

Exhibit highlights 'discovery' of Alaska

The Alaska Collection of the Z.J. Loussac Library in Anchorage is sponsoring a major exhibit of rare books, maps and artifacts through the month of December.

The exhibit, "European Discovery of Alaska," ranges from the 16th to the 19th centuries.

During this period, the five major

powers — Russia, France, Spain, Great Britain and the United States — vied with one another in the uncharted seas of the North Pacific, each seeking new and unexploited territories to help fill depleted national coffers.

Explorers such as Vitus Bering and Aleksei Chirikov opened up the far North to the fur traders of Russia,

beginning the 200 years of exploration and exploitation of Alaska, according to the Anchorage Municipal Libraries November newsletter.

The exhibit includes a pre-discovery map of Alaska from 1597, a late 18th century German map detailing the geography of Southeast Alaska and one of the first maps of the Aleutian Islands.