

THE ALASKA ASSOCIATION FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

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

MAY 1992

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AAHP'S TEN MOST ENDANGERED HISTORIC PROPERTIES LIST, 1992

By Russ Sackett

Each year, more historic properties in Alaska are threatened by neglect and/or development pressures. Preservation of these non-renewable resources and education of the public as to their importance are primary goals of AAHP. To help promote public awareness, AAHP lists what it considers to be the State's ten most endangered historic properties each year during Preservation Week.

In 1991, AAHP identified Alaska's ten most endangered historic properties for the first time. Seven of the original ten remain on the 1992 list. Three — the Fourth Avenue Theater in Anchorage, the sternwheeler *Nenana* in Fairbanks, and the Holy Assumption Orthodox Church in Kenai — are no longer considered endangered due to actions taken during the past year.

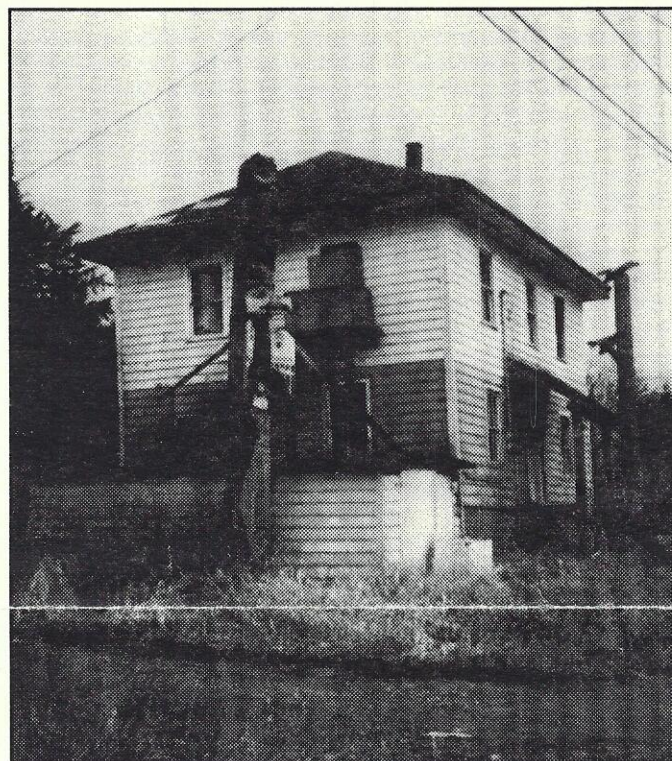
The Fourth Avenue Theater has been purchased by a private firm and has undergone extensive rehabilitation which has preserved its architectural integrity. The building should be open to the public in late May 1992. Extensive restoration efforts on the sternwheeler *Nenana* are almost complete. Restored as a museum, National Landmark dedication ceremonies for the vessel are scheduled for July 12, 1992. Finally, the Kenai Historical Society donated funds in 1991 to the Holy Assumption Orthodox Church for much needed repairs.

The ten Alaska historic properties identified as the most endangered in 1992 are representative of many properties throughout the State which are threatened to some degree. They are listed here to focus attention on the plight of our historic resources. It is hoped that the general public will become more aware of our heritage at risk and actively voice support for its preservation.

The following 1992 "ten most endangered" historic properties are listed below in alphabetical order.

Arctic Village Mission Church, Arctic Village

The Episcopal church in Arctic Village appears for the second time on AAHP's "ten most endangered" list. This log church was built in 1916 or 1917. Its significance is based on its



Chief Kashakes House, Saxman

association with Albert Tritt and on its architecture. A brief history of the church was presented in AAHP's November 1991 newsletter. No actions have been taken during the past year to preserve the church which is endangered by neglect.

Building 29, Sitka

Sitka's Building 29 also appears on AAHP's "ten most endangered" list for the second time. This structure is believed to have been built around 1850 and probably served as a residence for Russian-American Company employees. It is the only remaining Russian-American Company building in Sitka. Building 29 was described in AAHP's February 1992 newsletter and is endangered by structural deterioration and by possible remodeling or demolition.

NEW AAHP LOGO

With this issue, AAHP is officially unveiling its handsome new logo designed by well known Alaska commercial artist, Bill Devine. Bill donated many hours of his time developing alternate logo formats for review by the AAHP board and his efforts are sincerely appreciated.

Bill Devine has been in Alaska about 23 years. After a military career that spanned 3 years in the Army and 21 years in the Air Force, Bill entered civilian life and became a full-time commercial artist. Today, his designs are featured on a wide variety of Alaska tourist items, ranging from refrigerator magnets to jewelry and mugs. He also developed the concept for the dog statue at 4th and D in Anchorage, the starting line for the Fur Rendezvous. Over the years, Bill has generously donated his time to design logos and insignia for other organizations as well as AAHP.

AAHP's new logo features typical historic Alaska structures, including a Russian Orthodox church, a tribal house, a log cabin, a food cache, a country store and a mining complex. AAHP is very pleased with the results of Bill Devine's work and wishes to thank him publicly for donating his time and effort.

Chief Kashakes House, Saxman

Chief Kashakes House appears for the first time on AAHP's "ten most endangered" list. This Tlingit clan house was constructed in about 1889. It represents a Tlingit adaptation of a turn of the century balloon framed house. The property also includes two totem poles and a cannon. Part of the building's interior and roof were damaged by a small fire and the building has stood empty for a number of years. Restoration is urgently needed. Otherwise, the structure will soon be beyond repair. The family is interested in restoration but needs assistance in the form of grants or loans. The building is being considered for National Register status.

Eagle Historic District, Eagle

Eagle Historic District appears for the second time on AAHP's "ten most endangered" list. It was described in AAHP's February 1992 newsletter. The historic district continues to be endangered by bank erosion along the Yukon River. In the summer of 1991, local attempts at riverbank stabilization were made, including placing culverts to direct spring water from beneath the community to the river. The Eagle Historic Society is attempting to obtain additional funding to complete bank stabilization work.

Fairbanks Exploration Company Complex, Fairbanks

This complex was built in Fairbanks in the 1920's by the U.S. Smelting, Refining and Mining Company as support for extensive gold dredging operations in Interior Alaska by its subsidiary, the Fairbanks Exploration Company. It includes administrative offices, retort facilities, machine shops, a blacksmith shop, coal storage facilities, auto repair facilities, barracks, numerous warehouses and exterior storage racks, plus a residential area. The complex was described in AAHP's November 1991 newsletter. It has been deemed eligible for the National Register.

Today, the complex is beginning to deteriorate due to a lack of maintenance and development pressures. The Fairbanks Historic Preservation Foundation is attempting to raise funds to purchase the property. This is the second year that the complex has appeared on AAHP's "ten most endangered" list.

Holy Ascension Orthodox Church, Unalaska

Unalaska's Holy Ascension Orthodox Church is a wood frame cruciform plan building dating from 1895. The site is associated with Ivan Veniaminov (St. Innocent), a missionary at Unalaska for ten years and, later, Alaska's first resident Orthodox bishop. The church is an outstanding example of the cruciform architectural style, with three altars. It is the oldest church of this type in Alaska and is an important legacy from the Russian era. Today, the church is endangered by age, deterioration and a lack of maintenance. This is the second year that the Holy Ascension Orthodox Church has appeared on AAHP's "ten most endangered" list.

Kennicott Mine Complex, Kennicott

The Kennicott Mine was Alaska's largest hardrock mining operation. Development began in 1899 and production continued until 1938. Today, there are some 75 extant features forming the complex which is endangered due to neglect since its abandonment. The Kennicott Mine appears for the second time on AAHP's "ten most endangered" list.

In 1991, the State Legislature appropriated \$200,000 for emergency stabilization of the main mine buildings. This past winter, the U.S. Congress appropriated a further \$376,000 to continue emergency stabilization efforts. When these efforts are completed, the continued existence of the complex should be assured until more permanent restoration efforts can be undertaken.

Lacey Street Theater, Fairbanks

The Lacey Street Theater was built by Austin E. "Cap" Lathrop in 1939. This art deco theater is listed on the National Register and was designed by B. Marcus Pritica, a prominent Seattle architect. It is one of only three buildings in this architectural style remaining in Fairbanks and, at the time it was built, rivaled any theater west of the Mississippi. The original Filipino mahogany

interior of the theater was destroyed in January 1966 but the building exterior still maintains its historic art deco integrity.

The theater has stood empty since 1979. It suffers from neglect and needs major rehabilitation. The Fairbanks Development Authority recently acquired the building and is attempting to obtain volunteer labor for its rehabilitation or to identify an entity to enter into a long term lease.

Old Main School, Fairbanks

Fairbanks' Old Main School was built in 1933-34. It is an imposing three story concrete art deco structure with a central section and north and south wings. When it was built, Old Main School was the most modern school in the Territory. It represented a conscious effort on the part of Fairbanks citizens to change the temporary, waterfront town character of their community to a more progressive, permanent city landscape.

Old Main School appears on AAHP's "ten most endangered" list for the first time in 1992. Owned by the City of Fairbanks, its fate is presently uncertain. The building contains hazardous materials and does not meet current building codes. Plans for moving the City Police Department and the City government into the building are being discussed. The school is on the National Register.



Old Main School, Fairbanks

AAHP EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 1992

Officers

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

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- 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

St. Joseph's Catholic Church, Nome

Old St. Joseph's Catholic Church was constructed in 1901 in the Gothic architectural style after a design by Seattle architect J.B. Randell. In its day, the church was the one monumental piece of architecture in the Nome region and is the only church of its type which has survived from the pre-1930's era. The church saw continued use until the mid-1940's. However, after a new church was built in 1945, St. Joseph's was sold to the U.S. Smelting, Refining and Mining Company and was moved in 1946. It has been used as a warehouse ever since.

Today, St. Joseph's future is in question. It receives minimal maintenance. Furthermore, it has been on a temporary foundation since 1946 and is beginning to develop structural problems. This is the second year that St. Joseph's has appeared on AAHP's "ten most endangered" list. A more detailed history of the church appeared in the August 1991 AAHP newsletter.

REPORT FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

by Bill Cogbill

This year, your AAHP Board and officers are attaining their goals and objectives at a rewarding pace.

This newsletter launches our exciting new logo on its masthead and also features AAHP's 1992 list of Alaska's ten most endangered historic properties. AAHP was greatly encouraged by the increased public awareness created by our first list in 1991. We plan to continue nominating Alaska's ten most endangered historic properties each year during Preservation Week.

In December 1991, the AAHP board met with Kathryn Burns, Director of the Western Regional Office of the National Trust for Historic Preservation, primarily to develop realistic goals and objectives for 1992. The real work of AAHP centers on the effectiveness of our six committees plus the newsletter and nominating areas. I am pleased to report that all committee chairs are actively pursuing the objectives set and are submitting timely reports.

AAHP's first ever informational brochure is now in the final production stages. In addition to text, it includes representative pictures of Alaska historic structures plus a membership insert.

Besides establishing goals and objectives, AAHP set a 1992 focus on "Bricks and Mortar," a state and private matching fund program designed to assist property owners to repair, stabilize and/or restore historic structures. Under the guidance of legislative chairperson, Janet McCabe, letters supporting this program were sent to all legislators and several key state officials. Personal visits were also made. We achieved very positive reactions but, recognizing the State's severe budget crunch, are not optimistic about State funding support this year.

At its annual meeting, AAHP added a 15-member Advisory Board to obtain wider statewide input from individuals with expertise and a commitment to historic preservation. We have now completed nominations to the Advisory Board through the addition of Robert Charlie and Dinah Larsen of Fairbanks and Jana Harcharek of Barrow.

In the membership area, we currently have 153 paid 1992 members, 40 ahead of this time last year, and we are well on our way to a record goal of 200. This is personally rewarding. Also, the dollar amount is about 25 percent ahead of the total for 1991. Please pay your dues if you haven't already done so.

Several historic milestones are scheduled this year. The Alaska Highway, Rendezvous '92 plans many events to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the ALCAN. Also scheduled is Unalaska's June 3-4 commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the bombing of Dutch Harbor. Of special interest, since the sternwheeler Nenana located at Alaskaland in Fairbanks was on AAHP's 1991 most endangered list, is the vessel's scheduled 12 July dedication as a National Landmark. (I was on the maiden voyage of the SS Nenana in 1933).

—continued on next page

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.

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

AAHP's annual picnic and board meeting has been set for Sunday, 8 August. It will be hosted by Board member Jerry Strang, owner of the Gakona Lodge which is on the National Register. Mark your calendars and plan to join us. Some of us hope to also take a side trip north to mark the 50th anniversary of the Alaska Highway and, possibly, also to the historic Kennicott Mine.

Finally, I encourage you to remember National Historic Preservation Week (May 10-16). The 1992 theme is "Preservation Brings History to Life!" AAHP has provided the 1992 posters, along with Preservation Week suggestions, to all eight Certified Local Governments (CLG's) from Ketchikan to Barrow.

I believe your AAHP officers, committee chairs and Board members, all of whom are volunteers, are enthusiastically working for your association. We sincerely appreciate your support.

PRESERVATION WEEK, MAY 10 - 16, 1992

Anchorage Historic Properties will hold its annual membership meeting on Monday, May 11. At that meeting, annual preservation awards will be announced. In addition, special tours of the Oscar Anderson house for schoolchildren will begin during Preservation Week and will continue through the 21st of May.

The **City of Fairbanks and the Fairbanks North Star Borough Joint Commission on Historic Preservation** will issue a press release announcing Preservation Week. Mayors of both local governments will also issue a proclamation. The **Fairbanks Historic Preservation Foundation** will continue working on restoration of the sternwheeler Nenana, scheduled to be dedicated as a National Landmark on July 12.

The **City and Borough of Juneau, Community Development Department** plans to have a window display in a downtown store which features the Preservation Week poster and historic preservation documents produced by the Department.

The **Matanuska-Susitna Borough** has distributed Preservation Week posters to borough and city libraries. In addition, space has been reserved in Wasilla's Cottonwood Creek Mall during Preservation Week for displays by two 4th grade classes, the Palmer Chamber of Commerce and the Wasilla Museum. Finally, a bowl-a-thon for the rehabilitation of Palmer's Mat-Maid complex will be held on May 16 at the Valley Lanes.

The **City of Seward** is in the process of becoming a Certified Local Government (CLG). On May 12, a public meeting has been scheduled to familiarize the community with the CLG program and the availability of historic preservation grants.

The **Unalaska Historic Preservation Commission** has an article in the "Aleutian Eagle" announcing Preservation Week and highlighting Unalaska's preservation efforts. These include the Holy Ascension Cathedral/Bishop's House restoration project; preservation of the Henry Swanson House for use as a new visitor center; and work on adapting World War II buildings to accommodate a World War II interpretive center.

CORRECTIONS

The February newsletter incorrectly identified the Kenai Holy Assumption Orthodox Church as one of Alaska's two oldest standing Orthodox churches. While the Kenai church was originally built in 1849, it subsequently burned and was not reconstructed until 1895. Alaska's oldest standing Orthodox church is the Ascension of Our Lord Chapel, built in 1888 at Karluk on Kodiak Island.

In the February newsletter, we inadvertently listed Karen Stanley as an Advisory Board member. She is a newly elected 1992 member of our regular Board of Directors.

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