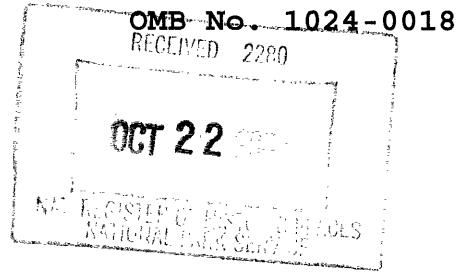


1460



United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

=====

1. Name of Property

=====

historic name Copper River & Northwestern Railway Bunkhouse and Messhouse

other names/site number AHRS Site No. VAL-00310

=====

2. Location

=====

street & number Third Street not for publication n/a

city or town Chitina vicinity n/a

state Alaska code AK county Valdez-Cordova code 261

zip code 99566

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form

Copper River & Northwestern Railway Bunkhouse and Messhouse  
Valdez-Cordova, Alaska

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination \_\_\_ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant \_\_\_ nationally \_\_\_ statewide X locally. ( \_\_\_ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

*Joan M. Antonson*

*17 October 2002*

Signature of certifying official

Date

Alaska

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property \_\_\_ meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register criteria. ( \_\_\_ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register  
\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the  
National Register  
\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the  
National Register
- removed from the National Register

*Edson R. Ball* *12/5/02*

other (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

*[Signature]*

Signature of Keeper

Date  
of Action

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form

Copper River & Northwestern Railway Bunkhouse and Messhouse  
Valdez-Cordova, Alaska

=====

5. Classification

=====

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>  2  </u>	<u>      </u> buildings
<u>      </u>	<u>      </u> sites
<u>      </u>	<u>      </u> structures
<u>      </u>	<u>      </u> objects
<u>  2  </u>	<u>  0  </u> Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register   0  

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)   n/a

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form

Copper River & Northwestern Railway Bunkhouse and Messhouse  
Valdez-Cordova, Alaska

=====  
6. Function or Use  
=====

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Transportation Sub: rail-related

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Vacant/not in use Sub: \_\_\_\_\_

=====  
7. Description  
=====

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

No style

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation wood  
roof wood shingle, metal  
walls wood  
other

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

A Copper River & Northwestern Railway bunkhouse and messhouse stand at Chitina, a small town in southcentral Alaska. They are located on lots at the east side of the townsite. They were built in 1910. The messhouse is on the west side of the property, adjacent to a stream which has grown into a pond. The bunkhouse, the larger of the two buildings, faces west. A gravel driveway divides the buildings. Directly east of the bunkhouse is a steep hillside. To the south is a lake, and to the north and west is the rest of the town. Included, but not counted as separate contributing buildings or structures, are two outhouses and two ten foot square underground caches. Wooden walks once joined the buildings to the outhouses.

Both the messhouse and bunkhouse are wood frame buildings. They have 1" x 6" tongue and groove siding and are painted Kennecott red with white trim. The roof of the messhouse has cedar shake shingles. The roof the bunkhouse has metal over the cedar shake shingles. The original foundations were heavy spruce timbers standing upright on 6" x 18" wood planking. They are now timbers standing on cement pads. The foundations are skirted with 1" x 5" board and batten planking and painted to match the buildings.

The **messhouse** is a one story, hip roofed building. It is 26' x 30' with four interior rooms and a 6' x 16' attached, enclosed porch. The front of the building faces south, and the porch is on the east side. There is a

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form

Copper River & Northwestern Railway Bunkhouse and Messhouse  
Valdez-Cordova, Alaska

=====  
8. Statement of Significance  
=====

Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.) n/a

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or a grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

Transportation  
Architecture

Period of Significance 1910-1938

Significant Dates 1910

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)  
n/a

Cultural Affiliation n/a

Architect/Builder Copper River & Northwestern Railway

**USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form**

Copper River & Northwestern Railway Bunkhouse and Messhouse  
Valdez-Cordova, Alaska

=====  
**9. Major Bibliographical References**  
=====

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Buzzell, Rolfe. *1995 Cultural Resources Survey of the Proposed Chitina Wayside*. Office of History and Archaeology Report #55. Anchorage: Alaska Office of History and Archaeology, 1995.

Heaton, Mabel. Interview with owner, January 2002 at Glennallen, Alaska.

Janson, Lone E. *The Copper Spike*. Anchorage: Alaska Northwest Publishing Company, 1975.

Quinn, Alfred O. *Iron Rails to Alaskan Copper*. D'Aloquin Publishers, 1995.

Simpson, Ron. [www.crnwrailway.com](http://www.crnwrailway.com).

Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve, Copper Center, Alaska.  
[www.nps.gov/wrst/history.htm](http://www.nps.gov/wrst/history.htm)

Previous documentation on file (NPS) n/a

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

**Primary Location of Additional Data**

- State Historic Preservation Office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other

**Name of repository:** Wrangell St. Elias National Park & Preserve

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form

Copper River & Northwestern Railway Bunkhouse and Messhouse  
Valdez-Cordova, Alaska

=====  
10. Geographical Data  
=====

Acreeage of Property less than one

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	06	636513	6822761	3		
2				4		
	___ See continuation sheet.					

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The Copper River & Northwestern Railway Bunkhouse and Messhouse occupy lots 1-5, Block D, Chitina Townsite. Commencing at the northwest corner of said Lot 1, thence south 200 feet, thence east 156 feet, thence north 200 feet to the northwest corner of said Lot 5, thence west along the north boundary of Lots 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1, a distance of 156 feet to the point of beginning.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The boundaries encompass the lots occupied by the bunkhouse and messhouse, the only buildings that remain from the Copper River & Northwestern Railway operations at Chitina, Alaska. The boundaries include two outhouses and two underground caches adjacent to the buildings that are not counted separately as buildings and structures. The boundaries are shown on the attached plat.

=====  
11. Form Prepared By  
=====

name/title Carla P. Hilgendorf

organization Owner

date August 15, 2002

street & number P.O. Box 1642

telephone 907-835-2298

city or town Valdez

state AK

zip code 99686-1642

**USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form**

Copper River & Northwestern Railway Bunkhouse and Messhouse  
Valdez-Cordova, Alaska

Page 5

timber-braced doorway into the root cellar under the building that is accessed from the west side of the building. A trap door from the kitchen also accesses the root cellar. The porch has doors on the north and south sides. The entryway is divided into two sections and each has a door entering the building. There is a small four-pane window in the entry.

The four interior rooms are of different sizes. The living and dining area is 16' x 20'. The kitchen is 11' x 18'. There are two small bedrooms on the west side of the building. There are eight four-over-four sash windows and a 3' x 5' horizontal slider with two two-over-two side-by-side panels. Steel piping and a radiator indicate the building was steam heated. There is a brick and mortar chimney in the center of the east half of the building.

The **bunkhouse** is a single-story rectangular building, built slightly above grade. The building faces west. The southern end of the bunkhouse is 20' x 25' with an enclosed porch. The porch measures 4' x 14' and has a single entry door. A door from the porch opens to a bunkroom. There are six four-over-four sash windows in the room. The northern end of the building is 23' x 25' and has an entry directly from outside to the bunkroom. The room has eight six-over-six sash windows and connects to the southern room through a single doorway. Steel piping and a radiator indicate the building was steam heated. The bunkhouse has two brick and mortar chimneys, one in each room.

The interior walls in the bunkhouse and the messhouse are 1" x 5" vertical grain fir, the ceilings are 1" x 3" tongue and groove fir, and the floors are 1" x 5" tongue and groove fir. Along the base of the walls is 1" x 6" fir baseboard with three-quarter inch round trim at the base. The doors in the buildings are five-panel solid wood. The buildings are wired for electricity.

Overall the buildings are in good condition. They have suffered little water damage and little vandalism. The caches are caving in and the larger of the two outhouses has fallen into the pond. The interior wood from the walls and ceiling in the northern end of the bunkhouse has been stripped away over the years.

In 2000-2001 the bunkhouse and messhouse were leveled and blocked with timbers on cement pads. The windows have been glazed and the doors mended. The bunkhouse roof has been covered with gray corrugated steel, the chimneys stabilized, and the building painted and skirted. More restoration work is planned.



**USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form**

Copper River & Northwestern Railway Bunkhouse and Messhouse  
Valdez-Cordova, Alaska

Page 7

=====  
**Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the  
property on one or more continuation sheets.)**

The Copper River & Northwestern Railway bunkhouse and messhouse at Chitina are among few buildings that remain from the railroad that was integral to the Kennecott copper mines. The copper extracted from Kennecott was very significant to Alaska's economy between 1911 and 1938. Constructed in 1910, the CR&NW bunkhouse and messhouse at Chitina served railroad train and maintenance crews from the time of their construction until 1938 when the mines closed and the railroad stopped operating. Chitina was at mile 131 on the 196-mile railroad that ran between Cordova and Kennecott. At Chitina, the railroad turned east to Kennecott or south to Cordova. Shortly after the railroad was constructed, a 30-mile road, later named the Edgerton Highway, connected Chitina with the Richardson Highway, the main overland route from a year round port to Fairbanks, the principal city in Interior Alaska. The bunkhouse and messhouse stood adjacent to the railroad tracks and one block from the depot. A water tower and several other small railroad service buildings surrounded the messhouse and bunkhouse. None of the other buildings or structures stand. The one-story, wood frame, tongue-and-groove bunkhouse and messhouse, painted Kennecott's signature red with white trim, are excellent and rare examples of the Copper River and Northwestern Railway buildings that once stood about every twenty miles along the route.

Historic background

The Copper River & Northwestern Railway completed its 196-miles of track in 1911 and started transporting ore from the rich copper mines at Kennecott in the Wrangell Mountains to the deep-water port at Cordova for shipment to a smelter at Tacoma, Washington. The Kennecott copper mining operation was an extraordinary endeavor, not only as a mine but also for the CR&NW Railway built through the wilderness to transport the ore. J.P. Morgan and the Guggenheim sons financed construction of the railroad and initial operations at the mine. The cost of constructing the railroad was \$23.5 million.

Chitina, at mile 131, where the railroad changed direction--east to Kennecott or south to Cordova, began as a construction camp for the CR&NW. The railroad placed one of its major stations at Chitina. Facilities included a depot, bunkhouse, messhouse, water tower, maintenance facilities, and a siding that circled Town Lake. During operation of the railroad, train crews changed at Chitina. Maintenance crews also used the bunkhouse and messhouse regularly.

Chitina served as a transshipment point. At Chitina, passengers and freight changed from the railroad to wagon or sled to travel north by road to Fairbanks in Alaska's interior, or the reverse. Shortly after the railroad started operating, the post office changed the terminus of the principal mail route to the interior from Valdez to Cordova. Mail was carried by rail to Chitina and trail to Fairbanks. In August 1910, the

**USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form**

Copper River & Northwestern Railway Bunkhouse and Messhouse  
Valdez-Cordova, Alaska

Page 8

=====

CR&NW surveyed and platted the Chitina townsite and offered lots for sale. The government appointed a U.S. commissioner to the town. The 1920 U.S. Census recorded 171 people living at Chitina.

The CR&NW employed about 200 maintenance workers in the summer and 150 in the winter along the line. In addition, there were two bridge crews. Snow and rock avalanches, glacial and earthquake activity, extreme wind and cold, forest fires, and flooding frequently closed the line, sometimes for several months. The bunkhouse and messhouse at Chitina were in constant use.

Albert Swalling worked for the CR&NW from 1929 to 1938, and for a time was foreman in charge of inspecting the buildings along the route. He and his crew stayed in the bunkhouses. He said the bunkhouses could accommodate 20-22 workers although there were usually only 10-14 men. He also said, "The food at the section houses was ample in quantity, but absolutely terrible in quality. The cooks were immigrant Japanese except in two places" (Quinn, p. 78).

The last copper train left Kennecott in 1938. The railroad was abandoned and the Chitina buildings stood empty for years. The Kennecott Copper Corporation sold the Chitina bunkhouse and messhouse in 1946. In the 1940s the U.S. Army used the buildings. After that, they served as storage for the local grocery. For years, the underground caches were the only refrigeration in town. The current owners are restoring the buildings. Today, Chitina bunkhouse and messhouse are among few of the Copper River and Northwestern Railway buildings that exist. Even fewer of the remaining buildings have physical integrity.

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form

Copper River & Northwestern Railway Bunkhouse and Messhouse  
Valdez-Cordova, Alaska

=====  
Additional Documentation  
=====

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

=====  
Property Owner  
=====

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Carla P. Hilgendorf and Mike L. Tucker

street & number P.O. Box 1642

telephone 907-835-2298

city or town Valdez

state AK

zip code 99686-1642

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form

Copper River & Northwestern Railway Bunkhouse and Messhouse  
Valdez-Cordova, Alaska

Page 12

=====  
NPS Form 10-900-a  
(8-86)

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

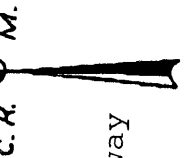
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section Photograph identification  
=====

1. Copper River & Northwestern Railway Bunkhouse and Messhouse  
Valdez-Cordova, Alaska  
Carla Hilgendorf  
August 27, 2000  
P.O. Box 1642, Valdez, Alaska 99686-1642  
Looking east at messhouse on the left and bunkhouse on the right
2. Copper River & Northwestern Railway Bunkhouse and Messhouse  
Valdez-Cordova, Alaska  
Carla Hilgendorf  
August 27, 2000  
P.O. Box 1642, Valdez, Alaska 99686-1642  
Looking east at bunkhouse (messhouse on left)
3. Copper River & Northwestern Railway Bunkhouse and Messhouse  
Valdez-Cordova, Alaska  
Carla Hilgendorf  
August 27, 2000  
P.O. Box 1642, Valdez, Alaska 99686-1642  
Looking north, messhouse on left, bunkhouse on right

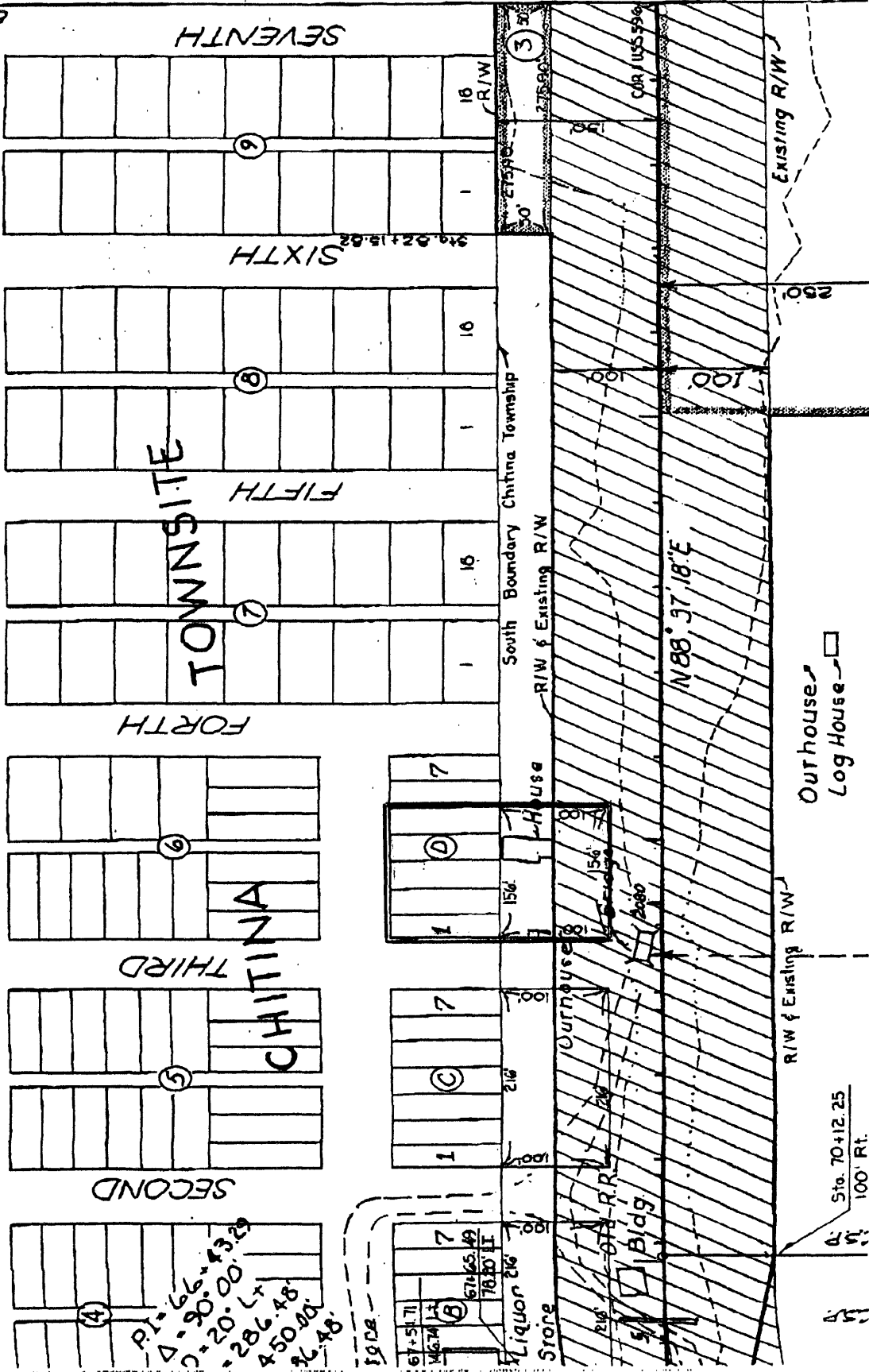
C. Line Chitina Tow

1. Checked by: J. Leland  
Date: 4-11-88



Copper River & Northwestern Railway  
Bunkhouse and Messhouse  
Valdez-Cordova, Alaska

A STREET



4  
 21.66  
 20.00  
 28.6  
 450.48  
 2.48

7  
 67.51.71  
 146.74  
 67.65.49  
 78.20.11  
 216  
 100  
 100  
 156  
 2080  
 156  
 156

Sta. 70+12.25  
 100' Rt.