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645 West Third Avenue, Anchorage, Alaska 99501-2124

MAY 1997

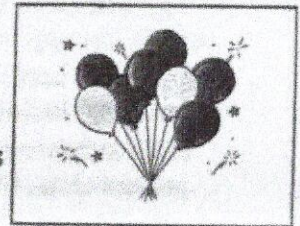
VOL. 16, ISSUE 2

Summer Picnic To Be Held Saturday, June 7th!

AAHP's annual summer picnic will be held a bit early this year—on Saturday, June 7th, from 1 to 4 p.m. at the Wasilla Townsite Park in downtown Wasilla. Come join us for a delightful barbecue picnic. Following the picnic, there will be a personalized tour of the many restored historic buildings of early Wasilla which have been moved to the park and preserved there. LeRoi Heaven, President of the Wasilla-Knik-Willow Creek Historical Society, will lead us to and through these buildings and share their stories with us. LeRoi will then take us through the nearby, recently-restored Teeland-Herning store (a designated Wasilla Historic Landmark) and then on to the Wasilla railroad depot, which is currently undergoing stabilization work.

All food and beverages will be provided. The Wasilla Townsite Park is located directly behind the Dorothy Page Museum and adjacent to the U.S. Post Office in downtown Wasilla. To get there, drivers from Anchorage should drive up the Parks Highway, 7 miles beyond its junction with the Glenn Highway, to a traffic light. At this intersection, which is Knik-Goose Bay Road (for those turning left) or Wasilla-Fishhook Road (for those turning right), drivers should turn right, then go one block to the park.

If you have never attended an AAHP picnic, this would be an excellent opportunity for you to meet some other members and learn about how Wasilla is preserving its historic heritage. We hope to see you there!



AAHP Preservation Grants Awarded

On May 14, during Preservation Week, AAHP officials announced that two Alaska properties had been awarded Preservation Grants. These grants, of \$2,500 apiece, will be used for structural rehabilitation and restoration.

- 1) The Improved Order of Red Men Lodge, in Eagle City, is a 30' x 60' single-story log building that was constructed in 1904 out of native spruce (*see May 1996 newsletter*). It was built to serve as a fraternal hall and retained that function until 1944, when Eagle's chapter of the lodge disbanded for lack of members. In later years the lodge building was used as a workshop and storage unit; then, in 1993, it was donated to the Eagle Historical Society, and a portion of it now serves as the Society's headquarters. Although the floor beams were replaced during the 1970s, the building's foundation is such that the floor is rotting; in addition, repairs are needed for the roof and walls. The Society has successfully raised more than \$20,000 to restore the building; AAHP's grant will allow material purchases that will further the preservation effort.
- 2) Alaska Nellie's Cabin is located in Lawing, along the eastern shore of Kenai Lake, between Seward and Moose Pass. The cabin was the longtime residence of Nellie Neal Lawing, a swashbuckling, well-known pioneer who set up construction camps and house the crews that built the Alaska Railroad. In 1923 she "retired" to this homestead, where she opened a museum (now demolished) and roadhouse. The cabin, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, is suffering from dry rot in the foundation logs, walls, and roof. AAHP's grant, combined with other funds contributed for the purpose, will be used to stabilize the foundation and roof.

Ten Endangered Buildings List Announced

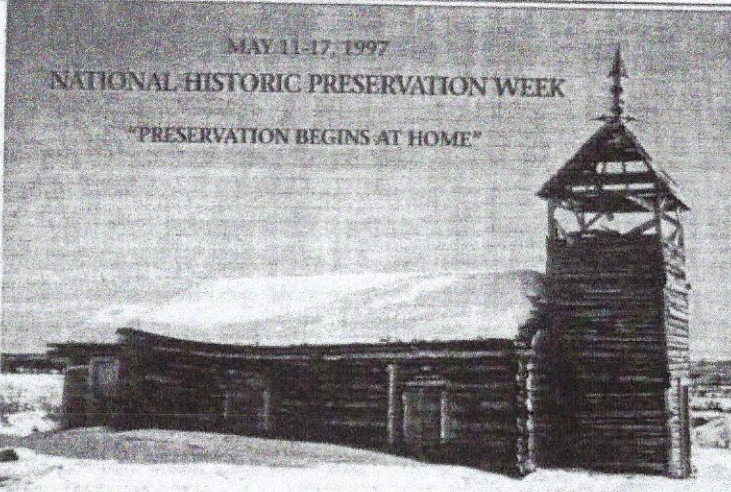
On May 14, Russ Sackett announced the list of properties to AAHP's Ten Endangered Buildings List. Two of the ten properties—the Improved Order of Red Men Lodge in Eagle City, and Alaska Nellie's Cabin in Lawing—were on last year's list, and were recently awarded an AAHP Preservation Grant (*see page 1*). The remaining properties include:

- The Alaska-Juneau Gold Mining Company Locomotive Shop, near Juneau. The shop was built in 1916 as part of the Jualpa Mine Camp, located in the Silver Bow Basin; the camp was erected to stage the company's drilling activities and to be the company's service division. But since the A-J mine shut down in 1944, very little has been done to stabilize any of the camp's buildings. Today, therefore, the shop's wood foundation is rotting and collapsing; in addition, high winds have ripped off portions of the roof, and settling has damaged the walls. To combat the threat to the foundation, the City and Borough of Juneau recently received an Office of History and Archeology matching grant. No actions have yet been planned, however, to rehabilitate either the roof or walls. The Jualpa Mine Camp Historic District is listed on the National Register of Historic Places; the repair shop is a contributing property of that district.
- The Matanuska Colony's cannery/creamery and warehouse complex. This large (50' x 275') building, located in central Palmer, was a key part of the agricultural colony's community center, which was established in 1935 by the Federal Emergency Relief Administration to aid the settling of 200 farm families from the upper Midwest. As the name suggests, the building has served various functions over the years, but it has lain largely empty for the past decade or two. The U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, which currently owns the building, wants to sell it to a private owner. Local historic groups and the state's Office of History and Archeology, however, hope to ensure that the property has a Historic Preservation Covenant; at the present time, there is some contention as to whether such a covenant can be obtained.
- Flat City Historic District. The town of Flat is located in southwestern Alaska; it is 8 miles south of the ghost town of Iditarod and approximately halfway between Anchorage and the mouth of the Yukon River. Flat, a gold-mining town located along the Iditarod National Historic Trail, includes 72 buildings that date from the 1909-1940 period. Most of these are constructed of logs and have been moved several times, due to both natural disasters and mining activities. The Flat townsite is threatened by neglect, the elements, vandalism, and uncertainties associated with land ownership. (Most of the land is federally owned but part of a mining claim, and building owners are reluctant to restore buildings because many recognize the value of the mineral-laden land underneath them.) The state, along with the U.S. Bureau of Land Management, is inventorying the town's historical sites and is drafting a National Register nomination. No plans exist, however, for either stabilizing or preserving any of the town's significant historical properties.
- Saints Sergius and Herman of Valaam Church, Nanwalek. This church, located at the southwestern end of the Kenai Peninsula (Nanwalek, until a few years ago, was called English Bay), was originally built during the Russian period; the existing church, which dates from 1930, is the third church of this name, all of which have existed at the same site. The church, rich in icons and associated artifacts, is still being used, but it is in poor conditions and desperately needs repairs. It is rotting and is sinking in the middle; it has broken windows, a lack of heat, and a roof and doors that need immediate replacement. In order to preserve the building, a proposal has been submitted to the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill Council. If awarded funding, the church will be renovated for use as a cultural center; artifacts will be displayed there, and the site can be used for meetings and potlucks.
- First Avenue Historic Streetscape, Fairbanks. First Avenue fronts along the south bank of the Chena River; on the north side of First was Captain Barnette's store, where Fairbanks began shortly after the turn of the

Episcopal Mission Church
Arctic Village, Alaska

Constructed in 1916-1917, by Albert Tritt and his congregation, the logs for this 17' x 17' church were floated down the Chukchar River and hauled overland by dog sled. The building served as both church and community hall until 1960, when a new church was constructed. In 1977, the Episcopal Mission Church was listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The property is significant for its architecture and for the role that it played in the development of Arctic Village. Vacant for many years, the Church was identified in 1992 as one of Alaska's ten most endangered historic properties.

MAY 11-17, 1997
NATIONAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION WEEK
"PRESERVATION BEGINS AT HOME"



For information about how you can help preserve Alaska's historic properties, contact:

The Alaska Association for Historic Preservation
545 West Third Avenue, Anchorage, Alaska 99501-2124

The National Trust for Historic Preservation
Western Regional Office, One South Street Suite 707
San Francisco, California 94108 (415) 776-0800

State of Alaska, Office of History and Archaeology
3011 C Street, Suite 1024, Anchorage, Alaska 99503-0071 (907) 263-8721

AAHP's *NEW* Preservation Week Poster!

Top Ten Endangered Property List (continued from page 2)

century. A four-block stretch of First Avenue, between Wickersham and Cleary streets, is of great historical significance, and today it is one of the few districts in town that still retains its early character. The streetscape includes the George C. Thomas Library, a National Historic Landmark, and the Masonic Temple and the Odd Fellows Hall, both of which are listed on the National Register. Additional buildings of note include the R.C. Wood house, St. Matthews Episcopal Church, the Kellum/Creamer House, and several unnamed frame residences. These buildings are facing a variety of threats, from proposed demolition to vandalism and neglect.

- **Erskine House, Kodiak.** The Erskine House was built during the 1805-08 period, and is the oldest of only four Russian buildings standing in the United States. Kodiak, at that time called Pavlovsk, was the headquarters of the Russian American Company, and the Erskine House was originally a warehouse, or *magazin*, for the RAC. After the U.S. bought Alaska, the building was owned by the Alaska Commercial Company; almost a century later, it was designated as a National Historic Landmark. In recent years, the building has served as the Baranof Museum and has been operated by the Kodiak Historical Society. Recent audits have revealed that the building needs new sheathing, and attempts are now underway to raise the necessary funds.
- **Sheldon Jackson College, Sitka.** The college was founded by Dr. Sheldon Jackson, during the late 19th century, as a boarding school for Native students; it was originally called the Sitka Industrial School for Natives. In 1910, the school was expanded and modernized, and a new campus, centered around a quadrangle, was designed by the famous New York architectural firm of Ledlow and Peabody. Most of the campus buildings, which date from circa 1911, are now threatened by a lack of maintenance; in particular danger is the Allen Auditorium, in the center of campus. In order to preserve the structure, a non-profit group was formed; that group has successfully obtained two grants: one to fund a building assessment, the other for architectural documentation by the Historic American Buildings Survey.
- **Victor Holm Cabin, Kasilof.** Holm built this cabin, located along the Kasilof River near Soldotna, about 1890 and lived there until his death in the late 1940s. It is one of a relative few area cabins that predate the Klondike gold rush, and thus its architectural style differs from those built later. In addition, many of the cabin's contents are historical as well; these artifacts show how local materials were used for clothing, tools, and furniture. The cabin is on the National Register of Historic Places.

National Trust Announces the Great American Home Awards

If you have restored or rehabilitated an older house within the past five years, consider entering the 1998 "Great American Home Awards" contest, which is sponsored by the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Now in its ninth year, the Home Awards is the national contest that specifically recognizes outstanding achievements in home rehabilitation across the country. Categories include: * Exterior Rehabilitation, * Interior Rehabilitation, * Sympathetic Addition, * Landscape, * plus a special category for Bed & Breakfasts.

To be eligible, houses must be at least 50 years old, and they must have been designed and still be serving as single-family homes or bed & breakfasts. The entry deadline is September 30, 1997.

For information and entry forms, send your name and address to: Great American Home Awards, National Trust, 1785 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036. Or you may call (202) 588-6283.

JOIN US AND PRESERVE ALASKA'S HISTORY!

Membership runs from January 1 through December 31. Benefits include...

- * the quarterly AAHP newsletter
- * annual meeting
- * workshops and seminars
- * historic preservation advocacy

___ Student	\$10	___ Contributor	\$50
___ Individual	\$15	___ Friend	\$100
___ Family	\$25	___ Sponsor	\$250
___ Non-Profit	\$25	___ Benefactor	\$500

PLEASE NOTE ANY CHANGE TO YOUR MAILING LABEL.

Donations to AAHP are tax deductible as allowed under IRS regulations.

I/we would also like to make a tax deductible gift of \$ _____ to the AAHP Top Ten Most Endangered Buildings preservation matching grant account.

Check enclosed for \$ _____. WE THANK YOU!

Please return to: The Alaska Association for Historic Preservation
645 West Third Ave.
Anchorage, Alaska 99501-2124

Update on the Matanuska Valley Farmer's Cooperating Complex

The Mat Maid Complex, in central Palmer, dates from the 1930s and has recently been nominated to AAHP's Ten Endangered Buildings List (*see page 2*). The May 1996 issue of our newsletter described earlier preservation activities. During the past year, much more has been done.

Last year, the Division of Agriculture, which owns the buildings, tried to sell the buildings for their assessed value. When that effort failed, the Division gave the Palmer Economic Development Authority (PEDA) the option of finding a developer at less than market value, and at that time, it was hoped that they could be sold for a nominal price with a historic covenant placed upon them. PEDA turned its option over to the Palmer Historical Society; the Society, however, was given just three days to find a developer and two weeks in which to consummate a sale. The Society found a developer, but was unable to complete the transaction in such a short time frame. PEDA then found a second developer who apparently hoped to purchase the buildings without the longstanding historic covenant, and the sale did not take place for that reason. As a result, the state, together with the Mat-Su Borough Citizens Historic Preservation Group, will issue a renewed proposal, probably in June, to market the buildings and simultaneously retain the buildings' historical integrity.

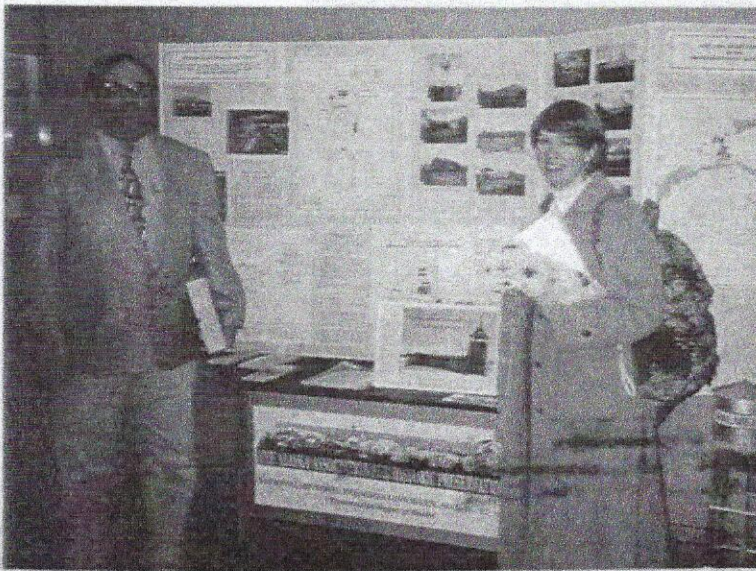
Preservation Week Celebrated May 11-May 17

The National Trust for Historic Preservation has designated National Historic Preservation Week each year since 1971. This year, Preservation Week was proclaimed for the week from May 11 through May 17. This year's theme is "Preservation Begins at Home." AAHP members celebrated Preservation Week by sponsoring several activities and taking part in others; thanks to Sylvia Elliott's work, the week's events were well publicized in various local media.

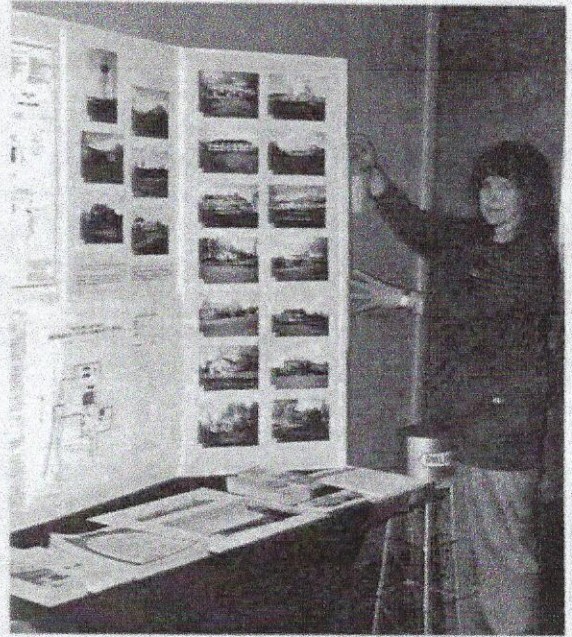
Anchorage Historic Properties, Inc. kicked off the week by offering tours of the Oscar Anderson House, which is located at Fifth Avenue and M Street. Tent City tent and lace-making demonstrations were offered. In honor of Mother's Day, the usual admission fees for the house tours were waived for all mothers.

On Wednesday, May 14, AAHP members Russ Sackett and Julie Johnson gave a noon-hour public talk in the Anchorage Museum of History and Art auditorium. Russ introduced and described AAHP's recently-unveiled Ten Endangered Properties List, while Julie spoke about Anchorage's historical resources and the role of Anchorage Historic Properties, Inc. in preserving the city's historical heritage.

Largely due to the efforts of board member Sylvia Elliott, AAHP distributed a Preservation Week poster. The handsome, 11" x 17" poster features the Episcopal Mission Church in Arctic Village (see photo on page 3) and describes its history. This church, for several years, has been listed as one of AAHP's Top Ten Endangered Properties. The poster was co-sponsored by the National Trust for Historic Preservation and the Alaska Office of History and Archeology.



Russ Sackett and Julie Johnson gave a Preservation Week talk last week at the Anchorage Museum of History & Art



Sylvia Elliott with a Mat-Su area poster.

Board member Fran Seager-Boss has also been active in Preservation Week activities. She created two large pictorial displays, both sponsored by Mat-Su Borough. One, which was on display at the Cook Inlet Book Company, showed a diverse variety of preservation projects taking place in the borough: the Matanuska Maid buildings in Palmer, the Colony Project (also in Palmer), the Talkeetna Historic District, and Teeland's Store in Wasilla. The other display, which was shown at the Anchorage Museum of History and Art, was focused more specifically on Mat-Su Borough's Colony Rehabilitation Project, located in the Palmer Historic District. She also produced a brochure featuring Preservation Week events. Fran has been active in Preservation Week activities for a number of years, and many Mat-Su area school children have learned and grown excited about Alaska's old buildings because of her efforts.

Fairbanks Preservation Efforts Spotlighted in National Magazine

The Spring 1997 issue of *History News*, published by the American Association for State and Local History, featured the efforts which the Tanana-Yukon Historical Society (TYHS) has been making toward preserving Fairbanks-area buildings. The article, by freelancer Barbara Behan Smith, notes the following:

"Last May, in honor of National Historic Preservation Week, TYHS published its first annual list of top endangered properties in the Fairbanks area. Two of the sites on the list exemplify early Fairbanks architecture. The 'First Avenue Streetscape' consists of several blocks along the Chena River in the original town site area (see article on pages 2 & 3). Another site is the Louis Rose Building. It is the last standing log commercial structure in Fairbanks and dates to before 1920. It is on the National Register, but is threatened with destruction from a street expansion project. There are many other significant sites around Fairbanks, and the TYHS wants to save them all. The society faces unique challenges, though, in doing preservation work in Alaska. As in many western states, local governments have been slow to address preservation issues. Add to this a widespread dislike of government regulation, which many Alaskans left the 'lower 48' to avoid, and it's no wonder that preservation has been slow to catch on.

"But despite the obstacles, definite progress has been made. In 1967, citizens rallied to save certain structures by removing them to a cultural theme park named Alaskaland. Although the structures are not adequately protected—and one is on TYHS's endangered list—the relocation of the structures signaled the beginning of a preservation movement in Fairbanks.

"In the late 1970s, architect Janet Matheson was commissioned to produce a survey of local historical resources along with recommendations for preservation. Her report is the primer on historic properties in Fairbanks. At the same time, TYHS lobbied for, and succeeded in having passed, an ordinance creating a historic preservation commission. To date, no historic districts have been created, but the society continues to rally for the cause.

"The organization also is working to establish a building preservation fund. In 2002, Fairbanks will celebrate its centennial, and TYHS hopes to use the upcoming celebration to get more support for revitalizing the downtown area. The 1996 Endangered Properties List was publicized through the local media, and the society intends to announce one every year as part of its preservation work."

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**THE ALASKA ASSOCIATION
FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION**
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