

CARRIE M. MCLAIN MEMORIAL MUSEUM

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Nome Centennial Celebration Receives Award of Excellence

There's No Place Like Nome For a Party

For Immediate Release

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Nome, Alaska — The City of Nome has been awarded the 2001 Alaska Award of Excellence in Public Participation. The Alaska Municipal League recognized the Gold Rush city's efforts for its "Nome Centennial Celebration 1998-2001" as part of its Seventh Annual Alaska Community Awards of Excellence.

The Nome Centennial Celebration was held from 1998 – 2001. In 1898 gold was discovered by the Three Lucky Swedes at Anvil Creek; in 1899 gold was discovered on the beach; in 1900, 40,000 people came to Nome as part of Alaska's largest Gold Rush and in 1901 Nome decided to get serious & incorporate as a First Class City. Sixteen community Centennial Events, varying in length from one to four days, were held in Nome from 1998 – 2001. A core group of organizers, with steadfast support from the Mayor, City Council, Nome businesses, community organizations combined with an army of volunteers known as the Nome Centennial Committee created the most extensive and enduring Centennial Celebration to date in the State of Alaska.

In early 1997 the Nome City Council appointed the Centennial Executive Committee consisting of Cussy Reader Kauer, John Handeland and Mary Knodel. These three individuals initiated the Centennial concept in 1993. In October 1997, Laura Samuelson was named the City of Nome Centennial Liaison. This group masterminded and organized the Centennial Celebration. Approximately 450 Nomeites formally served on the Nome Centennial Committee at one time or another. The Committee met on at least 81 occasions. Organizers have stated that every citizen of Nome aided in the success of the celebration.

The purpose of the Centennial Celebration was to formally recognize, research and understand the unique history that led to the development of Nome, Alaska. In the course of planning the various events extensive historical research was performed. The early history of Nome was accurately portrayed through historical reenactments. Living relatives of the Three Lucky Swedes, Wyatt Earp, Wilfred McDaniel, John Dexter, Nome's gold rush families as well as recognized historians took part in our Centennial events. One of the most exciting moments was finding the exact location of the original Discovery Claim on Anvil Creek. Dignitaries attending the festivities included U.S. Senator Ted Stevens, U.S. Representative Don Young, U.S. Senator Frank Murkowski, Governor Tony Knowles, Lieutenant Governor Fran Ulmer, Brigadier General Steven Korenek, Major General Phillip Oates, Alaska State Historian Judy Bittner, State Senator Donny Olson and State Representative Richard Foster.

Numerous physical improvements were made in the community. However, the most valuable benefit of celebrating Nome's Centennial has been that it has raised the public's awareness of Nome's truly unique history. The community and the region were educated thru the various Centennial events, museum exhibits and completed projects.

The events were extremely well attended by Nome's citizens. Several events drew up to 800 people. Nomeites & students of all ages now show an overwhelming pride & interest in what has happened in Nome over the past 100 years.

Nome lost a great deal of its history in the devastating 1934 fire. The Centennial brought a lot of that history back. The Carrie M. McLain Memorial Museum has received over 100 donations since 1998. Among the gifts were a tape recording of Jafet Lindeberg discussing the discovery of gold; a sealskin parka, pants & hassock; Nancy Murkowski's baby quilt; original documents from the Pioneer Mining Company; a manuscript on the "History of the Military Airfield At Nome"; the trophy from the 1910 All Alaska Sweepstakes; hundreds of photos including the gold rush, Pilgrim Hot Springs, World War II, Fort Davis as well as a photo album created by Esther Birdsall Darling. Most notable was the McDaniel Family donation of 400 historical photographs, Eskimo artifacts, gold mining tools as well as diaries and letters valued at over \$200,000.

For more information please contact Laura Samuelson, Nome Centennial Liaison and Director of the Carrie M. McLain Memorial Museum at 907-443-6630.

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Nome Centennial Celebration 1998 – 2001

Community Events

Nome, Alaska

Grand Opening of Old St. Joseph's on Anvil City Square – Catholic Church built in 1901, retired in 1946 & restored in 1997.

Discovery Days – 100th Anniversary of the Discovery of Gold at Anvil Creek
September 19 & 20, 1998

100th Anniversary of the Formation of the Cape Nome Mining District – October 16 - 18, 1998

The Golden Sands of Nome – 100th Anniversary of the First Ships to Nome. Held during the Midnight Sun Festival – June 19 & 20, 1999

Wyatt Earp Weekend – The 100th Anniversary of the Arrival of Wyatt Earp. July 3 & 4, 1999.

Poor Man's Paradise - 100th Anniversary of the Discovery of Gold on the Beach. July 20, 1999-GPAA Gold Panning Contest

Centennial Christmas Extravaganza – Celebrating Nome's 100th Christmas –
December 1999

100th Anniversary of the Arrival of Leonhard Seppala in Nome. March 18, 2000.
Norwegian Iditarod musher Harald Tunnheim ran the 2000 Iditarod race in memory of the 100th Anniversary of Leonhard Seppala arriving in Nome.

The 100th Anniversary of the First Train to Anvil Creek. Midnight Sun Festival June 17 & 18, 2000.

100th Anniversary of the Arrival of the Military in Nome, Fort Davis, The Post Office: The First Free Mail Delivery in US & the Construction of WAMCATS. The Military in Nome: Joining Forces for 100 years. July 4, 2000

100th Anniversary of the Jewish Synagogue in Nome. July 19, 2000.

Poor Man's Paradise - The 101st Anniversary of the Discovery of Gold on the Beach. July 20, 2000. GPAA Gold Panning Contest

Centennial Christmas Extravaganza - December 2000.

Nome's 100th Birthday Party - 100th Anniversary of the Incorporation of Nome as a First Class City – April 6-9, 2001.

Come Home To Nome - 100-year All School Reunion. June 20-22, 2001.

100th Anniversary of the Catholic Church in Nome – St. Joseph's Church July 1, 2001