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Press Release

ALASKA STATE MUSEUM

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

DATE: October 17, 2013

**Local History Live at the Alaska State Museum:
“The Birch Brothers – A Final Western of the Last Frontier”
with music by the Beat Bros.**

JUNEAU – A true western set in Douglas, Alaska, during the late 1800s will be the focus of storyteller Mark Whitman’s special presentation, “The Birch Brothers – A Final Western of the Last Frontier,” hosted by the Alaska State Museum on Friday, October 25 at 7:30 p.m. and again with a matinee on Saturday, October 26 at 2 p.m. Admission to either event is free of charge, and music will be performed by the Beat Bros.

Based on primary source materials, Whitman tells the story that took place during a time when the District, not the Territory, of Alaska, was in a pressure cooker. The economic panic of 1893 had shut down almost every bank and railroad across the country; people were desperate, and Alaska, on the verge of a gold rush, became a magnet for desperate and hardened types across the country.

“The Birch Brothers” is a tale that shows how Alaska’s economy, in that time, was built on booze. As the Klondike Gold Rush began, the amount of money to be made in smuggling liquor was too good for many people to resist. The Birch brothers were rough characters who showed up at this pivotal time – men used to “miner’s law” – and who demonstrated a burning contempt of the legal system. They pushed limits and challenged the early communities of Douglas and Juneau with brute force. The communities’ populations, both Alaska Natives and non-Natives, had to find a way to stand up to such men on their own.

Winter hours at the museum are 10 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday. Discounted winter admission is \$3. Visitors 18 and under are admitted free of charge. An annual pass that allows unlimited visits to the Alaska State Museum and the Sheldon Jackson Museum in Sitka is available for \$15. Assistance is available for visitors with special needs – please contact Visitor Services at 465-2901 before the visit.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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