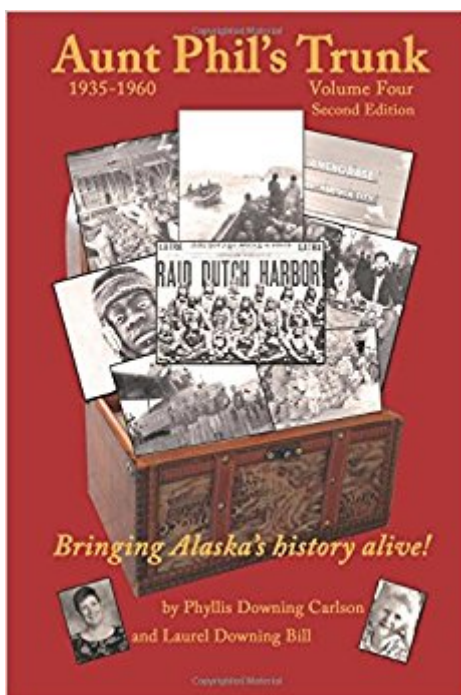


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# Aunt Phil's Trunk: Volume 4



## Synopsis

Alaska history decoded! Aunt Phil's Trunk Volume Four is a must read for anyone interested in Alaska's history! Following in the fast-paced and entertaining footsteps of the previous three volumes, Aunt Phil's Trunk Volume Four captures the essence of life in Alaska between 1935 and 1960. Its vivid nonfiction short stories and more-than 350 historical photographs highlight major events of World War II, the Cold War era and Alaska's struggle for statehood. Did you know? • The Japanese bombed and occupied two islands in the Aleutian Chain during WWII? • The U.S. Air Force song was written by an Alaskan? • Eskimo Scouts guarded more than 2,000 miles of Alaska's coastline for no pay? These and dozens more little-known stories fill the pages of Aunt Phil's Trunk Volume Four and share Alaska's colorful past from 1935 to 1960. I've been touting these books since the first volume appeared three years ago. They combine clear writing and plenty of details without getting bogged down in minutia. They include both the big stories and many lesser-known incidents. And they are densely illustrated with photographs showing what life was like in Alaska's earlier days. It's a great package, and it hasn't failed yet ... If you haven't done so, take some time and open Aunt Phil's Trunk; you'll find plenty of treasures inside. - David James, Fairbanks Daily News Miner

Our family has lived more than five generations in Alaska, witnessing and experiencing many of the historic moments Laurel Bill has written about in her comprehensive compilation of stories and events that shaped Alaska today ... The volumes of Aunt Phil's Trunk are a terrific, fast-paced read and should be required for all students of Alaska history. - Gail McIver Phillips, Former Speaker of the Alaska House of Representatives

Thousands of print books sold worldwide! Order your copy of Aunt Phil's Trunk Volume Four now! Read More Here:

World War II brought big defense dollars north, which helped bolster Alaska's economy. It also brought:

- A secret Russian mission to Fairbanks
- Internment of Aleut people
- A proliferation of tuberculosis

During the Cold War era, Alaska saw another increase of money and people into the Last Frontier. This period of its colorful past also generated stories of heroic Alaska Airlines flights for freedom, Alaska Natives' battles against discrimination and the blossoming of Anchorage into a jewel on the tundra. The last section of this action-packed volume features Alaska's 91-year-old struggle for statehood. Tales of tenacity, hope and determination fill these pages, and they also showcase many of the movers and shakers of days gone by, Alaska's first elected governor and the discovery of crude oil that tipped the balance toward statehood. Many more entertaining, nonfiction stories fill the pages of Volume Four. It is a treasure trove of short stories, along with close to 350 rare historical photographs, suitable for ages 9 to 99.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

David James, ReviewerFairbanks Daily News-MinerJune 21, 2009I've been reviewing books for the News-Miner for several years now, and have enjoyed much of what I've read. But if someone asked me to pick my favorite books out of the dozens I've reviewed in that time, my answer would be immediate: The Aunt Phil's Trunk series by the late Alaska historian, Phyllis Downing Carlson and her niece, Laurel Downing Bill. It's not an exaggeration to say that this series, of which the fourth volume has just been published, is outstandingly well produced, exceptionally informative and heaps of fun to read....Volume four covers the years 1935 to 1960. These were crucial years in Alaska's history, when the territory's importance to the United States emerged. In 1935, Alaska was still widely regarded by Outsiders as little more than a source of raw materials. But the hot war with Japan and the cold one with the Soviet Union revealed Alaska's tremendous strategic value and made statehood all but inevitable. These three themes World War Two, the Cold War, and the struggle for statehood are the primary stories told in this volume. More than half of this book is devoted to the war years alone. This was a transformative period for Alaska. The Gold Rush had long since ended, and those who had remained in Alaska were mostly involved in resource extraction and fisheries. The territory's remoteness had long caused it to be neglected by the federal government. But even before the attack on Pearl Harbor, Alaska's proximity to the increasingly aggressive Japan led to an enlarged military presence in the region. As the United States edged closer to war, Alaska played a growing role in the country's defense planning. The authors explore

several aspects of Alaska's role in the Second World War.... The impact of World War Two on Alaska is well covered here, with chapters on the Japanese invasion of the westernmost Aleutian Islands, the attack on Dutch Harbor, the building of the Alcan Highway, and the horrific battle to retake the island of Attu. But what readers will also find in this book are the human-interest stories that are a highlight of the Aunt Phil's series. Thus we meet Robert Crawford, a one-time Fairbanks' resident and bush pilot who authored the official U.S. Air Force song, *Off We Go Into the Wild Blue Yonder*. We also encounter James Doolittle, a scrappy kid from Nome who went on to a distinguished career commanding forces in Africa, Normandy and the Pacific.... And the authors provide moving accounts of Alaskans who were victims of the war, including the residents of Attu who were imprisoned and shipped to Japan, as well as Alaskans of Japanese descent who were rounded up by the U.S. government and placed in concentration camps in Idaho, and residents of the Aleutian and Pribilof islands who were evacuated to Southeast Alaska, dumped in squalid camps and essentially forgotten about. The early Cold War era solidified the military's presence in Alaska, and this book details this as well as other developments from the period.... During the 1950s, Anchorage grew from a small supply outpost into a modern metropolis, and other cities and towns in Alaska experienced rapid growth as well. This led to the final push for statehood, the period that this book explores in its closing pages. All these stories and many more are told in a highly readable fashion, and the authors include plenty of interesting and sometimes amusing anecdotes in the telling. And, as is always the case in this series, the book is packed with photographs.... All told, it's another score for the Aunt Phil's Trunk series. With four volumes in print, and another yet to come, it's now safe to say that this series is the most comprehensive, informative, and well-written general history of Alaska available for nonacademic readers. The entire series deserves a prominent place on every Alaskan's bookshelf.

US Review of Books  
Reviewed by Mihir Shah  
July 25, 2016

"This road is built for war, but this road will be used when peace and victory come back to us again."

Aunt Phil's Trunk: Volume Four is an exceptional account of Alaskan history. From a mere glance at the title, audiences unfamiliar with the preceding Aunt Phil's Trunk volumes may think they've stumbled upon another dense history book to read. This could not be further from the truth. A collective effort between the authors, volume four is a treasure trove of pivotal moments in Alaskan history, illuminated by monumental photographs, detailed captions, and thoroughly enlightening insight, including stories of the individuals that helped Alaska survive and eventually prosper economically. From World War II to the Cold War and from the segregation of native Aleutians to the brutality of internment camps, this gem leaves nothing out. Perhaps the most remarkable feat of Aunt Phil's Trunk is the authors' ability to

deliver their clearly exhaustive research within the confines of a fluid, entertaining, and narrative writing style. Even historians, pseudo-historians, and general aficionados would be surprised by some of the revelations within these covers. For instance, once a meager town of 4000, Anchorage, whose police force would use a stopwatch to clock speedsters, evolved into the home of Fort Richardson and Elmendorf Air Force Base, and Alaska became one of the key strategic pieces in controlling World War II. The life and impact of Anton Anderson, one of Anchorage's earliest settlers at a time when many were fleeing, is just as intriguing a read as any other story in this volume. Aunt Phil's Trunk focuses on a particular story or individual and weaves in the historical moments from their perspective. Undoubtedly, there is a large amount of content for the reader to digest in one reading. To combat this dilemma and highlight particular parts of the text, the volume places borders around biographies of key figures and other interesting snippets like the official U.S. Air Force Song. Unbiased, it would not be far fetched to suggest that the nearly thousand-page, high-school history textbooks could adopt this model, and they would find fewer kids with their heads on the books and more heads in the book. Rather than implanting myriad pictures to fill up the pages and leaving the readers to contemplate the meaning, volume four supplies detailed captions that could stand strong on their own. Moreover, the authors' passion exudes from each story. Any individual with even the remotest affiliation with Alaska is bound to find a spot on the shelf for all these volumes. Stylistically, it is easy to read, an organic style that flows like you're reading a novel. With that said, it must be mentioned that non-Alaskans who are just generally interested in US history, like the impact Pearl Harbor had on turning Alaskan cities like Anchorage into a crucial military base, will not be disappointed. It might not be altogether outrageous to say that this book should be considered a relic. Few books can take such a multitude of historical accounts and wrap them up so neatly that the layman can understand and enjoy the minute details. The volume begins with commentary on World War II and the crucial role that Alaska played, as evidenced by one of the more famous quotes stated by the man who essentially predicted the Pearl Harbor attacks, Brigadier General William Mitchell: "I believe in the future, he who holds Alaska will hold the world." The volume essentially shows how Alaska was built into the economically sound, Californian state that it is today. In the process, readers will truly relish the glimpses into the lives of individuals like Clyde Slim Williams, who, with his dog team, sled to the existing North American Highway System in British Columbia in 5 months. Stylistically, the volume caters to the fast-paced reader as well as those that enjoy reading via visuals. If a picture could really be worth a thousand words, then those in this book are clearly it. Crisp images of crucial, historical moments, taken right in the heat of the action will exhilarate

readers and are like a work of art in their own right. Aunt Phil's Trunk has the thoroughness of a Ph.D thesis, and natural storytelling abilities that combine for a truly enriching foray into the last frontier that anyone will enjoy.

Third-generation Alaskan Laurel Downing Bill has turned her Alaska historian aunt's work into a lovely series of books that highlight Alaska's colorful past. Downing Bill earned a degree in journalism from the University of Alaska Anchorage in 2003 and wrote several award-winning articles while employed as a reporter for the Anchorage Chronicle newspaper from 2002-2004. Her weekly Alaska history column, titled "Aunt Phil's Trunk," was a favorite with the paper's subscribers. Bill's award-winning stories have appeared in newspapers throughout Alaska, as well as Alaska Magazine, Mushing magazine and First Alaskans magazine.

This was the last book in her series that I read, and all of these writings were just what I was hoping for as I was looking for an exacting history that was not designed to sell books, but to give the amazing human history of Alaska. Thank you goodness her niece found her collection of notes! Shirley Johnsrud

Length: Print, 344 pages. Target Audience/Genre: This is the 4th volume of Alaska's history, covering the period 1935 - 1960. Q - How was this book obtained? A - I was provided a copy for evaluation and an honest review. Q - Is this a book that I can read without having to read others first? A - Yes. Q - Are there a lot of typos/misspellings, grammatical errors or other editing failures? A - No. This is well written and professionally edited. Q - Is this a fast, easy read or is it more of a leisure read? A - This is more of a reference book that one would read at leisure. Q - What sort of language does this writer use to amplify the points made? A - Plain English. Q - What age group is this suitable for? A - All ages above, say, 12 or so. Q - My biggest pleasure or disappointment? A - Although I've loved each volume I've read, my two favorite are volumes 3 and 4. What I love most about this volume is the discussion of World War II. That is because my father and his older brother spent the first two years of the war in Alaska. Both were in Ketchikan, then my father was stationed in the Aleutians. Other than building some landing strips in ridiculously short times, about all Dad had to say about his experience was that it was always cold. Still, it's nice to read about Alaska's experience during the war. Nice. Except for our treatment of the Japanese-Americans who had done nothing wrong, yet, as shown in Chapter 12, 112,000 Japanese-Americans were treated like criminals by being sent to prison-like

internment camps in Idaho and elsewhere. Bottom Line: Aunt Phil's Trunk Volume Four is a delightful history of Alaska from 1935 to 1960. This is written in plain English that readers of all ages should find interesting. Love the photographs. Five stars out of five. Comments regarding your opinion of this book or of my review, whether favorable or unfavorable, are always welcome. If you buy the book based on my review and become disappointed, especially, I do want to know that and I want to understand how I can improve as a book reviewer. Just please be polite. Thank you.

The late Phyllis Downing Carlson was a pioneer in collecting and recording facts pertaining to Alaska's rich and diverse history. When Laurel Downing Bill inherited her aunt Phyllis' trunk full of documents and other treasures recounting Alaska's history, she was inspired to share this incredible collection of information. Thus began a literary labor of love which spans generations. The Aunt Phil's Trunk series of books contains five complete volumes. Each book covers a particular time-span, with the series wrapping up in the year 1984. Laurel Downing Bill brings Alaska's history to life in this fascinating compilation. People with an interest in Alaska's history will thrill at the unique and extensive array of information offered within this series. Photographs, newspaper clippings and other images help complete this series which is highly recommended for home and school libraries.

I've finally got all four of this series read and this is my top reads. Lot's of information and things I didn't know could even happen. Grab this book/series and find a comfy spot and enjoy like I have. What a journey this has been. I look forward to more work by this author. Thanks Laurel. Loved them all. :)

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Is Alaska on your bucket list? Have you visited and wished you knew more about the history? Here you go. This set of books is well researched and written.

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