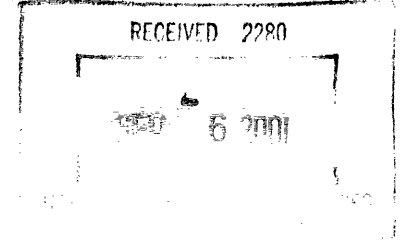


United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service



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 Teller Mission Orphanage

other names/site number Teller Reindeer Station, Teller Mission,  
Brevig Mission, Old Church, Mrs. T.L. Brevig  
Eskimo Mission and Orphanage  
AHRS Site No. TEL-00037

=====

2. Location

=====

street & number Shelman Creek Road and Mission Street

not for publication n/a

city or town Brevig Mission vicinity n/a

state Alaska code AK county Nome code 180

zip code 99785

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form

Teller Mission Orphanage

Nome, 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.)

[Signature]
Signature of certifying official

Aug 27, 2001
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:

- [X] 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
[ ] other (explain):

Entered in the National Register

10.21.01

Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form

Teller Mission Orphanage

Nome, 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>  1  </u>	<u>      </u> buildings
<u>      </u>	<u>      </u> sites
<u>      </u>	<u>      </u> structures
<u>      </u>	<u>      </u> objects
<u>  1  </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**

Teller Mission Orphanage

Nome, Alaska

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

**Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)**

Cat: Domestic Sub: institutional housing  
Education school  
Religion religious facility

**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, metal  
walls wood  
other \_\_\_\_\_

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

The community of Brevig Mission is located near the mouth of Shelman Creek on the north shore of Port Clarence, five miles northwest of Teller and sixty-five miles northwest of Nome. Port Clarence is the best harbor around the Seward Peninsula. Beginning in the 1850s, Arctic whaling ships obtained fresh water from Shelman Creek. Sheldon Jackson brought reindeer from Siberia to the site in 1891, and the next year he chose it for the program's main station. The U.S. Government operated the reindeer station until 1900 when the Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran Church agreed to manage the reindeer operation and open a mission at the site. The community was known as Teller Mission or Reindeer Station, although the Post Office used Brevig Mission. In 1963 the community formally adopted the name Brevig Mission.

The mission site is on a bluff about a quarter of a mile north of the Port Clarence shoreline, and approximately twenty feet above sea level. The mission building has a north/south orientation. It is not the original mission building. It has stood at the site since 1917, after a fire destroyed the original building. There are conflicting accounts about the building. Some believe the Lomen Brothers barged the building to the site from Nome. Others believe the missionary Reverend Oluf Fosso "with many willing hands" constructed it.

USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form

Teller Mission Orphanage

Nome, 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.)

- 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)

Social history  
Religion

Period of Significance 1917-1933

Significant Dates 1917

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

n/a

Cultural Affiliation n/a

Architect/Builder \_\_\_\_\_

**USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form**

Teller Mission Orphanage

Nome, Alaska

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

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

Brevig, Toleef Larson. Journal. Evangelical Lutheran Church in America Archives, St. Paul, Minnesota.

Brevig, T.L. Apaurak in Alaska, Social Pioneering Among the Eskimos. Translated and edited by J.W. Johnson. Philadelphia: Dorrance and Co., 1944.

Koutsky, Kathryn. Early Days on Northon Sound and Bering Strait: An Overview of Historic Sites in the BSNC Region. Volume III: The Port Clarence and Kauwerak Areas. Fairbanks: Cooperative Park Studies Unit, University of Alaska, Fairbanks, 1981.

Maakestad, J.L., editor. The Lutheran Church in Alaska. Anchorage: Key Wray's Print Shop, 1967.

Vorren, Ornulv. Saami, Reindeer, and Gold in Alaska. Illinois: privately printed, 1994.

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

X Federal agency

\_\_\_ Local government

\_\_\_ University

\_\_\_ Other

Name of repository: National Park Service, Alaska Support Office

**USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form**

Teller Mission Orphanage

Nome, Alaska

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

**Acreage of Property** less than one acre

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

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	08	430773	7246287	3	_____	_____
2	_____	_____	_____	4	_____	_____
_____ See continuation sheet.						

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

Teller Mission Orphanage is located in the southwest corner of Tract C, U.S. Survey 4494, in the Brevig Mission Townsite. It is in Township 2S, Range 28W, Section 9, Kateel River Meridian.

**Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)**

The boundary includes the mission building that has stood on the site since 1917. The building is on the site of the original mission building that burned in 1917. The other principal Teller Mission Orphanage building, used as a school and for storage, no longer stands.

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

**name/title** Roy N. Henry, Project Manager

**organization** City of Brevig Mission

**date** November 20, 1998

**street & number** North Tutu Street

**telephone** 907-642-3851

**city or town** Brevig Mission **state** AK **zip code** 99785-5021

=====  
**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)**

**USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form**

Teller Mission Orphanage

Nome, Alaska

Page 5

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The wood frame two-story building is on a post and pad foundation. It was originally 28 feet by 30 feet. An addition was constructed off the north elevation, or rear of the building at some time between 1924 and 1927. This addition increased the length of the building to 54 feet. The second floor of the building is tucked beneath the gable roof. Shed roof wall dormers are centrally placed on each of the east and west elevations. The dormers might have been added in 1917 and extended when the building was enlarged. Each dormer is approximately one-third the length of the current building's side wall length. The building is sided with both beveled and shiplap siding. The building has a corrugated metal roof. The building has tongue and groove plank skirting.

The south elevation is a gable end and was the main entry. The fenestration consists of a paired four over four double hung sash window in the gable wall, and a similar one at the left end of the first floor. A single four over four double hung sash window is just right of center against the arctic entrance. Presently, these windows are all boarded. A wooden box is under the peak, likely a part of the electrical system installed at the mission in 1927. It has an enclosed arctic entrance about 10 x 10 feet that extends from its right side. This entry is gabled. The gable end of the entry originally had a four-light single sash window hinged from the top in its left half and still has a five panel wood door in its right. It has unfenestrated side walls.

The west elevation, fronting Mission Street, has a shed wall dormer extending the left two-thirds of the length of the building. Evenly spaced in the dormer wall are three paired four over four double-hung sash windows, the left one boarded. The first floor's fenestration consists of, from left to right, double doors, large picture window, double hung sash window, double hung sash window, double hung sash window, large picture window, arctic entry, and double hung sash window. All are boarded. The east elevation is similar to the west. It, however, has an arctic entry towards its north end with a cross-shaped fixed window in its gable end. This might have been added after 1933 when the building was no longer used as an orphanage.

The north elevation appears as a gable end because of the shed roof wall dormers on the east and west elevations. The east dormer is stepped back approximately eight feet from the rear elevation. This elevation also has a shed roof addition that extends almost across its length. This addition was for a generator. The main building is unfenestrated on this elevation. The shed addition has a single sash window centrally placed that is boarded.

The first floor has six main rooms that provided space for a chapel, classrooms, kitchen, dining area, and the utilities. The second floor has a large sleeping room that accounts for approximately half of the floor space, and smaller quarters used by staff. The interior has plank floors painted brown, fiber board wall paneling with masonite wainscot, and asbestos board and fiber board ceilings painted white. These are in poor condition.



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Teller Mission Orphanage

Nome, Alaska

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The building has not been used for approximately twenty years. The majority of window and door openings are boarded, the east and north elevation siding is in poor condition, the skirting is broken and warped, the exterior paint has failed, and frost heaves have caused the floors to warp. It is in need of repair, but is still a sturdy building.

**USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form**

Teller Mission Orphanage

Nome, Alaska

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

The Teller Mission Orphanage, standing at its site since 1917, served the community later named Brevig Mission as the Norwegian Evangelical Lutheran school, orphanage, and church. Originally known as Teller Reindeer Station, the community is the site of the first Lutheran mission on the Seward Peninsula. The building replaced one built by Reverend T. L. Brevig in 1907 that burned in 1917. From 1900 to 1933, the emphasis of the mission was on its orphanage and school providing a home for as many as fifty Eskimo children left orphaned by the 1900 measles and 1918 influenza epidemics that ravaged the Seward Peninsula. To care for orphaned Native children, the Teller Mission represents the social thinking of the time that supported the idea of church-supported boarding homes and schools. When the orphanage closed in 1933, the missionaries said that the desperate need of the 1920s had passed and that they were unable to teach the children the traditional subsistence skills they needed to survive in the area. Although the Lutheran Church continued to use the building until they built a new church in the 1970s, the period of significance ends in 1933 when the orphanage closed.

Historic background

Sheldon Jackson, U.S. Government Agent for Education, and Michael Healy, U.S. Revenue Marine Service, imported reindeer from Siberia to Alaska's Seward Peninsula in 1891. Jackson observed that whalers and miners were depleting the Eskimos' traditional subsistence resources. He thought reindeer would provide food for the Eskimos and herding the animals would provide employment for them. Jackson established the reindeer program's headquarters near Teller. Initially, the site was called Teller Reindeer Station.

Toleef Larson Brevig came to the Seward Peninsula as an Evangelical Lutheran Church missionary in 1894 and with some breaks served until 1916. Initially he managed the reindeer station and served as pastor to the Norwegian Lapps brought to train the Eskimos in reindeer herding. He wanted to devote all of his time to the mission, and a replacement to manage the reindeer program was found. Reverend Brevig started the Lutheran's missionary work among the Eskimos of the Seward Peninsula. He helped the Eskimos cope with the devastating effects of the 1900s measles epidemic. At the reindeer station, over half the population, over fifty people total, died in six weeks. Reverend Brevig buried twenty-two people one day. After 1900, the mission expanded its operations and became an orphanage. The mission had thirty-six children at the orphanage in 1905. Reverend Brevig constructed a new building in 1907.

In poor health, Reverend Brevig left in 1916. His first wife and first son had died while on the Seward Peninsula. Church officials said "none has served as faithfully." The year after he left, the mission building burned. A replacement stood by fall 1917. The next year, the worldwide influenza epidemic raged across the Seward Peninsula. Orphanages were

**USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form**

Teller Mission Orphanage

Nome, Alaska

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needed more than ever. The Jesuits opened a home on the Seward Peninsula, at Pilgrim Hot Springs, to help meet the need for food, clothing and shelter for the many orphaned children (listed in the National Register of Historic Places on April 11, 1977). Of interest, one report specifically noted the Teller Orphanage was the only Protestant orphanage in northern Alaska.

At least by 1923, the children at Teller Mission Orphanage attended school in a separate building maintained by the mission. The government hired and paid the teacher. At the home, all of the children had chores to do. In the summer, the boys caught fish and the girls helped dry and smoke the fish. The missionaries always encouraged the children to learn traditional ways of life because they "did not want their charges to become isolated from their own people."

In 1927 long-time and dedicated missionary Anna Huseh personally paid and installed electricity in the orphanage. An addition for a generator was added to the building. The Lutheran Church also had mission stations on the Seward Peninsula at Igloo and Council, but Teller was its main station. In 1933 the church closed the Teller orphanage. Missionaries Mr. and Mrs. Olson wrote that in addition to financial necessity, the need for the home had declined. The children orphaned by the influenza epidemic had grown. The Olsons also wrote that the children needed to know the Native ways and mode of living to survive in the area and that they were unprepared to teach these skills. Happily, they reported that Eskimo families in the community adopted all of the mission children. The Bureau of Indian Affairs established a school in the community shortly after the orphanage closed. The Lutheran Church continued its Teller mission and continued to use the building until the late 1960s when a new church was built about thirty feet to the east. The church later transferred ownership of the 1917 building to the City of Brevig Mission.

**USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form**

Teller Mission Orphanage

Nome, Alaska

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=====  
**Property Owner**  
=====

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

**name** City of Brevig Mission

**street & number** North Tutu Street

**telephone** 907-642-3851

**city or town** Brevig Mission      **state** AK      **zip code** 99785-5021

**USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form**

Teller Mission Orphanage

Nome, Alaska

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**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. Teller Mission Orphanage  
Nome, Alaska  
Mary Tidlow  
1998  
National Park Service, 2525 Gambell St., Anchorage, Alaska 99503  
Looking north at front facade. The current church building is to the east
2. Teller Mission Orphanage  
Nome, Alaska  
Mary Tidlow  
1998  
National Park Service, 2525 Gambell St., Anchorage, Alaska 99503  
Looking east at west elevation
3. Teller Mission Orphanage  
Nome, Alaska  
Mary Tidlow  
1998  
National Park Service, 2525 Gambell St., Anchorage, Alaska 99503  
Looking south at north elevation
4. Teller Mission Orphanage  
Nome, Alaska  
Mary Tidlow  
1998  
National Park Service, 2525 Gambell St., Anchorage, Alaska 99503  
Looking northwest at south and east elevations
5. Teller Mission Orphanage  
Nome, Alaska  
Mary Tidlow  
1998  
National Park Service, 2525 Gambell St., Anchorage, Alaska 99503  
Looking northeast at orphanage and new church

**USDI/NPS NRHP Registration Form**

Teller Mission Orphanage

Nome, Alaska

Page 13

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

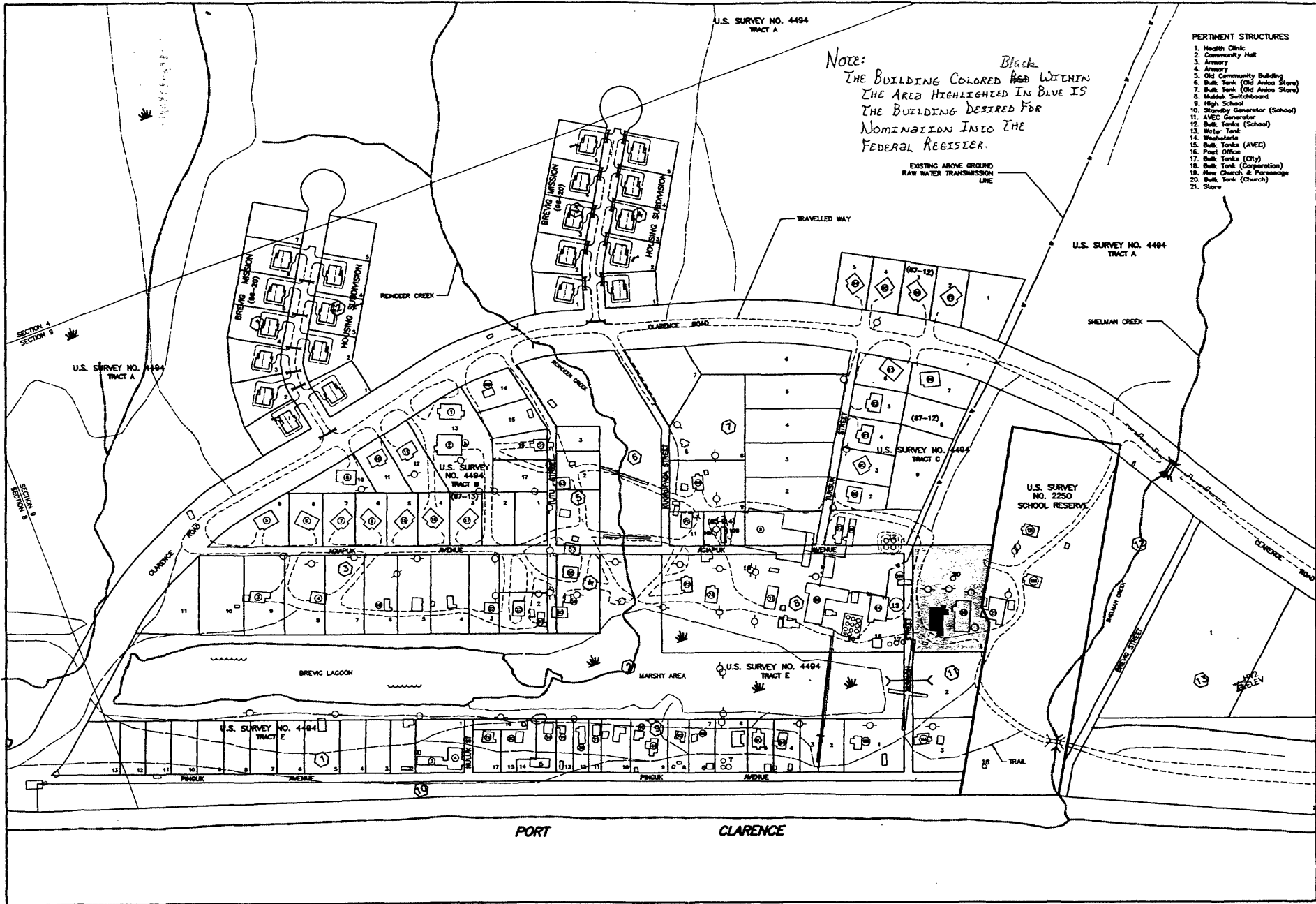
=====  
**OMB No. 1024-0018**  
=====

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

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**  
**CONTINUATION SHEET**

**Section** Photograph identification  
=====

6. Brevig Mission  
Nome, Alaska  
Photographer unknown  
circa 1920  
City of Brevig Mission, North Tutu St., Brevig Mission, Alaska 99785  
Looking west at original mission building
7. Brevig Mission  
Nome, Alaska  
Photographer unknown  
circa 1927  
City of Brevig Mission, North Tutu St., Brevig Mission, Alaska 99785  
Looking north at children and missionaries in front of original  
mission building



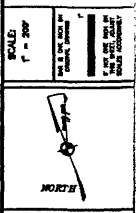
U.S. SURVEY NO. 4494  
TRACT A

*Note:* *Black*  
THE BUILDING COLORED ~~Red~~ WITHIN  
THE AREA HIGHLIGHTED IN BLUE IS  
THE BUILDING DESIRED FOR  
NOMINATION INTO THE  
FEDERAL REGISTER.

**PERTINENT STRUCTURES**

1. Health Clinic
2. Community Hall
3. Armory
4. Armory
5. Old Community Building
6. Bulk Tank (Old Amok Store)
7. Bulk Tank (Old Amok Store)
8. Multiple Switchboard
9. High School
10. Standby Generator (School)
11. AVEC Generator
12. Bulk Tanks (School)
13. Water Tank
14. Washeteria
15. Bulk Tanks (AVEC)
16. Post Office
17. Bulk Tanks (City)
18. Bulk Tank (Corporation)
19. New Church & Parsonage
20. Bulk Tank (Church)
21. Store

**RECORD DRAWING CERTIFICATE**  
THESE DRAWINGS REFLECT  
RECORDED INFORMATION OBTAINED  
DURING CONSTRUCTION.  
INFORMATION PROVIDED HEREON  
IS SUBJECT TO THE BEST OF  
MY KNOWLEDGE.



**BREWIG MISSION  
1936 FACILITY  
IMPROVEMENT PLAN  
COMMUNITY MAPPING**  
BREWIG MISSION, ALASKA

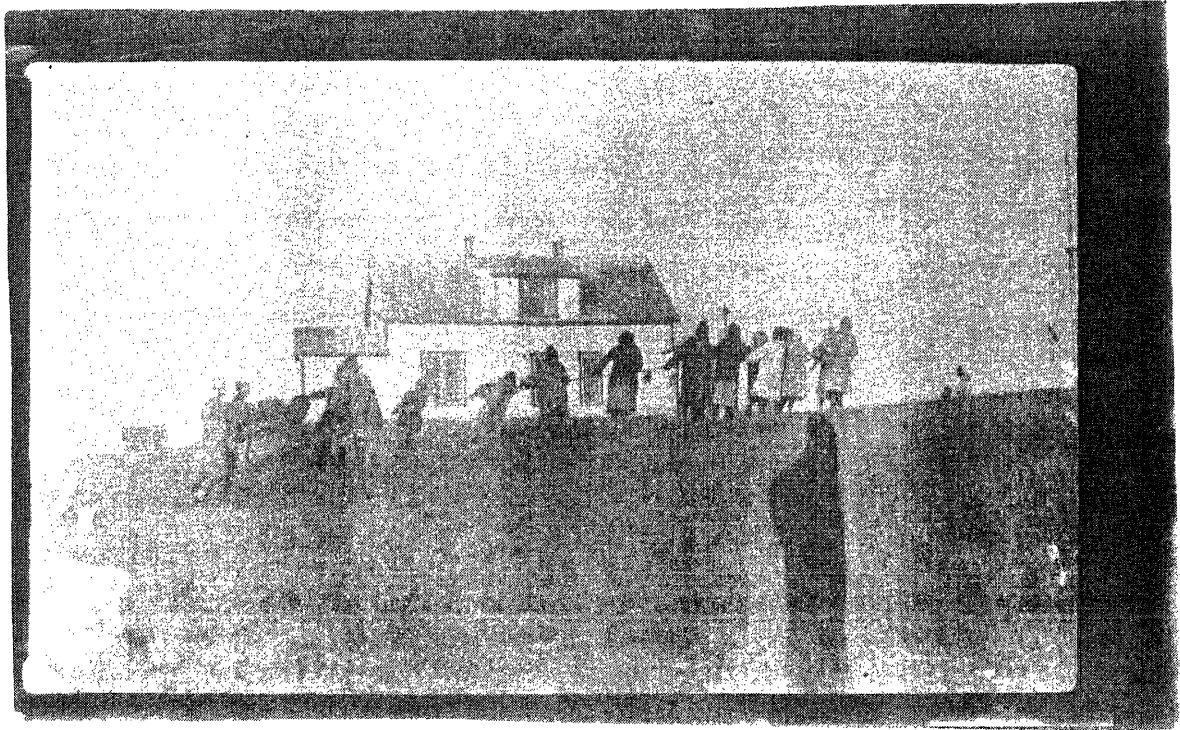
**CHUCK EGGEN  
CONSULTING ENGINEERS**  
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA

REVISION	BY	DATE

Project No. \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: SEPT. 1988  
Designed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Drawn: BTH  
Approved: CLE

Sheet No. **1**  
SHEET 1 OF 1

Teller Mission Improvement  
Map



TELLER MISSION ORPHANAGE  
PHOTOS 6 & 7