

THE ALASKA ASSOCIATION

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AAHP EFFORT WINS NATIONAL PRESERVATION AWARD

By Bill Coghill

The Potter Section House restoration project won the 1988 National Outstanding Public Service to Transportation and Historic Preservation Award. This prestigious preservation award recognizes exemplary solutions, to include innovative and creative approaches to problems involving transportation and historic preservation.

This is the first time an Alaska entry has been submitted. Bill Coghill, statewide AAHP coordinator, submitted the nomination in August, 1987. The nomination was one of 66 nationwide entries submitted, of which 16 were awarded honors, with the Potter nomination achieving the "Outstanding Historic Preservation Award."

A formal presentation award ceremony was held at the Potter Section House on June 22, 1989. The award, signed by the Secretary of Transportation and the Chairman of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation was presented by Frank Cunningham, Alaska FAA Director and senior U.S. Dept. of Transportation official, to Neil Johannsen, Director of Alaska State Parks, the lead agency and paramount organization responsible for the Potter project. In addition Senator Mike Szymanski presented an Alaska Legislature special commendation award in recognition of the exceptional restoration and interpretation of the Potter Section house. One of the original copies of this special award was presented to the AAHP. Bill Coghill served as master of ceremonies. Anchorage Mayor Tom Fink, Alaska Railroad president and CEO Frank Turpin, and Senator Jan Faiks gave remarks. AAHP Board members attending were Executive Director Donna Lane, Judy Bittner, Lin Garrison and former Board member Wilda Marston who was recognized for her initial booster efforts to preserve the Potter Section House. Ruth Moen, wife of the railroad section foreman who lived in the Potter House in the 1946 to 1956 period was present with her son Sidney.

The award, which read "For the preservation of an early vestige of the Alaska Railroad with the rehabilitation of the historic Potter Section House and base camp and completion of an interpretive park featuring railroad and natural history, rolling stock and artifacts," was received in May 1989, and was informally acknowledged at the Anchorage Historic Properties annual meeting at the Alaska Railroad Depot in Anchorage on May 15, 1989 during National Historic Preservation Week and National Transportation Week. Over 100 attended.

The Potter Section House is the only building of its kind still in existence in Alaska. It was built in 1929, and served as home for railroad maintenance workers (gandy dancers) and the section foreman until 1978. In that year efforts were initiated to preserve and restore the Potter Section House. The facility was dedicated by Governor Sheffield during a symbolic gold spike driving on October 3, 1986. It was opened to the public in 1987.

The Potter Section House and Historic Site is a true vestige of the Alaska Railroad's past. It is located at an aesthetically pleasing location between the railroad and highway at the

gateway to Turnagain Arm marking the end of the Anchorage bowl flatlands and the beginning of the sheer cliffs which adjoin Turnagain Arm. This summer an average of 500 people a day are visiting this important segment of our national heritage.



Bill Coghill and State Parks Director Neil Johannsen shown with Dept. of Transportation Potter Section House Outstanding Award at Alaska Railroad Depot, Anchorage, May 15, 1989.

AAHP EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 1989

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Membership	Russ Sackett
Newsletter Coordinator	Greg Curney
Legislation	Judy Bittner
Assistant	Gail Hollinger
Fund-Raising Coordinator	Charles Hawkes
Assistant	Lin Garrison
Award Coordinator	Russ Sackett

The Alaska Association for Historic Preservation (AAHP) was founded in 1981 as a statewide, non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation of Alaska's architectural, archaeological, historical and cultural resources.

FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

KENNECOTT MINE, A PRESERVATION PRIORITY

By Janet McCabe

In the heart of Wrangell-St. Elias National Park, 65 rough road miles from the town of Chitina, is the little town of McCarthy. Beyond McCarthy, another 4.5 miles up an abandoned railroad cut, is the great labyrinthian complex of the abandoned Kennecott mine. Few Alaskans today realize the significance of the Kennecott Mine in Alaska's history. Between 1911 and 1938 Kennecott extracted 4.6 million tons of extremely high grade ore, yielding gross revenues of \$200,000,000 of which \$100,000,000 was net profit.

Kennecott came to symbolize the much touted pay-off of Alaskan resource development. Judge Wickersham cited the Kennecott profits and used the Copper River and Northwestern Railroad connecting Kennecott with Cordova as a prime example of the economic benefits of extending railroads through Alaska. Kennecott's wealth helped generate the Guggenheim fortune which spurred the nation's industrial growth. The country looked at Kennecott and was reassured that the Alaska purchase was a bargain.

Today, 51 years after the mine shut down and the people left, most of the Kennecott buildings are still standing. Isolation and climate have helped preserve the wooden structures, but deterioration has set in and is accelerating. Without substantial investment in preservation, Kennecott will soon be lost.

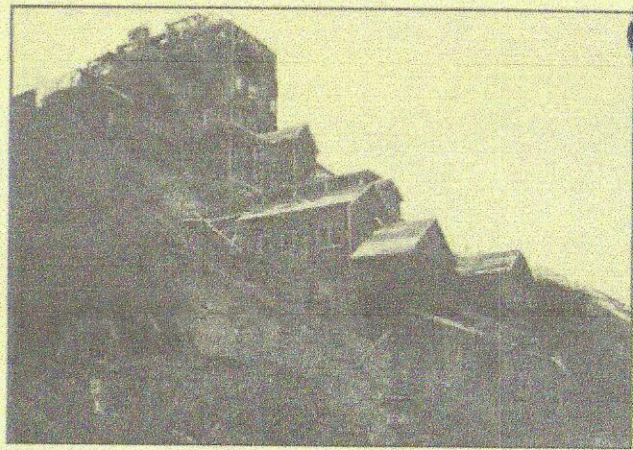
Over the years various groups and individuals have expressed interest in preserving the Kennecott buildings. In 1986, Congress designated Kennecott as a National Historic Landmark. The owners of the buildings have recently offered a donation/sale package to the National Park Service, and this summer the Park Service is conducting studies required by federal law prior to making a determination about acquisition.

Preliminary analysis indicates that preservation should be as a "ghost town." The structures would be stabilized but not restored as they were at the time of operation, and most structures would be preserved in exterior profile but closed to public entry. The local historical non-profit organization, the McCarthy-Kennecott Historical Museum, would be invited to work with the Park Service in planning, developing and operating a visitor center and interpretive program for Kennecott.

There is considerable statewide and national support for these efforts. After a visit last summer J. Jackson Walter, President of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, spoke to Alaskan preservationists emphasizing the national significance of Kennecott. The McCarthy-Kennecott Historic Society has organized "Friends of Kennecott" to collect funds for Kennecott Historical Society. Currently volunteers organized by the McCarthy-Kennecott Historical Society are working with the National Park Service to collect and preserve documents and artifacts which have been left in the abandoned buildings. During the last session the Alaska legislature adopted Legislative Resolve No. 42 in support of National Park Service acquisition and preservation of the Kennecott Mine properties.

The Alaska Association for Historic Preservation Board has endorsed Kennecott preservation as a top priority. To implement this decision, the association testified before the State Legislature in support of the resolution that was adopted, and \$1,000 has been reserved to assist the local non-profit group in their preservation efforts.

If you are interested in contributing your time, funds, or knowledge in this effort to preserve the Kennecott Mine structures, please contact an AAHP board member or write to the "Friends of Kennecott," P.O. Box 190006, Anchorage, Alaska 99519.



Kennecott Mine

Legislation Update

By Judy Bittner

The 16th Alaska Legislature passed several pieces of legislation of interest to historic preservation. The **Uniform Conservation Easement Act**, Senate Bill 123, sponsored by Senator Arliss Sturgelewski, allows conservation easements to be donated or sold to a governmental or charitable non-profit organization. An important piece of enabling legislation, it is based on model legislation drafted by the National Conference of Commissioners on Uniform State Laws. When introduced this session, Alaska was one of four states without a conservation easement law.

The bill allows conservation easements to be held in perpetuity and pass with title. It is a cost effective way to protect historic and natural values on private lands without the cost of fee simple purchase of the land. The owner is compensated through purchase of the easement or the ability to deduct the value of the easement from federal income taxes as a charitable gift. Because the property remains in private ownership, it remains on local tax rolls, and the public does not take on the responsibility of maintenance and operation of the property.

Anchorage Historic Properties, Inc. (AHP) lead the effort in finding a sponsor and tracking the bill through the session. A big thanks goes to AHP, Senator Sturgelewski and all of you who contacted your representatives in support of Senate Bill 123.

A number of resolutions concerning historic preservation also passed this session:

Senate Joint Resolution No. 16 supports the acquisition, preservation and interpretation of the historic Kennecott Mine by the National Park Service in the Wrangell-St. Elias National Park.

Legislative Resolve No. 14 encourages Governor Cowper to work with the governor of Magadan, Soviet Union, to plan a commemorative celebration in 1991 for the 250th anniversary of Vitus Bering's 1741 discovery of Alaska.

Legislative Resolve No. 28 recognizes the significance of the Russian Orthodox Church in Alaska history and the endangered condition of a number of the buildings and artifacts of the church. It calls for the Governor to direct the Office of History and Archaeology to inventory and document the art and architecture of the state's Russian Orthodox churches listed in the National Register of Historic Places, and in particular, the Holy Ascension Church at Unalaska. The Office of History and Archaeology received a \$40,900 pass through grant for the Alaska Association for Historic Preservation for a survey and inventory of icons in Alaska's Russian Orthodox churches.

Preservation at Juneau's House of Wickersham

By Gabrielle Laroche

Over the past year, the Alaska Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation has been working on restoration of the library at the Wickersham State Historic Site. The site was the home of several gold mining officials around the turn of the century including mine managers Frank Hammond and Bartlett Thane. James Wickersham, lawyer, judge and delegate to Congress, purchased the home in 1928 and lived there until his death in 1939. The home was occupied by Wickersham's second wife and then her niece until 1984 when it was sold along with many of the Judge's personal belongings, books and Alaskan memorabilia to the State of Alaska.

Although funding has been minimal, an operating budget nonexistent and keeping the house open to the public impossible at times, progress to protect the valuable collection and restoration of the house has gone on behind the scenes. This past summer, with the assistance of numerous volunteers, the nonprofit Wickersham Society and two college interns, hundreds of hours were spent restoring the judge's library on the second floor. From Rotary Club members came expert help on drywalling, drawings for molding reproduction and research of color schemes. The tedious task of scraping six layers of lacquer and paint off the fir floor, painting the walls and installing portable exhibit cases in the closets were all completed by other volunteers and Alaska Conservation Corp youths.

Volunteer time and talent is needed to give group tours, develop and present educational programs for children and organize and assist with special events.

Anyone with time and interest in historic homes, who enjoys working with the visiting public and has history related experience or education is encouraged to contact Lisa Golisek or Linda Kruger at the Division of Parks. Call 465-4563 for further information.

HOUSEKEEPING CHANGES

AAHP is becoming more organized! Financial accounts were computerized in a two journal system. Not only can we track our money more easily, we are now able to accept grants. Board meeting dates are now set for the third Tuesday of alternate months, allowing members to make long range plans to attend. This scheduling has encouraged two out-of-Anchorage members (Jerry Strang, Gakona, and Russ Sackett, Fairbanks) to attend regularly. Newsletters will be published quarterly.

Membership is the next area to tackle. Russ Sackett is the new Chairman of the Membership Committee. His committee will be formulating a plan to actively recruit members. To simplify record keeping and make membership renewal easier to recall, a calendar year of membership will be established and members will be reminded/invoiced for dues.

Gastineau Channel Historical Society News

By Gabrielle Laroche

The Gastineau Channel Historical Society has begun research on the Evergreen Cemetery in Juneau. Much of Juneau's early history is buried in the cemetery and the grave markers are eroding in the harsh Southeast climate. Research on the pioneers buried in Evergreen cemetery was done by Glenda Choate and a walking tour brochure outlining their personal histories was published by the City of Juneau's Community Development Department.

The society has acquired the book, A Graveyard Preservation Primer, by Lynette Strangstad, published by the American Association for State and Local History, as a way of exploring the possibilities of preservation. Strangstad has traveled for several years to graveyards, consulting and offering advice on how best to preserve them.

AAHP Annual Awards Program

To promote preservation of the state's cultural resources, the Alaska Association for Historic Preservation is initiating an annual preservation awards program which will recognize individuals, organizations, and local, state or federal agencies that have significantly contributed in the fields of preservation. Award categories are: Group Award (non-profit or private organizations); Individual Award; and Government Agency Award (local, state or federal agency).

Further information concerning The Alaska Association for Historic Preservation Awards Program is available through the AAHP, Old City Hall, 524 West Fourth Avenue, Suite 203, Anchorage, Alaska 99501 (907) 272-8595.

Nominations for the various awards are due in the AAHP's offices no later than 3 p.m. on September 29, 1989. Awards will not be made in a category unless, in the opinion of the official judges, a nomination meriting award has been received.

Awards will be announced and awarded at AAHP's annual meeting.

Important Newsletter Mailing Change

The newsletter mailing list may undergo a dramatic reduction of names in the near future. The list will be made to more closely reflect membership. Current membership is a mere 87 while we mail newsletters to more than 1,000. If you wish to continue receiving this newsletter, please join us by sending in the attached membership form.

Dues paid anytime within the rest of 1989 will count for all of 1990. AAHP is always a bargain, but signing up during the next four months will give you extra months for free.

MEMBERSHIP

Membership runs from January 1 through December 31. Dues are payable by December 31 of preceding year.

- | | | | |
|--|----------|---|-----------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Student | \$ 10.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> Friend | \$ 100.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual | \$ 15.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> Sponsor | \$ 250.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family | \$ 25.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> Donor | \$ 500.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Non-Profit | \$ 25.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> Benefactor | \$1000.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Contributor | \$ 50.00 | | |

Donations to AAHP are tax deductible, as allowable under IRS regulations.

\$ _____ IS ENCLOSED. Also, I would be glad to participate in AAHP activities in the following areas:

- | | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fundraising | <input type="checkbox"/> Membership | <input type="checkbox"/> Legislation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter | <input type="checkbox"/> Outreach | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |

NAME _____ PHONE w. _____ h. _____

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