

Bonfoey Family Homestead Cabin

North Pole

Property Description:

Log Cabin Homestead with Attached Greenhouse built in 1958. Freestanding Log Garage with Workshop also built in 1958. *Almost everything in the house is original to 1958, including electrical and plumbing.* Originally sitting on 5 wooded acres bordering the Chena Slough, acreage has decreased to 3.23 acres over the years due to widening of Badger Road. **Main floor** has 1,544 square feet. Kitchen is open to Dining Room and Living Room. Dining Room opens to Living Room with non-working Brick Fireplace and a newer Wood stove. 2 Bedrooms plus a Main Floor Master Bedroom with Half Bathroom (Toilet and Sink are not working). Full Bathroom has non-working Tub with non-working Shower. **Main Basement:** Finished in 1958, interior staircase leads to 3 additional Bedrooms. Basement contains Second Full Original Kitchen which is completely non-working. Kitchen opens to Living Room/Dining Room. Living Room has non-working Brick Fireplace. Full Bathroom is completely non-working. All plumbing is original and not operable. **2nd Basement:** Finished in 1958, second interior staircase leads to 1 Bedroom with Closet and Window.

Property history:

The Bonfoey Family Homestead, built in 1958, is one of the the earliest homesteads established in North Pole, Alaska. It is one of the first 3 log cabins ever built in North Pole and long ago served as a church to the North Pole community. It also served as one of the first, if not the first, homeless shelters in the North Pole area. Byrl and Joyce Bonfoey originally moved to Chugiak, Alaska with their 4 young children on July 4th, 1975 from Washington state, after Byrl accepted employment with the Alaska Railroad as Director of Purchasing. While with the Railroad, he had the train engines painted Red, White, and Blue with patriotic Stars and Stripes to celebrate America's Bicentennial in 1976. He took early retirement in October 1979, when the Railroad became State owned. He then worked for the Anchorage School District in Purchasing, where his duties included the purchase of dozens of Portable Classrooms and having them transported by barges from Seattle to meet the needs of the growing student population during the Oil Boom. He then spent time in Real Estate before becoming Director of Purchasing for the Fairbanks North Star Borough School District from September 1984 to October 1999. For his first year of work in Fairbanks, he "commuted" between their Chugiak home and his new job in Fairbanks in his 1972 Ford Pinto station wagon, sometimes having to drive with the door open to see the edge of the road during snowy weather. He lived in their travel trailer during the work week, which was parked in a coworker's driveway in Fairbanks, until he found and purchased the current Bonfoey Homestead in North Pole a year later. On nights when it was too cold to sleep in the travel trailer, he would sleep in his office at the Fairbanks School District building. The former high school, built in 1932, sometimes didn't seem much warmer than the trailer during the long winter months. The move from the Chugiak Homestead to the North Pole Homestead took many weeks and months, with Byrl packing and driving one load at a time. During this time, wife Joyce was experiencing a bad bout with chronic illness and was unable to help as much as she wanted to. In years past, Byrl and Son Steven would have to get up on the roof weekly to clear the heavy snowfall and to clean the chimney of their barrel wood stove. Some

winters they have received so much snow that the family dog was able to easily run up on top of the roof of the log cabin. Since relocating the Bonfoey family from its 1975 Chugiak Homestead to the North Pole Homestead in 1986, it has been in continual use by 3 generations of the Bonfoey family. Additional research of the long history of the Bonfoey Homestead in North Pole still ongoing.

Why is property endangered?

Almost everything in and about the Bonfoey Homestead is original to 1958. Both the log cabin home and log garage with workshop are intact but in need of major repairs and upgrades. The Cabin is becoming increasingly unsafe and hazardous. It is in need of all new wiring and plumbing, windows and exterior doors, kitchen and bathroom fixtures, and flooring on both levels. Original Electrical Wiring uses Fuses and is not up to code, and is especially dangerous in bathrooms and kitchens. Space heaters are also not possible at this time because of the wiring situation. Most of the Windows are Single Pane Glass. Enclosed Porch is in need of new roof or repairs.

Because of the original plumbing and other serious plumbing issues, the Main Floor Kitchen Sink Drainage has totally failed and all Laundry activities take place at friends' houses or is done by hand because the North Pole laundromat went out of business. Additionally, all Showering/Bathing takes place at a local public school's locker room. This is not convenient or safe or healthy for any of the Bonfoey residents. But this is especially the case for Homestead Owner Joyce Bonfoey who is elderly and uses a walker and has serious medical conditions that put her at great risk when exposed to public places such as a school locker room. The family would like to continue living in the home and preserve it for current and future Bonfoey family members and are now seeking funding in order to do so. If funding is not secured, the house will continue to deteriorate and it will not be healthy or safe for any member of the Bonfoey family to be living here. The Bonfoey Homestead would probably have to be sold "as is" and would more than likely be torn down by the new owner.

Activities under way to save property:

Original Boiler replaced with New Boiler. New replacement Interior Staircase to Main Basement. Circuit Breakers installed for Plumbing Heat Tape and possibly the Well. New Main Floor Bathroom Toilet. New Kitchen Window several years ago. New Main Floor Kitchen Sink and Fixtures, replaced several years ago. New Main Floor Dining Room Ceiling Light Fixture. Attached Greenhouse Glass Panels, replaced several years ago with used windows. Cabin's Composite Roof replaced. New Attached Deck constructed by the local Boy Scout Troop. Cabin Logs sanded and refinished. New wood stove to comply with current EPA regulations.

