

THE ALASKA ASSOCIATION FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

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

SEPTEMBER 1994

VOL. 13 ISSUE 3

NEW LIFE FOR THE LOUSSAC-SOQN BUILDING

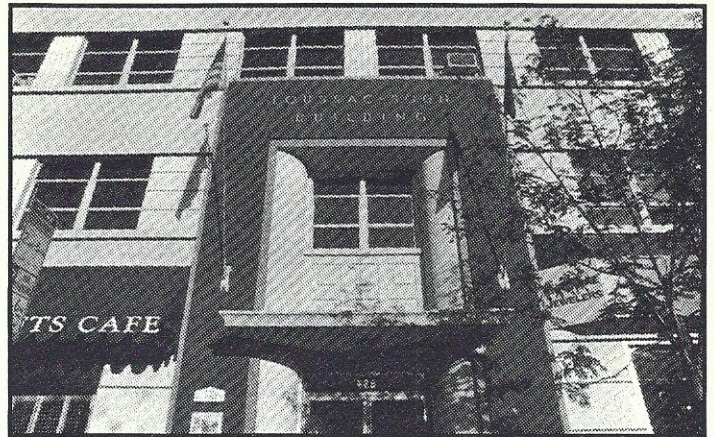
by Gillian Smythe

The Loussac-Sogn Building, located at the corner of 5th Avenue and D Street in downtown Anchorage, has begun a new and exciting chapter of its life. The building was acquired by Anchorage Neighborhood Housing Services in 1992 and was extensively renovated in conformance with National Register of Historic Places standards. Officially reopened in January 1994, the top two floors of this three-story building have been converted to Single Room Occupancy apartments for low income persons, with retail businesses remaining on the ground floor.

Restoration of the Loussac-Sogn Building was undertaken using a variety of creative financial mechanisms. These included a \$1,200,000 loan commitment from the Alaska Housing Finance Corporation and acquisition of the historic facade easement by Anchorage Historic Properties Inc. Anchorage Neighborhood Housing Services was also able to sell its low income tax credits to the National Bank of Alaska as part of the financing package.

The 100 by 140-foot Loussac-Sogn Building was originally constructed in 1947 on what was then the outskirts of Anchorage. It was designed by William A. Manley in the Art Moderne style and was one of Anchorage's early second generation buildings. (These buildings were larger and characterized by more permanent construction than the earlier, wood frame structures.) Other prominent second generation structures in Anchorage included City Hall (1936), Central Grade School (1938), Old Providence Hospital (1938) and the Federal Building (1939).

The Art Moderne architectural style was popular elsewhere in the U.S. between 1930 and 1945, but the Loussac-Sogn Building was only the second Anchorage structure using this style. (The first was the Federal Building). Rounded corners are typical of Art Moderne, and the two-story high entry on D Street utilizes this design detail. Art Moderne elements are also seen in the use of low relief horizontal lines between string courses, creating an effect of softened corners. The same horizontal lines provide a "ribbon of windows" effect typical of Art Moderne, as they tie in with the windows set between the string courses. The flat roof is also typical of this architectural style, as is the smooth wall finish without decorative surface ornamentation. Interior elements of architectural significance are the entrance foyer, stairs and light well. According to Alison K. Hoagland in her 1993 book, — Buildings of Alaska, "the Moderne style, simple and austere, was well



Loussac-Sogn Building

Photo: Clark Mishler

sued for Alaska, where architectural ornamentation was seen as an unnecessary frill."

The Loussac-Sogn Building was originally planned as a one story structure but was expanded to its present three stories during the design and construction phases. When the building was completed, the ground floor housed the medical offices of Dr. Sogn, Anchorage's "baby doctor." The upper two stories were subsequently rented out as offices, including space for architect William A. Manley on the second floor.

Today, the Loussac-Sogn Building is significant both for its Art Moderne architecture and its association with William A. Manley and with its original owners, Zadrich J. Loussac and Dr. Harold Sogn. William Manley designed many other Anchorage buildings, including Grant Hall at Alaska Pacific University, West High School, Ursa Major and Ursa Minor elementary schools, the Simpson and Commerce buildings, and the old YMCA (now occupied by Covenant House).

Z. J. Loussac first moved to Alaska with the gold rushes at the turn of the 20th century and eventually settled in Anchorage in 1916. He operated two drug stores in downtown Anchorage, helped organize the Evan Jones Coal Company, was active in civic affairs and ran a daily newspaper. In 1947, he became Mayor of Anchorage, a post he held for two terms. Z. J. Loussac also established the Loussac Foundation to further social, scientific and cultural activities in the Anchorage area.

Dr. Harold Sogn opened his medical practice in Anchorage in 1940. His clinic on the ground floor of the Loussac-Sogn Building was the first in Anchorage to house a group of medical specialists.

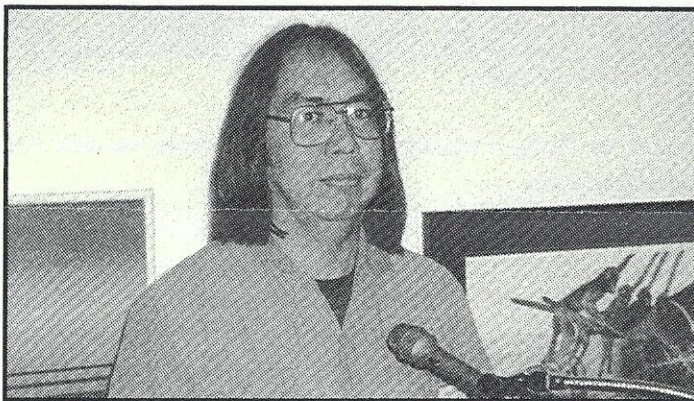
Later, because of ill health, he left that practice and established a separate clinic, also in the Loussac-Sogn Building.

Although the Loussac-Sogn Building was Anchorage's largest commercial building in its heyday, it had fallen on hard times in recent years. The restoration of this structure by Anchorage Neighborhood Housing Services to accommodate 52 Single Room Occupancy apartments, with shops on the ground floor, has breathed much needed new life into one of Anchorage's downtown historic structures.

PROGRESS REPORT FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

by Bill Coghill

1994 has been a very successful year for AAHP. It began with a bang in January, when AAHP held its annual meeting at Anchorage's historic Pioneer Schoolhouse. This was the best attended annual meeting to date, with over 50 people present. The two featured speakers were Alison "Kim" Hoagland and Kay Linton. Kim Hoagland gave a slide show based on structures in her recently



Robert Sam, Sitka Native Brotherhood

Photo: Bill Coghill

published book, "Buildings of Alaska", while Kay Linton described the history of the Pioneer Schoolhouse.

A major objective of AAHP in 1994 was to co-sponsor a preservation-related workshop. This objective was met in May during Preservation Week with a two-day workshop sponsored by the National Park Service, the Alaska Office of History and Archaeology, and AAHP. The theme of the workshop was "Economic Perspectives: Making the Historic Preservation Connection". Seventeen speakers with a combined wealth of personal and professional experience addressed historic preservation issues. The photo above shows Robert Sam of the Sitka Native Brotherhood who spoke on Native cemetery issues.

A total of 92 people attended the first day sessions, well above the 30 to 40 people anticipated. I was especially pleased that people from Nome to Ketchikan were able to attend, as well as Certified Local Government (CLG) representatives. AAHP's Board had authorized the expenditure of \$1,500, which was matched by National Trust funds, and made it possible for eleven participants from outlying areas

of Alaska to attend. Most recipients of AAHP travel assistance have commented on the value of the workshop.



Hope Walking Tour, AAHP Picnic

Photo: Bill Coghill

AAHP's annual picnic is always held outside Anchorage. This year, it was held on June 18 at Hope. Over 50 people attended, more than any previous AAHP picnic. After a delightful barbecue at the McCabe cabin, Anne Miller of Hope conducted a very interesting and informative one-hour historic walking tour of the community. The photo above shows Anne leading us through Hope.

During Preservation Week in May, AAHP announced its annual list of Alaska's "ten most endangered" historic properties and each was described in our June newsletter. This year, AAHP will take a more active role in supporting the rehabilitation of one or more structures on the "ten most endangered" list. At its June 1994 meeting, the AAHP Board approved the expenditure of up to \$3,000 in matching grants for this purpose. Board member Russ Sackett has prepared a

AAHP EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 1994

Officers:

Executive Director:Bill Coghill
 President:Frank Norris
 Vice President:Jack Sinclair
 Secretary:Fran Seager-Boss
 Treasurer:Clyde Courtnage

COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS:

Education:Fran Seager-Boss/Russ Sackett
 Fund Raising:Jerry Strang
 Legislation:Janet McCabe
 Membership:Bill Coghill
 Nominating:Jack Sinclair
 Projects & Issues:Bonnie Houston
 Public Relations:Julie Johnson
 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.

draft "Guideline and Application Form," which the Board reviewed at its September 12 meeting. It is planned that this document will be distributed to the current "ten most endangered" property owners this winter, with an April 1995 deadline for applications, and with awards being made to successful applicants during Preservation Week in May 1995.

Finally, as Chair of the Membership Committee, I want to comment on AAHP membership in 1994. We now have over 250 paid members, about 30 more than last year, our previous best. This is greatly rewarding to me and I thank all of you. I would especially like to thank our "Preservation Champions," those who have joined above the individual or family level. I am also gratified by the expanding number of non-profit organization members from all around Alaska.

AAHP is having a busy and most rewarding year. We sincerely appreciate your support.

PRESERVATION CHAMPIONS

Membership dues are a vital source of revenue for AAHP to carry out its functions and activities. The list below are those individuals and organizations who have joined AAHP or renewed their membership for 1994 above the individual and family level. AAHP is very grateful for your support.

SPONSOR LEVEL \$250

Jennings H. Graham, Ketchikan

FRIEND LEVEL \$100

Judy Bittner, Anchorage; Karl Guercke, Skagway; Jean Jackson, Anchorage; Henry & Lois Munson, Seward; Eva Trautman, Anchorage

CONTRIBUTOR LEVEL

\$50

Bristol Bay Native Corporation, Anchorage; Glen & Esther Chambers, Anchorage; John B. Chenoweth, Juneau; Ethel Clausen, Kenai; Bill & Gerry Coghill, Anchorage; Dick & Barbara Crouch, Anchorage; Coghill's Store, Nenana; Gregory H. Curney, Anchorage; Emily DeForest, Kenai; Don & Loretta Delk, Anchorage; Arthur S. Eash, Anchorage; Robert Gottstein, Anchorage; C. C. Hawley, Anchorage; Lawrence Hibshman, Juneau; Robert Lund, Anchorage; Don Lynch, Anchorage; Wilda Marston, Anchorage; Stephen D. Peters, Ketchikan; Robert & Mildred Renkert, Anchorage; George Schmidt, Anchorage; City of Seward; Barbara S. Smith, Anchorage; Gillian Smythe, Anchorage; Jay W. Snodderly, Ward Cove; Paul M. Spiro, Anchorage

GOVERNMENT AGENCY AND NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION MEMBERS

AAHP is pleased to report that a growing number of government agencies and non-profit organizations have become AAHP members. This group currently includes the following:

Alaska Division of Parks, Juneau; Alaska State Library, Juneau; Alaska State Museum, Juneau; Alaska Transportation and Industry Museum, Wasilla; Anchorage Historic Properties, Anchorage; Bristol Bay Historical Society, Naknek; Copper Valley Historical Society, Copper Center; Cordova Historical Museum, Cordova; Fairbanks Historical Preservation Foundation, Fairbanks; Gastineau Channel Historical Society, Juneau; Hope & Sunrise Historical Society, Hope; Homer Society of Natural History, Homer; City and Borough of Juneau, Community Development, Juneau; Kenai Historical Society, Kenai; Ketchikan Museums, Ketchikan; Kodiak Historical Society, Kodiak;

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

Main Street, Fairbanks; Museums Alaska, Anchorage; Naknek Village Council, Naknek; NANA Museum of the Arctic, Kotzebue; National Bank of Alaska Heritage Museum, Anchorage; North Slope Borough, Barrow; Russian Orthodox Diocese of Sitka & Alaska, Kodiak; City of Seward; Sitka Historical Society, Sitka; Skagway Public Library, Skagway; Soldotna Historical Society and Museum, Soldotna; Talkeetna Historical Society, Talkeetna; Tanana-Yukon Historical Society, Fairbanks; U.S. National Park Service, Cultural Resources Division, Anchorage; Unalaska Historical Preservation Commission, Unalaska; University of Alaska Museums, Fairbanks; Yakutat Native Association, Yakutat

SOMETHING NEW AND SOMETHING OLD IN SEWARD

by Shannon Skibeness

The City of Seward now has a separate Historic Preservation Commission. Commission members are Doug Capra, Walter Corrigan, Virginia Darling, Jeanne Galvano, Dan Seavey, Shannon Skibeness and Michael Wiley.

The new Commission met for the first time on May 11, 1994 and was briefed by Community Development Director, Kerry Martin, on what has been happening in historic preservation in the City of Seward. The City has a Historic Preservation Plan in place, thanks to a grant received for this purpose.

The City has also qualified for an additional 50 percent matching grant of \$3,000 toward an Historic Register Nomination for the Jesse Lee Home. The local match is being met through a contribution of personnel costs, materials and/or volunteer time. Tim Sczawinski has been retained by the City to research and prepare the nomination.

The Jesse Lee Home has been listed by AAHP for the past two years as one of Alaska's "ten most endangered" historic properties. The owner, the Historic Preservation Commission and those associated with the Home feel it is a significant property which should be on the National Register of Historic Places. The Home is perhaps best known as the home of Benny Benson, designer of Alaska's flag, but it also has other distinguished graduates. Through the Commission and the owner's efforts, and with the help of the grant, the property will be nominated for the Register this fall.

Once the Jesse Lee Home is accepted for the National Register of Historic Places, it is planned to establish a Jesse Lee Historic District, including the main building, two other buildings which are privately owned but were part of the original complex, the flag raising site, and a monument.

Look for more from Seward in the years to come in the name of historic preservation!

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
--