

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY
RECEIVED MAR 29 1978
DATE ENTERED NOV 7 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 Old Mission House (AHRS SITE NO. FYU-003)
AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER
CITY, TOWN Ft. Yukon
STATE Alaska
VICINITY OF Alaska, at large
COUNTY Yukon-Koyukuk
CODE 02
CODE 290 ✓

3 CLASSIFICATION

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

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Episcopal Diocese of Alaska (907) 452-3040
STREET & NUMBER Box 441
CITY, TOWN Fairbanks
STATE Alaska

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Bureau of Land Management
STREET & NUMBER 1028 Aurora Dr.
CITY, TOWN Fairbanks
STATE Alaska

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE Alaska Heritage Resource Survey (AHRS)
DATE September 30, 1977
FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS Office of History and Archaeology, Div. of Parks, 619 Warehouse Dr., Suite 210
CITY, TOWN Anchorage
STATE Alaska 99501

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

EXCELLENT
 GOOD
 FAIR

DETERIORATED
 RUINS
 UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

UNALTERED
 ALTERED

CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE
 MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Mission House at Fort Yukon, Alaska, was built by local residents in 1924/25. It is the third structure erected in the village since the first building was put up in the late 1890's. All three were of log construction; the first two of round logs and the present structure of three-sided logs cut at a small local mill. Although the second structure was razed by fire in 1924, its basic design, dimensions, and materials were duplicated in the third and present structure. With few exceptions, the Mission House at Fort Yukon is identical to the one built in 1914 and could be considered to date from the pre-WW I period.

Building materials were provided entirely from local resources and from what could be brought up river by steamer from St. Michael. Labor was locally obtained. The foundation is of mixed concrete poured into wooden forms to outside dimensions of 40 X 35 feet (main structure). The floor is uneven but also of concrete for the most part, except for the rear portion which is of dirt. In the East corner of the basement is a sunken 10,000 gallon concrete cistern which provided the water supply for the Mission House. Evidence of a rough plank form construction is still visible as distinct longitudinal lines in the foundation walls. Still intact is the wood shute entrance and the water cistern filler access.

Above the basement level there are two full floors and a spacious 14 X 38 X 7 1/2 foot attic, which extends under the standard peaked roof the length of the main structure. At the entrance a vestibule or "arctic breezeway" provides a sheltered main access which is flanked on either side by two tiers of small pane windows. The roof is sheeted with corrugated tin over tar paper, and on each side of the roof are two dormer windows which look out from the attic.

To the left of the main structure (facing) is attached a 44 1/2 X 27 1/2 foot two story log room. This addition extends 15 feet beyond the rear wall of the main structure to form a shallow "L", and its roof aligns at right angles with that of the larger main building. In addition to the main entrance there is a rear and a side (East) access, and also the wood storage/basement entrance is located on the West side of the Mission House, at the right angle formed by the main building and the addition.

The outside log walls are natural and calked with moss for insulation. The inside walls are mostly of frame construction, are painted and serve to partition off the various rooms and work areas. The floors are of wood and lanoleum. Since the 1925 reconstruction there have been some additions, some remodeling and some redesignation of room usage (see floor plans attached, fig. 1 and 2). Heating was provided by a huge steam boiler donated by the riverboat Jacob and rafted up river from St. Michael. The old boiler has since been replaced but there is an old wood-fired furnace in the basement addition which dates from the early period. The stone fireplace is still in use. Although the Public Health Service requirements have in some respects altered how the rooms are used from the original floor plans, Dr. Burke's office and bedroom and the attic where Hudson Stuck kept his office, for example, remain just as they were in 1925.

The grounds which surround the Mission House have not changed significantly and one hundred yards behind the Mission House, the remains of the famous Hudson Stuck Memorial Hospital are still visible.

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 checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input checked="" 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 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 1924

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The significance of the Mission House is demonstrated primarily in three inter-related themes that have characterized the history of Alaskan missions: religion, education, and community service.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Fort Yukon's evolution from an isolated trading post to a regional center for missionary activity is exemplary of the emphasis given to the church-school movement of the early part of this century. A combination of secular and spiritual instruction, underpinned by a program of health care, was advocated for villages such as Fort Yukon both as a humanitarian gesture and as a move to facilitate the education of Native peoples in Christian teaching. Fort Yukon will always occupy a prominent place in church history because of the important contributions of the church to this small community, and because of a long history and association with several exceptional men and women who served there and whose dedication to Native peoples and to the Church were substantial and lasting.

The first missionaries came to Fort Yukon in 1861 with the arrival of a priest from the Church of England's Mackenzie River District Missionary Society, Northwest Territories. 1/ Thus, Fort Yukon became the first, and soon the most important, interior Alaskan center for religious instruction. A small church and mission house were erected in 1893 to become the first such establishment in the middle Yukon region. 2/ Missionary work continued under the auspices of the Canadian Church until 1899 when the first American clergy arrived to establish a permanent Episcopal mission. By the turn of the century the Episcopal Church had assumed all responsibility for what was known as St. Stephen's Mission on the banks of the Yukon River.

Within the next ten years two men came to Fort Yukon whose talents and dedication would gain for one international, and for the other local fame and admiration, as well as enhancing the position of Fort Yukon as an important regional center. The first was Archdeacon Hudson Stuck and the second was Dr. Grafton Burke. Under their leadership the Church-Mission House-Hospital complex earned for Fort Yukon the Church's praise as its most significant missionary work in Alaska. 3/ For years these facilities provided the people of Fort Yukon and the surrounding villages with spiritual, medical, and social services until air transportation made such luxuries generally available. Although the Hudson Stuck Memorial Hospital was closed in 1957 and the Mission House was converted into a clinic by the Public Health Service, the Mission House remains an important part of Fort Yukon, Alaska, for reasons supplementary to its medical services.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

(See Continuation Sheet)

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 5 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A

3	588000	7377000
ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

B

3	567000	7303000
ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Section 18, Township 20 North, Range 12 East, NW Quarter, CRM.
 Patent No. 724648. Lat. 66° 34' 34N, Long. 145° 18W. North Bank of Yukon River.

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Jon M. Nielson, Research Historian and Consultant

ORGANIZATION

University of Alaska, Fairbanks

DATE

September 27, 1977

STREET & NUMBER

College

TELEPHONE

479-7587 (wife)

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

Alaska 99701

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 Karschen

TITLE

State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

March 23, 1978

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DIRECTOR, BUREAU OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST *William Karschen*

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

11/7/78

DATE

Oct 16, 1978

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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Old Mission House (AHRS SITE NO. FYU-003)

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 1 of 2

The history of the Episcopal Church at Fort Yukon chronicles three Mission Houses. Two were destroyed by fire, but the third, and present structure, built in 1924, still stands. After the second Mission House burned down in October of 1924, Dr. and Mrs. Burke and the people of Fort Yukon decided immediately to rebuild the Mission House; an indication of how important this building was to the village. 4/ With the help of the Department of Missions, the local people, and two well-known Church-workers, N. J. Nicholson and Moses Cruikshank, the third Mission House was built and on the same site as the 1914 structure. It stands now, as it did then, a hundred yards from the Hudson Stuck Hospital, the ruins of which are still visible from Dr. Burke's old upstairs Mission House office window. Soon after the fire, Mrs. Burke noted in an issue of the Alaska Churchman that the new building was to be an exact duplicate of the one which burned with the exception of two extra feet added to enlarge the kitchen. With great community effort and sense of purpose, the rebuilt Mission House opened its doors in 1925. 5/

During the first three decades of this century, Fort Yukon shipped more fur to the outside world than any other place in Alaska, and nearly all families, both Native Athabascans and non-Natives, were heavily involved in trapping. 6/ With the establishment of the Mission at Fort Yukon, as with the encroachment of other Euro-American institutions, there was a trend toward village centralization. One result of this centralization was that it became less common for families to trap together as a unit. It became more common for the children to remain in town during the winter to attend school, and most of these children went to the Mission House where they were cared for while their parents were away. Then, in the late spring and summer, they would join their parents to go to fish camps or duck hunting. In return the church received whatever could be provided.

A child's tuition or "sponsorship" was often paid for with a quarter of moose or caribou, or so many muskrat or beaver pelts. However, this was not a formal agreement, because the church provided free services for orphans or children whose parents couldn't provide a reimbursement.

Community members in general supported the Mission through hand-made goods and services such as cutting wood and providing food. The Mission House became, in these ways, the center of a unique Indian-white relationship and served an important community function by providing for the children.

In addition to religious instruction, the Mission House offered a boarding-school environment where students attended classes and performed daily chores. Unlike the boarding-schools in many other parts of the United States, the students remained in their home region and familiar environment.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 2 of 2

The elders of Fort Yukon retain fond memories of when they were children and called the Mission House their home for much of the year. Johnny Thomas remembers that when he stayed there each boy had to bring in ten sticks (4 ft. lengths) of wood every day and twenty on Saturdays, to feed the huge steam boiler in the basement. And he also recalls how water was hauled from the Yukon in the summer by wagon and during the winter by sledge. It was then poured through a hose, put down the wood chute, into a 10,000 gallon concrete cistern.

Adelia Williams remembers the four years she spent in the Mission House kitchen as the cook. One of the children's favorite meals was her beef stew which they all ate as one big family, gathered around six tables in a large room. All her supplies, except for a few vegetables, came by barge each spring at break-up. Special times were Halloween, Christmas, and the Fourth of July, because on these days Dr. Burke held huge parties for the children and staff.

The twenty or more children in residence at the Mission House were cared for equally whether they happened to be from Fort Yukon, a village several days journey away, or an orphan with no other guardian. Many of these same children are now the elders of Fort Yukon and names such as Thomas, Carrol, Peters, and Stevens can still be found on the old Mission House ledgers. Above all, there is a feeling that the Mission House is part of Fort Yukon and an important link to its past. Villagers expressed deep regret when the Hudson Stuck Memorial Hospital was torn down. There is now fear that one day the Mission House will also go.

This would be a shame, for St. Stephen's Mission was at one time the most highly endowed and energetic of the programs sponsored by the Episcopal Church in Alaska. 7/ The structure serves as a constant reminder of that period of Church and community history. For the individuals who built and worked at the Mission as well as those who stayed there when they were children, the building has special meaning. It is a reminder of their particular history recalled in stories and the memory of years spent with dedicated church men and church women.

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CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 1 of 1

Elliot, Norman, "An Outline History of St. Stephen's Mission and the Hudson Stuck Memorial Hospital at Ft. Yukon, Within the Arctic Circle," Alaska Churchman Vol. XLVII no. 2 (May, 1953): 13-17; and Merrell, Margaret, "One Hundred Years," Ibid., Vol. LVI no. 3 (Sept. 1961): 12.

Ibid., 15.

Bently, John E, "Annual Report: Ft. Yukon," Ibid., Vol. XXXVIII no. 1 (Feb. 1943): 12.

Waitz, Elsie, C., "Mission Notes: St. Stephens Mission, Ft. Yukon," Ibid., Vol. XIX no. 1 (Jan. 1925): 20-21.

Ibid., 21 (quoting Mrs. Burke).

Bently as cited above.

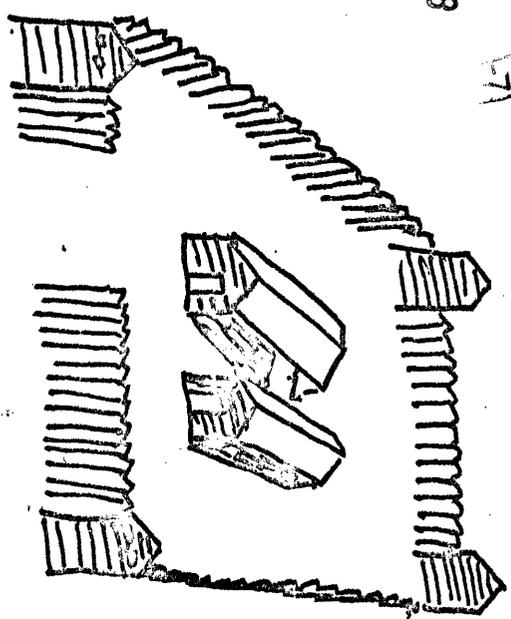
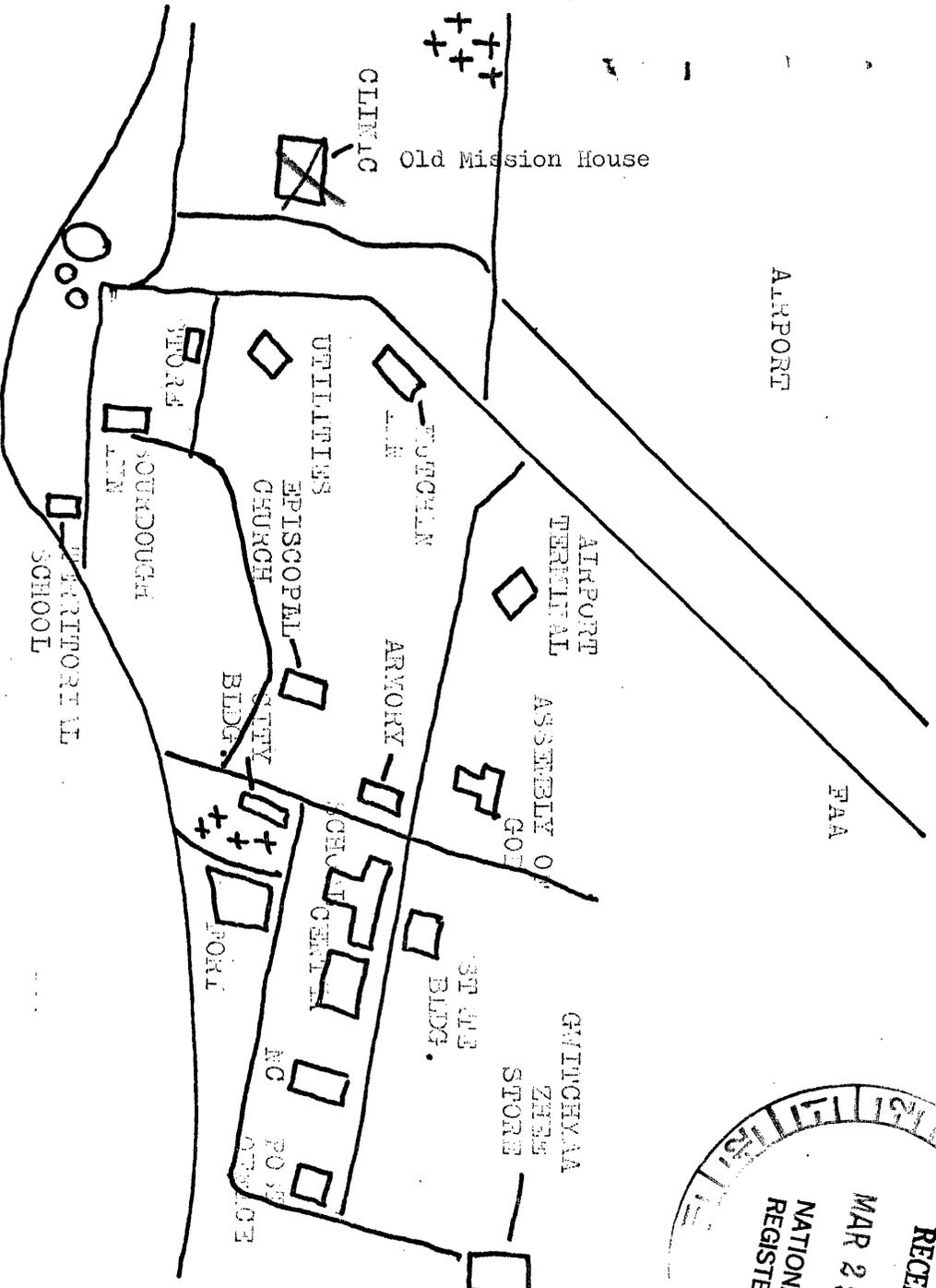
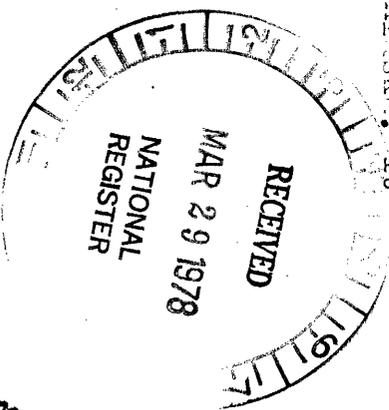
Stuck, Hudson, The Alaska Missions of the Episcopal Church. New York: Domestic and Foreign Missionary Service, 1920: 79.

Fort Yukon was established in 1847 by Alexander Amber Company of the Hudson's Bay Company. It is located about 100 miles north of the Arctic Circle near the point where the Porcupine River flows into the mighty Yukon.

In 1869 it was officially determined that Fort Yukon was indeed in Alaska. Although Hudson's Bay Company moved out, the village continued to grow.

1949 was the year of the flood in Fort Yukon. As a result of the flood, most of Fort Yukon was moved to higher ground. Today, Fort Yukon is the largest Indian village in Alaska. It has a population of 700.

Fort Yukon
 OLD MISSION HOUSE

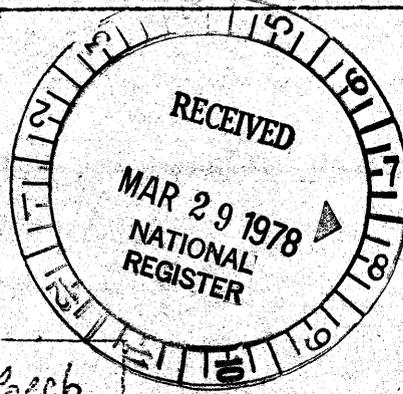


DINGILL ZHUU MUSEUM
 OLD MISSION HOUSE
 Site association with other buildings, Fort Yukon

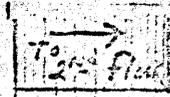
Living Room

NOT TO SCALE

RSD
4/21/77



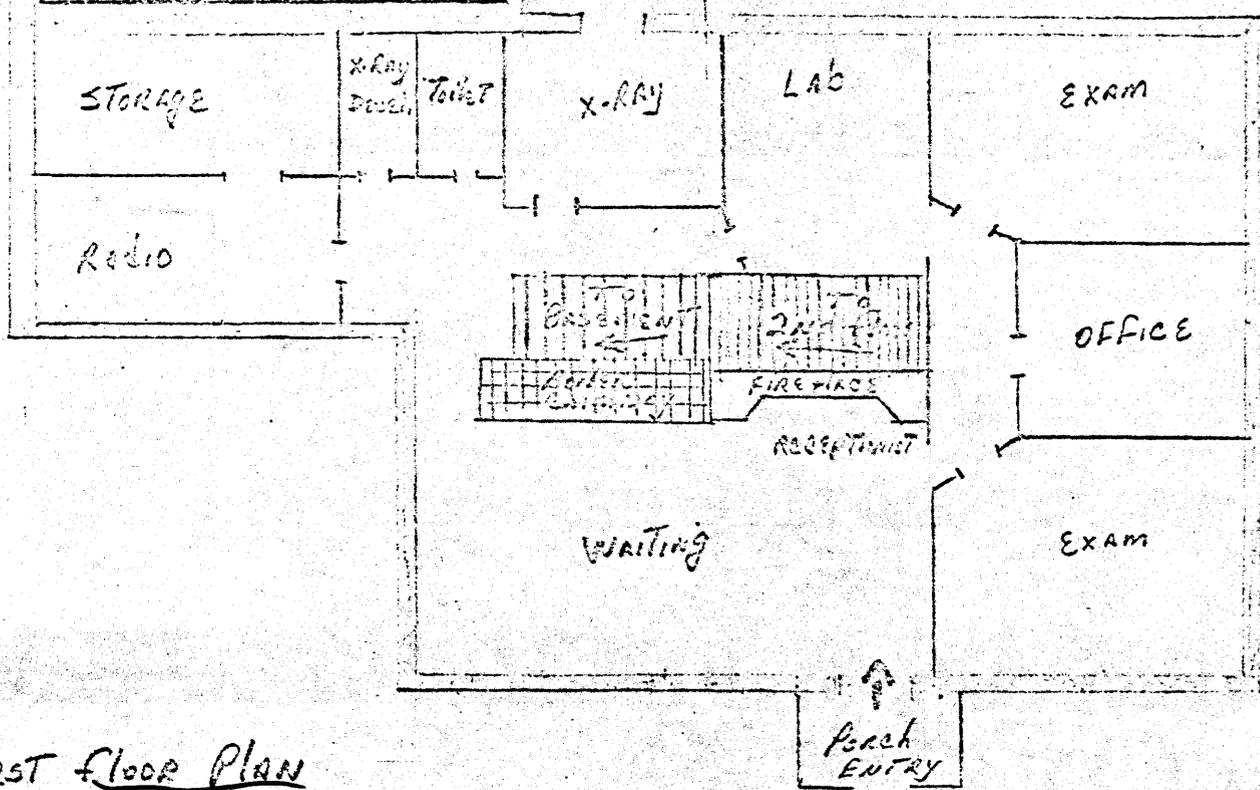
plus
MAINTENANCE Shop
space in basement
GRAVEL FLOOR, NO FINISHED
walls or ceiling.



KITCHEN

Porch

44 1/2' inside



30' inside

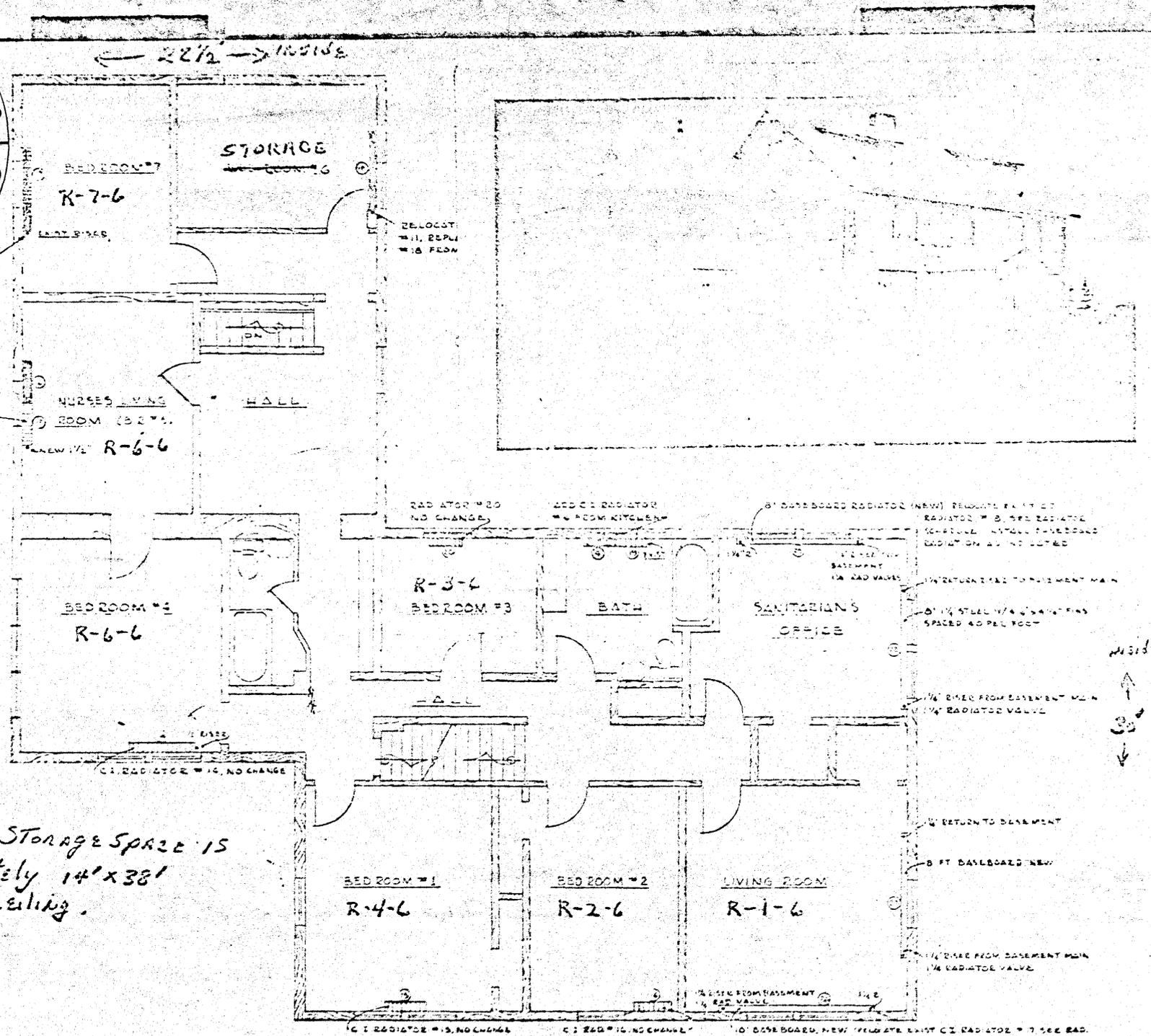
First floor Plan

PHS FT. YUKON
"Old Hudson's Bay Memorial Clinic"

40' inside
12' outside

FIG. 1

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ADD CI RADIATOR #1 FROM BEDROOM #7
 CI RADIATOR #5
 4 1/2' INSIDE

Plus
 ATTIC STORAGE SPACE IS
 APPROXIMATELY 14' X 38'
 WITH 7 1/2' CEILING.

← 40' →

PHS FT. YUKON

FIG. 2

SECOND FLOOR PLAN "OLD HUDSON STOCK MEMORIAL CLINIC"