



Puffins are among birds that abound on St. Paul Island. ©1987 Rob Stapleton

St. Paul Island celebrates 200 years of history

For the residents of St. Paul Island, not only is this year the Bicentennial celebration of the U.S. Constitution, it is also the Bicentennial of the founding of St. Paul Island.

The celebration of the island's second century was begun in May and will not finish until December.

According to Father George Pletnikoff, the Aleuts and Pribilofs are not only celebrating the 200 years since St. Paul was founded and settled, but also 200 years of Christianity.

Pletnikoff believes that St. Paul Island is unique because it is the largest *Unungen* — what Aleuts called themselves prior to Russian contact — settlement in the world.

Residents of St. Paul are celebrating a past that has not always been easy.

In an article in the *Tundra Times* last June, Pletnikoff said, "The history of the Pribilofs has been filled with many difficult and trying times. However, today we are a group of people who have a great deal to be thankful for."

The agenda planned for the celebration was set up by the St. Paul Bicentennial Commission and has included such events as the Miss Bicentennial Pageant, several marathons and potlucks.

Also part of the ceremony will be the burial on the island of a time capsule to be opened 50 years from now — in September of 2037.

Anyone wishing to take part in the continuing celebrations should contact Father George Pletnikoff, Box 46, St. Paul 99660; telephone, 546-2383.