

THE ALASKA ASSOCIATION FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

645 West Third Avenue, Anchorage, Alaska 99501-2124

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ANNUAL SUMMER PICNIC HELD AT CROW CREEK MINE

On Sunday, August 9, about 35 AAHP members and guests enjoyed a sunny day at our annual picnic, held at the Crow Creek Mine near Girdwood. A bountiful repast was had by all: Russ Sackett and Rogan Faith grilled hamburgers and hot dogs, and many members brought delicious side dishes, watermelon, and beverages.

Hosting the event was Cynthia Toohey, former AAHP board member. (Longtime board members may recall that the mine has hosted previous annual picnics.) During the afternoon, members and guests wandered through the blacksmith shop, barn, ice house, commissary, mine owner's cabin, mess hall, meat cache, bunk house, and other historic structures. It was great to glimpse a lifestyle of days gone by; and the Tooheys, generously, waived the fee for all AAHP attendees. Because several of the structures were built exactly 100 years ago, it was truly a "gold rush centennial" picnic outing.



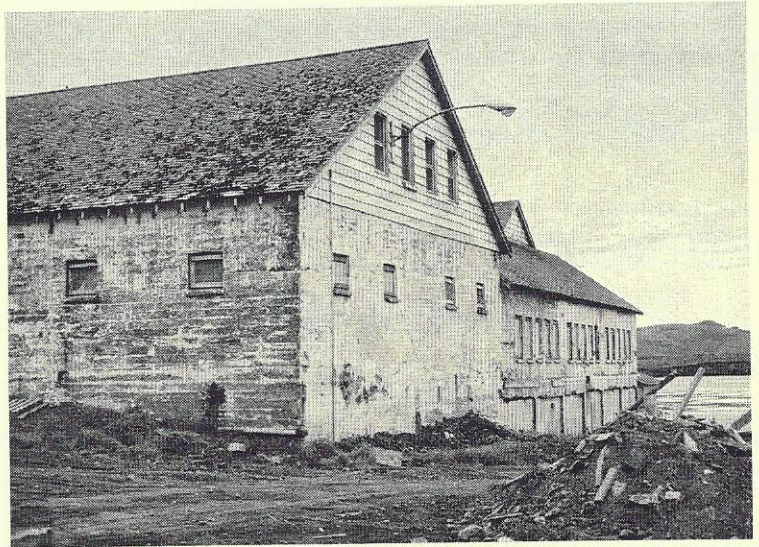
Some of the crowd that gathered at Crow Creek Mine for AAHP's annual picnic.

It is believed that the first claims at Crow Creek were staked in 1897. A group of eight partners known as the "Crow Creek boys" are credited with starting the mine which, during the early 1900s, was the most productive camp in the Turnagain region. There is no record of the total amount of gold taken from Crow Creek. But Arnie Erickson, who owned the mine beginning in 1922, claimed that until World War II the mine yielded an average of 700 ounces a month. At today's price of \$300 an ounce, that would equate to \$210,000 per month. The largest nugget ever found at Crow Creek was the size of a chicken egg; it weighed 4.5 ounces. The Tooheys took over the mine in the 1960s and brought their three children to Crow Creek in 1969. The family has lived and worked at this site ever since to preserve this page of Alaska's history.

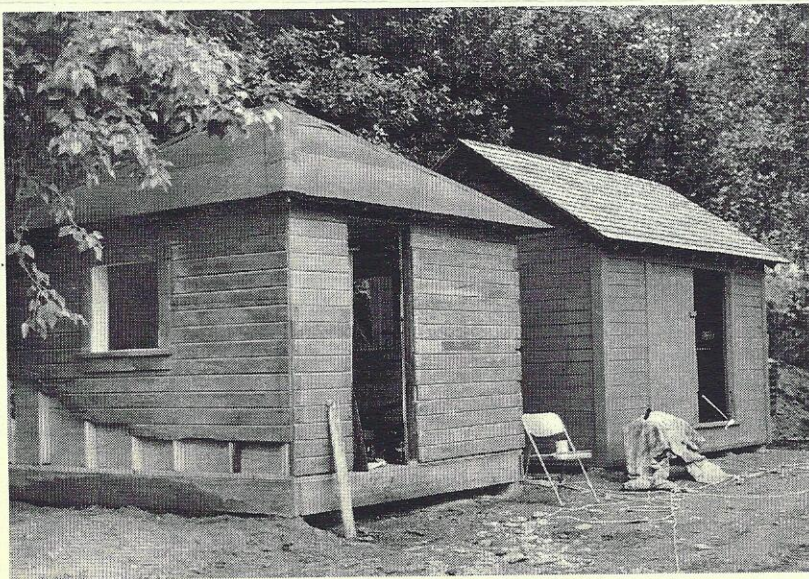
Inasmuch as we had seven members of the Board of Directors present—enough for a quorum—we concluded the afternoon with a short board meeting. The AAHP board wishes to extend a heartfelt "thanks" to Cynthia Toohey and her family.

CURRENT ARCHITECTURAL RESTORATION PROJECTS

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) has begun an 18-month rehabilitation project on the **St. George Island Sealing Plant**. This building was constructed in 1951 to replace a building that had burned the previous year. It is the focal point of the sealing complex and is a contributing element to the Seal Islands National Historic Landmark. When constructed, the builders used salt water to mix the concrete. The salts have eroded reinforcing bars, and the concrete spalled to a point where the building was being threatened by structural failure. The Sealing Plant was listed as one of AAHP's Ten Most Endangered Historic Properties in 1995. Over the next eighteen months, deteriorated reinforcement will be replaced as well as all original form ties drilled out and patched. The plans call for new foundation columns to be installed, new windows to match the originals, and for painting of the entire building. It is anticipated that the work will be completed in the fall of 1999. Alpha Engineering in Seattle, Washington prepared the restoration plans, and Tanaq Corporation is undertaking the construction work.



The Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) is in the process of restoring **four line shacks and a workshop** along with stabilizing a water tower, along the Copper River and Northwestern (CR&NW) Railway just south of Chitina. All but one line shack can be reached by car. (The other is accessed by boat.) The CR&NW railway, 196 miles long, was built from Cordova to Kennicott from 1907 to 1911. Line shacks were constructed along the route within a day's walk of one another to provide shelter for line workers. The railway was abandoned shortly after the Kennicott Copper Mine, and its associated mill, closed in 1938. Most of the rails south of Chitina were removed during World War II, and the railbed became a pioneer road linking Cordova to the interior. Over the years, the roadbed became impassable due to lack of maintenance on bridges and rock cuts. As a result, only about 20 miles of road south of Chitina are now open to vehicle traffic. The restoration of these buildings is a result of a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, aimed at DOT&PF under the provisions of the Clean Water Act, and the resulting consent decree. The Office of History and Archaeology developed restoration plans, and Alaska Building Structures, Inc. of Anchorage is doing the work. The rehabilitation of the five buildings is scheduled to be completed by the end of September.



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Interested in serving on AAHP's Board of Directors? *YOU TOO* can play an active part in the exciting historic preservation field. Being on the AAHP Board puts you in the forefront of what's going on. No experience necessary. Board meetings are held every other month in Anchorage. Terms are for three years. If you have questions, contact our executive director, Russ Sackett, at either 269-8726 or via rufiunis@aol.com.

PARK SERVICE SETS OUT PLANS FOR KENNECOTT COMPLEX

On June 16, the National Park Service (NPS) bought 8,839 acres of land in and around the old Kennecott mine and mill sites, and the Kennecott National Historic Landmark was incorporated into Wrangell-St. Elias National Preserve. The purchase, the culmination of years of effort and co-ordination with both private parties and other public entities, makes the NPS largely responsible for preserving and interpreting this large, complex, and remarkably significant historic site.



The NPS has embarked on a year-long planning process that will help determine the scope of its preservation and interpretation. This multi-step effort is an open and public process, and public meetings will be held at each step along the way to suggest tentative courses of action and to solicit the public's ideas and concerns. Park personnel have laid out three development alternatives: a "no action" alternative, an alternative emphasizing building stabilization, and a "managed historic site" alternative that allows a broader range of interpretation and adaptive re-use as well as stabilization.

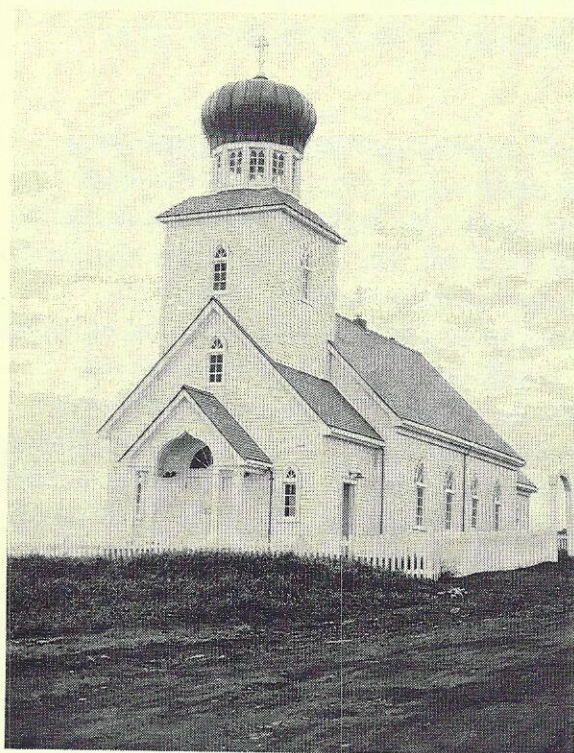
If you want to play an active part in the Kennecott planning process, or if you merely wish to be kept abreast of issues as they arise, you will want to obtain a copy of *The Kennecott Cable*, a newsletter that was published in early September. To get your copy, call Vicki Snitzer (a park planner) at 822-5238, or you may wish to write her at the Nabesna Ranger Station, P.O. Box 885, Slana, Alaska 99586.

PRIBILOF ISLANDS CHURCH RESTORED

St. George the Great Martyr Russian Orthodox Church, on St. George Island in the Pribilofs, underwent a restoration earlier this year. Work on the structure was completed early this summer. St. George the Great

Martyr was built by parishioners in 1936. It was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1980. The NRHP nomination for this building states that "of all the Russian Orthodox churches and chapels in Alaska, this may be the best example of effective balance and integration of classic designs to produced a building pleasing to the eye and utile [useful] in its purpose." Although the church was constructed in the 1930s, many of its interior furnishings date back to the 1880s and 1890s. The work was directed by the Aleutian and Pribilof Islands Restitution Trust, and the restoration plans were prepared by ECI/Hyer Architects. The church rededication will take place this month.

*** The **Valdez Trails Association** opened a restored section of the "Trans-Alaska Military Packtrain Trail" through Keystone Canyon on September 5. The historic discovery of the Keystone Canyon route, 100 years ago, led to the first glacier-free land route from Prince William Sound into the Alaska interior. A scouting party of the U.S. Army's Copper River Exploring Expedition, consisting of three men and 10 pack animals, passed through this spot on the way to Thompson Pass. Eventually, this led to an ice-free, year-round road to Fairbanks. See the *Anchorage Daily News* for August 30 and September 13 for details.



Church of St. George the Great Martyr

CELEBRATING HISTORIC NENANA

by Bill Coghill

Nenana is justifiably well known for its Ice Pool Classic, the lottery which has been held each spring since 1916 to guess the time when the ice breaks up on the Tanana River. In addition to this year's Ice Pool Classic, two other special events are noteworthy at Nenana this year, both of which I had the opportunity to attend. Those events are the opening of the Nenana Cultural Center and the 75th anniversary of the Alaska Railroad.

On June 6, many Alaskan dignitaries attended the grand opening and dedication of the Nenana Cultural Center. This beautiful new facility, built with local timber and labor, combines cultural preservation and local heritage into tourism development and economic growth for Nenana. The Center is named after Alfred Starr, a local Native leader. The dedication was kicked off by a parade, through downtown Nenana, which included about 50 motorcycles. At the dedication itself, AAHP member Jane Haigh blessed the facility and participated in the opening ceremony. The Center already has many fine displays. Al "Bear" Ketzler, a Tolchaket Board Member and catalyst for the facility, stated that the cultural center was the beginning of a much larger plan for Nenana. One ambitious project, to take place in a couple of years, is the construction of a new *Nenana sternwheeler*; it will be docked next to the Cultural Center and will make trips from Nenana to the bridge over



The Alfred Starr Cultural Center, dedicated June 6.



Standing next to one of three panel exhibits at the cultural center is Carol Phillips (left), exhibit organizer; Jane Haigh, who spoke about Alfred Starr; and the author.

the Yukon River on the Dalton Highway. (The well-known *Nenana*, which plied the Yukon River system from the 1930s through the 1950s, is now on display at Alaskaland in Fairbanks.) I encourage you to visit this facility the next time you are in Nenana.

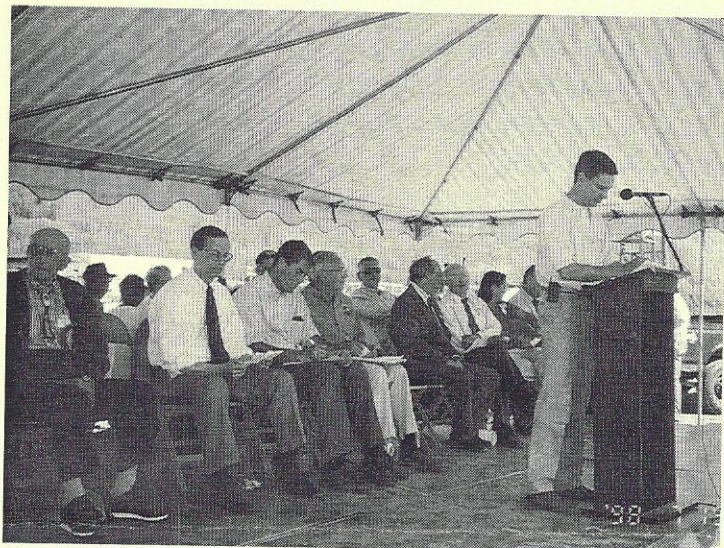
Six weeks later, on July 15, several hundred people gathered at Nenana to mark the 75th anniversary of the day that President Warren G. Harding drove the Golden Spike at Nenana, marking the completion of the Alaska Railroad. The 1998 festivities were held on a warm, sunny day; a special train arrived in town from Fairbanks, and all were treated to a salmon bake luncheon provided by the City of Nenana. A dedication ceremony followed with John Binkley, the ARRC Board Chairman, acting as Master of Ceremonies. (Binkley was also the emcee at two previous railroad events: the line's 60th anniversary, held at Nenana in 1983, and the transfer of the railroad from the federal government to the State of Alaska, held on January 5, 1985.) Other dignitaries at the 1998 event included Governor Tony Knowles; Bill Sheffield, the ARRC's President and CEO; Steve Dittmeyer, who was formerly General Manager of the railroad and is presently with the Federal Railroad Administration; Jack Coghill, former Lieutenant Governor and longtime area senator; and Nenana Mayor Bob Knight.

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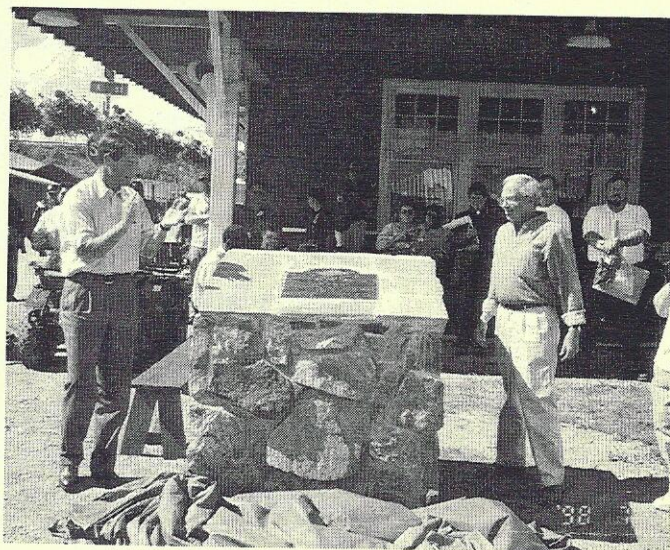
(continued from previous page) Mr. Coghill spoke at the event. His oration touched upon various aspects of early Nenana history, including the WAMCATS (Washington-Alaska Military Cable and Telegraph System) which ran through Nenana beginning in 1901.

A special attendee was 92-year-old Walt Teeland, who as a teenager had been present in Nenana in 1923 when President Harding drove the Golden Spike. (He had been working, at the time, as a clerk in Coghill's Store.) Walt joined Governor Knowles, and a selected ARRC employee, in re-driving the Golden Spike.

A special railroad monument was dedicated at the event, along with a time capsule to be buried in the monument with enclosed items to be opened on the 100th anniversary. The plaque on the monument reads, "In honor of the men and women who built it, and those who operate it for the people of Alaska."



Emcee John Binkley, speaking at the celebration. Walt Teeland, at front left, was in Nenana when Pres. Harding drove the original Golden Spike.



Governor Knowles and Bill Sheffield unveil the 75th anniversary dedication monument next to the historic Nenana railroad station.

JOIN US AND PRESERVE ALASKA'S HISTORY!

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

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

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

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

CONCESSIONAIRE SOUGHT FOR INDEPENDENCE MINE S.H.P.

(from the *Anchorage Daily News*, August 30, 1998)

A search has begun to find a concessionaire to run Independence Mine State Historical Park, according to the Alaska Division of Parks and Recreation. A public review, and an analysis of options for keeping the park running, concluded that the facility would be most efficiently operated by concession. But before soliciting for bids, the state is going to try to 1) raise the money to stabilize the park's deteriorating historic buildings, 2) upgrade the Hatcher Pass Road from the Motherlode Restaurant to the park's parking lot, and 3) seek a land exchange "to secure legal access to the underground mine tunnels adjacent to the park so that the successful bidder can offer underground mine tours," according to a press release. The owner of those tunnels has expressed interest in a land swap, and park officials think underground tours could help a concessionaire generate revenue. "Our goal," Alaska State Parks director Jim Stratton said, "is to partner with a business that can maintain the historic buildings at Independence Mine through revenue generated from services such as tours, food, and lodging." For more information, call Stratton at 269-8700.

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