

THE ALASKA ASSOCIATION

OLD CITY HALL 524 WEST FOURTH AVENUE, SUITE 203, ANCHORAGE, ALASKA 99501

MAY 1991

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PRESERVATION WEEK ACTIVITIES, 1991

The theme for National Historic Preservation Week, May 12-18, 1991 is "Celebrate Your Heritage". This year also marks the 25th anniversary of the National Register of Historic Places and the 75th anniversary of the U.S. National Park Service.

The official 1991 National Trust poster depicts preservationists, including Alaska's Judy Bittner, waving from the city hall of Charleston, South Carolina. Some ways that Alaska communities plan to celebrate Preservation Week are:

Anchorage. Anchorage Historic Properties, Inc. (AHPI) will display an exhibit featuring Anchorage historic resources at the Loussac Library. In addition, AHPI is holding its annual membership meeting on May 13. At that time, it will present awards for work done to further historic preservation in Anchorage.

AAHP, through Peg Stout, has worked with Anchorage elementary school students on a project to build models of Anchorage's historic buildings and traditional Alaska Native structures. The exhibit will be housed at Shops on the Village Green (700 E. Benson) from May 13 to May 20.

Fairbanks. The mayors of the City of Fairbanks and the Fairbanks North Star Borough will each read proclamations recognizing Preservation Week. Immediately afterward, a tour of National Register properties in the Fairbanks area will be held.

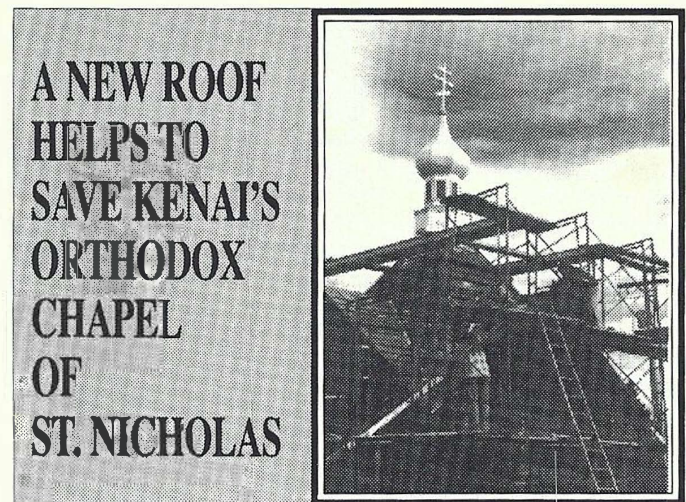
Also in Fairbanks, everyone interested in preservation is invited to be present for a group photograph to be taken on the sternwheeler "Nenana". The photograph will be made into a poster and entered in the National Trust contest.

Juneau. The City and Borough of Juneau is working with the Downtown Business Association on an historic trivia contest where pictures of details of Juneau historic buildings are run in the newspaper and prizes are awarded to persons who correctly identify the appropriate buildings.

Sadly, one of Juneau's historic buildings, the former St. Ann's School, will shortly be torn down. In recognition of Preservation Week, a group photo of alumni and friends of St. Ann's School will be taken and plans are underway to write a feature article on St. Ann's.

Finally, "Volume 2, Downtown Historic District: The Builders of Downtown", prepared by the City and Borough of Juneau's Community Development Department, will emerge from the printers either during Preservation Week or shortly thereafter.

Matanuska-Susitna Borough. A clean-up of the Mat-Maid (the old Matanuska Valley Farmers Cooperative) building in Palmer is scheduled for Saturday, May 18. Organizations involved include the Palmer Historical Society, the Palmer Economic Development Association (PEDA), the Palmer Chamber of Commerce and the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Cultural Resources Division. Aside from yard clean-up activities, work will include securing doors, sweeping the interior and beginning to scrape the building.



By Mary Ford

Orthodox Chapel of St. Nicholas

One of Kenai's historic treasures, the Orthodox Chapel of St. Nicholas, has a new roof - a gift from the Kenai Historical Society in this city's bicentennial year.

The roof is an extension of stabilization efforts begun in 1989 to save the hand-hewn, square-log building from collapse. Long a victim of weather, vandalism and minimum maintenance, the condition of the 86-year old memorial chapel was assessed by the National Park Service in 1985.

The Park Service declared the situation "critical" and made detailed recommendations. However, according to Archpriest Macarius Targonsky, funds were unattainable for even a scaled down version of the recommended measures. So, using some donated materials and others purchased by the Kenai Historical Society, a parishioner (Arthur "Swede" Foss) and workers from Wildwood Correctional Facility realigned and bolted the sagging timbers to new vertical half-logs placed at intervals inside. They also replaced rotting foundation logs and later installed new windows and doors.

The current project includes new flashing and wooden shingles; new paint on the cupola, dome and cross; new gable windows; blue paint on the window frames; and a coat of preservative on the logs.

The little chapel, approximately 20 feet square, was erected in 1906 over the grave of Igumen Nicholai, a priest-monk also called Abbot Nicholas or Father Nicholas. Although Kenai had been served by visiting Russian Orthodox missionaries since 1795, Father Nicholas came in 1844 as Kenai's first resident priest. His new parish extended north from Kenai to Knik, south to the tip of the Kenai Peninsula and east as far as present-day Valdez. During the summer, he would travel by bidarka to villages in his care. There, and in Kenai, he would perform baptisms and marriages, "settle disputes" and arrange for vaccinations.

Father Nicholas died in 1867 around the time of the Alaska purchase. He was buried beside the original church. Visitors sometimes mistake the chapel for the original church. However, that church was replaced in 1896 by the existing three-domed Holy Assumption Church, some

FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

A NEW ROOF HELPS TO SAVE KENAI'S ORTHODOX CHAPEL OF ST. NICHOLAS *(continued)*

400 feet away, and the chapel came ten years later. Both the chapel and the nearby Holy Assumption Church are National Historic Landmarks.

"After the church was built," the late Mary Nissen explained, "the people felt they should do something about where the first church was and the grave of Igumen Nicholai." She told how her father, Nick Kalifornsky, supplied ten of the assigned logs and fashioned the dome under the direction of Alexant Darien, chief carpenter. She added that the building was never completed but that icons and candlesticks were brought in and the people would gather there on St. Nicholas Day every December 19. Sadly, items disappeared from the unsecured building. Remaining furnishings were moved back into the church. December 19 is no longer celebrated there, according to Father Targonsky.

This is not the first time that the Kenai Historical Society has come to the aid of the chapel. In 1972, the Historical Society raised the building in order to provide concrete foundation supports and, in the process, discovered three crosses beneath the floor. One is most surely a marker for Father Nicholas and a second for his assistant, Songleader Makar Ivanoff. Father Targonsky says the third person is unknown. The crosses were photographed, then wrapped in heavy plastic before being put back. Mary Nissen said other church workers, wardens and readers are buried in the yard but the graves are unmarked. A separate church cemetery is several hundred feet away in a northerly direction.

Today, snug under a new roof and standing straight, the chapel of St. Nicholas, long an object of affection for townspeople and a favorite subject for visiting photographers, should last many more years.

THE ROLE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENTS IN HISTORIC PRESERVATION IN ALASKA

by Rolfe Buzzell

Local governments play an important role in historic preservation in Alaska. To date, thirteen local governments have enacted local historic preservation ordinances to identify and protect their historic and prehistoric resources. The duties and authorities included in these ordinances vary, as do the levels of preservation activity.

Under Title 29 of Alaska law, local governments may provide for the preservation, protection and maintenance of historic properties, including the establishment of local historic preservation commissions to identify and protect historic and prehistoric resources. Depending on their enabling ordinances, local preservation commissions may have the authority to locate and inventory historic sites and structures, conduct preservation planning activities, review projects for impacts on cultural resources, develop and review nominations to the National Register of Historic Places, rehabilitate historic structures and develop educational materials focusing on historic preservation issues. Local governments may also designate historic districts, in consultation with the State Historic Sites Advisory Committee, and adopt design review guidelines to ensure that changes or additions to the exterior of historic buildings or new construction are compatible with existing structures in an historic district.

Ten local governments in Alaska have established historic preservation commissions with authority to conduct preservation activities within their boundaries. They are the Municipality of Anchorage, the City and Borough of Juneau, the Fairbanks North Star Borough, the Matanuska-Susitna Borough and the cities of Ketchikan, Nome, Cordova, Seward, Dillingham and Unalaska. However, commissions in Nome, Seward and Cordova are currently inactive.

Seven local governments have established historic districts in which specific historic or prehistoric resources within a limited area have been designated as significant. Some of these communities have developed specific guidelines for demolition, additions to existing structures, or new construction. A review committee, often including professionals in areas such as architecture, history and archaeology, review proposed local projects to determine if they meet the district's design guidelines. Local governments with designated historic districts include the City and Borough of Juneau, Cordova, Skagway, the North Slope Borough, Ketchikan, Seward and Kupreanof. Cordova and Kupreanof are unusual in that their historic districts include all lots within their city limits.

The State Office of History and Archaeology administers the Certified Local Government (CLG) program which is designed to help local governments establish and develop their own historic preservation programs. If citizens are interested in starting such a program, their city council or borough assembly must adopt an ordinance establishing an historic preservation commission and the local government must apply to the State for certification in the CLG program. Once it meets minimum State guidelines, a local government becomes eligible to apply for federal matching historic preservation grant funds which are available only to local governments.

The State, through the Office of History and Archaeology in Anchorage, offers technical assistance and training to local government preservation programs and helps in the writing or revision of preservation ordinances. CLG grants are one of the few sources of public grant funds currently available in Alaska for preservation activities. The North Slope Borough, the City and Borough of Juneau and the Matanuska-Susitna Borough were the first local governments to be certified in Alaska, while those most recently certified are the cities of Dillingham, Unalaska and Ketchikan.

For information on historic preservation programs in your community, contact your local planning department or preservation commission. If there is no local historic preservation commission and you are interested in starting one, write to the State Office of History and Archaeology, P.O. Box 107001, Anchorage, AK 99510-7001 or call (907) 762-2623.

AAHP EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 1991

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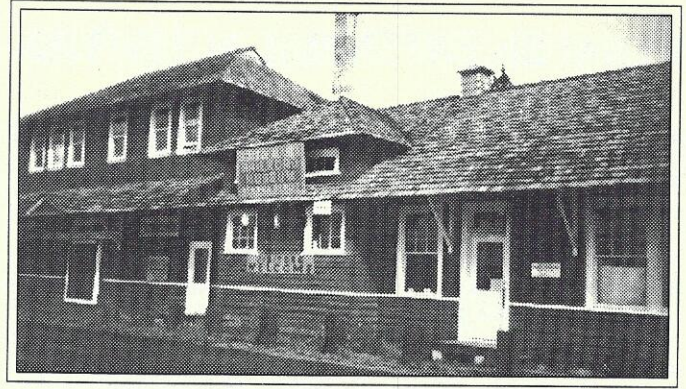
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Legislation: Janet McCabe
Membership: Jack Sinclair
Nominating: (Vacant)
Projects & Issues: Russ Sackett
Public Relations: Greg Curney

The Alaska Association for Historic Preservation (AAHP) was founded in 1981 as a private, statewide, non-profit corporation dedicated to the preservation of Alaska's prehistoric and historic resources through education, promotion and advocacy. Preservation of the built environment provides a vital link and a visible reminder of the past, emphasizing the continuity and diversity of Alaska.

HISTORIC NENANA DEPOT MUSEUM

By Bill Coghill



Nenana Railroad Depot

Officially listed on the National Register of Historic Places on August 10, 1977, the Nenana Railroad Depot has emerged in the last two years as a noteworthy budding museum with a primary focus on railroad memorabilia and Nenana's past life and history. This year is especially promising as local manager Joanne Hawkins moves ahead with energetic plans to improve several aspects of the Depot Museum.

The City of Nenana acquired the Depot from the Alaska Railroad several years ago. Subsequently, the city improved the old structure, including the roof and heating system, primarily under the auspices of the Historical Properties of Alaska (HAPI) which, in the 1989 summer season, had Annette McDonald of Nenana operate the waiting room as a gift shop and museum. In early 1990, the city transferred the lease from HAPI to Joanne Hawkins, a Nenana resident who manages the Tripod Gift Shop and Hawkins Warehouse.

The Depot was constructed in 1922 and first opened on December 12, 1922. The Alaska Railroad was completed from Seward to Fairbanks in 1923. On a hot summer afternoon on July 15, 1923, President Warren G. Harding drove the ceremonial golden spike at Nenana, signifying official completion of the Alaska Railroad. This simple act marked the end of one of the greatest engineering and construction projects of its time.

The only other depot in Alaska identical to the Nenana structure was the Seward Depot, which was listed on the Historic Register in 1987. In 1937, a second story was added to the Nenana Depot and served as living quarters for the station manager. The Depot was closed as a railroad station in January 1983 and has since been designated as the official State of Alaska Railroad Museum.

At the east end of the station, a monument was erected on the 50th anniversary of the Railroad's completion, along with a plaque and embedded commemorative gold spike. And, when the Railroad was transferred from federal to state ownership in January 1985, the signing ceremony took place in Nenana.

I missed Harding's spike ceremony (I was born one week later) but I was present at the Railroad's 50th celebration and was project officer and master of ceremonies for the 60th anniversary at Nenana, as well as the 1985 transfer to the State.

In the capable hands of Joanne Hawkins, I believe we will have a museum of which Nenana residents and all Alaskans will be proud. She has been working on gathering interesting pieces, many railroad-related. Of special note are her beautification efforts which this year will add 12 hanging baskets and flower beds of 12-15 assorted flower species.

Recently, Joanne installed an alarm system throughout the Depot, providing greater security for individuals who place their treasures here for display. Display cases are also now on hand to show off the many photos and printed materials for easy viewing but not for touching.

I believe the developing Nenana Railroad Museum will become a memorable stop for all travelers in the Interior, especially for Alaskans. The museum will be open daily beginning Memorial Day until Labor Day from 9 am to 7 pm. Joanne says there will be no charge to see the museum this year. Lastly, as a special note, if you are in Nenana to visit on Sunday, July 7 this year, please stop by Coghill's Grocery as we will be celebrating our 75th anniversary of serving Nenana.

MEMBERSHIP

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

Benefits include subscription to the quarterly AAHP newsletter * workshops & seminars * annual meeting * historic preservation advocacy.

<input type="checkbox"/> Student	\$ 10.00	<input type="checkbox"/> Contributor	\$ 50.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Individual	\$ 15.00	<input type="checkbox"/> Friend	\$ 100.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Family	\$ 25.00	<input type="checkbox"/> Sponsor	\$ 250.00
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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:

- | | | |
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Please Return To: The Alaska Association for Historic Preservation
Old City Hall, 524 West fourth Ave., Suite 203
Anchorage, Alaska 99501
Attention: Treasurer

KENAI BICENTENNIAL ACTIVITIES

(Call 283-1991 for details)

1991 is Kenai's bicentennial year and many activities are planned in commemoration of that milestone in the community's history.

May events include lectures on the Kenai Peninsula's past by Dr. Alan Boraas; groundbreaking for the Kenai Bicentennial Visitors and Cultural Center; and a fashion show featuring modern and vintage clothing. In June, events include a triathlon; a barbecue and street dance; oil industry-related tours and exhibits; the "Ballad of Kenai", a song, dance and story show; a salmon bake and square dance; and the Bridge of Song, featuring the Kenai Central High School choir.

July 4 celebrations will feature a parade and Russian dances, while fisheries exhibits plus a "Salute to Labor" are planned in August. On September 14, "Founding Days" will be celebrated at the Kenai Mall, hopefully with invited Russian dignitaries. In October, a "Friendship Potlatch" sponsored by the Kenaitze Indians and Cook Inlet Region, Inc. is scheduled, while bicentennial activities will culminate in December with dedication of the Kenai Bicentennial Visitors and Cultural Center.

COMMITTEE UPDATES

Education. Peg Stout has been working with Anchorage elementary school students on a project to construct models of historic buildings in support of Preservation Week.

Legislation. Janet McCabe testified before the Legislature in support of funding for Kennecott. She also contacted individual legislators about the possibility of a "bricks and mortar" matching grants program.

Membership. The Membership committee continues to work on expanding AAHP's contact list.

Projects and Issues. Russ Sackett and committee members circulated a list of Alaska's endangered historic structures for review by Board members. Ten structures considered to be the "most endangered" will be the subject of future newsletter articles.

Public Relations. Greg Curney reports that the committee has developed several ideas for an AAHP logo and will submit them to Bill Devine for development. The Committee has also been actively working on having a newspaper article published in celebration of Preservation Week.



PLEASE NOTE:

If you have renewed your AAHP membership, a "91" will appear after your name on the mailing label for this newsletter. If a smaller number or no number appears after your name, this means that your membership has expired. Please check the number after your name and renew your membership today if it is not current.



THE ALASKA ASSOCIATION
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