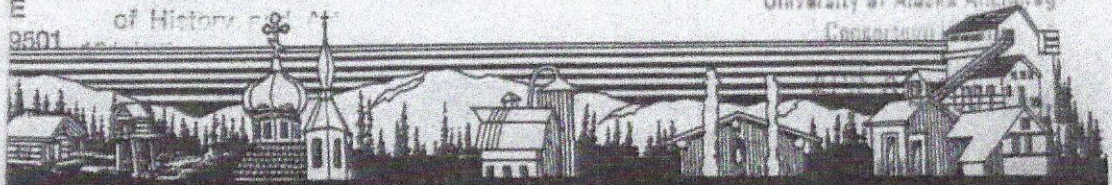


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DECEMBER 1993

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ALEUT CHURCHES IN LINE FOR RESTORATION FUNDS

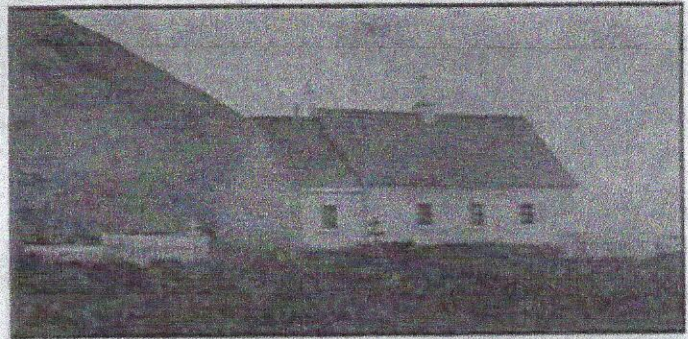
by Barbara Sweetland Smith

Six communities in the Aleutian/Pribilof region may soon become the beneficiaries of substantial funds earmarked for the repair and restoration of their historic churches. The U.S. Senate, before it recessed in November, passed an amendment to the Aleut Restitution Act of 1988, which would make \$4.7 million available to the villages of Akutan, Atka, Nikolski, St. George, St. Paul and Unalaska. The amendment was introduced by Senator Ted Stevens, principal sponsor of the 1988 legislation. The amendment must now be considered by the U.S. House and by Appropriations. If the monies become available, they will constitute one of the largest sums available for Alaska in many years. The churches in each of the six communities were named by the residents as their number one priority for restitution. The Restitution Act was passed in 1988 in recognition of the injustices suffered by Aleuts who were relocated from their island homes and interned at ill-equipped camps in Southeast Alaska for the duration of World War II. More than 10 percent of the Aleut population died in the camps. When the survivors returned home, they found that American troops had been billeted in their homes, that their personal property had been destroyed and sacred objects had been desecrated.

Reports by the Army and Navy inspectors after the War noted that churches had been broken into, even when they were boarded up, and objects left inside had been vandalized. The distinctive "onion" dome of the chapel at Nikolski had been used as target practice, letting water into the sub-roofing and the walls, causing deep rot. Even worse, the U.S. Navy burned the entire village of Atka shortly after the bombing of Dutch Harbor by the Japanese. The church, with its rich collection of liturgical art, was destroyed. The villagers were given no time to save anything.

After the War, villagers attempted to make repairs in order to stem the progress of decay caused by wartime damage. However, materials were scarce; mostly salvaged lumber from abandoned military installations had to be used. Also at that time, the Aleut communities were experiencing unprecedented poverty as jobs were scarce, causing many able-bodied men to leave home in search of work. Furthermore, the subsistence resources had been depleted or destroyed by the military actions around the islands. Atka built a new church on the site of the old, but today it is in the worst shape of all the churches, mainly because it was built with inferior lumber. The community hopes to replace this building.

Elsewhere in the Aleutian Islands, the communities hope to repair and restore their historic churches, most of which were extremely well built of quality materials. All of them are on the



Alexander Nevsky Chapel, Akutan

Photo by Kretal Merculief

National Register of Historic Places. The churches at St. George, St. Paul and Unalaska are National Historic Landmarks.

From 1991 through 1993, the Aleutian/Pribilof Islands Association, a non-profit organization charged with operating health, educational and cultural programs in the region, studied the condition of the six churches. The project was led by Barbara Sweetland Smith, with the assistance of Patricia Petrivelli, whose family is from Atka. It resulted in a report to Congress and the Secretary of the Interior entitled "Making it Right: Restitution for Churches Damaged and Lost During the Aleut Relocation in World War II".

The report contains a structural condition assessment for each church, an assessment which was mandated by the Aleut Restitution Act of 1988 as a condition for the release of any restitution monies for church repair. The language of the 1988 Act set \$1.4 million aside for the church repairs. However, the Aleutian/Pribilof Islands Association study concluded that \$3.9 million was needed, of which \$3.28 million was needed for structural repairs alone. The balance would cover repair of the church furnishings, such as icons and liturgical objects. Senator Stevens' amendment has raised the total needed to \$4.7 million, to allow for the necessary structural and engineering studies and architectural oversight. This change was recommended by the Aleutian/Pribilof Islands Restitution Trust, the body which will guide the restitution work, on the advice of Smith and the consulting architectural firm of ECI/Hyer of Anchorage.

Bryce Klug, the architect with ECI/Hyer who conducted the field assessments, concluded that the structural needs of the churches are great. Many of these conditions date from the vandalism and enforced neglect of the wartime years when the buildings' caretakers were relocated. "Making it Right" notes that:

"Three churches—St. Paul, Unalaska and Akutan, need new foundations. Roof repair is a requirement for all. Floors need extensive repairs at all six churches, due to rotting of the underlying timbers and wall supports. Windows and doors

should be replaced in most of the churches because the frames and sashes have rotted due to extreme weather. The iconostas (a wall across the front of the church, on which icons are displayed) is cracking badly at Nikolski and St. Paul because of deteriorating wall structures; these walls must be stabilized."

The architect also recommended that a number of other improvements be made to the buildings to help prolong their life. He urged that the churches be insulated in order to provide better fuel efficiency and to control wide temperature fluctuations. He also recommended new electrical networks in five of the churches, and life/safety additions to all the churches, including alarms and suppression systems. None of the churches have running water, but several communities expressed a desire for this service in order for them to add a bathroom. If plumbing is installed, it would also be possible to introduce humidity controls, in order to provide better protection to the liturgical art works within the churches.

Regarding historical integrity, the architect noted that the buildings:

"are little changed from their historic appearance before the war. St. Paul, however, has added a mechanical room, which houses a furnace. This room could be removed if a basement is dug...and the furnace relocated. St. Paul also removed the historic, decorative cornices and trim from its exterior during re-siding in the 1980s."

Fortunately, the new siding is over the old. It would be desirable to replace the decorative features and also to return to the original siding, making repairs where needed.

Progress on the restoration of these historic churches now lies with the U.S. House of Representatives and the shepherding of the Amendment by U.S. Congressman Don Young. Public Opinion messages from the Preservation community would be helpful. For information about the status of restoration work, contact Jake Lestenkof, Administrator, Aleutian/Pribilof Island Restitution Trust, 2821 Bailer Hill Road, Friday Harbor, Washington 98250. His telephone number is (206) 378-6321.

BUILDINGS OF ALASKA"

"Buildings of Alaska," by Alison "Kim" Hoagland was published by the Oxford University Press in 1993. It is one of a "Buildings of the United States" series of books sponsored by the Society of Architectural Historians.

In "Buildings of Alaska," Alaska's architecture is traced from the early sod, whalebone and driftwood structures through to the modern glass and metal office towers in downtown Anchorage. The book focuses on the different cultural traditions which have helped shape Alaska's architecture and it also explores how Alaska's buildings reflect attempts to adapt the unique environmental conditions.

Contributions to the State's architectural history of three major cultural groups: Alaska Natives, Russian settlers and Americans from the Lower 48 are examined in six Alaska regions—Southcentral, Southeastern, Interior, Northern, Western, and Southwest Alaska. The range in entries extends from aboriginal structures, Russian Orthodox churches, log roadhouses, false front commercial buildings built during the gold rush era, and concrete Moderne public buildings erected during the Pipeline and oil boom period of the 1970s and 1980s.

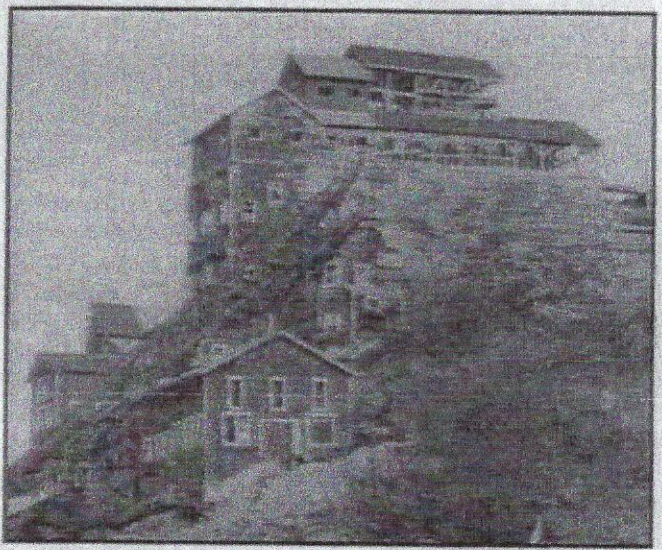
"Buildings of Alaska" contains over 250 photographs, drawings and maps. It is an authoritative reference for anyone interested in Alaska's architectural heritage, as well as being a general source of information for Alaskans and visitors alike.

REPORT FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

by Bill Coghill

As we leave 1993, I want to briefly call attention to some notable milestones reached by AAHP during this past year. AAHP's paid membership is now 220, a new record and 10 percent above last year's goal. AAHP is especially appreciative of your support.

Kennicott is now stabilized, a major achievement during 1993. We have been keeping our readers updated on restoration progress for this historic property which has made AAHP's "Ten Most Endangered" structures list in the past, as well as the National



Kennicott Roof Construction, Fall 1993 Photo by Rich Kirkwood

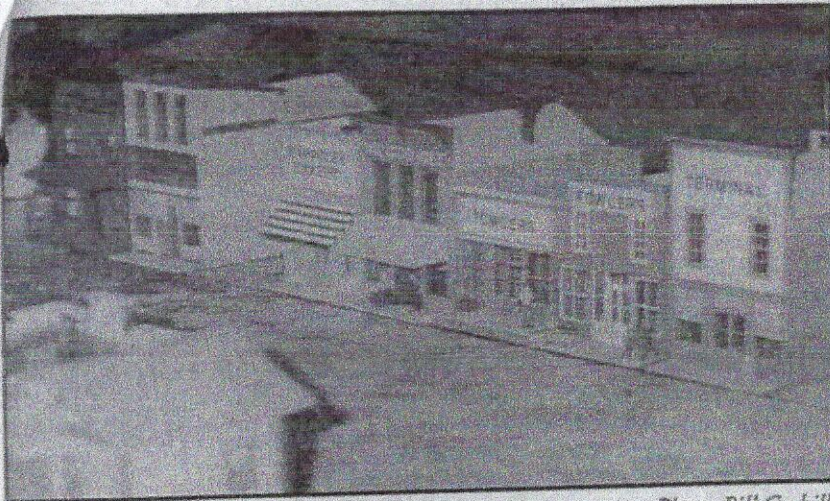
AAHP EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 1993

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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.



Model of Nenana Main Street, 1933

Photo: Bill Coghill

Trust's list. Note the accompanying photograph of Kennicott taken this fall. The roof on the 14-story mill building is now completed in place. The Friends of Kennicott are to be commended for their dedication and we are pleased to report that several AAHP members have also been closely involved in this ambitious project. The Kennicott Copper Corporation is currently removing asbestos and this work is scheduled to be completed in the spring of 1994. Then the way is clear for the U.S. National Park Service to proceed with its rehabilitation program.

The planned rehabilitation of the sternwheeler Nenana, located in Alaskaland in Fairbanks, was finished in 1993. This was an outstanding accomplishment. Plans are now underway to restore the engine room. An interesting feature added on the Nenana in 1993 is a scale model of the City of Nenana as it was in 1933, the year that the sternwheeler was built. The accompanying

photograph, taken in July 1993, shows one block of the main street of Nenana. Of special interest to me is my father's store, "W. A. Coghill," shown in the center of the photograph. My father started this store in 1916 and I lived on the second story of the building for the first 13 years of my life. Sadly, this portion of Nenana was entirely destroyed by a fire in October 1935.

Since our last newsletter, two additional non-profit organizations, the Skagway Public Library and Main Street Fairbanks have become AAHP members. AAHP has also received five new members at the contributor level since our last report. They are Bob and Mary Ellen Mitchell, Chris Campbell, Chuck Hawley, Glen and Esther Chamberlain, and Dennis Freeman. Many thanks for your support.

Finally, I urge our readers to attend AAHP's Annual Meeting, to be held on January 9, as noted elsewhere in this newsletter. An added attraction is Alison "Kim" Hoagland, who will be a featured speaker and will also be autographing her newly published book, "Buildings of Alaska."

ALASKA HERITAGE DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE UPDATE

The "Alaska Heritage Development Conference" scheduled for March 24-26, 1994 in Ketchikan has been postponed. We are advised that this conference will not take place until 1995. We will keep you posted.

MEMBERSHIP

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

MARK YOUR CALENDARS! AAHP ANNUAL MEETING

Pioneer Schoolhouse, 3rd and Eagle, Anchorage,
January 9, 1994, Noon - 2 pm

FEATURED SPEAKERS:

Kay Linton, *President, Anchorage Women's Club,*
Alison K. Hoagland, *author, "Buildings of Alaska,"*

PLUS A SLIDE PRESENTATION OF:
Alaska's Ten Most Endangered Structures, 1993,

Come and join us!

AAHP ANNUAL MEETING DETAILS

AAHP's 1993 annual meeting will be held on January 9, 1994
at the Pioneer Schoolhouse at 439 E. 3rd Avenue (3rd and Eagle).

next to the Alaska Native Hospital. The program will get underway at Noon and will continue until approximately 2 pm.

Featured speakers at the annual meeting will be Kay Linton and Alison "Kim" Hoagland. Kay is President of the Anchorage Women's Club, and she will talk about the restoration of the Pioneer Schoolhouse. Kim Hoagland will review highlights from her newly published book, "Buildings of Alaska." She will also be available to sign copies of her book which may be purchased at the discounted rate of \$35.00 by AAHP members only. If requested, AAHP will mail copies to out-of-town members for \$36.50.

A slide presentation of Alaska's "Ten Most Endangered" structures for 1993 will also be given at the annual meeting. The 1993 list included the following structures: Anchorage City Hall, Anchorage; Ascension of Our Lord Chapel, Karluk; Building 29, Sitka; Carison Home and Fisherman's Co-op, Dillingham; Chief Kashakes House, Saxman; Eagle Historic District, Eagle; Holy Lacey Street Theater, Fairbanks; and St. Joseph's Catholic Church, Nome.

The election of new AAHP Board members for 1994 will follow the main program. Immediately after the close of the annual meeting, a brief AAHP Board meeting will be held to elect officers.

Light refreshments will be served. It promises to be an entertaining and interesting program. We hope that AAHP members and other interested persons will make an effort to attend. See you there!

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