

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY  
RECEIVED 30 JUN 1978  
DATE ENTERED

# 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

Discovery Saloon (AHRs SITE NO. NOM-062)<sup>042</sup>

AND/OR COMMON

Division of Parks  
10/19/78

## 2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

Northwest Corner, Intersection 1st and D Streets

CITY, TOWN

Nome

VICINITY OF

Alaska, at Large

STATE

Alaska

CODE

02

COUNTY

Nome Division

CODE

180

## 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

Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Robinson

STREET & NUMBER

P.O. Box 359

CITY, TOWN

Nome

VICINITY OF

STATE

Alaska 99762

## 5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

District Recorder

(907) 443-2471

STREET & NUMBER

P.O. Box 431

CITY, TOWN

Nome

STATE

Alaska 99762

## 6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Alaska Heritage Resources Survey (AHRs)

(907) 274-4676

DATE

August 17, 1977

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

Alaska Division of Parks, 619 Warehouse Dr., 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED    DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

---

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Built in 1901, Discovery Saloon is a two-story, rectangular, wood-frame structure with a medium gabled roof and a false front. It measures 18 by 36 feet. The false front is topped by a graceful central semicircular hood. The building, along First Avenue, is one block north of the famous Front Street. It faces south overlooking Norton Sound. The saloon was converted into a residence around 1940. A number of external and internal changes have been made to the structure since it became a private home.

Originally, the Discovery Saloon sign painted on the facade was centered above the second story windows. The sign is no longer, replaced by a large seven-pane window and below that a cornice boxed eave that extends across the front. The original box, sash windows on the second floor and the west window on the first floor of the false front have been changed to bay windows. A bay window has also been added roughly in the center of the first floor of the west side of the building. Most of the other windows and window frames in the structure today are not original. Initially, the front entry to the building, centered on the ground level of the false front was a small utilitarian box. A more elaborate enclosed front entry has been added that stretches across the first floor of the front of the building. An exterior stairway originally led to the second floor on the west side, at the top of the stairway was another enclosed entry. The outside stairway and entry have been removed. The roof has recently been covered with new corrugated galvanized steel sheets, and new yellow painted shiplap aluminum siding has been added.

The first floor area of the building was the saloon. It was one large room with a stairway to the second floor in the southeast corner. The area has since been partitioned to make a living room, kitchen, bathroom and entryway. The dark glossy finished wood bar is still in the northwest corner, today the north end of the living room. The stairway is also in its original location. The upstairs is divided into four large rooms and two baths. The west side stairway entrance to the second floor has been replaced by a first floor entrance at the rear of the west side of the building and interior stairway across the back of the building. A full unfinished concrete basement also has been added.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
___PREHISTORIC	___ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	___COMMUNITY PLANNING	___LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	___RELIGION
___1400-1499	___ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	___CONSERVATION	___LAW	___SCIENCE
___1500-1599	___AGRICULTURE	___ECONOMICS	___LITERATURE	___SCULPTURE
___1600-1699	___ARCHITECTURE	___EDUCATION	___MILITARY	___SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
___1700-1799	___ART	___ENGINEERING	___MUSIC	___THEATER
___1800-1899	X___COMMERCE	___EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	___PHILOSOPHY	___TRANSPORTATION
X___1900-	___COMMUNICATIONS	___INDUSTRY	___POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	___OTHER (SPECIFY)
		___INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES      1901                              BUILDER/ARCHITECT      Max Gordon

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Discovery Saloon, built in 1901 when Nome was changing from a boom town tent camp into a city, is Nome's oldest surviving business structure. Although altered, Discovery Saloon with its' false front is an example of the most popular architectural style for large commercial structures in Alaskan gold rush communities. Today the saloon is privately owned, and at least since 1940 has been a residence.

### Historical Background

Late in 1898 gold was discovered in creeks near what became the City of Nome. By May, 1899 a tent town had been created. New discoveries followed, including finding gold in the beach sand. The gold supply seemed inexhaustible. Reportedly, 10,000 people lived in the town. Nome, created to supply the miners and to take their gold from them, began to take the appearance of permanence after 1900. Large wood frame buildings with adorned false fronts replaced the tents. Saloons, of course, were a dominant feature of the town. In 1901 when Discovery Saloon opened, a business directory listed 44 drinking establishments.

Max Gordon built Discovery Saloon in 1901 on First Avenue, a block north of the main business district, Front Street. This saloon was more a gentleman's club than many of the other saloons in Nome. Billiards and card tables were advertised. Located off the main street, Discovery Saloon escaped the major fires of 1905 and 1934 and the vicious storms of 1913 and 1972 and resultant ocean waves that destroyed most of Nome's gold rush buildings.

Gordon and his wife owned and operated the saloon until 1912 when they sold the property to Melvin E. Lyon and left Nome to return to California. Subsequent owners, as long as the building was operated as a saloon, were Lawrence E. Grimm and E.M. Elliott. The property was described as "all of Lots 17 and 18, Block 26, including two-story house occupied as saloon on first floor and dwelling above; along with five three-room cottages and a one-story residence on facing lot; two pianos, four billiard and pool tables and other furnishings and improvements." When Elliott sold the saloon he sold the other properties separately. Only the saloon building still stands.

The Robert K. Herman family converted the saloon into a residence. The building was one of the largest most elegant residences in Nome. Several prominent Nome families have lived in the house over the years including an owner of one of Nome's large stores that traded for furs and Eskimo products and a newspaper owner. Although a number of interior and exterior alterations have been made,

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

(See Continuation Sheet)

ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY Less than 1

Nome B-1/C-1

SCALE 1:63,360

QUADRANGLE NAME

UTM REFERENCES

A 03 481190 7252750'  
ZONE EASTING NORTHING

B           
ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C         

D         

E         

F         

G         

H         

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

South 81 feet of Lot 18, Block 26, Nome Townsite

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

Michael S. Kennedy, Historian/Joan Antonson Mohr, Historian

ORGANIZATION

Alaska Division of Parks

DATE

March 1, 1979

STREET & NUMBER

619 Warehouse Dr., Suite 210

TELEPHONE

(907) 274-4676

CITY OR TOWN

Anchorage

STATE

Alaska 99501

## 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 Stansbee*

TITLE

SHPO

DATE

August 23, 1979

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DATE

4/3/80

ATTEST

*W. Ray Jones*  
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

13/31/80

*Kristen T.O. Connell*  
CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

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Discovery Saloon (AHRS SITE NO. NOM-062)

**CONTINUATION SHEET**

ITEM NUMBER

8 PAGE 1 of 1

the building is one of few from Nome's gold rush boom town days that has survived. It stands out among the other buildings in town. People in Nome still know the building as the Discovery Saloon.

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
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Discovery Saloon (AHRS SITE NO. NOM-062)

**CONTINUATION SHEET**

ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 1 of 1

ALASKA ALMANAC

1909 Harrison Publishing Company, Seattle, Washington.

ALASKA DIRECTORY

1907 R.L. Polk Company, Seattle, Washington.

ALASKA-YUKON MAGAZINE

1907 Harrison Publishing Company, Seattle, Washington.  
1908

City of Nome

1898 Record Books: Cape Nome Mining District and City of Nome,  
present District Recorder, Nome, Alaska.

Ferguson, Maria L.

1901 DAWSON CITY, YUKON TERRITORY, AND ALASKA, DIRECTORY GAZETTEER.

Harrison, E.C.

1905 NOME AND THE SEWARD PENINSULA. Metropolitan Press, Seattle,  
Washington.

McLain, Carrie M.

1969 GOLD RUSH NOME. Graphic Arts Center, Portland, Oregon.

NOME DAILY NUGGET

1900- Nome, Alaska.  
1960

DISCOVERY SALOON  
AHRS Site No. NOM-062  
Nome Division, Alaska

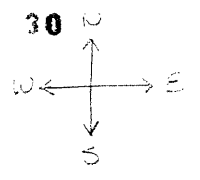
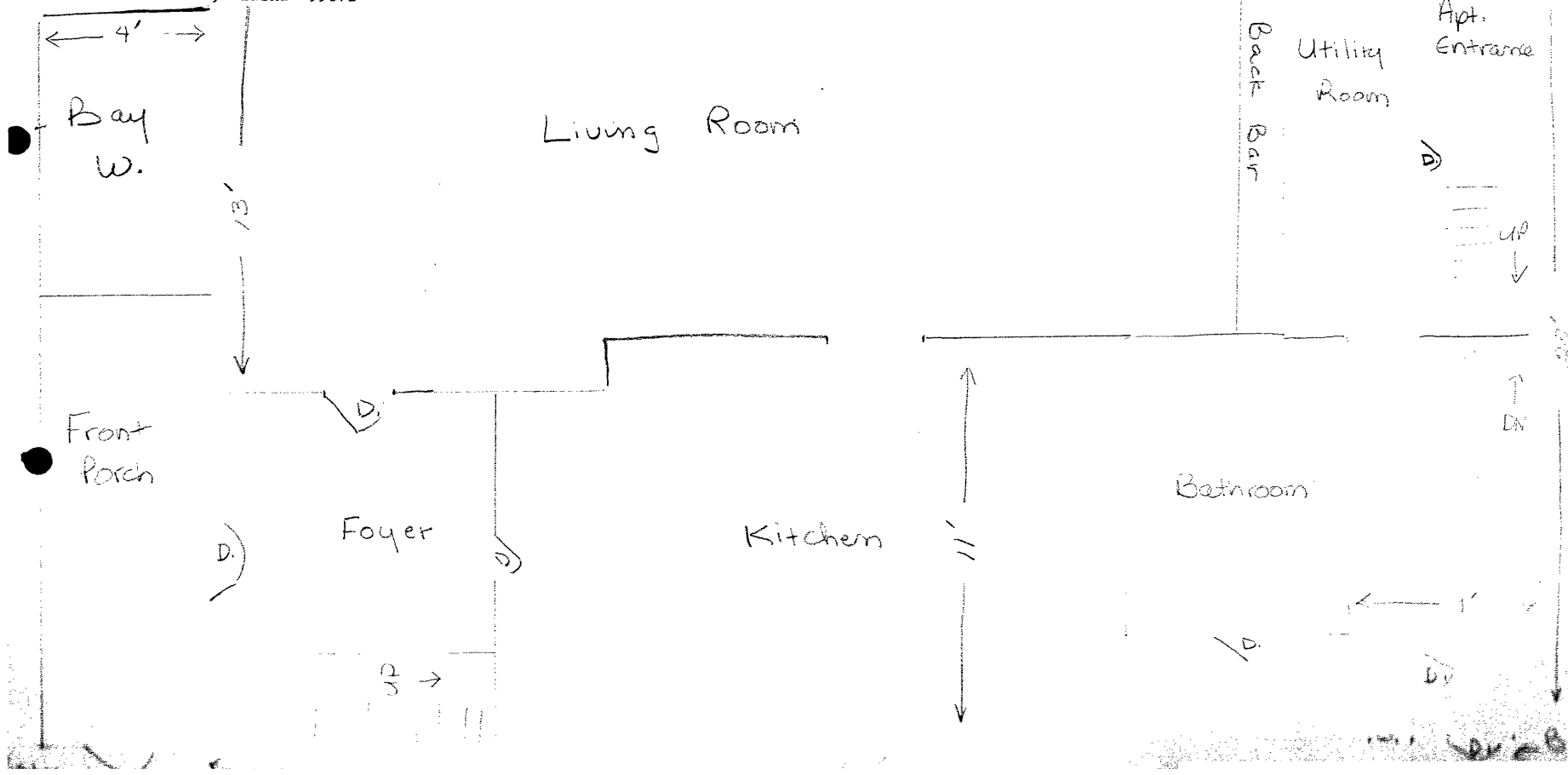
Site Plan

Credit: City of Nome Museum  
Nome, Alaska 99672

1st. Floor

Bay W.

31'



Note: There is also a full size and full kitchen on the length and width of the house.

DISCOVERY SALOON  
AHS Site No. NOM-062  
Nome Division, Alaska

Site Plan

Credit: City of Nome Museum  
Nome, Alaska 99672

## 2nd Floor

