

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICENATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Seward, Fort, William H. (AHRs Site No. SKG-001)

AND/OR COMMON

Chilkoot Barracks

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

Port Chilkoot

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Haines

VICINITY OF

Alaska

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

Alaska

02

Haines Division 100

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

 DISTRICT BUILDING(S) STRUCTURE SITE OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

 PUBLIC PRIVATE BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

 IN PROCESS BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

 OCCUPIED UNOCCUPIED WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE

 YES: RESTRICTED YES UNRESTRICTED NO

PRESENT USE

 AGRICULTURE COMMERCIAL EDUCATIONAL ENTERTAINMENT GOVERNMENT INDUSTRIAL MILITARY MUSEUM PARK PRIVATE RESIDENCE RELIGIOUS SCIENTIFIC TRANSPORTATION OTHER**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Alaska Indian Arts, Inc. (907)766-2160

STREET & NUMBER

Box 271, Port Chilkoot

CITY, TOWN

Haines

VICINITY OF

STATE

Alaska 99827

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTIONCOURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

District Recorder

STREET & NUMBER

Box D

CITY, TOWN

Haines

STATE

Alaska 99827

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Alaska Heritage Resource Survey (AHRs)

DATE

1970

 FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Alaska Division of Parks, 323 East 4th Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Anchorage

STATE

Alaska 99501

7 DESCRIPTION**CONDITION**

___EXCELLENT
XGOOD
 ___FAIR

___DETERIORATED
 ___RUINS
 ___UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

___UNALTERED
XALTERED

CHECK ONE

XORIGINAL SITE
 ___MOVED DATE_____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Initially, Fort William H. Seward adjoined the Tlingit village, Chilkat, astride a portage between Chilkoot and Chilkat Inlets. Although the location has not changed, surroundings have, and the fort lies a half mile south of the City of Haines, on Portage Cove, a peninsula about one mile wide. A road runs between the town and fort site.

Constructed between 1902 and 1904, Fort William H. Seward was comprised of about 85 frame buildings placed around a central parade ground. ~~The fort was a~~ typical infantry post of the period, although no fortifications were ever erected. Additional land was withdrawn by Executive Orders over the first ten years for clay and water reserves. In 1909, the fort encompassed about 4,410 acres.

Shortly after 1945, Fort Seward was deactivated and the land and buildings were sold to the Port Chilkoot Company. With the intent of developing a resort town, the firm took over the barracks and officers quarters, converting them into hotels, recreation centers, museums, and residences for members of the company. One officers' building has been converted into a rest home.

Today, several buildings have been added to the complex. A building moved to the site functions as a performing arts center, and two buildings have been constructed to depict a Chilkat tribal community house and gold rush era construction. On the periphery of the former military reserve a few modern private residences have been erected. However, a few original frame buildings, such as the officers' quarters, remain in good condition on their original sites. Although altered, these buildings together with the original location serve as an interesting example of an early twentieth century military installation.

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 checked="" 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 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

1902-1945

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Significance

Established by Executive Order on December 31, 1898, Fort William H. Seward, known then as Haines Mission, was the last of a series of eleven military posts established in Alaska during the territory's gold rushes between 1897 and 1904. Founded for the purpose of preserving law and order among gold seekers, the site also provided a U.S. military presence in Alaska during boundary disputes with Canada. Fort Seward was not permanently garrisoned until April, 1902 and from 1904 to 1945 the fort's role was that of a routine military post. Between 1925 and 1940 the fort was the only active military establishment in Alaska. Shortly after the fort was deactivated in 1945-1946, the land was sold to a private enterprise, the Port Chilkoot Company. Today an entertainment area, easily accessible from the City of Haines, is operated by Alaskan Indian Arts, Inc. at the post site and open to the public.

Historical Background

For several months during 1898 an unofficial Army post operated at Haines Mission. The location was selected because traffic over three trails, the Chilkoot, Chilkat, and White Pass, that led to the gold fields, could simultaneously be observed. The War Department decided to turn the post into a permanent fort, and by Executive Order set aside 1,280 acres. Construction at the fort, supervised by Colonel W. P. Richardson, began in July, 1902, and was completed two years later. The name, Fort William H. Seward, in honor of the Secretary of State who negotiated the purchase of Alaska in 1867, was decreed by William H. Taft, then Secretary of War, on March 3, 1904. A typical infantry post of the period, the post was comprised of 85 frame buildings around a square parade ground. Of interest, no fortifications were ever erected at Fort Seward. Three companies of the Third Infantry under the command of Colonel Thomas C. Woodbury, formerly stationed at Camp Skagway, were the first occupants of the fort from July to November 5, 1902.

By Executive Orders on November 21, 1902, November 27, 1905, and April 23, 1909 the original tract was enlarged and land was designated for

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CONTINUATION SHEET

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clay and water reserves. By 1909 the fort encompassed about 4,410 acres. Another government decree, on December 13, 1922, changed the name of the fort to Chilkoot Barracks after the local Indians and in commemoration of one route that many pioneers travelled to settle in Eastern Alaska.

Between 1921 and 1925 all military posts in Alaska, except Fort Seward, were abandoned and remained unoccupied until World War II. Total troop strength in Alaska in 1927 was 255: 14 officers and 241 enlisted men. In December 1939, 11 officers and 286 enlisted men, armed with .45 caliber pistols and 1903 Springfield rifles, were stationed at the Fort Seward garrison. Transportation was limited to one small tugboat.

Fort Seward was deactivated shortly after 1945, and the land and buildings sold to the Port Chilkoot Company.

The property was listed in the National Register of Historic Places on April 11, 1972.