

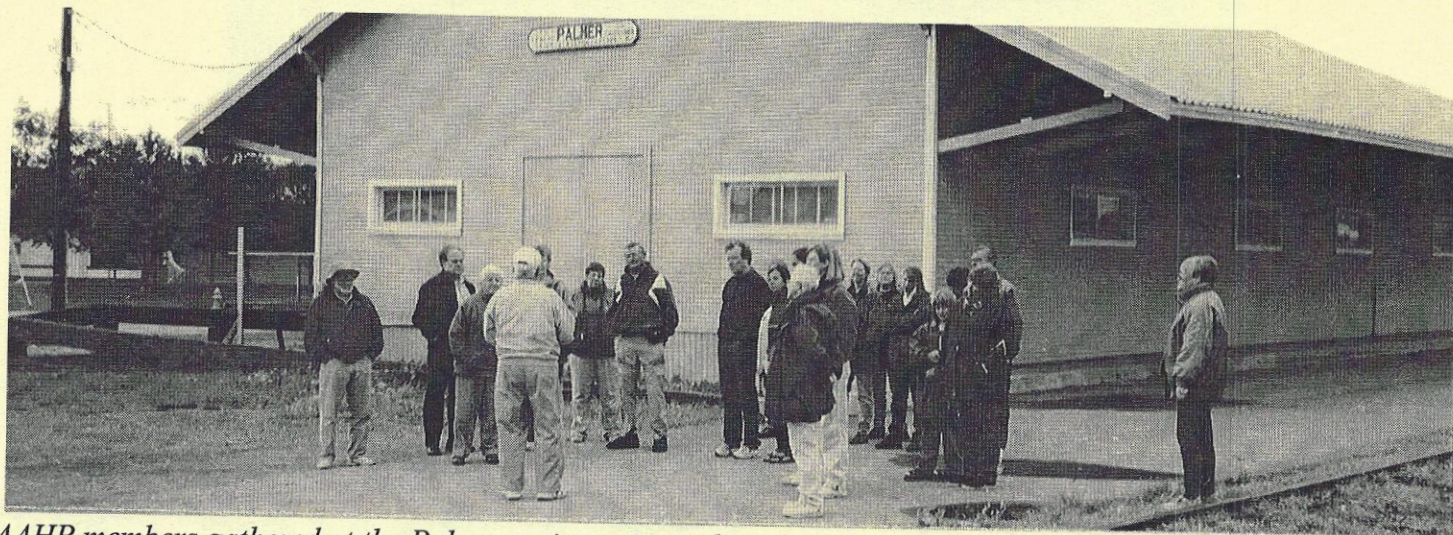
# THE ALASKA ASSOCIATION FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

645 West Third Avenue, Anchorage, Alaska 99501-2124

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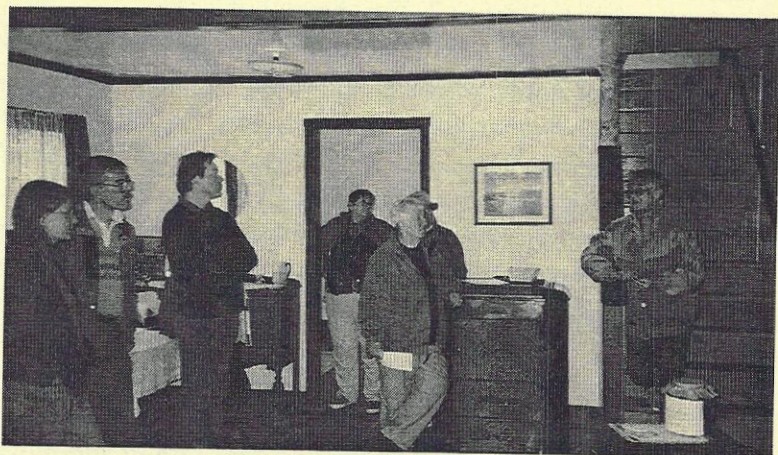
## SUCCESSFUL AAHP PICNIC HELD IN PALMER



*AAHP members gathered at the Palmer train station to hear longtime resident Wayne Bouwens (with his back to the camera) speak. Jeri Keeling (at extreme right) and Wayne led AAHP members on a walking tour.*

An enthusiastic crowd of 25 to 30 preservationists descended on Palmer at the noon hour on July 25 for our organization's annual picnic. A good time was had by one and all; most of the attendees hailed from either the Anchorage or Mat-Su areas, although a few tourists (some from as far away as Arizona and New York) took part as well.

As announced, the picnic would be held "rain or shine," and the crowd was not disappointed. (It rained later that afternoon...) After a huge potluck lunch, which was devoured under a shelter near the old railroad depot, participants headed off on a walking tour of the colony complex. Jeri Keeling and Wayne Bouwens of the Palmer Historical Society led the way. Both had lived in Palmer during the early days of the federally-sponsored Matanuska Colony experiment, and they had remained to watch the Palmer area grow and prosper. Later in the walking tour, Janet Kincaid invited us into the Colony Inn, where she described the history of the old teachers' dormitory and the restoration process. The tour ended at the Colony House, which the Palmer Historical Society has preserved as a remarkable re-creation of an early colonist's residence.

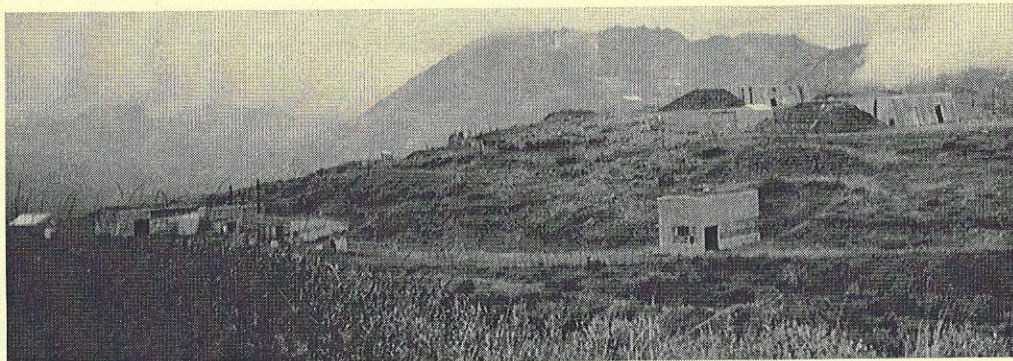


*Jeri Keeling (right) speaking at the Colony House.*

Many thanks go to Ms. Keeling, Mr. Bouwens, Ms. Kincaid, and all those who helped with the potluck. See you next year!

## NIKE SITE COMMITTEE FORMED

The United States Army is organizing an Advisory Task Force to help determine viable options for the management and stewardship of the Nike Site Summit, a National Register of Historic Places Cold War-era property on Fort Richardson. The committee, which began work in mid-September, is comprised of citizens representing interested organizations throughout the community, including the Alaska Association of Historic Preservation.



*The Nike Site Summit complex, located atop Mount Lyon near Anchorage.*

According to Judy Bittner, State Historic Preservation Officer, the Army is seeking partnerships with public and private entities in order to help preserve their historical properties. Ms. Bittner was especially enthusiastic about discussions with the Hon. Mahlon (Sandy) Apgar, Assistant Secretary of Army Installations, Logistics and Environment. "He was in Alaska and had meetings on historic resources as well as environmental programs," she said. "He was very interested in going to the Nike Site and was pleased with our Task Force. He thought it fit very well into his vision of engaging public, private and non-profit partners to explore creative uses for historic buildings." The Army holds the nation's largest portfolio of historic properties, according to the Army's brochure, *Managing the Army's Historic Properties*. Approximately 12,000 Army properties are listed on or are eligible for the National Register of Historic Places; the Nike Site was placed on the National Register in July 1996.



*The interior of the Nike Site buildings contain a number of paintings, most of which are in a woeful state of disrepair.*

The Nike Site sits atop Mount Lyon near the Arctic Valley ski area in the Chugach Mountains. It was active from 1959 to 1979, and residents who lived in Anchorage prior to 1964 may remember watching live firings from the site. The Mount Lyon facility was one of three Nike sites built in the Anchorage area and one of eight in the state of Alaska. Of those eight, this is the only remaining facility.

## ALASKA'S OFFICE OF HISTORY AND ARCHEOLOGY TO MOVE

Alaska's Office of History and Archeology, along with other State of Alaska offices now located in the Anchorage's Frontier Building (at 36th Avenue and A Street), will be moving sometime during December 1999. These offices will be moving to the old Bank of America Center at 550 West Seventh Avenue, which is being renamed the Atwood Building in honor of the late Robert Atwood, longtime publisher of the *Anchorage Times*. The OHA will be occupying a portion of the 13th floor of the new building.

Please note that the telephone numbers and e-mail addresses for the various OHA staff will not change.

## AAHP HOLDS FIRST TELECONFERENCE, REACHES OUT TO ALL ALASKA PRESERVATIONISTS

As many of you know, one of the biggest difficulties that our organization has faced over the years has been one of communication among our members, and more specifically between the various members of our Board of Directors. We in the AAHP have always attempted to serve as a statewide preservation organization, and we have always courted interested preservationists no matter where they have resided. We have indeed been *very* fortunate over the years to have members from both the Mat-Su Valley and the Kenai Peninsula—and even the Copper River Basin!—who have braved the highway several times a year in order to attend our meetings. We naturally applaud those efforts, but it should not have to be nearly this difficult for members outside of Anchorage to take part in the Board meetings. And as you know, many other statewide organizations are able to successfully operate by using teleconferencing equipment.

In order to address the need for better organizational communication, we purchased a teleconferencing unit over the summer. On September 7, AAHP successfully held its first Board of Directors' meeting by teleconference. And we fully intend to teleconference ALL of our future Board meetings.

Given this action, we would like to ask each of you—particularly those of you who have an interest in preservation but live outside of Anchorage—to consider running for our Board of Directors. AAHP, at this time, has a few Board vacancies, and one-third of the present Board's terms will expire at the end of this calendar year. SO ... If you have an interest in serving on the Board or know someone that you think would be good as a Board member, please let AAHP know.

## NEW ANCHORAGE FIRE STATION SITE AVOIDS HISTORIC NEIGHBORHOOD

The Anchorage Municipal Assembly, after considering a range of alternative sites, has decided to locate its new fire station near the corner of Fourth Avenue and A Street, just east of the downtown business district.

The city's current fire station, at Seventh and C, was built in 1962. It has long been considered too small, and voters passed bond propositions in both the 1998 and 1999 to fund a new station. In mid-June, however, city land manager Larry Houle issued a list showing three possible locations for the new station. One of those locations inflamed local preservationists because it would have necessitated razing much of a block—located just east of the Anchorage Museum of History and Art—that is comprised of older (1940s and 1950s-era) residential buildings.

AAHP, in concert with other organizations and individual, protested the proposed action, and *Anchorage Times*, on July 5, also wrote an editorial opposing the move, noting that the neighborhood would be “a goofy place to put a huge fire headquarters.” In reaction to those protests, municipal officials took another look at the proposal and decided to select property, at Fourth and A, that had not previously been considered on the three-site list. The final site chosen by the city has no significant historical structures.

## “RESTORE AMERICA” TELEVISION PROGRAM VISITS ALASKA

Bob Vila's show, “Restore America” on the Home and Garden television network (HGTV), is in the midst of a 50-state tour. Alaska was one of the first tour stops, and in early June the show's film crew arrived.

The crew spent some two weeks in the state. It visited three cities along the Railbelt (Seward, Anchorage, and Fairbanks) plus Nome. Specific sites visited included the Seward Railroad Depot, which was restored in 1996 by the Chugach Alaska Corporation; the Oscar Anderson House, which was restored in 1978-82 by Sam Combs and is now operated by Anchorage Historic Properties, Inc.; the colonial-style Ringstad House (the F. E. Manager's Home) in Fairbanks; and Saint Joseph's Church in Nome, which was restored by ECI Hyer, Inc.

The show aired on HGTV on September 5. Mary Flaherty, who worked with the film crew during its visit to the Oscar Anderson House, was impressed with the crew's efforts and was pleased at the outcome. The crew, admittedly, was at first surprised that the show would be spotlighting such a recently built home. Once a few facts about the area's history were presented, however, the crew gained a renewed appreciation of the difficulties presented both in the initial house construction process and in the four-year restoration process as well.

# ACTION ALERT

## for Historic Preservation Funding

Let Congress know TODAY about your commitment to historic preservation!

**THE SITUATION IS THIS:** Both the House of Representatives and the Senate have passed an Interior Appropriations bill which includes Fiscal Year 2000 funding for the Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) and the Advisory Council for Historic Preservation. The House bill provides more money than the Senate version for both the Fund and the Advisory Council. The final funding level will be decided in a House-Senate conference committee.

**WHAT CAN YOU DO?** Alaska's own Senator Ted Stevens has been appointed to the conference committee. We in the preservation community urge you to CALL, FAX, or E-MAIL Senator Stevens and ask him to adopt the House level of funding for the Historic Preservation Fund and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation.

**WHEN IS THE DEADLINE FOR COMMENTS?** Please have your comments to Senator Stevens's Washington office by **Monday, October 11.**

**ITEMS YOU MAY WISH TO CONSIDER IN YOUR LETTER ...** The increases called for by the House are very modest: only \$1 million for the states, \$3.4 million for Historically Black Colleges and Universities, and \$400,000 for the Advisory Council. Also: the Historic Preservation Fund is authorized at \$150 million per year, and the House appropriation is well under this ceiling. Indeed, the HPF has always operated at a mere fraction of its authorization, and EVERY LITTLE BIT COUNTS. On a shoestring budget, the HPF and all its parts have done extraordinary work. At a minimum, the HPF deserves this extra \$4.8 million in the year 2000.

### TO CONTACT SENATOR STEVENS:

by telephone: (202) 224-3004

by fax: (202) 224-2354

by email: [senator\\_stevens@stevens.senate.gov](mailto:senator_stevens@stevens.senate.gov)

### 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  
\_\_\_ Individual .....\$15  
\_\_\_ Family .....\$25  
\_\_\_ Non-Profit.....\$25

\_\_\_ Contributor .....\$50  
\_\_\_ Friend .....\$100  
\_\_\_ Sponsor .....\$250  
\_\_\_ Benefactor .....\$500

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

If you have one, what is your **email address**? \_\_\_\_\_

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

## **FIRE DESTROYS HISTORIC HOTEL IN FORT YUKON** (reprinted from the *Anchorage Daily News*, September 26, 1999)

A century-old building that began as a military barracks and later became a key part of Fort Yukon's social life and skyline was destroyed by fire late last week. The Sourdough Hotel, run down and abandoned for more than a year, burned early Thursday.

Fire Chief Grafton Bergman said that by the time his crews reached the hotel, it was too late to beat back the flames. "That thing was red hot by the time I got there," he said. Bergman said the fire that claimed the former snack bar, pool hall, coffee shop and restaurant is still under investigation. He said the blaze was not electrical because the building was not wired, leaving him to suspect carelessness or arson.

The building was raised in 1899 as an officer's quarters at Fort Egbert in Eagle, roughly 150 miles up the Yukon River from Fort Yukon. When Fort Egbert closed in the mid-1920s, Johnny Olson, an enterprising Swedish miner and prospector, and his brother split the building in



five pieces to float downstream. Olson arrived in Fort Yukon in 1926 with three of the five pieces, the other two having been lost on gravel bars. Olson pieced the surviving portions of the building together, adding on other scraps to establish a roadhouse that became a center of Fort Yukon social life for more than 70 years.

Mae Glazer, a lifelong resident of Fort Yukon, said that whenever she returned by plane, her eyes sought out the landmark. "Flying in from almost any direction, that's the building that you first see," Glazer said. "It just seems strange that I won't be seeing it anymore." Glazer said she awoke early Thursday to knocking at her door as residents rallied to help protect a neighboring home from the fire. Bergman said that that home was badly damaged by volunteers saved it.

Joan Antonson, a historian with the state Office of History and Archaeology in Anchorage, worked to get the building on the National Register of Historic Places in December 1997 and said plans to restore the building were in the works. Antonson said the roadhouse was the first Fort Yukon building to be documented on the registry.

## **MILLENNIUM PROJECT PRESERVES NATIONAL TREASURES** (adapted from the *Anchorage Daily News*, July 4, 1999)

The effort to restore the original Star-Spangled Banner is the centerpiece of a larger national effort to mark the millenium by rescuing endangered national treasures. Under the Millenium Project—a partnership between the White House and the Department of the Interior with the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities—federal grants are being offered to the states to match money raised locally to preserve artifacts, documents, monuments and sites that have played an important role in U.S. history.

According to a May 1999 list issued by the "Save America's Treasures" organization, 73 projects had been designated thus far by the partnership. Perhaps because of the demand for private-sector funding in the restoration efforts, only 17 of those 73 projects (23.2%) were located west of the Mississippi River, even though more than half of America's population lives in the west. And curiously enough, more than half of the projects designated in the western U.S. were located in just two states: California and New Mexico. No projects were awarded to projects in Alaska, nor to those in the two states (Washington and Idaho) that are located closest to Alaska's borders.

It is hoped, in the future, that Alaska and other lightly-populated western states will be considered to a greater degree when lists of "national" preservation projects are being considered.

## **ANCHORAGE RAILROAD DEPOT DESIGNATED NATIONAL REGISTER PROPERTY; PETERSBURG VOTES FOR A PRESERVATION ORDINANCE**

The Anchorage Depot was placed on the National Register of Historic Places on August 27, 1999. It joins 22 other National Register Properties in Anchorage and 300 in Alaska.

Construction on the Moderne style concrete building was begun in 1941, immediately before the United States became actively involved in World War II. Construction materials were scarce in Anchorage during that time, and the depot's completion in 1942 illustrates the importance of the railroad to Alaska and the United States. Two-story additions were built on the east and west ends in 1948. The depot replaced a smaller, wooden building that had been hastily constructed in 1915. Upon completion, the depot joined a growing number of permanent structures that had likewise replaced wooden buildings, such as Old City Hall (1936) and the Federal Building (1939), both of which are also on the National Register.

In other preservation news, the Petersburg City Council, on September 7, voted 6-1 on its first reading to pass a preservation ordinance. The city, by so doing, hopes to become a Certified Local Government, which makes the city eligible for various forms of historic preservation funding.

### **THE LATEST NEWS ABOUT OUR MEMBERSHIP**

AAHP wishes to express its sincere appreciation to our 249 members for your support. Beginning this month, any new or renewed memberships we receive will apply to the year 2000.

Geographically, 161 members (65% of the total) are from Southcentral Alaska (of which 115 are from Anchorage), 33 (13%) are from Southeast Alaska (17 from Juneau), 31 (12.5%) are from Interior (17 from Fairbanks), 17 (6.8%) are from out of state, and the remaining 7 are from Alaska's western and southwestern regions. Categorically, a plurality of members (44%) have joined at the Individual level, followed by Family (25%), Non-Profit (15%), Contributor (3.2%), and Friend (3.2%), with Student and Corporate members comprising the remainder.

Renewal notices for membership in calendar year 2000 will be mailed out next month.

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