

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

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**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

received

date entered

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

**1. Name**

historic Building No. 29, Sitka

and or common Tilson Building

**2. Location**

street & number 202-204 Lincoln Street not for publication

city, town Sitka vicinity of

state Alaska code 02 county Sitka Division code 220

**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 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	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military
			<input type="checkbox"/> museum
			<input type="checkbox"/> park
			<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
			<input type="checkbox"/> religious
			<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
			<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
			other:

**4. Owner of Property**

name Norman E. and Ethel L. Staton

street & number 501 Baranof Street, Box 829

city, town Sitka vicinity of state Alaska 99835

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. City and Borough of Sitka

street & number 304 Lake Street

city, town Sitka state Alaska

**6. Representation in Existing Surveys**

title See Continuation Sheet 1 has this property been determined eligible? yes  no

date federal state county local

depository for survey records

city, town state

## 7. Description

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<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

The only Russian American Company building remaining in Sitka today is located in the center of town, on Lincoln Street. Formerly "Governor's Walk" in New Archangel, capital of Russian-America, Lincoln Street is now the main street of Sitka, Alaska. Building No. 29, which served as a residence for Russian-American Company employees, stands just a few doors from St. Michael Cathedral (NHL) and a short walk down Lincoln Street from the Russian Bishop's House (NHL). Historically, No. 29 was one of the many massive log buildings with steeply pitched roofs which served the commercial and administrative needs of the Russian American Company on this busy street leading up from the wharves. Today No. 29 is still at the commercial hub of the city, but through the attrition of time, culminating in a devastating fire in downtown Sitka in 1966, its bulk and roofline are a singular exception on Lincoln Street.

William Dall described the buildings of Sitka as they appeared in 1865, two years before the U. S. purchase of Alaska: "The houses were all of logs, but painted a dull yellow, the metal roofs were red and with the emerald green spire of the church, projected against the dark evergreen of the adjacent hills, presented an extremely picturesque appearance. It was quite unlike anything else in America, and seemed to belong to a world of its own."<sup>1</sup> Other observers commented on the "ponderous hewn logs" of the Russian American Company buildings,<sup>2</sup> and on the "wonderful durability and ingenuity in their construction."<sup>3</sup>

Typically, Russian American company buildings were one to three stories and covered with steeply pitched gable or hipped roofs. Since company life was communal, buildings were large to accomodate multiple living quarters, corporate kitchen, bakery, laundry, and storage facilities. Massive round logs were used for warehouses and common residences. However, the more important company administrative buildings and officers' residences were hewn "so as to leave no crevices, with the internal and external logs so well dressed as to be suitable for painting or papering."<sup>4</sup> Building No. 29 was one of the latter carefully built and finely crafted structures.

It is possible that No. 29 was built by Finnish workmen brought to New Archangel by Governor Adolf Etholen in the 1840s. These skilled carpenters carried out much of the company's construction over the next two decades. Available evidence (a series of maps and artistic renderings of New Archangel, 1835 to 1867) indicates that No. 29 was not built before 1846. It probably dates from the 1850s and may be the "two-story building, with a stone foundation and tile roof, [which] was built to serve as a company office and to provide quarters for several employees" constructed under Chief Manager Voevodskii.<sup>5</sup> The building appears as No. 29 on the 1867 map, "The Settlement of New Archangel," which documented the transfer of Russian American Company property to the United States. (ILLUS-1)

# 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	
..... 1700-1799	..... art	..... engineering	..... music	..... humanitarian	
X 1800-1899	..... commerce	X exploration/settlement	..... philosophy	..... theater	
..... 1900-	..... communications	..... industry	X politics government	..... transportation	
		..... invention		X other (specify)	
					Alaska History XXI
<b>Specific dates</b>	ca. 1850; ca. 1885	<b>Builder/Architect</b>	Russian American Company		

**Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)**

SUMMARY STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Constructed under the Russian flag in the new world capital of New Archangel, Building No. 29 has exceptional significance as a rare example of a Russian-American colony structure. New Archangel, now Sitka, was the center of civil administration, trade, and manufacturing for Russia's American colonies. Building 29, so designated on the 1867 inventory of Russian-American Company property, is the sole, surviving Company building in Sitka today. In its origins and Russian period associations, it is an outstanding representation of Theme II, European Exploration and Settlement (Russian).

Following the purchase of Alaska by the United States in 1867, Building No. 29 was associated with people and events significant to the first years of U.S. administration in Alaska. Building 29 is the only secular building remaining from Sitka's first years as seat of government for the new possession; it was owned and occupied by several individuals prominent in the establishment of civilian rule and the social and economic development of early Sitka. In its historic associations from this period, Building No. 29 has outstanding significance to the broad theme of U. S. Political and Military Affairs, 1865-1914 (Alaska History, Theme XXI).

Although substantial changes to Building 29 preclude national significance under the theme of Architecture, it is worthy of recognition as a finely-crafted vernacular log structure from the Russian-American period with many original features intact.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

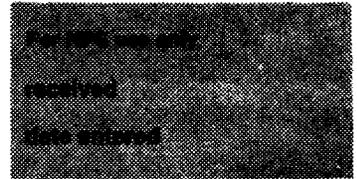
I. EXPLORATION AND SETTLEMENT (RUSSIAN)

By the mid-1850s when the Russian American Company erected a new, two-story, hewn-log structure between St. Michael's Cathedral and the married employees barracks, the port of New Archangel was a half century old.



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Representation in Existing Surveys

Title:	National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings
Date:	1961 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Federal
Depository:	Department of the Interior, National Park Service
City, Town:	Washington, D. C.
Title:	Alaska Heritage Resources Survey (SIT 028)
Date:	1973 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> State
Depository:	Alaska Department of Natural Resources
City, Town:	Anchorage, Alaska

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Building No. 29 was a characteristically Russian structure, typical of New Archangel or any number of towns in northern Russia in the mid-nineteenth century. Russian wood architecture was based on "the mutations and combinations of the various forms of 'blockwork': the rectangle and the polygon; the shed, the wedge, the ogee barrel-vault, and the tent roof."<sup>6</sup> All of these forms are visible in the Sitka townscape of the 1850s. (ILLUS-2) The basic unit of construction was the srub, a rectangular frame of logs notched to interlock at the corners and laid up in ranges (called crowns or venets) to the desired height. The box-like structure (or klet), assembled of one or more sruby with floors, windows, doors, and roof, may be combined with additional klet to form larger structures.

Sketches from 1868 and 1870 and recent investigations into the original portions of the building show that No. 29 was a two and one-half story log structure with a partial basement and horizontal gable roof and a two story side gallery covered by a shed roof. (ILLUS-3,4) The main unit (klet) was a nearly perfect square of logs measuring approximately 28 feet in length, or four sazhens (a Russian unit of measurement equal to seven feet). The flat hewn surfaces of these logs measure some 18 inches. The facade was divided into four bays of one sazhen each by the placement of three windows and an entrance door (to the gallery).

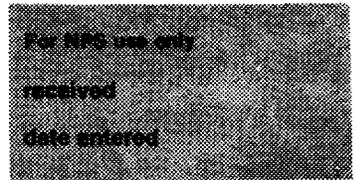
The building rests on massive squared logs placed on a foundation wall of large stones. The sill log was originally several feet above grade; a raised stoop with approximately six steps and a railing provided access to the gallery entrance, from which the main building was entered.

The interior as well as the exterior walls were constructed of hewn logs; ends from interior logs visible in the gallery measure 10" x 7" to 11" x 9". The logs were hewn flat on two sides, concave on the bottom and convex on the top, to fit snugly and shed moisture. Each log was marked with both a Roman and an Arabic numeral to indicate which wall and which course within the wall were its intended position. Full dove-tail notching joined logs at the corners.

Floors were constructed of half-logs tenoned into sill and joist logs. Tongue-and-groove planks (1" x 6") were laid crosswise on the half-logs as decking. The gable roof employed a timber-framing system with full-log corner braces notched into the plates. Insulation in the ceilings was typical of Russian buildings: a thick layer of sand supported by canvas which was stretched across the joists and nailed in place. A single brick chimney penetrated the roofline just east of the mid-point.

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The design and construction of the original doors is unknown; hand-forged iron hardware remains on one attic door. Likewise, the design and construction of the original windows cannot be established with certainty. Drawings (1870s) and photographs (1880s) show what are most likely the original, fifteen light double-hung windows (nine over six). Plain lintel heads appeared over the windows; molded cornices were added over the windows and entrance door some time in the 1880s.

It is not known whether No. 29 was sided at the time of construction. Early narratives describe the Russian buildings in Sitka as uniformly log in varying stages of weathering, or else painted with yellow ochre. Original plans for the Russian Bishop's House called for siding; however, this structure apparently received its siding in stages. Whether or not No. 29 was sided when it was built, in the earliest available sketch (1868) it appears to be sheathed in horizontal drop or shiplap siding. (This type of siding has been retained.) The roof originally may have been covered with tiles or standing-seamed metal; by 1870 it was shingled.

An 1870 sketch depicting a partial back view of No. 29 shows a two-story ell with a shingled gable roof and an overhang projecting from the rear. The ell is one cell deep with a twelve-light casement window on the first floor and a fifteen-light window on the second. It is not known whether this ell was part of the original structure. (ILLUS-5)

All of the early views show a plank walkway running in front of No. 29 along the length of Lincoln Street. The building backs up to the bay; its rear yard contained several outbuildings and storage structures on pilings.

Many changes have occurred on Lincoln Street in the almost 125 years since Russia sold its American colonies to the United States. With the exception of the Russian Bishop's House and Building No. 29, all Russian period structures have been destroyed. As Sitka has developed into a modern city, the installation of utilities, grading and paving of streets, and pouring of concrete sidewalks have altered the streetscape. The 1966 fire which destroyed St. Michael's Cathedral resulted in the loss of many nineteenth and early twentieth century buildings and the subsequent construction of new commercial and apartment buildings on Lincoln Street. The historic setting of No. 29 was also affected by in-filling of the tidal zone, which made possible the development of a major roadway and a full-sized building lot between No. 29 and the bay.

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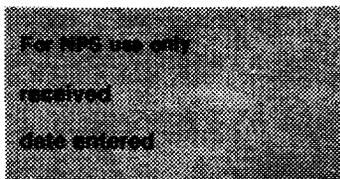
Changes have taken place at Building No. 29, as well, both in its historic period and in recent years. These changes have been of four types: (1) additions to the original Russian klet which have not altered the original structure; (2) replacement of deteriorating materials with new, similar materials (roofing, siding, foundations); (3) "modernizing" by upgrading heating, plumbing, and electrical systems, redecorating interiors, and changing styles of window sash and exterior trim; and (4) alteration of window openings to accommodate commercial uses. Although the external appearance of the house has changed considerably since its construction, the original Russian structure is substantially intact. Original exterior walls, basement, floors, major portions of interior walls, most window and door openings, roofing system, attic with some of the original insulation, and the gallery side walls, floor, ceiling, staircase, and balustrade remain unaltered.

The most substantial change to No. 29 was undertaken in the mid-1880s. An 1883 photograph shows the building before modification. (PHOTO-1) Photographs from 1887 (PHOTO-2,3) show that a two and one-half story addition was constructed on the east side of the gallery. The shed roof over the gallery was removed to incorporate the gallery into the main structure; the gable roof of the original building was extended horizontally to cover the gallery and the addition. The addition was two cells deep and extended the facade by two bays. The two new second-story windows were spaced to continue the visual rhythm of the original building. (The front and rear windows in the addition were fifteen-light double-hung sashes to match the windows in the original structure. Eight light double-hung sash windows were used on the east side of the addition.) Below, an entrance at grade level was centered on the facade and flanked by two narrow windows. However, the original entrance with its porch and railing retained its visual prominence on the facade. Straight molded cornices were placed at the headers of the front windows and doors. Four dormers, evenly spaced across the roof front, further tied together the elements of what was now a six-bay facade: original main building, side gallery, and new extension. (PHOTO-4)

Other than a small gabled portico added to the main entrance sometime before 1894, (PHOTO-5) the next seventy years brought little change to No. 29. By the 1950s, Sitka's streets had been widened and paved, raising the grade by about two feet. The porch and railing have disappeared from the main entrance, replaced by three steps leading directly to the door. A small porch roof overhangs the entrance, supported by two side brackets. Vertical trim boards have been added to the corners of the building and a wide horizontal trim board marks the division between stories. The front windows in the original portion of the building have been replaced by single-paned double-hung sashes, and

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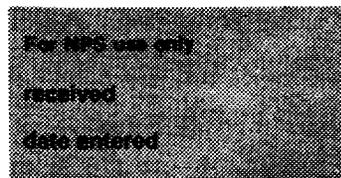
the original window opening above the main entrance has been enlarged to serve as a door--although there is no balcony, only the porch roof over the front steps. In the 1880s extension, the narrow side lights which flanked the entrance have been enlarged to accommodate multi-paned shop windows. The molded cornices over windows and doors have been replaced with a simple cornice board. The foundation has been sheathed in vertical tongue-and-groove siding. The effect of the changes in exterior detail was to present a more "New England-like" appearance; however, at this time the architectural configuration of the building was essentially the same as it was in the 1880s. (PHOTO-6,7)

The 1960s brought additional changes, however. A wooden awning, spanning the width of the sidewalk below, was suspended from the front of the building by steel cables to protect Lincoln Street shoppers from the incessant Sitka rains. The storefront windows of the addition were enlarged again and fitted with plate glass. The second story window openings in the addition were reduced in size; the window-then-door above the main entrance was sided over, and the clapboard siding on the dormers and gable ends was replaced with shingles. The original chimney and a chimney added to the extended portion of the building sometime after 1894 were removed. Most damaging to the integrity of the structure, however, was the opening of an entrance at the east end of the front facade, which, with its accompanying plate glass shop window, eliminated one of the first story windows in the original portion of the building. Two of these windows were sided over. A brick wainscoting was added to the lower portion of the facade, most likely to cover problems with rotting timbers and settling. (PHOTO-8,9)

This was the condition of the building when it was studied in 1961 as part of the National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings (Alaska History). In 1984-1985 the current owner of No. 29 undertook rehabilitation work to repair deteriorating foundations and replace rotted structural members. (PHOTO-10,11) At the same time, he removed decades of wall coverings, plasterboard, and other materials applied to the interior of the original portion of the building. Once the interior was stripped down, it became apparent that the original Russian period structure was almost fully intact. (PHOTO-12,13) From the original roof, visible in the attic where the addition was joined to the main structure in the 1880s, to original door and window openings long since sheathed over, to massive brick bake ovens in the basement, a Russian-American building had been preserved inside a modernized shell. Canvas nailed to the ceilings still held insulating sand; many square yards of wallpapers similar in design to some of the earliest in the Russian Bishop's House adhered to the log walls when modern coverings were removed. (PHOTO-14)

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In completing renovations to use the first floor of No. 29 as a gift shop, the owner cut away three sections of original interior walls to provide for traffic circulation. (ILLUS-6; PHOTO-15) Most of the interior wall surface was re-covered using furring strips and wallboard; one section of wall was left exposed, showing the hewing marks and numbers incised on each log for assembly. (PHOTO-16,17) A front window opening, previously been sided over, was reopened without alteration; a single pane of fixed glass was installed. (PHOTO-18)

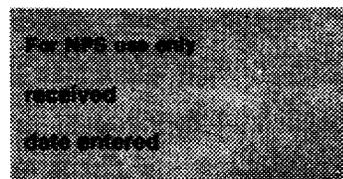
In the gallery, behind the contemporary, pre-hung insulated door, the original staircase with its solid and simply turned balustrade rises to second floor and the attic. During renovation work the original ceiling beams and the log walls of the gallery were exposed, showing the joinery where interior walls of the main structure are notched into the gallery wall. The framing of the original doors was visible, as were the floor boards with their wrought nails. The canvas and its load of sand have been removed from the ceilings for reasons of safety and maintenance. The exposed surfaces will be re-covered upon completion of the renovations. (PHOTO-19,20)

FOOTNOTES

1. William H. Dall, Alaska and its Resources (Boston: Lee and Shepard, 1870), p. 255.
2. Delvan C. Bloodgood, "Eight Months at Sitka," Overland Monthly, February 1864, p. 179.
3. North Star, August 1896, p. 2.
4. U. S. Congress, House, Russian America, Ex. Doc. No. 177, 40th Cong., 2nd sess., 1868, p. 69.
5. Richard A. Pierce, "Alaska's Russian Governors: Rosenberg, Rudakov, Voevodskii...more Chief Managers of the Russian-American Company," Alaska Journal 2 (Summer, 1972):48.
6. G. H. Hamilton, The Art and Architecture of Russia, The Pelican History of Art (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1954), p. 169.
7. Hamilton, p. 170.
8. Paul C. Cloyd and Anthony S. Donald, Russian Bishop's House, Sitka National Historical Park, Alaska: Historic Structure Report (Denver: U. S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1982), pp. 20-21.

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Alexander Baranov--who ultimately forged working colonies out of official ignorance, promised supplies, reluctant natives, stubborn churchmen, and opportunistic promyshlenniki<sup>o</sup>--knew within his first few years as manager of the Shelikov company post at Kodiak that a Russian presence must be established farther east along the coast. By 1796 he was regularly sending parties out to explore distant coastlines and collect furs. The first such expedition to southeastern shores brought back news that British and American traders had already established an active market among the Tlingit Indians of Sitka Island, exchanging guns for furs. Baranov, naturally, wished to prevent other nations from occupying territory discovered by earlier Russian seafarers and retain free access to waters rich with sea otter. What concerned him most urgently, however, was the flow of firearms through native hands along the coast to Yakutat, jeopardizing the<sup>1</sup> survival of the small, mainland post his company had established there.

It was not until 1799, when a struggle among the owners of the Shelikov Company and its competitors resulted in formation of the new Russian American Company, that Baranov was able to act on his intentions. In September of that year he sailed from Kodiak with 1,100 Russians and Aleuts to build a fort at Sitka. They chose a wide stretch of beach in a quiet bay for the new post. Tlingits on the island were hostile from the beginning; harrassment was constant. In 1802, after Baranov and many of the company employees had returned to Kodiak, the Tlingits attacked and destroyed the fort.

Two years passed before Baranov returned to strike back. In spite of Russian guns, vessels, and superior numbers, it took the timely arrival of the gunboat Neva to turn the battle decisively in the Russians' favor. The Tlingits abandoned their massive stockade without surrender, but for the rest of their tenure the Russian American Company kept New Archangel heavily fortified, beleaguered by the continuing hostility of the natives.

The site Baranov selected for a new fort was on a harbor cut deep into the island shoreline, a short distance from the scene of the recent battle. The harbor was large enough to hold an entire fleet and was free of ice year around; it was protected from winds out of any direction. Equally important, a broad outcropping of rock stood above the harbor on which formidable defenses could be erected. Construction began at once, and the Imperial double-eagle was raised to fly above New Archangel until it was lowered in 1867 for the American stars and stripes.

<sup>o</sup> Russian fur traders

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The reports of office manager Kyrill Khlebnikov to the Russian American Company board in 1825 and 1826 provide glimpses of New Archangel as a thriving seaport, the center of the Russian American colonies in fact as well as intent. In its second generation of building, the aging log structures erected under Baranov now being replaced, New Archangel's capital assets were assessed at 90,187.25 rubles. Russian American Company personnel numbered 813 Russians, Aleuts, and Creoles (halfbreeds).<sup>2</sup>

Khlebnikov provides this description of the settlement:

On...an outcrop of native rock, and rising 77 feet above the water, there is a flat area...where the New Archangel fortress was built. At present it has three towers and a battery of 30 cannon, from three to six pound calibre, and a two-story building which houses the Chief Manager. Below this there are barracks accomodating 40 workers. Below the cliff on a slope on the shore side, there are warehouses, barracks and other quarters.... These form the middle fortress.

Outside the palisade were the church, school and teachers quarters, infirmary and pharmacy, vegetable gardens, and flour mill. Some twenty private dwellings had been erected along the shore, as well as company housing, bathhouses, and bakery. In the harbor were a ropewalk, chandlery, blacksmiths, coppersmiths, cooperage, metal shops, carpentry and joiners workshops, woodworkers, paint shops, boatwrights for small craft, and stone masons (bricks were brought in from Kodiak). Ten ships comprised the Company fleet. A 1,200-volume library with titles in Russian and eight other languages was listed as a company asset.<sup>4</sup>

In 1821, when the Russian American Company's charter was renewed for a second twenty years, Russia's colonial enterprises stretched from the Aleutian Islands along the southern coast of Alaska to Fort Ross (California) and southwest to the Sandwich Islands (Hawaii). The colonies were organized in five administrative units, each containing several ports, forts, redoubts, odinochkas (one-man trading posts), and artels (hunting parties).<sup>5</sup> The central administration for all districts remained in New Archangel.

The second charter brought reorganization and some new directions to the company. The establishment of uniform auditing procedures and the closing of the Unalaska, Unga, and Atkha offices resulted in an increase of staff in New Archangel. The number of skilled workers and laborers in the port was increased at this time, as well.<sup>6</sup>

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Faced with increasing competition from British and American trade to the south, exploratory expeditions were sent out from New Archangel to conduct surveys in Bristol Bay and Norton Sound and along the major inland waterways. Several new posts were established during this period.

Under Muryav'ev's administration (1820-25), the company policy to deny the Tlingits access to any of the islands in Sitka Sound was reversed. On the premise that it would be safer to keep an eye on the Kolosh than to leave them to their own devices, the toions (chiefs) were invited to settle beside the fort. New Archangel's fortifications were strengthened in anticipation of the move. From the three blockhouses along the stockade which separated New Archangel from the native village, cannon were trained on the company's new neighbors; an iron portcullis gate was constructed to admit natives during designated hours only, and never after dark. This move stimulated trade with the natives and ultimately developed a qualified, but interdependent, relationship between the Tlingits and the colonizers which persists in the physical and social structure of Sitka today.

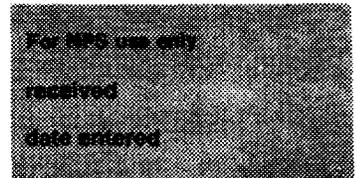
The Orthodox Church also established a strong presence in New Archangel during the second charter period. The missionary efforts of several decades, but primarily the gifted leadership of Father Ioann Veniaminov (later Bishop Innokentii), resulted in the baptism of several Tlingit toions. By the close of the second charter the Holy Synod endorsed Father Veniaminov's recommendations to reorganize the colonial Church, giving it more autonomy: a cathedral would be established in New Archangel with a seminary to train clergy for service throughout Russian America; the senior priest at New Archangel would supervise the church throughout the colonies. The seminary, built in 1840, and the new Cathedral of St. Michael Archangel, built in 1843-48 and reconstructed in 1966, are National Historic Landmarks, known respectively as the Russian Bishop's House and St. Michael Cathedral.

The last administrator under the second charter, Adolph Etholen (1840-45), was responsible for the construction of many of the buildings that eventually passed into American ownership. Of Finnish birth, Etholen brought with him a large contingent of his native countrymen: scientists, clergy, artisans, and carpenters. The refined craftsmanship of the Finnish log builders and cabinetmakers influenced construction in New Archangel for several decades to come.

Although the Russian American Company continued to show profits during its third charter (1841-1861), fifty years of intensive fur hunting by three maritime powers had resulted in depletion of fur seal and sea otter populations. The market for furs had also collapsed, silk hats replacing fur in western wardrobes. In response to the slowing fur

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trade, the company diversified and increased its activities on the Asiatic coast of the north Pacific. The 1850s found New Archangel, now usually called Sitka, the hub of new ventures, as well, including a flourishing ice trade with San Francisco and sales of fish and lumber in Hawaii and California. Whaling and coal mining were also pursued for a time. Sitka became an increasingly busy port, fifty ships calling in little more than a year.<sup>10</sup> The company continued to construct new facilities in Sitka into the early 1860s. It was during this period of heightened activity that the building later identified as No. 29 (1867 protocol map) was constructed.

When the Russian American Company's charter expired in 1861, it was not renewed. Inspectors for the Naval and Finance Ministries concluded that the company's future was not bright; the fur trade remained weak, and the new ventures of the past decade had faltered. The Crimean War had depleted the Imperial treasury and focused Russia's attention on Europe; official policy actually precluded consolidation of American holdings. Further, the Russian American Company was becoming increasingly expensive to operate. To sell the colonies to the United States would have both political and financial advantages.<sup>11</sup> Thus, in 1867, the territory and assets of the Russian American Company became possessions of the United States.

**II. U. S. POLITICAL AND MILITARY AFFAIRS, 1865-1914 (ALASKA HISTORY)**

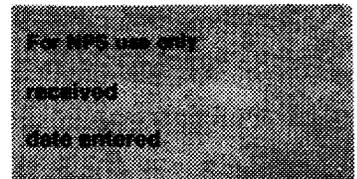
With the purchase of the colonies, Building No. 29 appears in the historic record as a prominent Sitka property. It is one of the buildings specifically identified on the 1867 inventory map of the Russian-American settlement and was owned or used by individuals who played significant political and social roles during Alaska's early years as a U. S. possession.

One of Sitka's most important figures in the period following the purchase of Alaska was William Dodge, who was the first American owner of Building 29. Dodge had been appointed to assist the transfer commission as Brig. Gen. Lovell Rousseau's secretary and to serve as the Treasury Department's<sup>12</sup> special agent to the District of Alaska, or Acting Collector of Customs.

Recognizing the futility of trying to maintain law and order as a sole agent, let alone provide civil administration and balance competing interests, Dodge and several other individuals with high stakes in Sitka formed a provisional city government and Mayor's Court. Dodge was elected mayor and held that position for three years.

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Dodge's civic interest in Sitka was grounded in his investments. He had purchased from the Russian American Company several prime pieces of real estate along the former Governor's Walk, now Lincoln Street. Additionally, he published the capital's first newspaper, The Sitka Times, and, with three partners, established a brewery. One of Dodge's purchases, acquired in November of 1868, was Building No. 29. The deed simply described the property as: "that certain lot or parcel of land situate on Lincoln Street...upon which is erected building numbered Twenty-nine<sup>(29)</sup> according to the official map or plan of the said City of Sitka."<sup>13</sup> A subsequent deed described it further as "the two and one-half storied log building described and designated as house No. 29 in the report of certain commissioners duly appointed and recognized by the Russian and American governments...fronting on Lincoln or Main Street...with frontage...of sixty-two feet."<sup>14</sup>

Dodge must have lived in No. 29 for a time. A visitor to Sitka in 1868 sketched the building and labeled it "Custom Collector Dodge's House."<sup>15</sup> (ILLUS #3) In the spring of 1870, however, John Kinkead was using the building as a residence and place of business. No. 29 may have served as Sitka's post office during Kinkead's tenure as postmaster.<sup>16</sup> At the time Kinkead is associated with the building, Dodge was still the owner. However, by late 1869 he had begun to disentangle himself from what had turned out to be a disappointing Sitka venture.

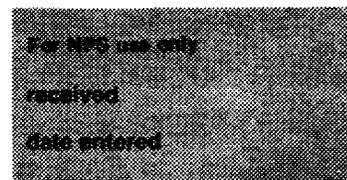
Kinkead was himself a significant personage in Sitka's history, first as a local politician and business man and eventually as governor of Alaska. Like Dodge, he arrived before the transfer with an official appointment as Sitka's postmaster. An additional appointment, as Post Sutler, gave him an inside track to the Army's liquor business.<sup>17</sup> Upon arrival in Sitka, Kinkead entered a partnership to conduct a mercantile and fur trading business, as well.

The Sitka Times noted in June, 1869, that "Louthan and Kinkead" were doing business on Lincoln Street. Their firm operated a 10-ton schooner, Sweepstakes, for trade along the southeast coast of Alaska. Later that year the partnership dissolved and Kinkead continued on "at the old location," which was almost certainly No. 29.<sup>18</sup> Kinkead was also a partner with Dodge in the brewery. Following the passage of Alaska's Organic Act in 1884, Kinkead served a nine-month term as Alaska's first governor.

It is not known exactly how long Kinkead retained occupancy of No. 29 on Lincoln Street. The record shows, however, that William Dodge sold the building to Antonio G. Cozian on November 7, 1870, for \$1,500.00--the sum for which Dodge purchased it two years earlier.<sup>19</sup>

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Cozian, a native of Dalmatia (then in Austria), was a sea pilot employed for several years by the Russian American Company. He was one of many company employees who remained in Sitka to seek their fortunes under a new flag. In time he became a naturalized citizen.<sup>20</sup> During the spring after transfer, Cozian departed Sitka to pilot the schooner Langley on a four month trading voyage. In 1869 he was hired to pilot the steamer Newbern for General Tomkins' inspection tour from Sitka to Kodiak and Cook's Inlet.<sup>21</sup> A reef in Peril Strait, Alexander Archipelago, was discovered by Cozian and named after him in 1880.<sup>22</sup> It is likely that Cozian used No. 29, or a portion of it, as his residence.

For sixteen years, from 1870 to 1886, the record is silent concerning No. 29 on Lincoln Street. The provisional government had failed; records kept by the Collector of Customs and the Navy Commander's reports constitute the official records until civil government was established in 1884. Information from 1886, however, yields some clues to the building's history in the previous decade.

On February 9, 1886, Samuel Milletich, executor for the estate of Antonio G. Cozian, sold the real estate holdings of the deceased at public auction. Building 29 was not among the properties sold. Two weeks later, however, Milletich sold Building 29 to Phillip S. Wittenheiler of Sitka. Samuel Milletich was one of the early investors in Sitka who stayed through the hardest times and succeeded. A fellow Dalmatian, Milletich apparently was a trusted partner and compatriot of Cozian; they owned some property jointly, and Milletich ultimately served as Cozian's executor. Since No. 29 was not included in the estate, and newspaper references to Milletich's sale of the building suggests that he had owned it for some time,<sup>23</sup> it is likely that Cozian had sold No. 29 to Milletich before civil records were established in 1884.

Milletich already owned a home and a number of buildings in Sitka. In 1886, when he sold No. 29, it was referred to as the "Sessions house," suggesting possible use by the new District government, its courts or commissioners.<sup>24</sup>

The new owner, Phillip S. Wittenheiler, did some renovation work on the building prior to leasing it to a Captain Cowles, who was involved in mining at Silver Bay.<sup>25</sup> Cowles and his family were to live upstairs, while they sub-leased the ground floor rooms to the Millmore Hotel across the street.<sup>26</sup> Meanwhile, Wittenheiler was preparing to move his family to Juneau as he took up duties as deputy U. S. Marshal there. Wittenheiler served for two years before returning to Sitka and taking up residence in No. 29, Lincoln Street.

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Once back in Sitka, Wittenheiler was engaged in a variety of activities. He leased the Millmore Hotel for a time, made some improvements to No. 29 (1891), and owned and operated a<sup>27</sup> fur sealing schooner. He was also involved in Sitka's lumber industry.<sup>27</sup> In October of 1892, Wittenheiler again left Sitka to become Inspector Afloat for the U. S. Customs Service on the steamer Al-ki.<sup>28</sup> The Register of Deeds shows that Wittenheiler sold No. 29 to Peter Callsen in September of 1893 for \$3,000.00.

Callsen was a master carpenter; his skills are frequently remarked upon in the Sitka newspapers. Among many projects in Sitka, he built three houses on the Greek Church Mission property, Nos. 35, 104, and 105 (Russian Bishop's House NHL),<sup>29</sup> and replaced the roof of St. Michael's Cathedral.

The final owner of No. 29 in the historic period was Thomas Tilson, a Norwegian immigrant, who purchased the building from Peter Callsen in January of 1908. After he bought the house, Tilson sent for his wife Tomina and two young sons, Thomas and Alfred. Another son, Oscar, and a daughter, Lena, were born after the family was settled on Lincoln Street. The Tilson family, like others before them, lived on second floor and leased the ground floor for use as a bakery and store. The old bakery in the basement, perhaps unused since the Russian period, was leased for the first time of record in 1918. (The lease specifies "bake ovens, stoves, baking utensils, and other appurtenances.")<sup>30</sup>

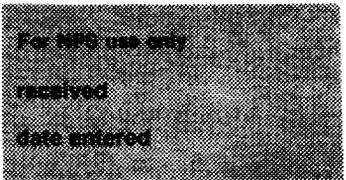
Thomas Tilson owned a mercantile business, in which his sons later joined him. Tilson and his sons also fished halibut together for many years, operating from a wharf which extended from the rear yard of No. 29, Lincoln Street. Thomas kept an office in the attic above the family living quarters, which was his private<sup>31</sup> space and a frequent retreat from the noise of his youngest children.

After Thomas Tilson's death in 1939 (Mrs. Tilson had died in 1929), No. 29 remained in the children's possession. Daughter Lena lived in the house for the better part of forty years, moving out for the last time in 1951. She had grown up and raised two children of her own in what has come to be known in Sitka as the "Tilson building."<sup>32</sup>

In 1960 No. 29 passed out of the hands of the Tilson estate. It has gone through a series of owners, all of whom retained a pattern of use established decades before: living quarters on second floor (rented apartments from the 1940s to the present), and commercial retail uses on first floor of both the original log portion of the building and the 1880s frame annex.

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ASSESSMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

In recognition of their national historical significance, twelve sites associated with the Russian presence in America have been designated National Historic Landmarks. Ten of these are in Alaska, representing aspects of Russian exploration and settlement and the Russian heritage that continued to flourish after the raising of the American flag. Two additional sites, Fort Ross in California and the Russian Fort in Hawaii, represent the Russian American Company's expansion efforts intended primarily to assure supplies for the isolated Alaskan colonies.

Six additional Russian period buildings were recognized in the National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings carried out in Alaska in 1961. Two of these were in Kodiak, the Lowe House and Hubley House; four were in Sitka: the Buldakoff Dwelling, Russian American Company Warehouse, Church Warden's House, and Russian Residence (Building No. 29). Catastrophic losses--the 1964 earthquake and tsunami in Kodiak and the 1966 fire in Sitka--and demolition by owners have resulted in the destruction of all but one of these structures: the Russian residence, Building 29, in Sitka.

Building No. 29 is comparable to the recognized Landmark sites in its historical significance and structural integrity. In fact, it represents historical associations and architectural features not found in other extant structures. Only three of the twelve National Historic Landmark sites have standing Russian-American period buildings: Fort Ross, Erskine House (Kodiak), and Russian Bishop's House (Sitka). St. Michael Cathedral NHL, Sitka, is a reconstruction of the 1848-50 church. Each of these sites, including No. 29, is a unique representation of the Russian colonial role in American history.

Fort Ross NHL. Fort Ross is unlike any of the other Russian sites in that it was established essentially for agricultural purposes. The protective stockade enclosing a small cluster of buildings was surrounded by orchards and fields. Because it was designated a state historic site in 1906, before development along the Sonoma coast affected the integrity of setting or site, Fort Ross has been managed with the aim of preservation for 80 years. Nonetheless, a combination of earthquake damage, repeated fires, and reconstruction programs conducted without rigorous archeological and architectural documentation have resulted in a site with high interpretive value but little original fabric or workmanship.<sup>33</sup> The Rotchev House, built in 1836 for the last Fort Ross commandant, is in some ways comparable to No. 29 in Sitka. The exterior log walls are original, as may be several of the interior partition walls. However, a fire in 1972 destroyed the roof and many interior finishes and furnishings, necessitating extensive repairs and

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some reconstruction.<sup>34</sup> Building No. 29 exhibits complete structural systems, as well as original materials in exterior and interior walls, window and door frames, joists, rafters, floors, and roof members.

Erskine House NHL. The Erskine House represents the Russian American Company settlement at Kodiak. Although the Company moved its headquarters to Sitka in the early 1800s, Kodiak continued to be an important station until the sale of the colonies. The Erskine House is reputedly the oldest Russian building in the United States, believed to have been constructed by Baranov as a fur warehouse and office.<sup>35</sup>

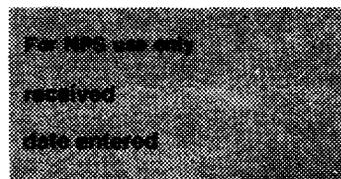
The structure has been much altered, both on the exterior and interior. However, like No. 29, the heavy log walls still exist "in large part." Also like No. 29, the additions date from ca. 1880.<sup>36</sup> Unlike No. 29, the original roof of the Erskine House has been replaced, possibly as a result of fire; the interior room partitions "are poorly constructed and obviously not original"; and the second floor stair rail and newel post "appear to be of a later period."<sup>37</sup> Although No. 29 almost certainly retains more original fabric than the Erskine House does, the point is somewhat academic. Both buildings have substantial integrity behind their exterior modifications, and each is a sole extant representative of a Russian colonial building type and of a significant chapter of the history of Russian America.

Russian Bishop's House NHL. The Russian Bishop's House in Sitka is comparable to Building No. 29 in some important ways, although there are significant differences between them, as well. Both structures were built after Chief Manager Etholin brought Finnish carpenters and builders to Sitka. The buildings exhibit many similarities in design features, construction, workmanship, and even interior paint and wall coverings. A National Park Service staff member, who has been involved in the Russian Bishop's House restoration for more than a decade, suggested that certain architectural and finishing details could have been better understood through study of those features which are still intact in No. 29.<sup>38</sup>

The Russian Bishop's House was built for the Orthodox church as a seminary and clerical residence; it thus had a specialized form and function. Building No. 29 was built as a residence for the Russian American Company, and thus represents a secular housing type--the only example remaining in Alaska. One feature the two structures have in common is a side entrance gallery, typical of Russian vernacular buildings from Kiev to Siberia. The galleries of the Russian Bishop's House have been reconstructed from interpretations of original plans; the original galleries, themselves, had been rebuilt in a new

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configuration in 1887.<sup>39</sup> At No. 29 the original gallery with its flooring, staircase, and balustrade remain intact except for the roof, which was modified to accomodate the 1880s addition.

Now a part of Sitka National Historical Park, the Russian Bishop's House is in the final phases of restoration. Visually, it has greater integrity of setting, materials, and design than does No. 29, which presents an altered face to Lincoln Street. The integrity of No. 29 resides in the relative completeness and coherence of original form and fabric behind its compromised facade. No. 29 is a primary document in the vernacular architecture of the Russian colonies. Thus the two remaining Russian period structures in Sitka complement each other. A study of one can illuminate the other, while they each represent one of the driving forces in the Russian occupation of America: the Russian American Company and the Russian Orthodox Church.

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In the 1890s a writer for the newspaper North Star described the heritage of New Archangel still present in Sitka:

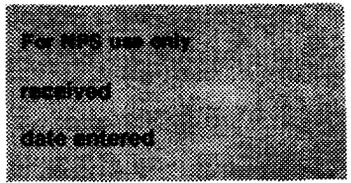
Alaska's quaint and queer old capital is especially interesting to tourists as the mouldering, mildewed monument of the old Russian dominion.... Many of the old Russian buildings are still standing, and, though moss-covered, dingy, and grey with age, they still show wonderful durability and ingenuity in their construction.<sup>40</sup>

By 1961, when the National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings study was conducted in Alaska, many of the Russian period structures had been lost to fire and demolition. However, enough remained that the North Star's description could still apply to Sitka. Twenty-five years later, only two, irreplaceable, structures remain: the Russian Bishop's House and Building No. 29.

Today No. 29 on Lincoln Street is the only building in Sitka to tell the story of the Russian American Company and its employees, who came to expand an empire through the wealth of furs. It is the only building which embodies Sitka's transition from the Russian capital, New Archangel, to Sitka, capital of Alaska. No. 29 is the only building which remains to tell of the Company men who stayed to seek their fortunes under the American flag and of the frontier adventurers, investors, aspiring politicians, civil servants, immigrants, tradesmen, and entrepreneurs who flocked to an old Russian capital to fulfill their American dreams.

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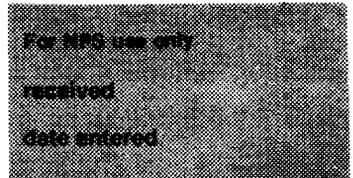
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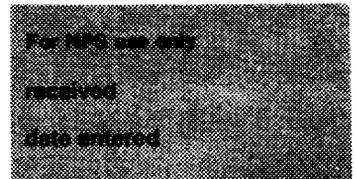
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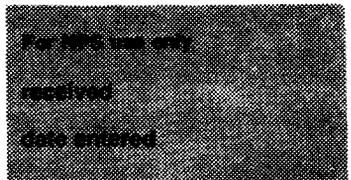
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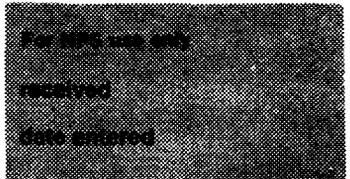
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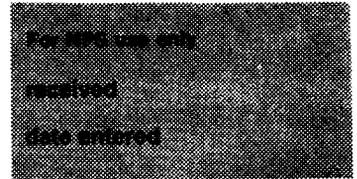
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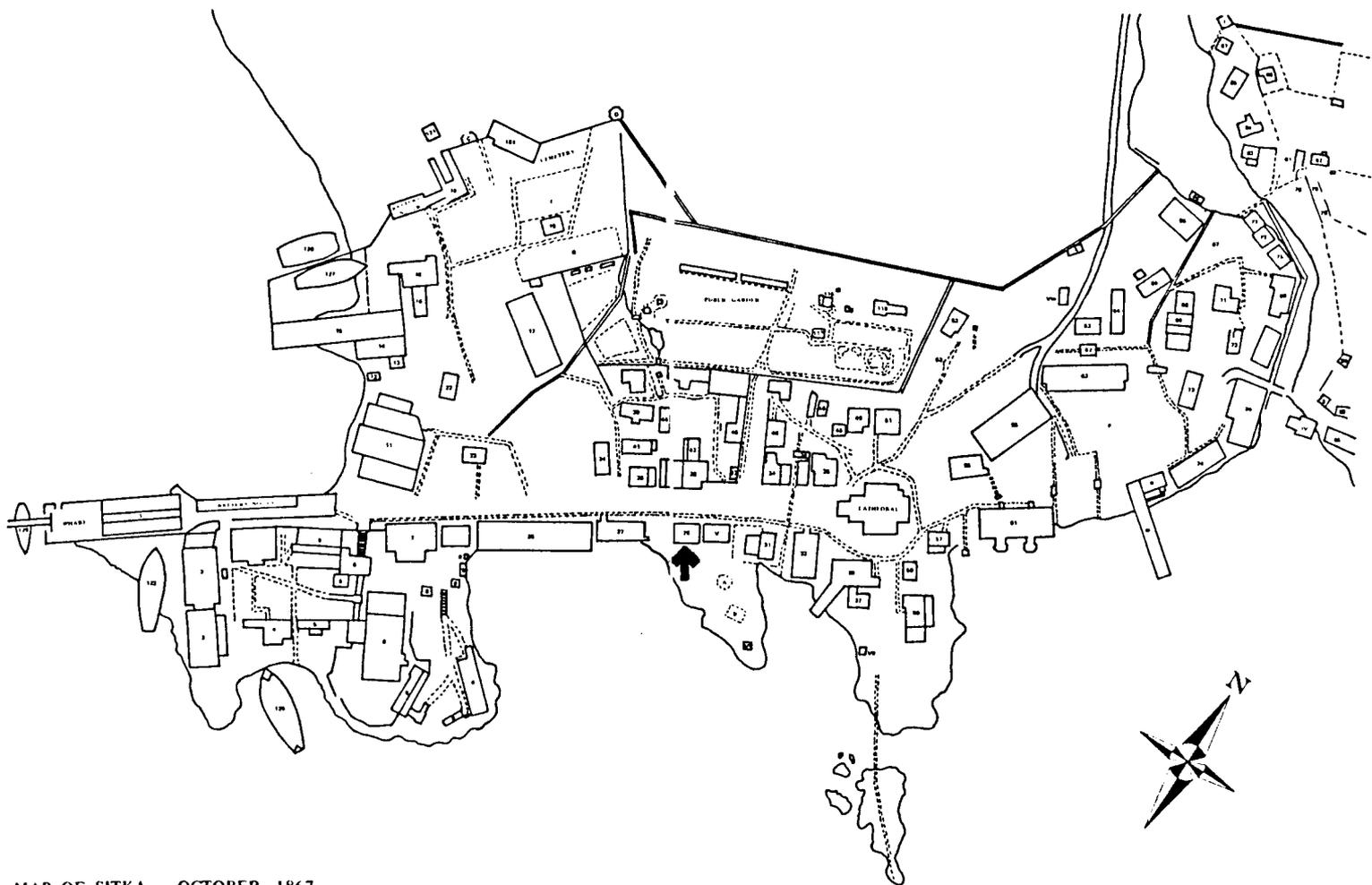


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MAP OF SITKA - OCTOBER, 1867

- A Battery No 1
- B Battery No 2. Vralaskan Battery.
- C Blockhouse No 1
- D Blockhouse No. 2
- E Blockhouse No 3
- 1 Warehouse
- 2 Shop and Store
- 3 Subsistence Storehouse
- 4 Tannery for Furs
- 6 Barracks, three stories
- 7 Office Building, two stories
- 8 Governor's House
- 9 Wash and Bath House

- 11,12,13,14,15,22, and 23, Dock Yard and Buildings
- 16 School Building
- 18 Market for Indians
- 18a Resurrection Church
- 19 Lime Kiln
- 20 Unfinished Barracks
- 25 Bakery, Joinery, etc
- 61 Officers Lodgings, two stories
- 66 Laundry
- 74 Sawmill
- 75 Tannery

- 76 Unfinished Bath House
- 77 Water Flour Mill
- 96 Aleutian Dwellings
- 102 Bishop's House, two stories
- 103. Hospital, two stories
- 116,117. Arbors on Public Garden
- 118. Powder Magazine
- 121. School Building for Indians
- 122. Observatory on Japonski Island
- 123 House for Observer, Wharf, Garden, Hotbeds, etc. Cathedral of St. Michael. Church of the Resurrection (Kotashan Church).

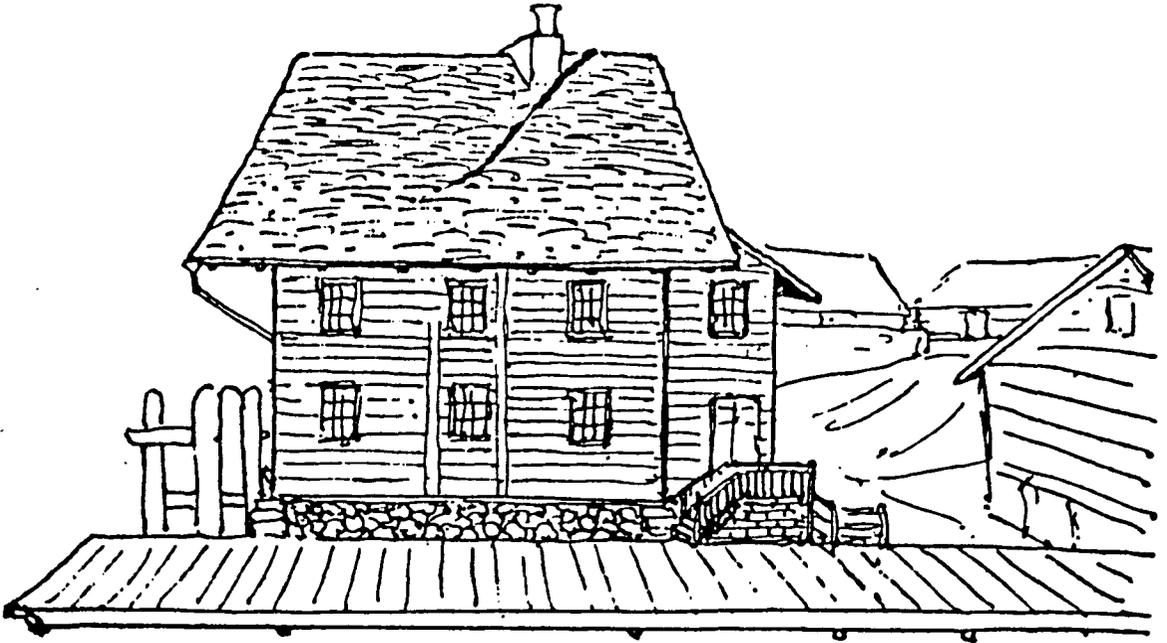
*Map by Charles L. Rice  
with the cooperation of the  
Department of Transportation and Public Works  
Planning and Programming  
Livestock Service - Moscow*

ILLUSTRATION 1. MAP OF SITKA, OCTOBER, 1867. (▲ Building No. 29)



ILLUSTRATION 2. SITKA CA. 1840.

Original painting in possession of Etholin family, Stockholm. Reproduced in Alaska Journal, Vol.2, No. 2.



CUSTOMS COLLECTOR DODGE'S HOUSE, SITKA, A.T.

E.T. 1868

ILLUSTRATION 3. BUILDING NO. 29, SITKA. 1868.

Reproduced in A Journey to Alaska in the Year 1868: being a diary of the late Emil Teichmann, reprinted 1963.

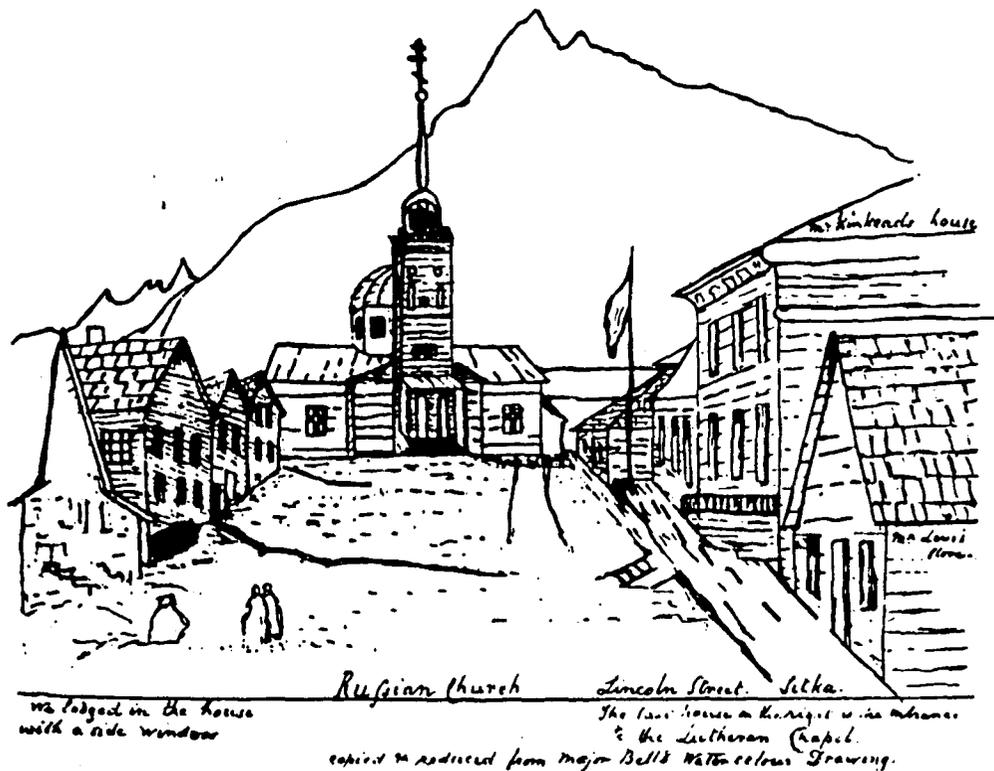


ILLUSTRATION 4. BUILDING 29, SITKA, 1870. ("Mr. Kinkead's House")

Reproduced in Lady Franklin Visits Sitka, Alaska 1870, R. N. DeArmond, ed., 1981

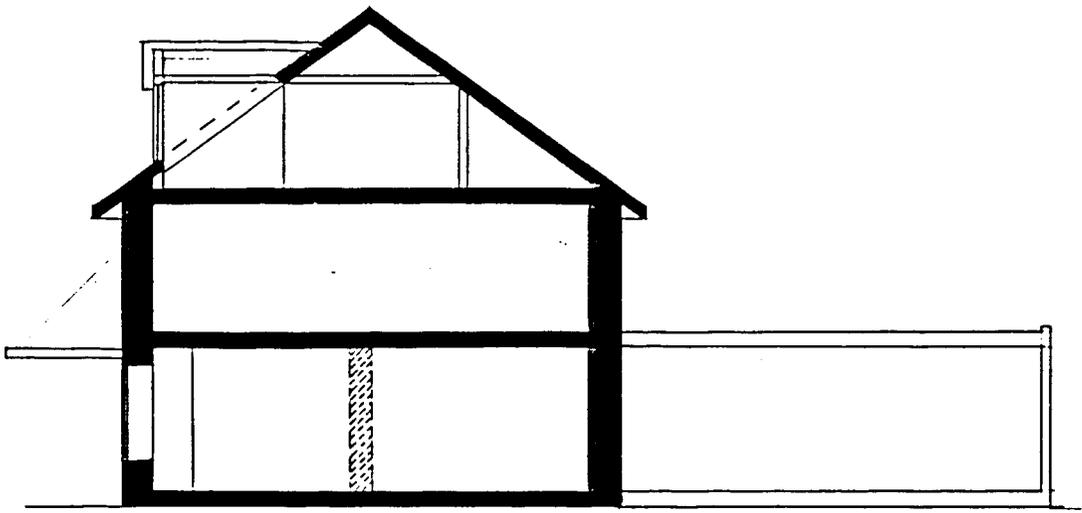


*View from our front Window. Sitka, Alaska. June 1870*

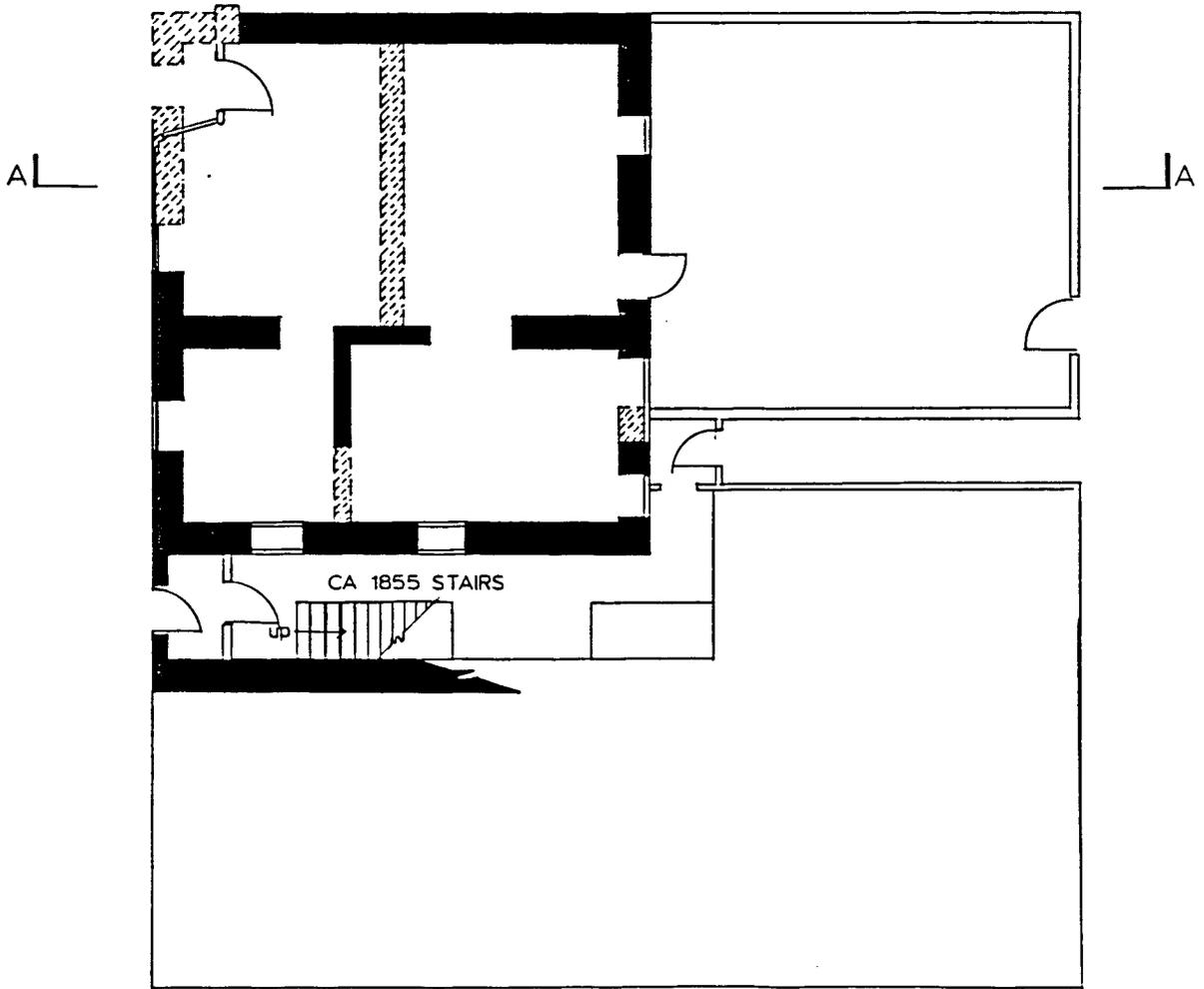
The view from the front window of Lady Franklin's drawing room at Sitka, looking out over the islands of the bay. To the left is a part of Building No. 29, occupied by John H. Kinhead.

ILLUSTRATION 5. BUILDING NO. 29, SITKA. 1870.

Reproduced in Lady Franklin Visits Sitka, Alaska 1870, R. N. DeArmond, ed., 1981.



DIAGRAMMATIC SECTION A-A



FLOOR PLAN, 1st FLOOR

0 2 4 6 8 FEET

LEGEND

- CA 1855
- ▨ CA 1855 REMOVED
- LATER ADDITIONS

SITKA - BLDG. 29

