

THE ALASKA ASSOCIATION FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

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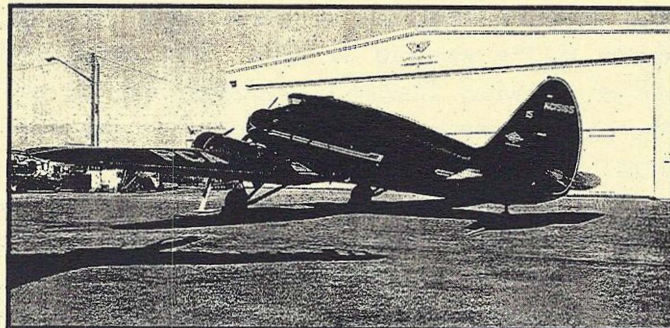
GET READY FOR THE JANUARY 7 ANNUAL MEETING!

AAHP's annual meeting will be held on Sunday, January 7, 1996 at the Alaska Aviation Heritage Museum. The museum is located at 4721 Aircraft Drive--on the south side of Lake Hood, just north of International Airport Road.

The program will get underway at 12:00 noon with snacks, coffee and conversation. Sue Cogswell, the museum's Curator of Collections, will give a brief history of the museum and its collection, plus an outline of future plans. Don Robinson, Curator of Aircraft, will then describe the aircraft restoration process, using the museum's 1929 Travel Air 6000-B as an example. This historic plane first came to Alaska in 1939 with Cordova Air Service and was owned by several Alaska aviation pioneers. It crashed at Bethel in 1944.

A guided tour of the entire museum collection will follow Robinson's presentation. The collection includes several outstanding examples of early Alaska aviation. For example, the museum's 1931 Fairchild American Pilgrim 100B is the only one remaining in the world and is one of only four aircraft listed on the National Register of Historic Places. A 1936 Stinson A Trimotor (*pictured*) is also the last left in the world. This plane crashed near the Toklat River in 1947 and remained until it was recovered in 1972. It underwent seven years of restoration in Chicago; the museum acquired it in 1988.

After the tour, AAHP President Pat Murphy will make a brief presentation on the progress made by our organization in 1995. Executive Director Bill Coghill will then oversee the nomination and election of board members to fill the five slots which become vacant this month. The final item of business will be a short Board meeting to elect AAHP officers and to set the date for the next board meeting.



For help in locating the meeting site, call the museum at 248-5325 (weekdays).

2nd YEAR OF GRANT PROGRAM BEGINS

This year marks our organization's second annual Ten Endangered Properties Preservation Grant. This is a matching grant program established to assist properties that are on AAHP's Ten Endangered List. Only the properties that are on the 1995 list are eligible for applying. (The 1995 award winner, the Chief Kashakes House in Ketchikan, was on the 1994 list.) This year, AAHP's Board of Directors has set aside an additional \$3,000 for the grant program. Application forms will be mailed to the owners of the Ten Endangered Properties in late January 1996. Completed applications will be due by March 29, 1996, with successful grant awards to be announced during Preservation Week, May 12-18.

To assist in supporting our grant program, appeals for donations to the grant account will be mailed to our members. It is hoped that through tax deductible donations from our members and others, this grant program can continue and grow, assisting larger projects that will insure the preservation of threatened Alaskan buildings.

Spotlight on ... THE HARRINGTON CABIN OF HOMER

by Chris Thorsrud

In 1935, two of Homer's early residents built a 14' x 18' cabin. Sixty years later, the cabin is the focus of a joint restoration and interpretation venture between Alaska State Parks and the Pratt Museum.

Stanton Shaffer, a fox farmer and homesteader, built the cabin in Homer with the help of Charlie Erickson, a miner and trapper. Shaffer was the first resident; he lived there until his death in the autumn of 1936. The cabin was willed to Mae Crittenden Harrington; it was thereafter occupied by Mae and her daughter Jane.

Mae Crittenden Harrington, who hailed from a Valdez family, was an active member of the developing Homer community. She opened her cabin to new arrivals who needed a place to stay until they could make their own arrangements. In the cabin's main room, Mae wrote numerous letters to Territorial representatives; she advocated, among other things, an increase in Homer's road budget from \$300 to \$500 a year and road being extended north to Kenai. In 1939, the Richard and Helen Edens family lived with Mae in the cabin during their first week in Homer.

After Mae and Jane moved to California, Minister Ruth Kyllonen and her young son Buzz lived there from 1943 to 1945. During their residency, marriages were performed in the cabin and plans were made by future Anchorage Point homesteaders. During the severe winter of 1946-47, Sherman and Vi Chapman struggled to keep the cabin warm for their newborn son. Other cabin residents included USGS geologist Farrell Barnes and family (1948); present Homer Mayor Harry Gregoire and his wife Elaine (1949); and the Charley Carlson family (1953).

During the 1960s, the cabin stood fire-charred and deserted until former mayor Erle Cooper and his wife Virginia rescued it from demolition by moving the cabin one-half mile to the property on which his business was located. In 1975, local artist Toby Tyler purchased the cabin from the Coopers and converted the structure into his art studio. In 1991, Toby donated the cabin to the Kachemak Heritage Land Trust; two

years later, the Trust donated the cabin to the Pratt Museum. During this period, the cabin was moved numerous times; it is currently located on the museum grounds.



The cabin in the summer of 1945. Photo from the Myhill Collection.

The cabin reflects the settlement and strength of the Homer community. It is built of beveled spruce logs with square notched corners and wide cornerboards. The original roofing paper was either red or green, the only color choices available in Homer in the 1930s. The cabin consisted of one main floor with stairs leading up to a full loft. The cabin had two doors, a small front porch, and French light windows. One of the original boards in the cabin was inscribed, "Chamberlain and Watson, Seldovia, Alaska." The chinking included gunny sacking, mattress stuffing, bits of clothing, and pieces of cement.

Preserving Alaska's old structures, and the stories those walls have to tell, contribute to our awareness of who we are. The Harrington Cabin is an excellent example of interagency cooperation, as well as the effort of many individuals who have personal ties to the cabin. Oral histories, written documents, letters and photographs have given the cabin's preservation a multi-dimensional life and have reflected back into the community. Preserving a building such as this adds to our understanding of where we once were, where we are, and where we are headed.

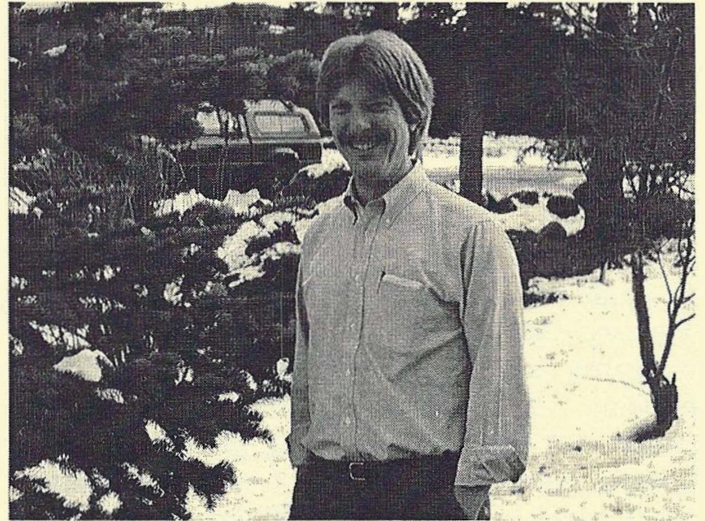
HISTORIC PRESERVATION IN ALASKA'S STATE PARKS

Four months ago, Jim Stratton became the new director of Alaska State Parks; he succeeded Neil Johannsen, who had held the post for more than a decade. The change in leadership has the potential to impact historic preservation in the state, so the AAHP editor recently spoke to Stratton about the challenges facing cultural resources in the state park system.

The new director is a longtime Alaska resident, and he has lived in Anchorage since 1984. Before Governor Knowles tapped him for his present job, he worked for the Alaska Conservation Foundation; prior to that, he was active in a Juneau-based environmental advocacy group. The two positions exposed him to a wide variety of challenges faced by Alaska parklands.

He notes that of the 127 state parks, seven were specifically created to preserve and interpret cultural properties. They include four state historical parks: Independence Mine, north of Palmer; Big Delta (Rika's Roadhouse), near Delta Junction; Totem Bight, near Ketchikan; and Nilnunqa, near Cooper Landing. Other cultural parks are Caines Head State Recreation Area, near Seward; Castle Hill, in Sitka; and Wickersham House, in Juneau. In addition, Potter Section House with its railroad rolling stock, located south of Anchorage, and the Nike Missile Site, near the Arctic Valley ski area, are historical properties within Chugach State Park.

The agency is working hard to improve the cultural parks. At Castle Hill, plans are in the works for a project that promises to increase site interpretation, modify its appearance (to make it less "fortlike") and ease public access. At the Wickersham House, contractors are in the midst of a stabilization effort, and at Totem Bight, the clan house was recently rebuilt and two adjacent totems are being recarved. At Caines Head, the trailhead and parking lot at the end of the spur road will soon be improved, and the agency hopes to install a Seward-based ranger sometime in 1996. Plans are also in the works to build some sort of visitor facility at the Nike missile site, and Potter Section House may some day hold a visitor center. Big Delta and Nilnunqa (the latter an archeological site along the Kenai River) need few immediate visitor or preservation improvements.



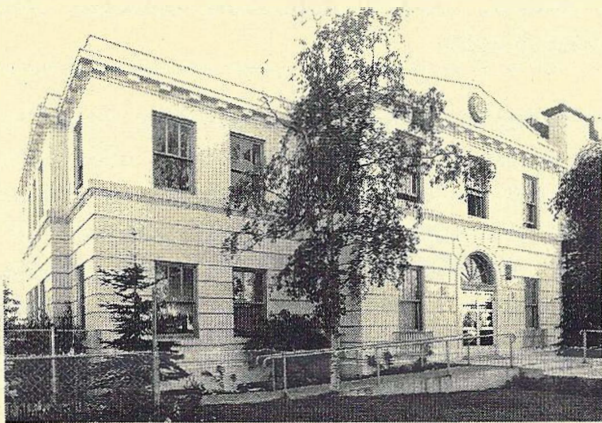
Jim Stratton, the new State Parks Director. Photo by Jack Sinclair.

In order to maintain its properties, State Parks has worked to obtain funds from a wide variety of sources in recent years, and the agency now collects fees that total more than one-third of its budget. At Wickersham House and Big Delta, a concessioner operates the site and provides income. At Totem Bight (at present) and Castle Hill (in the near future), rangers collect a fee from cruise ship patrons and other summertime visitors. Other income sources are being sought.

Stratton's biggest historical challenge is at Independence Mine. The state, so far, has rehabilitated six buildings in the mine complex: the visitor center (superintendent's house), assay office, apartment house, administration building, warehouse-commissary, and new bunkhouse. But other structures--including the old bunkhouse, mess hall, and mine portal complex--may soon be lost if action cannot be taken to preserve them. Stratton feels that "the best way to protect and enhance the buildings is to use them," so he has orchestrated an effort to involve a wide variety of promotional, business, service, and preservation organizations in the Palmer and Wasilla areas. He hopes that viable alternatives can be found that will allow the buildings to be preserved and rehabilitated. The agency held a public meeting on December 6 in the Mat-Su area to discuss the problem and seek community-based solutions. It is hoped that the buildings will see new life, perhaps as a lodge, camp bunkhouse, hostelry, or similar function, in the not-too-distant future.

ANCHORAGE'S OLD CITY HALL: RENOVATION UPDATE

The renovation of Old City Hall, once on AAHP's "Ten Endangered Properties" list, is moving along smoothly, according to Julie Johnson, Executive Director of Anchorage Historic Properties, Inc. (AHPI), developer of the project. The new Anchorage Convention and Visitors Bureau (ACVB) headquarters will be ready for occupancy on March 29, 1996. The Visitors' Center, now at the log cabin, will be relocated on the west wing addition of the building. The main lobby will be open to the public and will be the starting place of AHPI's historic downtown walking tours which meet every summer weekday at 1:00 p.m.



Historic renovation at this scale is unusual for Anchorage. "It's fun to see workers get so excited," said Johnson. "I think the enthusiasm of everyone at Boslough Construction is something that's making this project work so well. Every time they make a new discovery, their faces light up like Christmas trees!" She cited the following examples:

* On the west side of the first floor, future home of the new ACVB Visitors' Center, crews discovered the door frame to the old firehouse. The steel frame had its original transom, perfectly intact but for a broken window pane. Further demolition revealed garage doors on either side. The wall is painted like an old filling station: kelly green to chair height, the rest stark white. In what used to be the firehouse, workers found a round hole in the ceiling, approximately four feet in diameter, which had been closed with cement. "It looked to me like it was the hole for the fire pole," she said. "A 'ghost' marking on the floor of the second floor showed the same outline."

* Upstairs on the west side addition, after all the ceiling tiles and insulation were removed, workers discovered a decorative architectural pattern of dentils. These dentils, identical to those which run under the parapet atop the second floor's exterior, were unpainted. Because most concrete buildings were not painted until after World War II, this discovery suggests that the addition was built before the war. Also found with the dentils was a relief pattern buried all those years under plaster. The dentils and relief will be refinished and incorporated into the interior plan.

* In the basement was found a different sort of reminder of those who walked the old halls. A vintage whiskey bottle, circa 1945, was found in a basement wall near where the jail used to be. The label boasted of its "Pre-War Quality," a poignant reminder to its finders of how difficult those times really were.

JOIN US AND PRESERVE ALASKA'S HISTORY!

Membership runs from January 1 thru December 31. Benefits include: * the quarterly AAHP newsletter, * workshops and seminars, * annual meeting, * historic preservation advocacy.

- | | |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> Student \$10 | <input type="checkbox"/> Contributor . . \$ 50 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individual \$15 | <input type="checkbox"/> Friend \$100 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Family \$25 | <input type="checkbox"/> Sponsor \$250 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Non-Profit . . . \$25 | <input type="checkbox"/> Benefactor . . \$500 |

Donations to AAHP are tax deductible, as allowable under IRS regulations.

I would be glad to participate in AAHP activities in the following areas:

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

NAME _____

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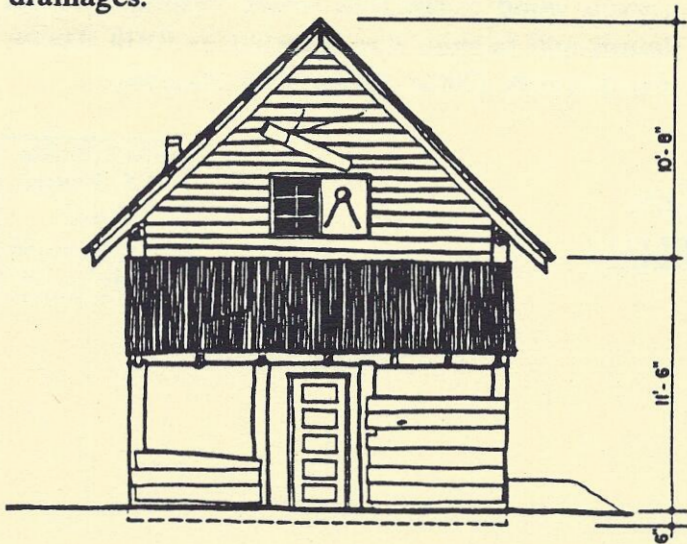
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Return to: AAHP, 645 W. 3rd Ave., Anchorage, Alaska 99501, attn: Treasurer

BRUHN-RAY MINE BUILDINGS TO BE MOVED

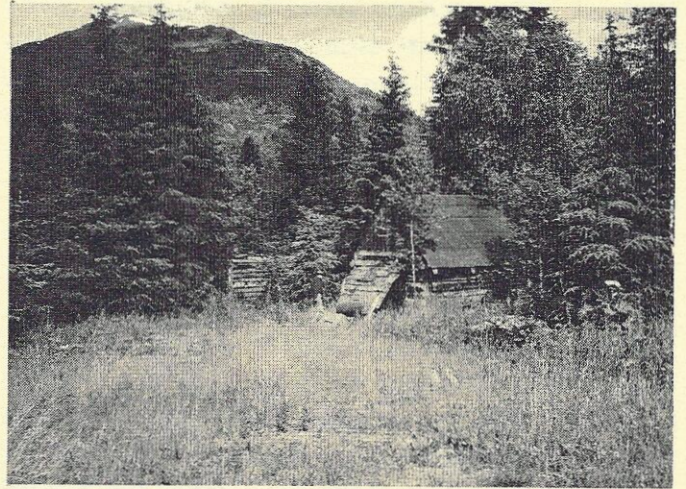
by Rosemarie Knecht and Rolfe Buzzell

Two log buildings associated with the historic Bruhn-Ray Mining Camp, near the Hope Cutoff on the Seward Highway, will be moved to Hope in the summer of 1996. The buildings, a bunkhouse and a blacksmith shop, are in the path of the re-alignment of Seward Highway and the construction of a new bridge over Canyon Creek. The Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF), after consultation with the Alaska State Historic Preservation Office, is paying to move the buildings to Hope. This move is part of the mitigation of the highway realignment project's impact on the Bruhn-Ray Mining Camp. The owners of the buildings have agreed to donate them to the Hope and Sunrise Historical Society (H&SHS). The Society has agreed to have the buildings placed near its newly-opened museum; it will use the old mine buildings to interpret the history of mining on the Sixmile and Resurrection Creek drainages.



WEST ELEVATION - BUNKHOUSE

The Bruhn-Ray Mining Camp is the most well-preserved historic mining camp on the Sixmile Creek drainage. Prospectors first discovered placer gold at the mouth of Canyon Creek (part of that drainage) in 1895, near the present location of the camp. The discovery touched off a gold rush to the area, and Canyon Creek became one of the highest gold-producing creeks in the Turnagain Arm mining district. In 1912,



The camp's barn (left) and blacksmith shop, looking east. The DOT&PF/H&SHS proposal calls for the blacksmith shop and bunkhouse (see diagram, below left) to be moved to Hope next summer.

N. O. Anderson started buying up claims on lower Canyon Creek. In the following years he constructed seven buildings to serve as a support base for his ambitious plans; he hoped to rechannel Canyon Creek in order to get at the gold in the narrowest part of the canyon. Anderson completed the camp buildings by 1920, but he died not long afterwards. Nick Bruhn, who was one of Anderson's employees, then teamed with Seward attorney L. V. Ray; the two men acquired the camp and 17 mining claims from Anderson's heirs. For the next several decades, Bruhn and Ray mined their claims, and also used the camp as a family retreat. Then, in 1954, Anchorage miner John Coleman and his wife Linnie bought the camp and the adjacent claims.

The two camp buildings that are slated to be moved have quarter-round logs for corners and steeply pitched metal roofs with gable ends. The H&SHS is gearing up to raise funds and hopes to obtain volunteers and donated services to preserve the buildings. Upcoming Society projects will include site preparation, foundation construction, weatherproofing, restoration, and interpretation. The buildings have been determined eligible for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places.

THE FIGHT TO SAVE SITKA'S ALLEN AUDITORIUM

The Allen Auditorium, built in 1911, serves as the architectural centerpiece for Sheldon Jackson College. The balloon-framed, vernacular Swiss chalet-style structure stands empty and has been deteriorating in recent years. Preservationists have been alarmed because college officials have hinted that the structure was slated for eventual demolition.

Now, however, a reprieve--perhaps temporary--has been granted. Several local leaders, including Thad Paulsen, the editor of the *Sitka Sentinel*, have incorporated the Allen Memorial Preservation Project in hopes of preserving the campus building. The group applied for a Preservation Services Fund grant from the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and in October the AMPP was awarded \$2000 for a preservation architect to undertake a feasibility study for the auditorium's rehabilitation and reuse. The group also hopes to obtain the services of a structural engineer (to assess the building's structural integrity) and an NTHP marketing specialist (to assess its commercial potential). The NTHP has been key to the campaign thus far; not only has it provided monetary assistance, but the organization's

regional staff has flown to Sitka and spoken to members of the preservation and planning commissions as well as to other concerned citizens. College officials, recognizing the community support for the preservation effort, have promised to not demolish the auditorium pending results of the architectural study.

COME TO A SWEDISH CHRISTMAS

by Mary Flaherty
Oscar Anderson House Manager

In early December, the Oscar Anderson House Museum will give school children and other visitors the opportunity to experience Christmas in early Anchorage during the annual Swedish Christmas Tours. The museum, one of Anchorage's first family residences, will be decorated with traditional holiday decorations, recalling the Swedish heritage of the Anderson family. A new addition this year will be a lovely Swedish hand-carved wood candelabra which belonged to the family and recently was donated by Ruth Anderson Burgess, Oscar Anderson's daughter.

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