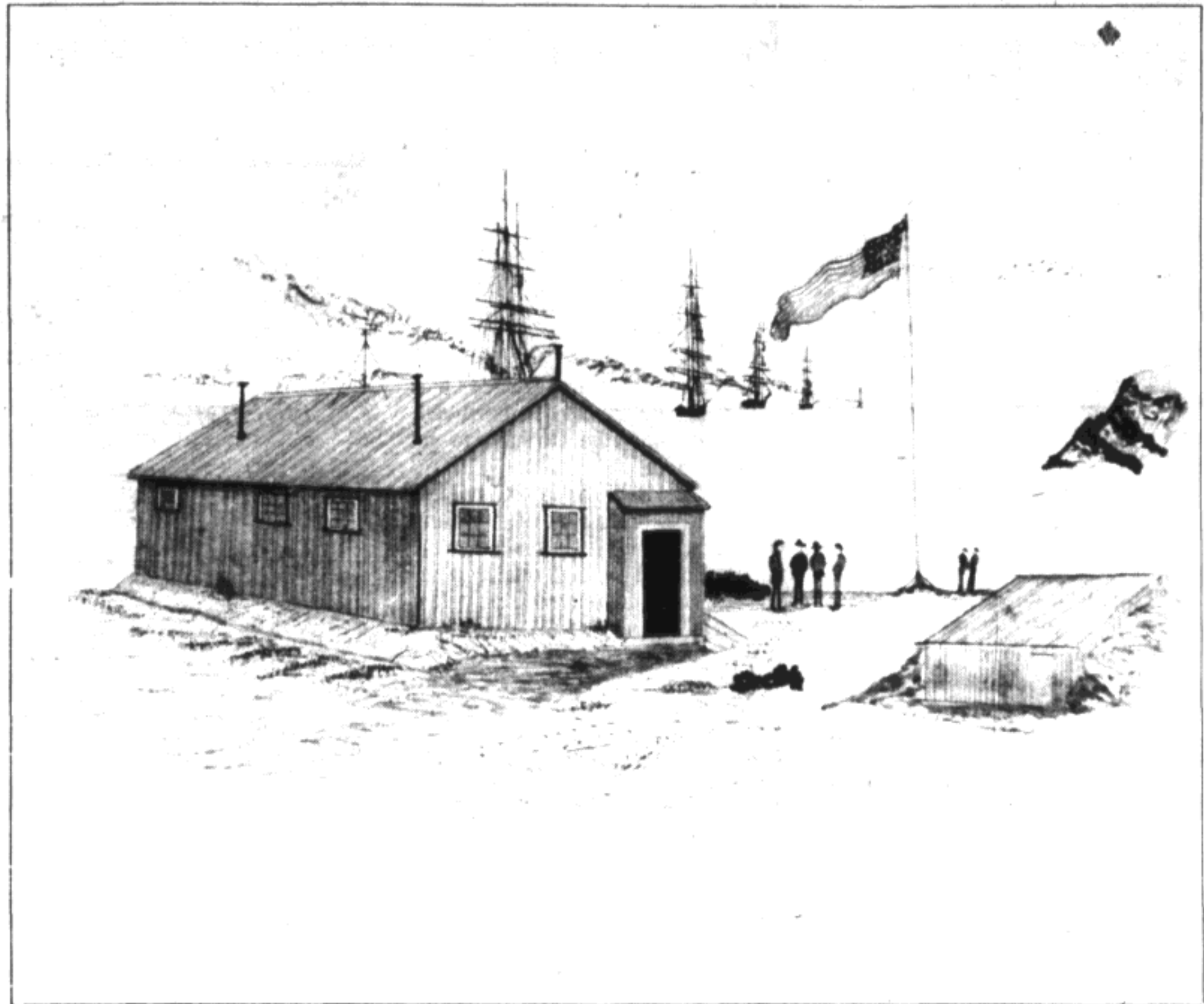


photo courtesy Anchorage Museum of History and Art

A Native pen and ink sketch depicting commercial whaling activities in Alaskan waters is among recent additions to the permanent collection of the Anchorage Museum of History and Art. The sketch, done in the late 19th century by an unknown artist, is believed to be a Western Alaska whaling shore station.

