

# Preservation Alaska

Alaska Association for Historic Preservation, Inc.

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# **2023 Ten Most Endangered Historic Properties**

**Preservation Alaska**  
Alaska Association for Historic Preservation, Inc.







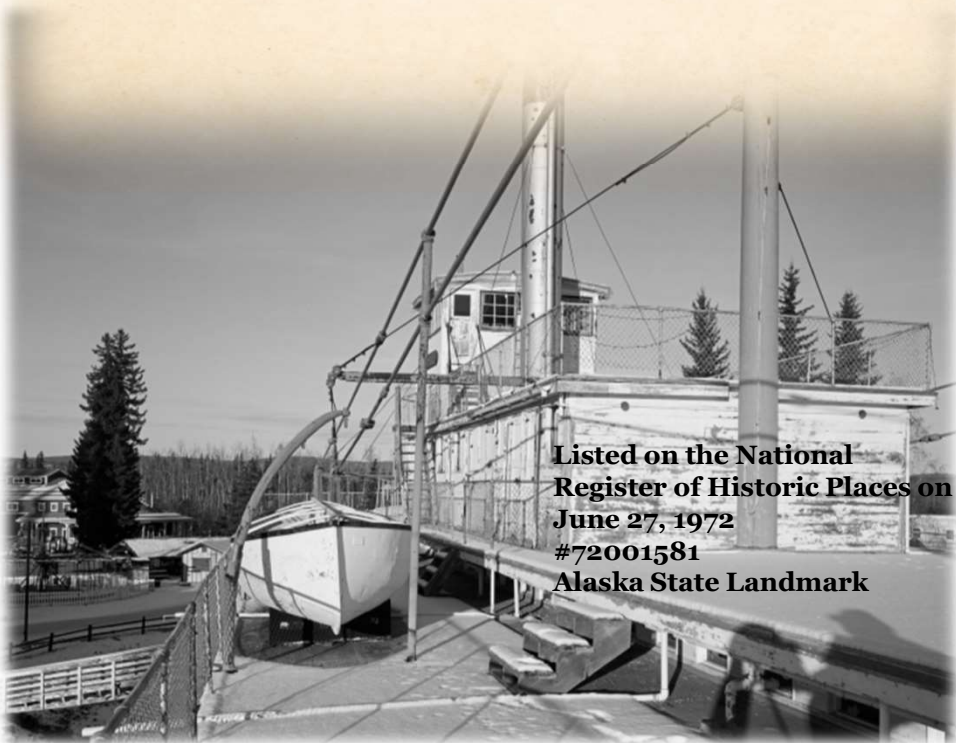
# Steamer Nenana

## AKA SS Nenana

Fairbanks  
[FriendsOfSSNenana.com](http://FriendsOfSSNenana.com)

The Steamer Nenana is a five-deck, wooden-hulled western rivers style steamer sternwheeler packet built from clear, vertical grain, kiln-dried fir. The ship is a blend of steam, wood, and paddlewheel technology that is 237 feet long and weighs a total of 1128 tons.

The steamer was commissioned and built in 1932, by the Alaska Railroad. She was prefabricated in Seattle, assembled in Nenana, launched into service in 1933, and run by the Alaska Railroad. The original design contained 24 berths, a dining salon, a smoking room, an observation room, a kitchen, a bakery, and men's and women's bathrooms along with passengers' and officers' rooms with porcelain sinks and electric lights.



**Listed on the National  
Register of Historic Places on  
June 27, 1972  
#72001581  
Alaska State Landmark**



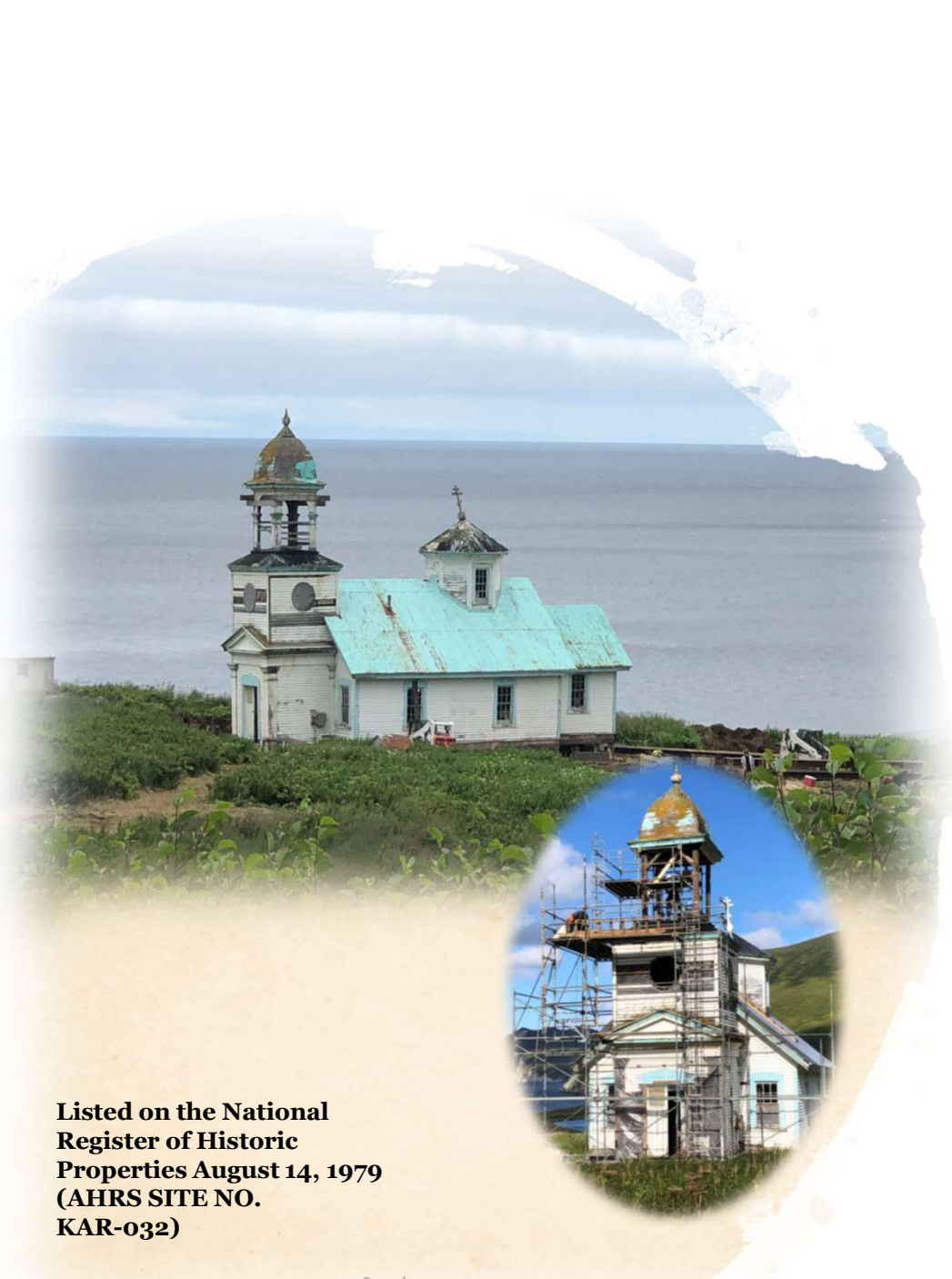
# Ascension Church of Our Lord Chapel

at Karluk on Kodiak Island  
[RossiAlaska.org](http://RossiAlaska.org)

The Ascension of Our Lord Orthodox Church was constructed in 1888 and is believed to be the second Orthodox church in Karluk, the first Russian post on the western side of Kodiak Island. The church was situated inland from the cliff's edge high above the mouth of the Karluk River and Shelikof Strait. In August 2021, the church was lifted from its foundation and moved about 80 feet inland for a temporary placement. Although the church does not currently have a resident priest, a visiting priest conducted services throughout the year prior to the move to its temporary location.

Early photos illustrate the church was built above the original village; however "in 1978, the village nearly washed away during a winter storm that reshaped the mouth of the Karluk River, collapsed a bridge, and destroyed the local fuel supply." (M. Graham: *Hope for a Haven*, Saving Places National Trust for Historic Preservation. Summer 2021.)

Listed on the National  
Register of Historic  
Properties August 14, 1979  
(AHRS SITE NO.  
KAR-032)





# Chitina Emporium

Chitina, Alaska

The building has a long history of being an anchor to the community, including a hotel, bar, retail store, and power/heating source for the community. (Originally it had a Copper River and NW Railroad sternwheeler's boiler used to heat the building with lines to other buildings. Currently, the building is uninhabitable, and the foundation wood posts are collapsing. The lots behind the building are wetlands. The L4 beside the building is vacant. The Art Gallery building and hotel buildings have been restored and are stable. Chitina is a vital link to the St. Elias NP, and a historic location of interior coastal indigenous connections. When the railroad was operating, Chitina was a junction connecting the stagecoach and later road to the interior and Fairbanks.

The building foundation posts have failed in many locations. The side of the building is bulging above the second-floor ceiling joists on one side. Windows are broken. The metal roof is OK, but the access cover was open for some time resulting in water damage to the second floor and ceiling below. The basement is dirt and subject to flooding, which has caused many of the posts supporting the building to fail. The building is in critical condition, unsafe to be in, and needs to be quickly stabilized to avoid further damage that might make it impossible to salvage.





# Eldred Rock Lighthouse

near Haines  
**EldredRockLighthouse.org**

Eldred Rock Lighthouse sits on a very small island located approximately 17 miles south of the town of Haines, Alaska. The island is the last (southernmost) in a string of islands extending south from the Haines peninsula. Built in 1905, Eldred Rock Lighthouse is the oldest original lighthouse in Alaska and the only remaining octagonal frame lighthouse of those built between 1902-1905. It is the only station not rebuilt. It was established because of the many shipwrecks nearby especially during the 1898 Gold Rush, when Lynn Canal was in heavy use.

Eldred Rock Lighthouse has been unmanned for over 45 years, and as a result the buildings have fallen into disrepair and are considered endangered. The primary reasons for this state of disrepair are due to environmental and logistical challenges and no agency funding to maintain the lighthouse. The extreme weather and environmental conditions greatly contribute to the rate of deterioration. Logistically, the island is very difficult and expensive to access. This makes getting resources—humans, building supplies, etc.—to the island very difficult. The concrete base of the lighthouse is spalling and needs quite a bit of attention.



ER Lighthouse 2022 South Face, directors Oliver Price and Sue York; Jen Davis photographer



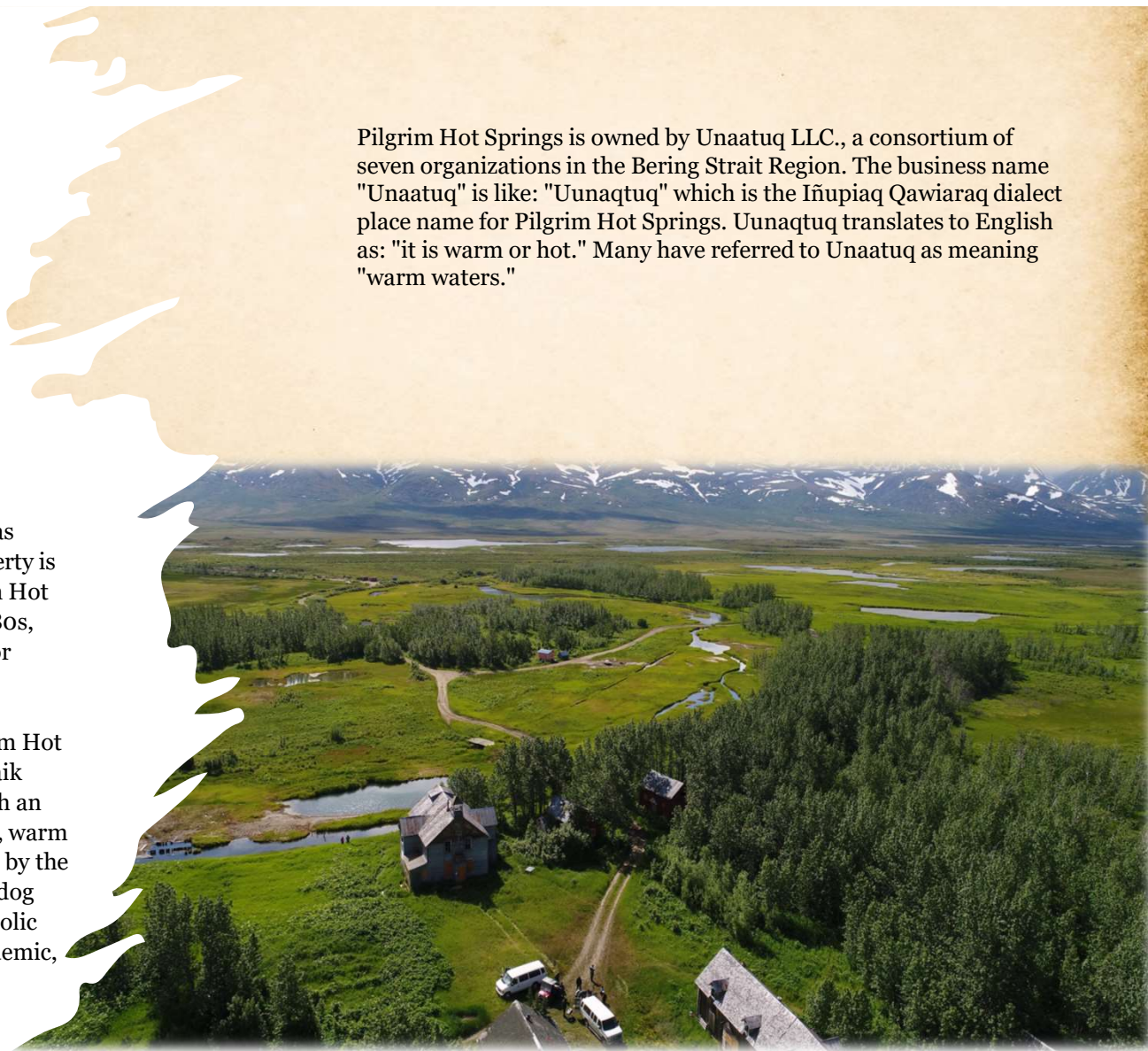
# Pilgrim Hot Springs

**60 miles north of Nome**  
**[www.PilgrimHotSprings.com](http://www.PilgrimHotSprings.com)**

Pilgrim Hot Springs is located on a 320-acre tract of land that was originally surveyed as a homestead in the early 1900's. The property is accessible during three or four months of the year via the Pilgrim Hot Springs access road, a 7 mile "frontier" road built in the early 1980s, which connects the property to the Kougarok Road (Nome-Taylor Highway).

A sub-Arctic oasis located in remote Northwestern Alaska, Pilgrim Hot Springs is nestled between Hen and Chickens Hill and the Kigluaik Mountain range. [Kiglawait] The property is a lush tree oasis with an abundant geothermal resource. Pilgrim boasts hot bathing pools, warm fertile soil, and a unique history including pre-contact utilization by the Indigenous population, Alaska Gold Rush history, railroads and dog sled trails, early aviation and military use, its time used as a Catholic mission and orphanage for the victims of the 1918-1919 Flu Pandemic, agricultural use, as well as its most recent use as a recreation destination and tourist attraction.

Pilgrim Hot Springs is owned by Unaatuq LLC., a consortium of seven organizations in the Bering Strait Region. The business name "Unaatuq" is like: "Uunaqtuq" which is the Iñupiaq Qawiarq dialect place name for Pilgrim Hot Springs. Uunaqtuq translates to English as: "it is warm or hot." Many have referred to Unaatuq as meaning "warm waters."







# Pioneer Hall

## Ketchikan



Pioneer Hall is a two-story, wood frame building on post foundations constructed over bedrock. The building footprint is approximately 1,786 sf. It has a steep, modified hip roof with an unfinished attic. The building has been altered on all four elevations and in its interior. Modifications were made to its Front Street facade in its early years and continued to be made to visible facades along Pioneer Way. It was built on a prominent site overlooking the waterfront and its 50' flagpole was a beacon for early seafarers coming to Ketchikan.

As the town grew rapidly in the years that followed, many—now historic—buildings began to surround Pioneer Hall. By the late 1920s, the commanding view earlier enjoyed by the Pioneer Hall was eclipsed by larger buildings including the Gilmore Hotel and the City Hall. The building is situated on historic Pioneer Way which is a stairway/pedestrian alley connecting Front Street to Main and Grant Streets.





# Fort William H. Seward Hospital Haines

<https://www.nps.gov/places/fort-william-h-seward.htm>

The Fort Seward Hospital Building is one of the anchor-buildings within the fort. At 10,000 sq. ft., this building is key to the character of Fort Seward. The hospital building was built between 1902-1904. The style of architecture is representative of the popular Neoclassical or Federalist style of the era, which is reminiscent of Greek classical architecture featuring clean lines, cornices and columned porches. The hospital building is one of the largest buildings from the original fort. It has four stories, including a large basement and attic.

Established in 1903, Fort William H. Seward ( "Fort Seward") served as a U.S. military post until 1947 when it was abandoned, sold to a group of WWII veterans and became "Port Chilkoot." The area became a National Historic Landmark in 1978 and was renamed Fort William H. Seward. The military buildings frame a central parade ground with the lieutenant's houses on the top row, the captain's housing on the North side, the soldiers' barracks on the lower side, and the Hospital Building completes the frame on the South side of the parade grounds.



Listed on the National  
Register of Historic Places on  
April 11, 1972  
#72000190

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# Bishop Rowe Chapel

## Arctic Village

The log Bishop Rowe Chapel in Arctic Village is an iconic structure, renowned not only in the sub-Arctic region bordering the East Fork of the Chandalar but indeed, across the state of Alaska. Built by local villagers during the post-WW II era, this extraordinary and unique chapel is the third iteration of a structure that was first created by one of the founding fathers of the village, Rev. Albert Tritt, at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. For decades the chapel, situated in the center of the village, served as a focus of social and communal activity. It was – and is – an homage to Gwich'in identity.

The church has been renovated over the years since it ceased to be used actively in the 1960s (most recently 2002-05) given its relevance and significance to Gwich'in culture and indeed, to the history and heritage of Alaska as a whole. However, given the harsh conditions of the region compounded by a changing climate, a recent *Condition Survey* (Nvision Architecture, 2019) has determined that after two decades, the structure is again endangered and in need of additional maintenance. Unless a series of repairs are undertaken soon, the building could be lost -- this time possibly for good.

**Listed on the National  
Register of Historic Places  
on April 22, 1977  
#77001578  
(AHR Site No. ARC-0561)**







# Bristol Bay Boats

## Naknek

<https://www.bristolbayhistoricalsocietymuseum.com>

This historic collection of 14 wooden Bristol Bay fishing boats that demonstrates the evolution from the days of the sail that began in the 1880's to the first powerboats legally allowed to fish the waters of Bristol Bay in 1951. This unique collection features rare, and one-of-a-kind boats that range from early 1900's sailboats to "Conversions" which are sailboats that have been converted to host gas powered engines and retrofitted with cabins to replace the ridge pole tents formerly constructed with oil skins and wooden oars.

The Conversions range from those with the first small, enclosed cabins and the later version with stand-up cabins. The collection also features several boats built by Bryant, which are some of the first wooden power boats designed at built specifically for our fishery. The collection also includes some of the last models of wooden boats designed and built by American Commercial that were made in the late 1970's before wood was replaced with other construction materials. A keystone in the collection is a fully restored 1932 sailboat, Libby's Koggiung #5, which is fully restored, with sails, and all the riggings, anchor, and a net. [Pronounced Kah-gee-yung] (Historically there was a village site named Koggiung located right by this Libby cannery that was built on the Kvichak River . [Pronounced Kwee-Jack.]





# Hi-Yu Stamp Mill

## Fairbanks

The Hi-Yu Stamp Mill property is a historic property approximately 20 miles Northeast of Fairbanks, Alaska. Situated in the hills and creeks, where many other mines also thrived, the Hi-Yu Stamp Mill remains a testament of historic underground mining in interior Alaska. On the main property is the stamp mill, a large red building, built into the hillside for purposes of utilizing gravity in the milling process. There remains the two Joshua-Hendy 5 stamp batteries, most of the diesel engine, and generator. The jaw crusher still resides in the uppermost part of the mill. Although the property has degraded significantly, and parts have fallen prey to vandalism, it is still one of the best and only surviving examples of early underground mining and milling in interior Alaska.

The gold deposit that the Hi-Yu mill building is situated near, was known as early as 1912, and in one short year an adit had been driven 450 feet. In 1914 the mine was in full production, and a 5-stamp battery was moved from nearby Chatham Creek to process the precious ore.



The Hi-Yu Stamp Mill, which processed lode gold in the Fairbanks Creek area. Photo by John Baeten  
Blog: <https://tinyurl.com/4vdh9xmb>



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## Step Back in Time with Anchorage's only Historic House Museum!

The Oscar Anderson House was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1978, for its architectural significance and for Oscar Anderson's role in the development of early Anchorage. The Oscar Anderson House is a National Trust for Historic Preservation "*Distinctive Destination*" and is the **ONLY** designated historic property in Alaska.





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**Regret goes only one way. The preservation of historic buildings is a one-way street. There is no chance to renovate or to save a historic site once it's gone. And we can never be certain what will be valued in the future. This reality brings to light the importance of locating and saving buildings of historic significance—because once a piece of history is destroyed, it is lost forever.**

*From "Six Practical Reasons to Save Old Buildings"*

*by Julia Rocchi*

<https://savingplaces.org/stories/six-reasons-save-old-buildings#.YjwN-fMJD8>



**PEOPLE  
SAVING  
PLACES**

