

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received JUN 25 1986

date entered 8-7-86

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic Pilgrim 100B Aircraft AHRS SITE NO. DIL-035

and/or common Pilgrim N709Y, Gillam's Pilgrim

2. Location

street & number Dillingham Municipal Airport not for publication

city, town Dillingham vicinity of

state Alaska code 02 county Bristol Bay Division code 070

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 type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> transportation
			<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property

name Ball Brothers Seafoods (907) 243-4440

street & number 4041 West International Airport Road

city, town Anchorage vicinity of state Alaska 99502

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Bristol Bay Recording District (907) 842-3721

street & number

city, town Dillingham state Alaska 99576

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Alaska Heritage Resources Survey (AHRS) has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date July 20, 1980 federal state county local

depository for survey records Alaska Division of Parks & Outdoor Recreation
P.O. Box 7001

city, town Anchorage state Alaska 99510

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 Pilgrim is a single engine aircraft that was built for commercial purposes. It was manufactured in December of 1931 by the American Airplane and Engine Corporation, at Farmingdale, Long Island, New York. The aircraft was designed as a nine passenger commercial aircraft, Model 100B. The Pilgrim has a Commercial Aircraft License No. NC709Y, and its serial number is 6605.

The Pilgrim has a high, single 58'-span wing, 18" thick at the fuselage. It has a comparatively narrow, separated single-seat cockpit between the cowl and front wing-end. Three windows are placed along the passenger section on each side of the aircraft, with a fourth window at the top of each aft door. A two-wheel landing gear is truss-rigged from the wing. A single landing wheel is located below the rear horizontal stabilizer at the tail section of the aircraft.

A nine cylinder Wright Cyclone cowl-enclosed 575 H.P. radial R1820E engine drives a two-bladed propeller. The motor cowling is encased in metal. The fuselage, wings and tail sections are fabric covered. The Pilgrim has a maximum payload of 1806 lbs. with 150 gallons of fuel, or 2188 lbs. with 86 gallons of fuel. The cargo space includes 476 lbs. of capacity in the forward section, 60 lbs. of capacity under the front cabin seat, and 70 lbs capacity in each of three compartments under the cabin.

In the 1940s, a larger motor was installed in Pilgrim NC709Y which increased the horsepower by about 40 percent. The larger motor and three-blade propeller increased take-off, landing, airspeed and lift performance. The motor and propeller conversion are the only major alterations that have been made on NC7096, the Pilgrim left in Alaska.

The Pilgrim is still flight worthy and continues to fly.

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 checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify)
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		

Specific dates 1936

Builder/Architect American Airplane and Engine Corporation

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The Pilgrim N709Y is significant for its historic role in the development of aviation in Alaska. This aircraft was the first Pilgrim aircraft flown to Alaska and was one of approximately thirteen Pilgrims (out of the 26 that were built) that served as the workhorse of Alaskan aviation in the late 1930s and early 1940s. Pilgrim aircraft were a favorite among Alaskan "Bush Pilots" during this time period when air transportation were establishing superiority over dog teams, steamboats and railroads in transporting passengers and freight in the territory of Alaska. The Pilgrim N709Y is still flight worthy and is the only Pilgrim aircraft still in existence.

The Pilgrim N709Y aircraft was manufactured in 1931 by the American Airplane and Engine Corporation, a division of Aviation Corporation. Between 1931 and 1932, twenty-two of the nine passenger Model A and B Pilgrims were produced for American Airways (later, American Airlines) and four modified versions (known as YIC-24's) were built for the U. S. Army Air Corps. The manufacturer was forced out of business by the Great Depression in 1932. Even though the Pilgrim proved to be a reliable passenger aircraft, American Airways phased out use of the Pilgrims in 1936 in favor of larger, faster aircraft.

Between 1936 and 1939, more than half of all the Pilgrim aircraft (including the military model) were pressed into service in Alaska to serve the rapidly changing needs of air transportation. Many famous early Alaskan bush pilots, such as Harold Gillam, Murrell W. Sasseen, Herbert Nicholson, Lucien "Frank" Barr, and Oscar Winchell, used pilgrim aircraft in general and the Pilgrim N709Y specifically to carry mail, freight and passengers to the isolated communities in Alaska's rugged terrain. During the early 1940s, the Pilgrim aircraft developed a reputation as being ideally suited to Alaska's needs because of its durability and capacity to fly in all-weather conditions. Pilgrim aircraft were used in Alaska well into the 1960s, by which time they were being replaced due to attrition and the availability of more powerful, all-metal aircraft.

The first Pilgrim brought to Alaska, N709Y, was flown to Alaska from the East St. Louis, Illinois area in August of 1936 by veteran bush pilot, Murrell W. Sasseen. The Pilgrim N709Y was initially operated by Alaska Air Express (AAE), until 1940 when AAE merged with Star Air Service. The **Pilgrim** served the Juneau and Anchorage areas, as well as the Kuskokwim and

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of nominated property -1

Quadrangle name Dillingham (A-7) Alaska USGS

Quadrangle scale 1: 63 360

UTM References

A

0	4	5	3	1	1	0	0	6	5	4	4	7	5	0
Zone		Easting						Northing						

B

Zone		Easting						Northing						

C

Zone		Easting						Northing						

D

Zone		Easting						Northing						

E

Zone		Easting						Northing						

F

Zone		Easting						Northing						

G

Zone		Easting						Northing						

H

Zone		Easting						Northing						

Verbal boundary description and justification The aircraft itself.

Currently is kept in a small hangar at the Dillingham airport; when in Anchorage, plane is in the Wein hangar at International Airport, Anchorage; or at Lake Hood Runway.

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
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state	code	county	code
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Rolfe Buzzell, Historian with assistance by: Michael S. Kennedy and Jim Reardon, Alaska Magazine, Anchorage

organization Office of History & Archaeology

date May 15, 1984

street & number P.O. Box 7001

telephone (907) 762-4108

city or town Anchorage

state Alaska 99510

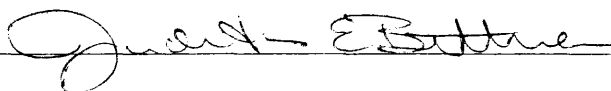
12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

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



title State Historic Preservation Officer

date 6/18/86

For NPS use only

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

for William B. Bushong
Keeper of the National Register

date 8/7/86

Attest:

date

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
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(AHR Site No. DIL-035)

Continuation sheet Pilgrim 100B Aircraft

Item number 8

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received

6/25/86

date entered

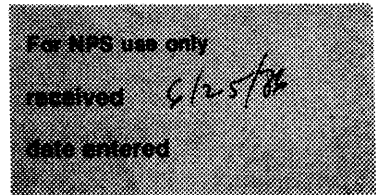
Iditarod regions for AAE and Star Air Service. In 1941, the aircraft was sold to Alaska Airlines, which used the Pilgrim for scheduled flights out of Anchorage, Cordova and Valdez, and for feeder flights to remote fishing villages out of Sitka, Petersburg and Juneau. During World War II, when most airlines in Alaska were under government contract, N709Y participated in the military build up of Alaska. The aircraft was used, among other assignments, in round-the-clock shuttle flights to haul asphalt in barrels for the construction of airfields that were used to transfer "Lend-Lease" aircraft from the U. S. Ferry Command to Russia.

During the war years, the Pilgrim N709Y was damaged in rough landings near Yakutat, Iditarod and Bethel. Various repairs were made to the aircraft after these accidents. A larger, Wright Whirlwind motor with 3-blade propeller was installed which increased the horsepower by 40 per cent.

After the end of World War II, the Pilgrim was grounded for a period of time, after which it saw duty carrying fish for Alaskan and Washington salmon canneries. The aircraft was owned by Bellingham Cannery, Marine Packing Company and Wenatchee Air Service. In the 1960s, N709Y was leased by the State of Washington and used as a fire-fighting aircraft. In 1970, the aircraft was repurchased by Alaska Airlines and used for public relations as an historical aircraft. In 1971, the Pilgrim was purchased by the Shenk Brothers who used it to carry salmon for Washington and Alaska canneries. That same year, the aircraft was sold again to the present owners, Ball Brothers Fisheries of Bristol Bay. The present owners have been using the aircraft as a salmon-hauling work plane and it is based at Dillingham. They also value N709Y as an historic aircraft, the last known Pilgrim in existence.

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(AHRS Site No. DIL-035)

Continuation sheet Pilgrim 100B Aircraft

Item number 9

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