

2021

Ten Most Endangered Historic Properties

Alaska Association for Historic Preservation, Inc.





**Ascension Church
of Our Lord Chapel
at Karluk on Kodiak Island**
RossiAlaska.org





The church is located on the far side of Kodiak Island and is the oldest existing Russian Orthodox church in Alaska. It is also one of the most professionally designed. The elaborate nature of this church may be attributed to the successful salmon cannery that had been located on the Karluk River below. The Karluk Packing Company began building homes for its native workers in the late 1800s and one of the workers asked to build a church instead of a house. The church was finished on June 11, 1888, and although the cannery closed in the 1930s, the church remained.

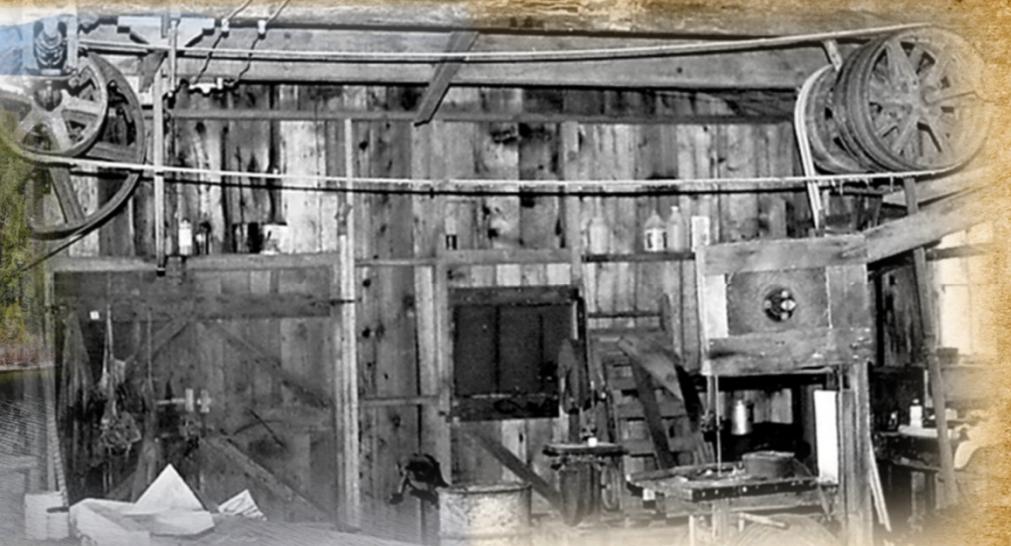
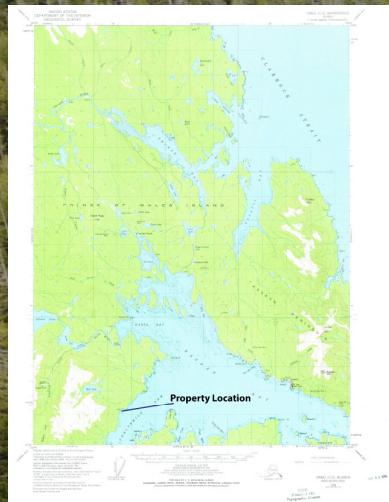
Today, the church is in danger of falling into the Karluk River if nothing is done soon because of the erosion of the cliff. A group is working with the Diocese of Alaska to move the church inland a safe distance to save it. The church will be moved and then mothballed until a final location is found for the church and then a full restoration will take place.

2021 Update: A committee of 30 individuals and agencies have been working the past year to fund and move the church. It is hoped that the church will be moved early this summer.

Wolf Creek Boatworks

Near Hollis on Prince of Wales Island
www.SaveWolfCreek.com





Located on this site for about 80 years, 25 years of restoration, maintenance, improvements, and preservation have been invested in Wolf Creek Boatworks. Currently, the battle to exclude the land from the USFS and Alaska Mental Health Land Trust (AMHLT) land swap of 1544 acres has hit a dead end. An eviction notice was issued to the boatworks by the USFS which requires all privately-owned property to be removed by December 17, 2020 or it becomes property of the USFS. The buildings and equipment will be removed with no compensation or recourse, and the the land will be transferred to the AMHLT. The boatworks is situated on a 7-acre site with very little of the land allowed by law to be logged due to its proximity to natural fish habitat. AMHLT intends to log the entire 1544 acres to fund its programs. Preservation Alaska and others support saving the boatworks. There is currently a lawsuit filed in court to stop the transfer.



Kennicott Historical Museum photo, presumably U.S. Commissioner E.E. Chamberlin standing outside the U.S. Commissioner's Cabin (note that sign indicates his post/home), snapped by "Hilda" with her box camera, circa 1927-1932

United States Commissioner's Cabin at McCarthy



The U.S. Commissioner's Cabin is a historic, privately-owned structure located within the heart of Wrangell-St. Elias National Park & Preserve, in downtown McCarthy. The cabin was built circa 1908. Oral history indicates it was constructed before most of the other buildings in town. It is the last of its kind in McCarthy.

At the beginning of the 20th Century, the area was home to one of the largest copper operations in the world. A former McCarthy railroad station master said this cabin had originally been the office for the Mother Lode Mining Co., which started operations about 1908 before the Copper River & Northwestern Railway reached Kennicott (just over four miles away) in 1911.



The McCarthy Creek floodplain has changed over time and threatens the U.S. Commissioner's Cabin as well as other nearby structures. Immediate threats to this property include catastrophic structural damage caused by flooding. Changing weather patterns may also be a factor increasing the risk of flooding events, both in terms of their frequency and magnitude. This historic property has already incurred minor flooding and groundwater intrusion. When McCarthy Creek rose in the past, so did the water table, flooding the cabin's root cellar; consequently, support beams for the root cellar collapsed, necessitating replacement of floor beam. The property now faces escalating risk, as water reaches higher levels than ever before.



Steamer Nenana AKA SS Nenana

Fairbanks
FriendsofSSNenana.com



The Steamer Nenana is a five-deck, wooden-hulled western rivers style steamer sternwheeler packet built from clear, vertical grain, kiln-dried fir. The ship is a blend of steam, wood, and paddlewheel technology that is 237 feet long and weighs a total of 1128 tons.

The steamer was commissioned and built in 1932, by the Alaska Railroad. She was prefabricated in Seattle, assembled in Nenana, launched into service in 1933, and run by the Alaska Railroad. The original design contained 24 berths, a dining salon, a smoking room, an observation room, a kitchen, a bakery, and men's and women's bathrooms along with passengers' and officers' rooms with porcelain sinks and electric lights.

She is located in Pioneer Park in Fairbanks. Years of neglect and deferred maintenance have brought the SS Nenana – a beautiful piece of Alaskan history – to deplorable conditions. In April 2018, the Fairbanks Northstar Borough blocked all entrances to the sternwheeler and closed off this beloved historic landmark to the public due to safety concerns.

Dedicated community members organized into the non-profit Friends of SS Nenana and had the vessel inspected by the Principal Naval Architect of Columbia-Sentinel Engineers Inc. from Seattle, WA during June of 2019. A report of needed repairs was generated for the group.

The National Park Service, Alaska Interior Region, is offering technical assistance for the repairs and restoration of the vessel. Without substantial fundraising, advocacy, and a close partnership agreement with the borough, we will lose the SS Nenana, a historic sternwheeler that is the last of its kind.

2021 Update: The Fairbanks North Star Borough, in response to strong community support, has committed maintenance funds for work on the SS Nenana. They have hired a design firm with a historic preservation consultant to prepare bid documents for repairs to the vessel. Work will start with the cargo deck. They will be seeking further funds for interior and exterior restoration work.



Pilgrim Hot Springs

60 miles north of Nome
www.PilgrimHotSprings.com





Pilgrim Hot springs was used as an orphanage by the Catholic (Jesuit) Diocese from 1918-1941. It was used during WWII as a place for soldiers' rest and relaxation, when the military presence significantly increased as a result of the US/USSR lend-lease program. Since the 1950's it was enjoyed primarily for recreational use by the people of the region and visitors to Nome.

All of the buildings in the immediate vicinity of the Mission were constructed between 1910-1930. The church and the nun's quarters are still structurally stable and retain most of their original architectural attributes, though they have been diminished through weathering and some vandalism. Other structures at the mission have not fared as well. Nearly all present some level of instability, and some have collapsed (the machine shop). Because of the mission's history and its historical and personal importance to local residents, it is imperative that a baseline be established to determine what efforts need to be undertaken to stabilize and preserve the structures. Pilgrim Hot Springs is an important destination for visitors to Nome and many people travel there to visit the mission and soak in the hot waters. Stabilization of the buildings and the development of interpretive signage would add greatly to that experience and would preserve the ambiance and history of this important place in Alaska's history.

Further information for 2021: The property is also threatened from the effects of a changing climate: increased snow fall, additional snow melt, and higher waters are causing erosion and flooding on and near the property. An increase in beaver activity and new beaver dams also has increased local flooding and threatens historical structures on the property. The water level is rising high enough to threaten the cemetery and mass burial site of the 1918-1919 flu victims, as well as precious agriculture fields. While the main mission complex is not directly affected by flood waters at this moment, the threat is imminent and restoration efforts must include flood mitigation and beaver species mitigation.



Pioneer Hall

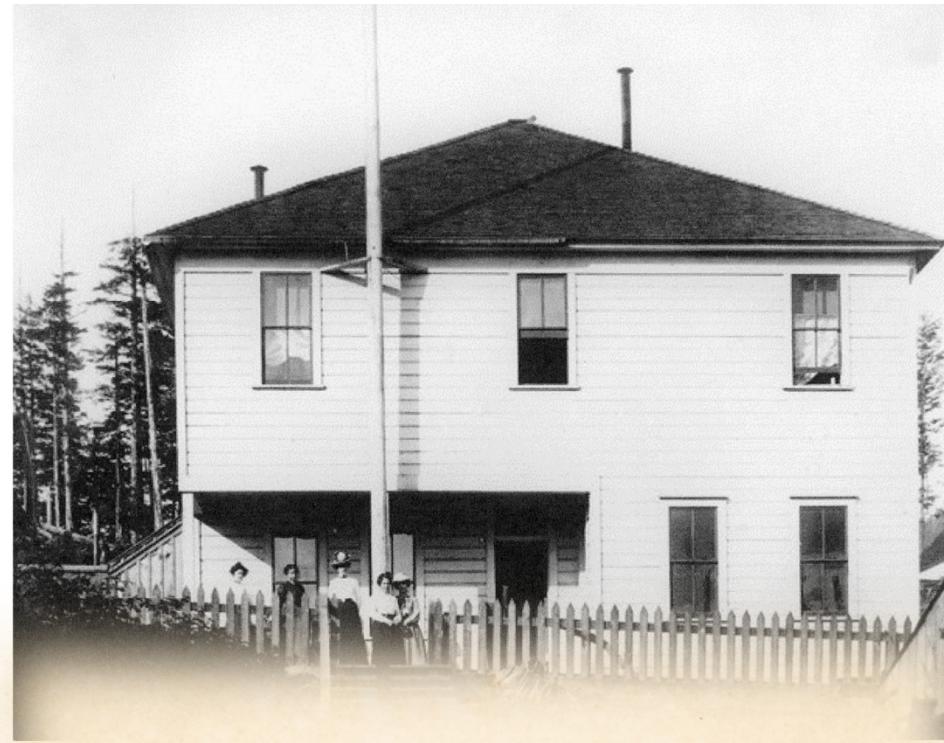
Ketchikan



Pioneer Hall is a two-story, wood frame building on post foundations constructed over bedrock. The building footprint is approximately 1,786 sf. It has a steep, modified hip roof with an unfinished attic. The building has been altered on all four elevations and in its interior. Modifications were made to its Front Street facade in its early years and continued to be made to visible facades along Pioneer Way. It was built on a prominent site overlooking the waterfront and its 50' flagpole was a beacon for early seafarers coming to Ketchikan. As the town grew rapidly in the years that followed, many—now historic—buildings began to surround Pioneer Hall. By the late 1920s, the commanding view earlier enjoyed by the Pioneer Hall was eclipsed by larger buildings including the Gilmore Hotel and the City Hall. The building is situated on historic Pioneer Way which is a stairway/pedestrian alley connecting Front Street to Main and Grant Streets.

The Pioneer Hall is an iconic Ketchikan landmark from the community's earliest days. It was the first Customs House located in Ketchikan (1900-1907) and has been a prominent landmark in the community since 1900. In 1922, it began a new life of serving the Pioneers of Alaska (Igloo No. 16 and Igloo 7). The Pioneers have continued to meet in this building over the ensuing nearly 100 years and continue to carry out many civic activities. This is the Downtown Historic District's and the City of Ketchikan's oldest building and a contributing building to the District's National Register of Historic Places designation. While the building has been altered over the years, the Pioneer Hall is individually eligible for the National Register by virtue of its place in Ketchikan's history.

The building needs considerable rehabilitation to meet health and safety standards that would enable the Pioneers to continue to use the property. The building needs immediate attention to its foundation and structural deficiencies as well as extensive upgrades to its mechanical and electrical systems. There are numerous code issues that render the building unsafe to its members and visitors and that, if corrected, would enable older members to visit the building and remain active in the organization for a longer period. The building's deficiencies have been enumerated in the draft report of the Historic Building Assessment.



US Customs House, circa 1901. Restoration of the building would return many of its double-hung windows, channel siding and architectural detailing.

Eldred Rock Lighthouse

near Haines

EldredRockLighthouse.org





Eldred Rock Lighthouse sits on a very small island located approximately 17 miles south of the town of Haines, Alaska. The island is the last (southernmost) in a string of islands extending south from the Haines peninsula. Built in 1905, Eldred Rock Lighthouse is the oldest original lighthouse in Alaska and the only remaining octagonal frame lighthouse of those built between 1902-1905. It is the only station not rebuilt. It was established because of the many shipwrecks nearby especially during the 1898 Gold Rush, when Lynn Canal was in heavy use.

Eldred Rock Lighthouse has now been unmanned for over 45 years, and as a result the buildings have fallen into disrepair and are considered endangered. The primary reasons for this state of

disrepair are due to environmental and logistical challenges and no agency funding to maintain the lighthouse. The extreme weather and environmental conditions greatly contribute to the rate of deterioration. Logistically, the island is very difficult and expensive to access. This makes getting resources—humans, building supplies, etc.—to the island very difficult. The concrete base of the lighthouse is spalling and needs quite a bit of attention.

The roofs of the various structures (four buildings on the island) are all in need of some level of repair to prevent water intrusion. Most wood and windows need to be repaired and repainted. Outside, the landscape needs attention to prevent the natural environment from “taking over.” Furthermore, there are environmental factors in and around the lighthouse that need to be cleaned up in order for the property to be safely used by the public





One Room Schoolhouse

Talkeetna



The building was constructed in 1935-36 and opened as a one room schoolhouse the fall of 1936. The teacher lived in ‘teachers quarters’ on the second floor and the first floor was the school for grades 1-8. It also served as a community center/church over the years.

There wasn’t high school in Talkeetna until 1964. By 1971, there wasn’t enough room for all the kids and the schoolhouse closed when a new elementary (and a new high school) was built. The building went through a renovation and opened as a museum in 1974. Small repairs were done when needed. The building got a new coat of paint in the 80s.

In 2017, the old exterior paint job was abated, due to lead paint and the building returned to its original white color. Over the years, the small repairs on top of small repairs have added up to one really huge and sorely needed change - the old electrical, plumbing and heating systems, as well as original windows, all need replacing.

The building is now 85 years old - not necessarily as old as many historic Alaska buildings, but over the years, band-aids on top of band-aids have led to continuing issues. The back addition roof actually has a roof on top of a roof and is still ice-dams and leaks inside in winter.

If nothing is done, the back roof could collapse, the electrical is in poor shape and could lead to fire. There is possible damage to the foundation that occurred in the 2002 earthquake that was never fixed. The structure needs numerous repairs.



Qiyhi Qelahi

Groundhog Cultural Landscape

Northern Alaska Peninsula





The Qiyhi Qelahi (Groundhog Mountain) Cultural Landscape is a place of traditional use for the people of Nondalton.

The site is endangered due to the Pebble Limited Partnership's (PLP) proposed mine that is directly in the middle of the area. If built, the mine will destroy the cultural landscape. As it is, PLP's current exploratory drilling program is already impacting the cultural landscape because Nondalton residents are avoiding this area their ancestors have used for countless generations.

The Nondalton Tribal Council is working towards documenting the cultural landscape and is participating in the ongoing Section 106 process for the Pebble Project.



4th Avenue Theatre

Anchorage
www.4thAvenueTheatre.org

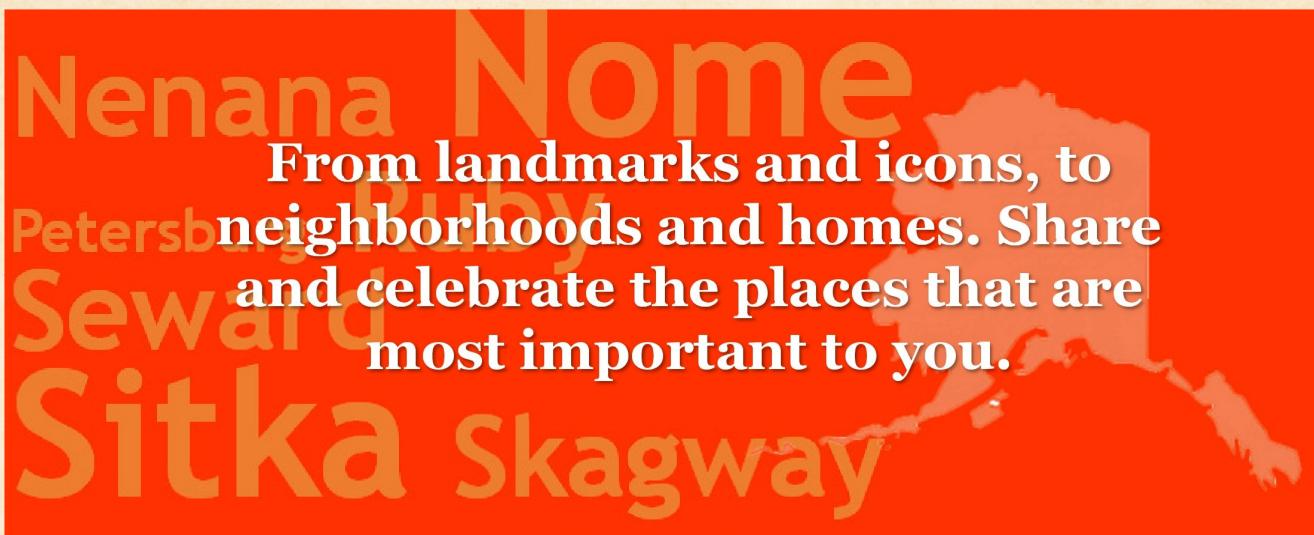




The theatre was built by Cap Lathrop as his legacy to Alaska. It is the only art deco building of its kind in Alaska. It was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1981. Built beginning in 1941, and completed in 1947, after a halt during World War II, somewhat after the heyday of these styles, it was a large 960-seat first-run theater until the 1980s. There are four sets of murals including a huge, floor-to-ceiling pair, which depicts the commercial and industrial growth of Alaska.

The theatre has been closed for some time and is in need of restoration. There is no word from the owners exactly what their intentions are for the future of the theatre. Preservation Alaska first listed the theatre on this annual list in 1991 and continues to list this property because the organization feels it is vitally important that the entire building be restored and once again welcomes the local community.





Preservation Alaska

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