



THE ALASKA ASSOCIATION FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Old City Hall, 524 West Fourth Avenue, Suite 203, Anchorage, Alaska 99501

AUGUST 1992

VOL. 11 ISSUE 3

WORLD WAR II: ALEUTIAN REMINDERS

by Carol Burkbart

1992 marks the 50th anniversary of the Japanese bombing of Dutch Harbor and the beginning of World War II's Aleutian Campaign. Five National Historic Landmarks in the Aleutians commemorate the momentous events of that campaign. They are part of the national World War II theme, under the sub-theme of the War in the Pacific, 1941-1945. The five National Historic Landmarks are:

- Dutch Harbor Naval Operating Base and Fort Mears, U.S. Army (Unalaska and Amaknak Islands);
- Cape Field at Fort Glenn (Umnak Island);
- Attu Battlefield and U.S. Army and Navy Airfields;
- Japanese Occupation Site, Kiska Island;
- Adak Army Base and Adak Naval Operating Base.

The U.S. National Park Service administers the National Historic Landmark Program for the Secretary of the Interior. This program focuses attention on historic and archaeological resources of exceptional value to the nation as a whole and represents our most important prehistoric and historic cultural resources. The National Historic Landmarks commemorating the Aleutian Campaign serve as tangible reminders of the significant events that took place there. However, the ravages of the harsh Aleutian climate, development pressures, vandalism, and looting place these resources in jeopardy. Success in preserving our World War II National Historic Landmarks depends on public awareness of the heritage these resources represent.

Japanese activity in the Aleutians during World War II was originally intended to split the American Pacific fleet by drawing forces away from Midway Island. However, after the U.S. victory at Midway, the main incentive for continued Japanese activity became the propaganda value of holding American soil.

Japanese aerial attacks on Dutch Harbor and troop landings on Attu and Kiska were initially intended by Japanese planners to be quick strikes and withdrawals. Fortification of Attu and Kiska provided patrol bases designed to protect the easternmost reaches of the Japanese empire. It was pride that motivated both sides to persist in the long and costly struggle in one of the world's least hospitable environments. For the U.S., the emotional impact of the Japanese occupation of a part of North America sustained a prolonged campaign.

Dutch Harbor Naval Operating Base and Fort Mears National Historic Landmark was the site of the Japanese bombing attacks on June 3 and 4, 1942 which began the Aleutian campaign. Cape Field at Fort Glenn National Historic Landmark, located west of Dutch Harbor, was the first Alaska project commissioned after the United States entered the war in December 1941. The secret air base was built under the guise of a fish cannery. It provided the aerial defense for Dutch Harbor and caught the Japanese, who believed the nearest

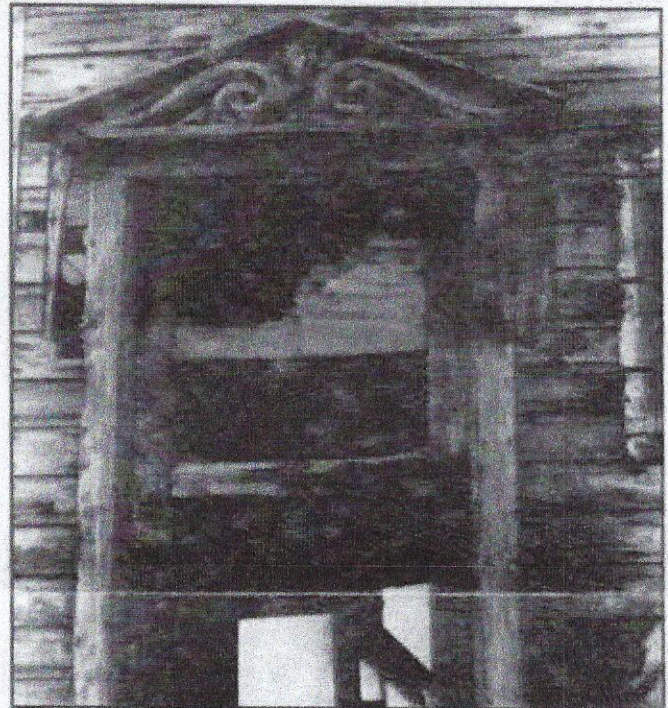


Photo courtesy of NPS

Commander's House, Fort Glenn, Umnak Island, 1991

American airfield was on distant Kodiak, by surprise.

The Japanese forces captured Attu and Kiska Islands on June 6 and 7, 1942. Attu, located 1,500 air miles from Anchorage, is the last island in the Aleutian Chain. Both islands lie between the cold Bering Sea and the warm Japanese Current of the North Pacific, are buffeted year-round by vicious storms and are typically shrouded by dense fog.

The Japanese held these islands from 1942 to 1943, at the peak of Japan's military expansion in the Pacific. Many Americans feared that a Japanese invasion of the North American continent would be mounted through Alaska. The alarm caused by the Japanese invasion and occupation forced both the United States and Canada to divert forces to the Alaska Theater which could probably have been deployed to greater strategic advantage elsewhere in the Pacific.

During the Aleutian Campaign, tens of thousands of United States land, sea and air forces advanced progressively westward along the 1,100 mile Aleutian arc in order to dislodge Japanese troops occupying Attu and Kiska Islands. The original feature of Adak Army Base and Adak Naval Operating Base National Historic Landmark was an advance airfield, built in an incredible twelve days to bring American planes within safe bombing range of Kiska.

The Japanese held Attu until May 1943, when about 15,000 American troops recaptured it in heavy fighting. The three-week battle for Attu Island was the only battle on North American soil during World War II. It cost 549 American lives

and 1,145 wounded. The Japanese lost their entire garrison of about 2,350 men. The last 750 or so Japanese soldiers died when they charged American engineer troops in a frenetic banzai attack.

The American recapture of Attu placed the Japanese garrison at Kiska, which was much larger than its counterpart on Attu, in a precarious position. On July 28, 1943, Japanese ships managed to evade detection as they sailed into Kiska Harbor in a dense fog. All 5,100 Japanese troops on the island were evacuated in less than one hour and the ships sailed away unseen, without a single loss of life. Despite diligent surveillance by American air and sea forces, the Japanese had managed one of the most brilliant evacuations in military history.

On August 15, 1943, a combined Canadian-American force of 34,000 men invaded Kiska, only to find that the Japanese had fled. There were casualties nonetheless. In the process of recapturing the deserted island, over 313 American and Canadian soldiers died, some from "friendly fire" and many others from booby traps and mines. The Aleutian Campaign was over. The Japanese had been expelled from North American soil.

Attu and Kiska were immediately designated and fortified as American bases. Through 1945, both islands served as patrol bases and, along with Adak and Amchitka, were used to stage air attacks on Japan.

Today, the National Historic Landmarks on Attu, Kiska and Umnak are without equal in terms of the sheer number of undisturbed resources which still endure as reminders of the Aleutian Campaign. World War II remains here include buildings, airfields, roads, bridges, docks and storage tanks. A pushcart railway built by the Japanese near Holtz Bay on Attu can still be seen. Murals painted by soldiers stationed at Cape Field survive on the walls of quonset huts at Umnak and a Japanese Shinto shrine stands on Kiska. Vehicles, tools and mechanical equipment lie rusting where they were left when the bases were abandoned. Thousands of shell and bomb craters are still visible in the tundra of Attu and Kiska. Also remaining are Japanese trenches, foxholes, gun emplacements and American ammunition magazines and dumps. Spent cartridges, shrapnel and shells remain at the scenes of heavy fighting.

As 1993 approaches, marking the 50th anniversary of the recapture of Attu and Kiska, the Aleutian Campaign is drawing attention once again. Attention is sorely needed. All five Aleutian Island National Historic Landmarks are listed as imminently threatened in the Damaged and Threatened National Historic Landmarks Section 8 Report to Congress. All require immediate documentation and implementation of appropriate management strategies if they are to be preserved.

The extreme isolation of Attu helps protect this National Historic Landmark from development, vandalism and other human threats. However, vandalism has occurred in the past. It is exemplified by an extensive collection of World War II artifacts found in an unofficial recreation building on the island. The collection includes what appears to be a Japanese grave post, converted to a support for a bar, and a bar railing that appears to have been taken from the World War II chapel. Several World War II buildings and their contents were burned, either by arsonists or during military-sanctioned "clean-up" projects. Clean-up also involved bulldozing large quantities of World War II machinery into Massacre Bay. Severe weather conditions pose the largest threat, however, as they promote erosion and contribute to the continued deterioration of cultural resources remaining on the island.

As on Attu, the severe climate has taken its toll on surviving buildings, structures and objects on Kiska.

Nevertheless, buildings, armaments, fortifications and personal artifacts remain and several Japanese vessels torpedoed by American submarines still rest at the bottom of Kiska Harbor. Also on Kiska are structures, armaments and equipment from an Allied naval patrol base which was established by the American-Canadian forces upon reoccupation and was abandoned after the war. As well as the hostile climate, periodic looting and vandalism by commercial fishermen serve to endanger this landmark.

During the past three years, the National Park Service has worked to document the extensive amount of material on Attu and Kiska remaining from World War II. In 1989, the National Park Service joined with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (which administers Kiska as a unit of the Alaska Maritime National Wildlife Refuge) and the U.S. Navy to conduct an underwater survey of Kiska Harbor. That survey located ten submerged submarines and shipwrecks and an aircraft.

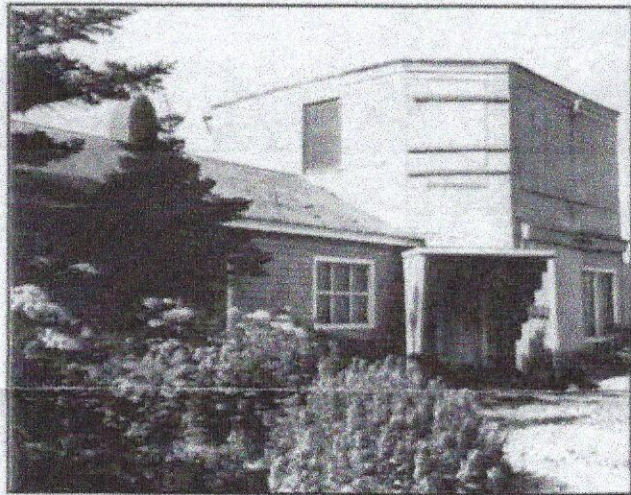


Photo courtesy of NPS

Aerology Operations Building, Unalaska, 1989

AAHP EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 1992

Officers

Executive Director:	Bill Coghill
President:	Russ Sackett
Vice President:	Jerry Strang
Secretary:	Rolfe Buzzell
Treasurer:	Frank Norris

COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS:

Education:	Jack Sinclair
Fund Raising:	Rolfe Buzzell
Legislation:	Janet McCabe
Membership:	Bill Coghill
Nominating:	Jerry Strang
Projects & Issues (acting):	Russ Sackett
Public Relations:	Gloria Trueblood
Newsletter:	Jill Smythe

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 visible reminder of the past, emphasizing the continuity and diversity of Alaska.

Terrestrial survey work on Attu began in August 1991 and is scheduled for completion in August 1992. The object of this survey is to document remaining World War II structures and objects and to reassess the National Historic Landmark boundaries.

Dutch Harbor Naval Operating Base and Fort Mears National Historic Landmark is under extreme pressure from the Bering Sea fishery because of its location around one of the largest U.S. fishing ports and the only deep water port in the Bering Sea. Cape Field at Fort Glenn National Historic Landmark on Umnak Island is also under pressure from fisheries activity. With only three year-round residents, vandals and souvenir hunters pose a continued threat to this landmark. Adak Army Base and Adak Naval Operating Base National Historic Landmark continues to serve as an active naval base today. Because of the island's mountainous terrain and extensive wetlands, only a limited area is suitable for construction. Many World War II structures on the island have been torn down as part of the military clean-up effort or to make way for new construction. Current National Park Service projects include boundary reviews of all three National Historic Landmarks.

50th Anniversary commemorations in 1992 and 1993 call attention to places like Dutch Harbor/Unalaska, Umnak, Adak, Attu and Kiska. The National Historic Landmarks on these islands commemorate little known, often forgotten, but nonetheless significant people and events in the life of this nation. Action is necessary if they are to be preserved from the threats summarized in this article.

Public Law 95-348 directed the National Park Service to provide a study of sites and areas associated with the Pacific Campaign of World War II. Under this mandate, the Alaska Regional Office produced a report in 1991, World War II in the Aleutians Alternatives. The study examines four management alternatives for preservation and interpretation of World War II resources in Unalaska and the Aleutians. In 1992, the Alaska Regional Office transmitted the alternatives study to the National Park Service in Washington, D.C. for submittal to Congress.

STERNWHEELER NENANA DEDICATION CEREMONY

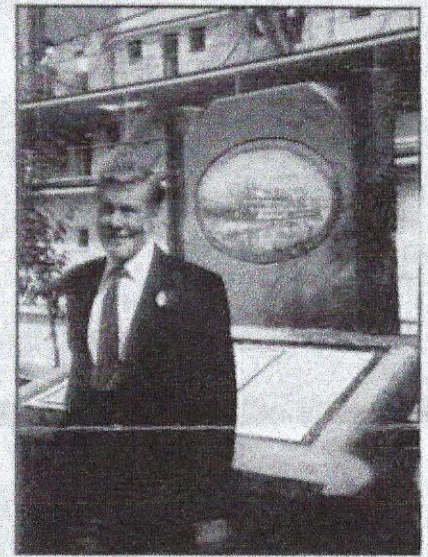
By Bill Cogbill

Three years ago, on August 6, 1989, I was present at a public presentation ceremony at Alaskaland, Fairbanks. It marked the second year of a five-year effort to restore the sternwheeler Nenana.

On 12 July, 1992, I was part of a crowd of about 2,000 people gathered at Alaskaland to commemorate the completion of restoration of the SS Nenana, the last of some 250 to 300 steamers which operated on the Yukon River and its tributaries between 1869 and 1955.

This was certainly a proud day for me. I was on the initial voyage of the SS Nenana in 1933 and my first job in 1939, at age 16, was on a steamboat plying between Nenana and Dawson City in Canada's Yukon Territory. Now, this "Proud Queen of the Yukon," symbol of a great era in Alaska history, stands as a link and a visible reminder to all Alaskans and our visiting tourists.

A highlight of the two-hour ceremony on July 12 was the presentation of a bronze National Historic Landmark plaque to four former officers of the SS Nenana— (Continued)



Jack Williams, SS Nenana Dedication, July 12, 1992

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
<input type="checkbox"/> Non-Profit	\$ 25.00	<input type="checkbox"/> Benefactor	\$ 500.00 & above

(federal, state, and municipal agencies included)

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"/> Fund Raising | <input type="checkbox"/> Membership | <input type="checkbox"/> Legislation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Public Relations | <input type="checkbox"/> Projects & Issues |

NAME _____ PHONE w. _____ h. _____

ADDRESS _____

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

Captain Howard Adams, Dick Glegg, Fred Hoefler and Jack Anderson. The plaque was presented by the National Park Service, represented by Ted Birkedal. It was then installed on a special dedication monument next to the SS Nenana and was unveiled during the afternoon.

AAHP salutes the driving force behind this \$1.6 million restoration, Jack Williams of the Fairbanks Historical Preservation Foundation, for the outstanding hands-on restoration task performed during this five-year period. The SS Nenana was on AAHP's first list of Alaska's most endangered facilities and we are delighted to have contributed to the awareness of this project and its removal from our list.

The steamboat era began when the first vessel entered the Yukon River on an upstream trip to Fort Yukon on 4 July, 1869 and ended when the SS Nenana made her final voyage from Nenana to Fairbanks in 1957. Today, the SS Nenana, believed to be the largest steamboat ever built, symbolizes that yesteryear era for thousands of visitors to Alaskaland.

AAHP BOARD MEETING

A brief board meeting will follow the AAHP annual picnic to be held on August 8, 1992 at the Gakona Lodge. The board meeting will get underway at about 2 pm. Lizbeth Henning, Assistant Director of the Western Region Office of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, will also attend.

Agenda items for the board meeting are:

- AAHP Brochure
- Discussion of a Tax Incentive Workshop
- Committee Reports

A reminder to Committee chairs. Please bring or submit your Committee report worksheets.

AAHP ANNUAL PICNIC Saturday, August 8, 1992

This year, AAHP's annual picnic will be held on Saturday, August 8 at the Gakona Lodge, home of AAHP Vice President, Jerry Strang. The picnic is scheduled to get underway at Noon, to be followed by a brief board meeting at about 2 pm.

The picnic promises to be a memorable event. Jerry Strang has volunteered to provide the food which he says will feature caribou burgers! Bring your family and friends. Let's make it a memorable weekend.

To reach the Gakona Lodge, take the Glenn Highway past Glennallen to its junction with the Tok Cut-off at Gulkana. Then, take a right onto Highway 1 at Gakona. The total distance from Anchorage is almost 200 miles.

Overnight accommodations are available at the Gakona Lodge. Contact Jerry Strang at 822-3482 for reservations. The lodge is an attractive log roadhouse, the oldest portion of which dates back to 1902. It is on the National Register of Historic Places and was featured in the November 1989 AAHP newsletter.

For those interested, side trips are also available. You might consider taking a flight from Gakona to Kennicott Mine. Or, you could take a trip up the Tok Cut-Off to the ALCAN Highway which is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year.

MEMBERSHIP REMINDER

DID YOU FORGET TO RENEW? Please! Now that we've reminded you, prompt payment of your dues would be appreciated. Note mailing label on this newsletter — if there is not a "92" after your name, it means you have not paid your 1992 dues.

THE ALASKA ASSOCIATION
Old City Hall 524 West 4th Avenue, Suite 203
Anchorage, Alaska 99501
FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Nonprofit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Anchorage, Ak.
Permit No.587

THOUGHTS FROM THE PRESIDENT'S CHAIR

By Rolfe Buzzell

The New Year promises new opportunities and challenges for historic preservation in Alaska in 1991. This past winter also saw a great deal of activity. The following is a summary of major developments at AAHP during the past three months.

ANNUAL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

AAHP held its annual meeting in Anchorage on December 2 in conjunction with the annual meetings of the Alaska Historical Society, Museums Alaska and the Cook Inlet Historical Society. The symposium involving the four organizations provided new opportunities for networking and an increased level of exposure for AAHP.

Three speakers were featured as part of AAHP's annual meeting activities. Photographer Gib Whitehead gave a fascinating multimedia presentation on "Memories of McCarthy and Kennebecot" during the morning brunch session. More than 70 people attended. During the afternoon session, two professional engineers with strong interests in historic preservation made presentations relating the conference theme of "Science and Technology in Alaska's Past" to the built environment. Lyle Perrigo spoke on the need to acquire scientific and technological information as part of the preservation process. Ted Trueblood spoke on cost-effective methods of rehabilitating historic structures in Alaska.

During AAHP's annual business meeting, a slate of new board members was elected by the membership. The number of board members was reduced from 24 to 13 to facilitate establishing a quorum at board meetings. Board members elected for one year terms were Greg Curney, Frank Norris, Gillian Smythe and Jerry Strang. Members elected for two year terms were Janet McCabe, Russ Sackett, Jack Sinclair and Peg Stout, while those elected to three year terms were Donna Lane, Rolfe Buzzell, Bill Coghill, Kate Lidfors and Mike Jungreis.

NEW OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS FOR 1991

Immediately after the December 2nd annual meeting, the new board of directors met to elect officers and committee chairs for the coming year. The new officers elected for 1991 are President Rolfe Buzzell, Vice President Donna Lane, Executive Director Bill Coghill, Secretary Kate Lidfors and Treasurer Frank Norris.

Committee chairs for 1991 are Peg Stout (Education), Jack Sinclair (Membership), Russ Sackett (Projects and Issues), Michael Jungreis (Fund Raising), Janet McCabe (Legislation), Greg Curney (Public Relations), Gillian Smythe (Newsletter Coordinator) and Donna Lane (Nominating). Committee chairs are actively recruiting AAHP members who are interested in serving as committee members. Serving on a committee is one of the best opportunities to become actively involved in your Statewide historic preservation organization. Join us!!

ANNUAL BOARD TRAINING SESSION

On January 19, 1991, the AAHP's board of directors held its annual training and goal setting meeting in Anchorage. Lisbeth Henning of the Western Regional Office of the National Trust for Historic Preservation served as facilitator. After reviewing the previous year's goals and accomplishments, board members set about the task of establishing objectives for 1991.

AAHP's objectives for 1991 include: 1) securing funds from the Legislature for matching grants for the restoration of historic structures; 2) obtaining adequate funding from the Legislature for the State Office of History and Archeology; 3) identifying and

publicizing a list of the most endangered historic sites and structures in Alaska; 4) supporting efforts to stabilize and preserve Kennebecot; 5) assisting the Icon Preservation Project in its ongoing efforts to record Russian Orthodox churches and their icons; and 6) providing assistance to Alaska communities in addressing historic preservation issues.

Objectives for AAHP's organizational development in 1991 include: 1) design and production of a brochure; 2) establishment of a board of advisors; 3) doubling the size of AAHP's paid membership; and 4) laying the groundwork for an endowment campaign which would begin in 1992. AAHP committees will be further refining specific objectives and time lines for the completion of these and other objectives during the coming months.

1991 will be an exciting and challenging year for historic preservation in Alaska. I invite each of you to roll up your sleeves and become actively involved in the preservation of Alaska's heritage resources, whether that be in your local community or at the Statewide level. Only through commitment, networking and cooperative efforts will we be able to preserve the most significant sites and structures from Alaska's past. Preservation of the built environment provides a vital link and visible reminder of the past, emphasizing the continuity and diversity of Alaska.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION WEEK, MAY 12-18

The week of May 12-18 is observed as "Historic Preservation Week" throughout the country. This year's theme is "Celebrate your Heritage", a challenge to proudly display each community's history. This year's celebration promotes the 25th anniversary of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 which initiated the National Register of Historic Places. It also promotes the 75th anniversary of the U.S. National Park Service.

Now is the time to begin organizing and planning your community's observance of National Historic Preservation Week. For additional information and ideas, contact AAHP. Posters are available for \$9.50 each from the National Trust, Office of Communications, 1785 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C., 20036 or you can call (202) 673-4141. You should order the posters now in order to receive them in time for Preservation Week.

AAHP EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 1991

OFFICERS:

Executive Director: Bill Coghill
President: Rolfe Buzzell
Vice President: Donna Lane
Secretary: Kate Lidfors
Treasurer: Frank Norris

COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS:

Education: Peg Stout
Fund Raising: Mike Jungreis
Legislation: Janet McCabe
Membership: Jack Sinclair
Nominating: Donna Lane
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.