

PH0672301

DATA SHEET

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED MAY 31 1977
DATE ENTERED APR 6 1978

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

* *
Harding Railroad Car (AHRS Site No. FAI-103)

AND/OR COMMON

DENALI

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

Alaskaland

___ NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Fairbanks

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Alaska

___ VICINITY OF

STATE

Alaska

CODE
02

Fairbanks Division

COUNTY

CODE
090

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE	
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

City of Fairbanks (907) 452-1881

STREET & NUMBER

410 Cushman Street

CITY, TOWN

Fairbanks

___ VICINITY OF

STATE
Alaska 99701

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Alaskaland Records, City of Fairbanks (907) 452-1881

STREET & NUMBER

410 Cushman Street

CITY, TOWN

Fairbanks

STATE
Alaska 99701

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Alaska Heritage Resources Survey (AHRS)

DATE

26 November 1976

___ FEDERAL STATE ___ COUNTY ___ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Alaska Division of Parks, 619 Warehouse Drive, Suite 210

CITY, TOWN

Anchorage

STATE
Alaska 99501

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE <u>1965</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Pullman passenger-observation car Denali (Alaska Railroad equipment No. X-336) that was used by President Warren G. Harding and his party when he visited Alaska in 1923 had been purchased by the railroad earlier in the year from the Great Northern Railroad.

Pullman cars, the rich man's "yachts on wheels" were first manufactured in 1865. The cars were ornamental, both inside and out. Interiors of the cars were finished in polished wood, well lighted, with plush, comfortable seats that converted into beds. A private bath and observation platform were standard features. Up to thirty people could be accommodated. Fully equipped, a new Pullman Palace Car cost around \$20,000.

The Denali was such a car. Inside, the seats were covered with red upholstery, the car was lighted by a nine-branch candelabra, and the panelling was dark cherrywood. The arched windows had stained glass at the top, the wood exterior painted was green, and the gaudy Tuscan Roman letters were hand-painted.

In 1945 the car was converted to an outfit car. Shortly after, the car was retired and left on a siding at Nenana. The car was refurbished by the railroad in 1959-1960 at a cost of \$2,600 and donated, by request of the Pioneers of Alaska, Igloo No. 4, to the City of Fairbanks.

Restoration work included repainting the exterior green, the lettering yellow, and the original light fixtures and the railing on the observation platform bronze, the ceiling white, and cleaning the panelling. The main part of the car was left empty, but in the front the sleeper compartment seats were rebuilt. In August 1965 the car was moved to Fairbanks, and in 1967 became part of Alaskaland--a park established by the City of Fairbanks in connection with the 1967 Alaska Purchase Centennial.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1923

BUILDER/ARCHITECT Pullman Palace Car Company

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

This compartment-observation Pullman car was part of The Alaska Railroad's "Congressional Special," the train that carried President Harding and his party from Seward to Fairbanks and return during Harding's visit to Alaska in 1923. The primary purpose of the Alaska trip was to drive the golden spike that signified completion of the railroad owned and built by the Federal government, that connected the Interior of Alaska (Fairbanks) with the year-round port (Seward) on the southern coast of the Territory. Harding was the first United States President to visit Alaska. The car, along with two others, the Yukon and the Seward, were actively used on the Alaska Railroad during the 1920's and 1930's. The Denali was briefly used as an outfit car in the 1940's, retired, then restored in 1959 and 1960 and donated to the City of Fairbanks. Located at Alaskaland Park in Fairbanks, the Harding Car is owned and operated by the City of Fairbanks as a visitor information center during the summer months.

Historic Background

Purchased from the Great Northern Railroad in 1923, this Pullman observation-compartment car was brought to Alaska the same year and renamed Denali, the Indian word for the highest mountain in Alaska, Mount McKinley. The car was part of the "Congressional Special" train that July, and used by President Harding and his immediate party when they travelled from Seward to Fairbanks and return.

Harding left Washington, D.C. on a transcontinental tour June 20, 1923, in the midst of the impending debacle of his administration. Travelling by train across the northern half of the United States, the party sailed for Alaska on July 6 from Tacoma aboard the transport Henderson. Stops were made at Ketchikan, Wrangell, Juneau, and unexpectedly at Skagway before the transport reached Seward on July 13. Boarding the Congressional Special, the party travelled from Seward, with a stop at Anchorage and side trip to the Navy-owned and operated coal mines and town at Chickaloon, to Nenana. The President took the controls of Locomotive No. 615 near Wasilla and operated the train for about twenty miles under the direction of Engineer F. W. Brayford, as far as Willow. Mrs. Harding occupied the fireman's side. Later, the white gloves the President wore while driving were sent to Brayford by Mrs. Harding.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See continuation sheet

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than 1

UTM REFERENCES

A	0,6	46,348,0	7190 2,19,05,8,2	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

As platted and located in the Alaskaland overlay, City of Fairbanks.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Joan M. Antonson, Historian

ORGANIZATION

Alaska Historical Commission

DATE

15 March 1977

STREET & NUMBER

3211 Providence Drive

TELEPHONE

(907) 274-4679

CITY OR TOWN

Anchorage

STATE

Alaska 99503

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

William Stenoble

TITLE

Deputy SHPO

DATE

5/27/77

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST:

Charles Johnson

DATE

4/6/78

DATE

4-3-78

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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Outside of Nenana at the Tanana River Bridge, on the hot, sunny Sunday afternoon of July 15, 1923, President Harding drove the golden spike that signified completion of The Alaska Railroad. The golden spike had been purchased by the people of Anchorage as a gift to Colonel Mears, a member of the Alaska Engineering Commission. It was made of 14-carat gold, measured five and a half inches long, weighed fifteen and a half ounces, and was valued at \$600. Several men, including Colonel Steese, Chairman of the Alaska Engineering Commission spoke before the President. Harding's remarks were short and laudatory followed by the golden spike ceremony.

Territorial Governor Scott C. Bone carefully inserted the spike in the hole prepared for it and the President tapped it gently. The golden spike was then withdrawn and an iron spike was substituted. The President missed twice and then drove the final spike--The Alaska Railroad was officially complete. (Prince, p. 528)

The party changed their itinerary while in Fairbanks. Rather than return by automobile over the Richardson Highway to Chitina and travel on the Copper River and Northwestern Railway to Cordova, the party returned to Seward over the route it had come. Reboarding the Henderson, a stop at Valdez with an automobile trip to Keystone Canyon was added. The party stopped at Cordova and took a trip on the Copper River and Northwestern Railway to view Child's Glacier. As scheduled, a visit to Sitka was made before sailing to San Francisco.

On the return trip the President was taken ill. First reports said he had an attack of ptomaine poisoning believed caused by a crab dish served for dinner one evening aboard ship. "Heart symptoms" developed, and all speaking engagements were cancelled. On August 2, 1923 the President died in San Francisco--amid conflicting rumors as to the cause and nature of his illness. One story, reported after Harding's death, connected the itinerary change in Fairbanks with the ensuing events.

While here (Alaska) he (Harding) received a long cipher message from Washington, D.C. The contents of the message, never disclosed publicly, seemed to sap his vitality.

The Denali, with two other Pullman observation cars, the Seward and the Yukon, all purchased by The Alaska Railroad from other roads in the United States, were actively used in Alaska during the 1920's and 1930's when the railroad provided the primary means of transportation in the Territory. In 1945 the Denali was converted to a transport car. Shortly after, it was retired and parked on a siding at Nenana. In 1959 the Pioneers of Alaska, Igloo No. 4 in Fairbanks wrote to the Alaska Engineering Commission asking if they could procure the car, move it to Fairbanks and operate it as a museum. The car was refurbished during 1959 and 1960 by The Alaska Railroad

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and donated to the City of Fairbanks. In 1965 the car was moved to Fairbanks and in connection with the 1967 Alaska Purchase Centennial Celebration was moved to its present site, at Alaskaland Park where it serves as an information center during the summer months.

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PRESIDENTIAL PARTY

THE PRESIDENT

MRS. HARDING

Hon. Geo. B. Christian, Jr.
Secretary to the President

Gen. Charles E. Sawyer, U.S.A.

Mrs. Sawyer

Capt. Adolphus Andrews, U.S.N.
Aide to the President

Major O. M. Baldinger, U.S.A.
Aide to the President

Lieut. Com. Joel T. Boone, U.S.N.

Mr. Judson C. Welliver

Mr. E. W. Smithers

Hon. Hubert Work
Secretary of the Interior

Mrs. Work

Hon. Henry C. Wallace
Secretary of Agriculture

Hon. Herbert Hoover
Secretary of Commerce

Mrs. Hoover

Hon. Frederick H. Gillette
Speaker of the House

Mr. Malcolm Jennings

Mrs. Jennings

Hon. Scott C. Bone
Governor of Alaska

Governor William Spry
Commissioner of the General
Land Office

Admiral Hugh Rodman, U.S.N.

Mrs. Rodman

Col. W. J. Greeley
Chief Forest Service

Mr. N. B. Nichel
Kinograms

Mr. K. W. Fassold
Pathe News.

Mr. John Painter
Fox Film Co.

Mr. E. Carl Wallon
International News Reel Co.

Mr. E. R. Bartley

Associated Press

Mr. George R. Holmes
International News Service

Mr. Lawrence C. Martin
United Press

Mr. James R. Nourse
Universal News Service

Mr. Dave Lawrence

Mr. Richard V. Culahan
New York Times

Mr. Lairs Seibold
New York Herald

Mr. Charles Michelson
New York World

Mr. Carter Field
New York Tribune

Mr. Robt. Barry
Philadelphia Public Ledger

Mr. H. P. Stokes
New York Evening Post

Mr. Grafton S. Wilcox
Chicago Tribune.

Mr. Robert L. Norton
Boston Post

Mr. Charles G. Ross
St. Louis Post Dispatch

Mr. Robert B. Armstrong
Los Angeles Times

Mr. Arthur J. Sinnott
Newark News

Mr. Carl Smith
Oregon Journal

Mr. Ashmun Brown
Seattle Times

Mr. J. Hayden
Detroit News

Mr. Millard J. Bloomer
Co-Operative Newspaper
Syndicate

Mr. F.G. Bonfils
Denver Post

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Mr. Henry Miller Keystone View Co.	Mr. Frank P. Kent Baltimore Sun
Kadel & Herbert Pictorial News	Mr. Joe Mitchell Chapple National Magazine
Mr. Stephen T. Early Associated Press	Mr. G. M. Foote Western Union
Mr. W. H. Shipley Baltimore & Ohio R. R.	Mr. H. M. Bain Secretary to Mr. Wallace
Mr. W. J. Donald Secretary to Mr. Work	Mr. R. L. Jervis
Mr. W. G. Ferguson	Mr. W. A. Landvoigt
Mr. H. L. Barker	Mr. A. D. Drescher
Mr. J. J. Fitzgerald	Mr. J. L. Slye
Mr. Edwick	Mr. Cooper
Mr. M. J. McDermott	Mr. W. R. Jarrell
Mr. S. D. Kemp	Mr. J. W. Murphy
Miss Wynne	Mr. Jos. Sheahan
Mr. Arthur Brooks	Miss Parderly

RAILWAY AND HIGHWAY STAFF

Mr. B. H. Barndollar	Examiner of Accounts
Mr. F.A. Hansen	Eng. of Maint. and Construction
Mr. F. C. Ferrell	Master Mechanic
Mr. J. T. Cunningham	Superintendent of Transportation
Mr. C. L. Mason	Assistant to the Chairman
Mr. A. Haag	General Storekeeper
Mr. A. B. Cummings	Mgr. Hotel and Dining Car Service
Mr. H. L. Watson	Asst. Supt. River Boats
Mr. Ike P. Taylor	Supt. Road Commission, Fairbanks
Mr. Abe McKinnon	Supt. Road Commission, Richardson
Mr. T. H. Huddleston	Supt. Road Commission, Valdez
Mr. Frank Shipp	Supt. Road Commission, Chitina
Capt. L. B. Parsons,	S.C. Communications, Cable, Radio, Wire

ROADMASTERS

Mr. Geo. W. Calwell	Seward to Anchorage
Mr. James Breenan	Anchorage to Curry, incl. Chickaloon
Mr. J. K. Moore	Curry to Julius
Capt. C. G. Jeces	Julius to Fairbanks and Chatanika

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DISPATCHERS

Mr. D. B. Rose	Chief Dispatcher
Mr. M. A. Perry	
Mr. H. L. Hugg	
Mr. E. M. Taylor	
Mr. Ross P. Cole	

ENGINE AND TRAIN CREWS

Mr. A. O. Adams	Traveling Engineer
Mr. F. W. Brayford	Engineman
Mr. Herbert Beebe	Fireman
Mr. G. L. Jenkins	Conductor
Mr. G. N. Woodard	Brakeman
Mr. E. G. Jones	Brakeman
Mr. C. M. Eckmann	Baggageman
Mr. Stuart Gordon	Electrician

EQUIPMENT

Baggage Car
Business Car B-1
Coach (Smoker)
Sleeper "Fairbanks"--14 sections
Sleeper "Talkeetna"--10 sections
Sleeper "Anchorage"--10 sections
Compartment-Observation Car "Kenai"
Diner "McKinley Park"
Compartment-Observation Car "Denali"

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Alaska Engineering Commission
1915- Files, Anchorage, Alaska.
pres.

Brown, C. M.
1975 The Alaska Railroad: probing the interior. History and
ms Archaeology Series No. 15, Alaska Division of Parks,
Anchorage.

Jones, Jenk
1960 Time is catching up with Alaska Railroad 'queens.' The
Anchorage Times, 26 April, p. 8.

Prince, Benadine LeMay
1964 The Alaska Railroad in pictures, 1914-1964. 2 vols. Ken
Wray's Print Shop, Anchorage.

Wintehar, Oscar O.
1964 The transportation frontier: 1865-1890. Holt, Rinehart and
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