

Clausen Memorial Museum

The small Norwegian-American fishing town was hoping to build a very modest \$18,000 volunteer-labor museum with a sculpture out front. The members of its Centennial committee had hoped for 50 percent federal funding. Instead they got \$3,880.

Late in 1966, the federal overseer determined that the building only qualified for a matching grant of \$3,880, and the monument.

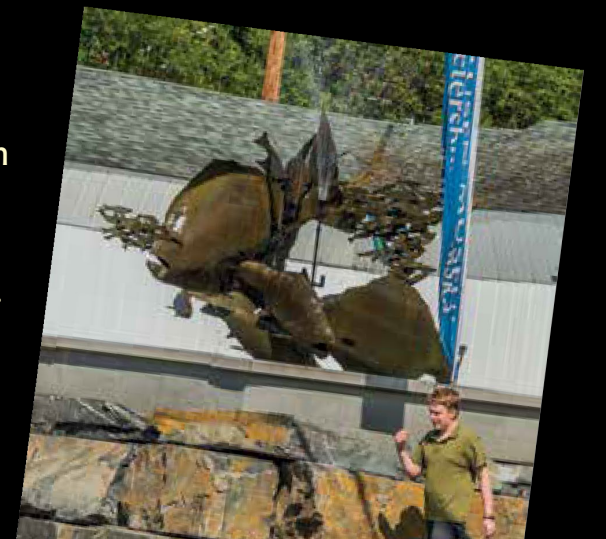
As the museum opened its doors for the Centennial year, its first curator was able to direct visitors inside to an exhibit featuring the mounted remains of “The Largest King Salmon Ever Caught (126.5 pounds)” — as well as “The Largest Chum Salmon Ever Caught.” And a half-century later, Petersburg Museum director Sue McCallum could still show off those same trophy fish, along with a Tlingit canoe, a huge lighthouse lens, and roughly 45,000 historical photographs and negatives.

The building now is about four times larger than it was initially, thanks to new wings that were added piecemeal in the 1970s, '80s and '90s. But in truth the Petersburg museum is still just a “modest wooden bungalow,” except now it’s a fifty-year-old bungalow.



Above: vintage cork buoys adorn the remodeled entrance of Petersburg’s museum, built a half century ago.

Right: The bronze Fisk sculpture and fountain at the entrance of the Petersburg museum was partially funded by Alaska’s Centennial celebration. New stonework around the fountain was added in 2013.



Below: awaiting the opening of the annual purse-seining season in Petersburg’s south harbor.

