

THE ALASKA ASSOCIATION FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

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

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RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH OF ST. GEORGE THE VICTORIOUS

by Mary C. Schultheis

The Pribilof Islands are remote volcanic specks in the Bering Sea, about 800 miles southwest of Anchorage. The Islands were unpopulated before the turn of the nineteenth century when the Russian American Company first brought Aleuts from Unalaska and Atka to harvest fur seals and to process their pelts. Only the two main islands, St. Paul and St. George, are inhabited.

The Russian Orthodox Church has been an important factor in the lives of Pribilof Islanders for more than one hundred and fifty years. On St. George, the island's first chapel was dedicated to the Great Martyr St. George in 1833. It was built from driftwood by the Russian American Company on a hill overlooking the Bering Sea. That chapel was replaced in 1875 by a much larger frame structure built on the same site.

St. George's third Russian Orthodox church, the Church of the Holy Great Martyr George the Victorious, was built by parishioners with local funds and private subscriptions and was consecrated in May 1936. Like its predecessor, it is also located on the original chapel site. The altar of the original chapel is believed to be under the porch of the present church, while a cross on the north side marks the site of the 1875 structure. The church was placed on the National Register in June, 1980.

The present Church of St. George the Victorious is a handsome, wood frame structure with distinctive Gothic arched, cathedral windows. Another unusual feature is the porch which has an entry mirroring the shape of the cupola.

The barrel design of the church interior was reportedly the inspiration of a carpenter employed on the Island during the 1930's by the U.S. government. However, many of the church's interior furnishings date back to the 1880's and 1890's. Most icons and an iconostasis were purchased for the previous church in the early 1880's. The work of local craftsmen, including much of the carving, is also evident in the interior. Several early priests are buried either in the church yard or in the cemetery southeast of town.

In general, the church has been well maintained. Recently, in 1986, the church cupola was replaced and sheathed with copper. However, some long term damage was sustained during World War II and has resulted in water seepage into the superstructure, especially the area under the bell tower. As a result, some wall boards and beams will eventually need to be replaced.

Unlike many articles recently featured in this newsletter, the Church of St. George the Victorious is not considered to be an endangered structure. The church is, nevertheless, an important remaining fragment of our Russian American heritage.



Church of St. George the Victorious

Photo: Kretal/Merculief

RESTORATION PROGRESS IN PALMER

by Gillian Smythe

An important building remaining from Palmer's Colony days, the old dormitory building, is being restored. The three-story dormitory dates from the winter of 1935 when it was built to house nurses, teachers, secretaries and other skilled single workers recruited to help the colonists. The building originally had 24 to 30 single rooms, with attic residents reportedly having to use bathrooms on the second floor. It is located next to the old school, now used as administrative offices for the Matanuska-Susitna Borough.

In recent years, the building was owned by the Salvation Army. However, after a fire, the structure was boarded up and remained vacant for much of the past decade. The dorm was included as part of a National Historic District in 1991. The same District includes other buildings which are still vacant, such as the Matanuska Maid complex and the old pharmacy building.

Janet Kincaid, the new owner of the old dormitory, has embarked on a major restoration effort, which she estimates will cost in excess of \$300,000. Aluminum siding has been removed, revealing the building's wooden exterior for the first time in years. Windows have been replaced and are now similar to those in the original building. The interior has been almost completely gutted.

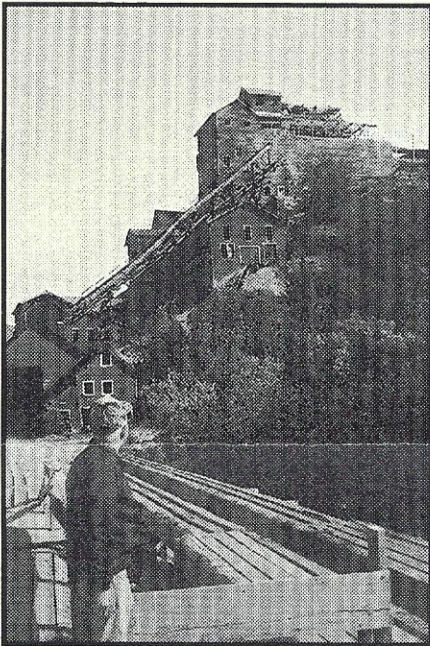
Janet has examined old photographs to make sure that the restoration work matches the original structure as much as possible. She hopes to have the building ready for occupancy this August, in time for the Alaska State Fair.

KENNICOTT STABILIZATION WORK CONTINUES

by Bill Coghill

I spent three delightful and adventurous days at Kennicott this June. The accompanying photo was taken on June 11 and shows me watching stabilization work underway on the fourteen-story Kennicott Mill Building. Only a portion of the top roof of the Mill Building was completed then but, by the end of summer, the entire top roof will be in place. This summer marks the last phase of the Friends of Kennicott's three-year emergency stabilization program. Friends was successful in raising \$576,000 from state and federal sources for the project.

Past AAHP newsletters have included several articles on the Kennicott Mine. For two years, it was included on our "Ten Most



*Kennicott,
June 1993*

*Photo:
Bill Coghill*

Endangered" list and it has also appeared on the national "Endangered" list. Kennicott was once one of the world's largest and richest copper mines but it was abandoned in 1938. The complex has been a National Historic Landmark since 1986 and is located on private land within Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve, the nation's largest national park. Stabilization of the major structures of the mine complex is considered vital to the National Park Service's future restoration plans.

I certainly recommend that readers visit Kennicott, as well as nearby McCarthy. Rich Kirkwood, a former AAHP board member, operates the Glacier Lodge at Kennicott. As well as great food and lodging, the Lodge offers visitors a panoramic view of the area. If you do plan to go though, make reservations. As many as 40,000 visitors are expected this year to the Kennicott-McCarthy area.

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS AND GOVERNMENT AGENCY MEMBERS

The following non-profit organizations and government agencies are members of AAHP. As we keep telling you, membership dues play a vital role in helping AAHP to carry out its functions. Thank you very much for your continued support. We

certainly appreciate it. Also, if you have suggestions for improving our newsletter or wish to submit articles, we would definitely like to hear from you.

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS AND GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

- Alaska Aviation Heritage Museum, Anchorage
- Alaska State Library, Juneau
- Alaska State Museum, Juneau
- Alaska State Division of Tourism, Juneau
- Anchorage Historic Properties, Inc., Anchorage
- Chilkat Valley Historical Society, Haines
- City and Borough of Juneau,
 - Community Development Dept., Juneau
- City of Seward, Seward
- City of Unalaska Historic
 - Preservation Commission, Unalaska
- Copper Valley Historical Society, Copper Center
- Fairbanks Historical Preservation Foundation, Fairbanks
- Gastineau Channel Historical Society, Juneau
- Hope and Sunrise Historical Society, Hope
- Inupiat History, Language and Culture, Barrow
- Kenai Historical Society, Kenai
- Kodiak Historical Society, Kodiak
- Museum of Alaska Transportation and Industry, Wasilla
- NANA Museum of the Arctic, Kotzebue
- National Bank of Alaska Heritage Museum, Anchorage
- Page Museum, Wasilla
- Russian Orthodox Diocese of Sitka and Alaska, Kodiak
- Sitka Historical Society, Sitka
- Skagway Historic Museum, Trail of '98, Skagway
- Soldotna Historical Society & Museum, Soldotna
- Talkeetna Historical Society, Talkeetna
- Tanana-Yukon Historical Society, Fairbanks
- U.S. National Park Service, Cultural Resources, Anchorage

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- 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 CHURCH AND SULLIVAN ROADHOUSE UPDATES

by Russ Sackett

Grants have recently been awarded for preservation feasibility studies for old St. Joseph's Catholic Church in Nome and the Sullivan Roadhouse on Fort Greeley.

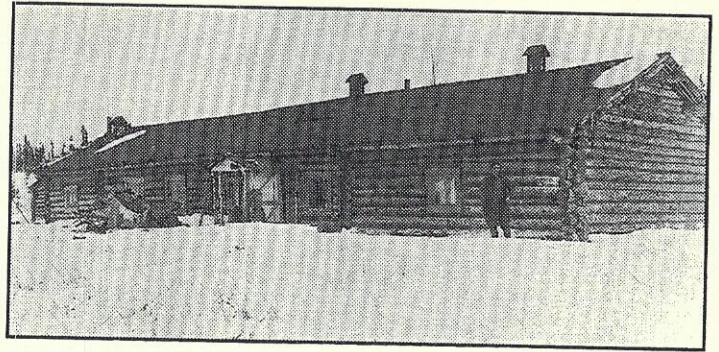
St. Joseph's Catholic Church, Nome

The National Trust for Historic Preservation has awarded the City of Nome a small grant for a feasibility study to determine if the old St. Joseph's Catholic Church can be restored. This building dates from 1901 and remained in use as a church until 1945. It has been identified by AAHP for the past three years as one of Alaska's ten most endangered structures.

The City of Nome will soon own the old church and plans to move it to a site near its original historic location. ECI/Hyer has been contracted to undertake the architectural/structural assessment and feasibility study. In addition, the University of Alaska's School of Management has been retained to perform an economic feasibility study for the restoration and potential future uses of the church. The final report will be used to help obtain grant funds for the church's restoration.

Sullivan Roadhouse, Fort Greeley

Sullivan Roadhouse is the subject of a Department of Defense Legacy Grant to study the feasibility of the building's relocation to Delta Junction and its restoration. John E. Sullivan and his wife constructed the roadhouse in 1907-08 on the Donnelly-Washburn Cut-off Sled Trail, a winter segment of the Valdez-Fairbanks Trail. The roadhouse was operated until 1924 when the railroad from Seward to Fairbanks was completed, and the building was then occupied as a residence until the 1930's. Today, it sits adjacent to the Fort Greeley bombing range.



Sullivan Roadhouse, 1930's

Photo: Slim Moore collection

The Sullivan Roadhouse study is being undertaken under an arrangement among the Bureau of Land Management, the Corps of Engineers, the Delta Chamber of Commerce and the State Office of History and Archaeology. Based on the outcome of the study, a Legacy grant may be available next summer to relocate and restore the roadhouse.

MEMBERSHIP REMINDER

HAVE YOU RENEWED YOUR MEMBERSHIP IN AAHP?

Check your mailing label. If there is not a "93" after your name, you have not yet paid your 1993 dues. Prompt payment would be appreciated. We need your support. Thank you.

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 |
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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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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 ANNUAL PICNIC

Saturday, August 14, 1993

This year, AAHP's annual picnic will be held on Saturday, August 14 in Talkeetna. The picnic is scheduled to get underway at 1 pm, to be followed by a brief board meeting at around 3 pm.

As always, the AAHP picnic is expected to be a fun event. AAHP will provide hamburgers and "all the fixin's." The picnic will be held on the west side of the Talkeetna museum, next to the ballfield. Bring your family and friends.

Talkeetna is an attractive "end of the road" town which was established in 1909 or 1910. It has a fascinating past centered around mining and railroad operations. The town also has a rich legacy of pioneer aviators and has a long association with mountaineering expeditions to Mt. McKinley.

Talkeetna's past lives on in the present. Well known historic structures include the Fairview Inn, the B & K Trading Post, the Talkeetna Roadhouse and the museum. Much of the downtown area was included within a National Historic District in April 1993.

The museum is operated by the Talkeetna Historical Society, an AAHP member. The building was originally a schoolhouse built in 1936 and now houses an extensive collection of local exhibits. The former Talkeetna Section House and Railroad Depot buildings have been moved adjacent to the museum and have been restored by the Talkeetna Historical Society.

A Talkeetna walking tour brochure is available at the museum. For the more adventurous, flightseeing trips to Mt. McKinley are available from local air taxi services. Several flight options are available, including glacier landings.

Hope to see you there.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Historic Ketchikan, a private preservation organization, is planning an "Alaska Heritage Development Conference" for March 24-26, 1994. The conference will be held in Ketchikan's Ted Ferry Convention Center, currently under construction. Sessions will address the economics of historic restoration and why it works; Main Street; and heritage tourism. Successful projects from the Pacific Northwest and Alaska will be used.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation and the State's Office of History and Archaeology have provided some assistance in planning the conference. For additional information, contact Historic Ketchikan, P.O. Box 3364, Ketchikan, AK 99901.

NEW ALASKA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Last month, the nine-member Alaska Historical Commission was named. It constitutes a merger of the former Historical Sites Advisory Committee, the Alaska Historical Commission and the State Board of Geographic Names.

In addition to Lieutenant Governor Jack Coghill and State Historic Preservation Officer Judy Bittner, members of the new Alaska Historical Commission are:

Peter Bowers, Fairbanks
Neva M. Egan, Anchorage
Jennings H. Graham, Ketchikan
Nancy Lesh, Anchorage
Beverly L. Masek, Willow
B.G. Olson, Fairbanks
Elizabeth A. Tower, Anchorage

Four of the members of the Commission are AAHP members. We congratulate all Commission members and wish them well in their important task.

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