

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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RECEIVED FEB 29 1980

DATE ENTERED

APR 29 1980

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Falcon Joslin House

(AHRIS SITE NO. FAI-037)

AND/OR COMMON

Fairbanks Exploration Company House

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

413 Cowles Street

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Fairbanks

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Alaska at large

VICINITY OF

STATE

Alaska

CODE

02

COUNTY

Fairbanks District

CODE

090

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS
- ACCESSIBLE
- YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- NO

PRESENT USE

- AGRICULTURE
- COMMERICAL
- EDUCATIONAL
- ENTERTAINMENT
- GOVERNMENT
- INDUSTRIAL
- MILITARY
- MUSEUM
- PARK
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- RELIGIOUS
- SCIENTIFIC
- TRANSPORTATION
- OTHER:

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Hugh Connelly

STREET & NUMBER

413 Cowles Street

CITY, TOWN

Fairbanks

VICINITY OF

STATE

Alaska

99701

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. District Recorder

STREET & NUMBER

607 Barnette Street

CITY, TOWN

Fairbanks

STATE

Alaska

99701

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Fairbanks: A City Historic Building Survey

DATE

November 1978

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR

SURVEY RECORDS Fairbanks North Star Borough Accessors Office

CITY, TOWN

Fairbanks

STATE
Alaska

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

EXCELLENT
 GOOD
 FAIR

DETERIORATED
 RUINS
 UNEXPOSED

CHECK ONE

UNALTERED
 ALTERED

CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE
 MOVED DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Located within the original Fairbanks townsite, the Falcon Joslin house is a two-and-a-half story detached, "square-built" wood-frame structure with a single-story room built onto the east gable facade. The single-story addition may or may not be part of the original building. The main facade of the lower story, including a later garage addition on the east end, is four bays wide, measuring 15.8 meters. The second story gable facade is two bays wide measuring 7 meters. A single story, one-room wing, not contemporary with the original house, is attached on the north and measures 5.5 meters by 6.4 meters.

The 6-by-2.4 meter screened porch with closed veranda joins the front gable facade and is mounted by straight wood stairs. Six delicately detailed wooden columns support the porch roof. A full cribbed basement underlies the main structure but does not extend under the more recent garage addition and north wing.

The nailed frame structure of the house is covered with horizontal shiplap drop siding with vertical corner trim. Metal sheathing, applied to the level of the porch, protects the exterior siding. A medium hipped roof has corniced, boxed eaves with a plain frieze. Corrugated-metal roofing covers older wood shingles. Extra shingles added to the roof corners give the eaves an upturned "Japanese effect", a more recent embellishment not present in early photographs of the house. A hipped-gable dormer with its original ornate divided window makes the attic more spacious, creating a large storage area or additional bedroom space above the second story. A single stack, poured-concrete exterior chimney is offset to the left at the rear of the second story but is contained internally by the first story.

Positioned in the west gable facade, the main entrance door is offset to the left. The original partly glazed wood door contains seven recessed beveled panels with the center panel exhibiting an ornate raised relief carving. The main door surround head has plain trim and encloses the flat main door structural shape. An original feature of the house, in addition to the door, is the main picture window on the front gable facade. This window consists of a sash and transom with the sash composed of ten small triangular windows formed by crossing lattice dividers. The main window slide is double hung but has been painted over numerous times and is now immobile.

Inside, the house retains much of its original style. The original wood molding is still in place and the original wood banister and staircase still lead from the entrance hall to the second story. Early lighting and plumbing fixtures along with original locks, door knobs, and built-in bookcases help the house retain the atmosphere and style of early construction in Fairbanks.

There were no out buildings contemporary with the original house. A detached greenhouse was built east of the garage at some time during the later history of the house. In addition to the north wing, another alteration, for which no record exists, involved enclosing and screening in the open porch shown in the early photographs. Fortunately the original square pillars supporting the porch roof remain. Although they modify the exterior of the house to some extent, most of these alterations have been made in the original style of construction and do not detract significantly from the house's integrity.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		Falcon Joslin

SPECIFIC DATES

1904 - 1916

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

Unknown

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Falcon Joslin house, built ca. 1904, is one of the first frame houses constructed in Fairbanks and almost certainly the city's oldest frame house still standing in its original location (Matheson 1978:20). Perhaps the major significance of the tall, dignified, "unquestionably ostentatious" house, however, is its intimate association with its original owner, Falcon Joslin. One of the most influential early citizens of Fairbanks, Falcon Joslin was directly associated with the economic growth and survival of Fairbanks as a permanent settlement.

In 1904 this two-story, "square built", midwest-farmhouse style of frame construction contrasted sharply with the single-story log cabins of early Fairbanks. Only two years earlier in July of 1902, Felix Pedro discovered gold near the present site of Fairbanks and prospectors and miners came pouring into the Tanana Valley. Falcon Joslin's home marks the beginning of an important stage in the architectural evolution of the city when the temporary tents and log cabins of the miners were joined by larger houses of frame construction, signaling a trend toward permanence. Miraculously the house escaped damage from both the 1905 flood, which inundated Fairbanks from First Avenue to Sixth Avenue, and the great fire of May 22, 1906, which devastated the entire center of town from Lacey Street to Turner Street and from the Chena River to Third Avenue (Matheson 1978:5).

The Joslin family occupied the house from 1904 to 1916. During much of this time, however, Joslin's wife and three children lived in Seattle and Falcon remained the sole occupant of the rambling structure. In 1916 Joslin sold the house to C.P. Guis who in turn sold it to M.V. Guis in 1921 (Hugh Connelly, personal communication). The Fairbanks Exploration Company (F.E. Co.) purchased the house from M.V. Guis in 1930 and shortly afterwards built a single-story, one-room addition on the north. The F.E. Co. used the building as housing for company executives and later, during the Second World War, as a temporary dormitory for its employees (Matheson 1978:20). Al Seeliger, the last F.E. Co. employee to live in the house, moved out in 1958, and the house remained empty for a year until Hugh Connelly purchased it from the F.E. Co. in 1960 (Hugh Connelly, personal communication). Although Mr. Connelly has restored interior parts of the house to their original style particularly the upstairs bathroom and the kitchen, no major structural changes have been made since 1960. The house was not seriously damaged by the 1967 Fairbanks flood although flood water filled the basement and reached to within a few inches of the first story floor.

Although the Falcon Joslin house is an important architectural landmark, it derives even greater historical significance from its association with the man who built it. There is one pervading influence on the success of any settlement that escapes measure-

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See Continuation Sheet

UTM NOT VERIFIED

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than one acre

QUADRANGLE NAME FAIRBANKS D-2, SE QUAD

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24 000

UTM REFERENCES

A 6 465480 7191000
ZONE EASTING NORTHING

B
ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C

D

E

F

G

H

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The nominated property comprises city lot 10B of Block 64 of the Fairbanks townsite as recorded in book 182 p. 167 and is approximately 90' by 80' in size.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE CODE COUNTY CODE

STATE CODE COUNTY CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Robert C. Betts

ORGANIZATION

Cooperative Park Studies Unit/Anthropology and Historic Preservation. April 20, 1979

DATE

STREET & NUMBER

University of Alaska

TELEPHONE

(907) 479-7050

CITY OR TOWN

Fairbanks

STATE

Alaska

12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

William Steenblee

TITLE

SHPO

DATE

2/22/80

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DATE

4/29/80

ATTEST: *W. Ray Luce*
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

4/22/80

Kristen D. Connell
CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

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ment; that intangible quality of loyalty and identification of the settlers with their own area. These qualities coupled with aggressive leadership may mean the difference between stagnation followed by attrition of population and steady growth, expansion, and diversity of economic and cultural activities." (Monaghan 1959: 187-188). Perhaps more than anyone else, Falcon Joslin and his Tanana Valley Railroad set the stage for the economic growth and ultimate survival of Fairbanks.

Falcon Joslin -- lawyer, railroad builder, and financier -- was born September 27, 1866, in Bellview, Tennessee. After practicing law first in Seattle (1890-1897) and later at Dawson City in the Yukon Territory (1898-1904), Joslin joined the rush of miners to the Tanana Valley in 1904 (Olive Joslin Bell, personal communication). Arriving in Fairbanks at a time when tremendous numbers of prospectors and miners were invading the Tanana Valley, Falcon Joslin recognized that mining camps in the recently established Fairbanks Mining District needed cheap and reliable transportation. In addition, Joslin saw the agricultural potential of the Tanana Valley and the possibility of diversifying the economic base of Fairbanks through development of the rich farm land (Joslin 1907:289-293). With both these goals in mind, between 1905 and 1907, Joslin used American and English capital to construct 45 miles of track from Chena, the head of steamboat navigation on the Tanana, to the mining camps at Chatanika. A 4.7-mile spur line led to Fairbanks on the Chena River (Wilson 1977:8). This narrow-gauge track became the Tanana Valley Railroad (TVRR), and Falcon Joslin served as its president for ten years until 1917.

At the time Joslin began construction of the first 21 miles of track from Chena to Gilmore, the existence of Fairbanks as a permanent settlement was by no means assured. Fairbanks, incorporated in 1903, was engaged in a struggle for existence with the nearby town of Chena which was incorporated in 1904 (Robe 1943:188). At first it was uncertain whether Fairbanks or Chena would emerge as the primary supply base for the mining camps. The TVRR played a key role in this contest. The expansion of mining operations and the transition from placer mining, requiring a minimum of equipment and little capital, to load mining, requiring more machinery and larger investments, was dependent upon the availability of low-cost, reliable transportation. Joslin's railroad meant that miners no longer had to depend on the town of Chena for the shipment of equipment and supplies. By 1908, the contest for survival had been won and trains from Chatanika ran directly through to Fairbanks. Chena declined in importance and was eventually abandoned.

Robert L. Monaghan in his "The Development of Settlement in the Fairbanks Area: A Study of Permanence" points out the significant role of Joslin's railroad in the history of Fairbanks.

"Transportation has been a major factor in the development of Fairbanks and its environs. Improvement in transportation has been

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followed by changes in the economy, a broadening of the economic base, greater investment in the area and hence greater permanence (Monaghan 1959:39).

By the end of 1904 the Fairbanks Mining District had become the third great mining district of the North. Gold output increased yearly to a record high of \$9,650,000 in 1909 (Robe 1943:11). The TVRR prospered as long as gold production remained high, but in the years after 1909, when a decline in gold production and a corresponding population decrease began, Joslin's railroad ran into serious financial problems. Joslin desperately sought to establish a wider economic base for the Fairbanks area. Between 1910 and 1912 Joslin spent much of his time in Washington D.C. seeking legislation to stimulate the growth of the Tanana Valley, and tax relief for his troubled railroad. However, in the end, heavy government taxation along with losses in passenger and freight business to automobile competition forced Joslin to negotiate with the United States Government to take over the failing railroad. Negotiation began in 1915 and continued until June 2, 1917, when the Secretary of the Interior authorized the purchase of the Tanana Valley Railroad by the government (Brown n.d.:5). In 1916, a year before the sale of the TVRR, Joslin sold his house and left Fairbanks. He died in Seattle in 1928 at age 62.

Today the Alaska Railroad follows the right of way of the old Tanana Valley Railroad, but there is no sign of the earlier narrow-gauge track or of the engines or cars of the Tanana Valley's first railroad. The only existing memorial to Falcon Joslin in interior Alaska is the house where he lived during his years as president of the TVRR. The Falcon Joslin house is significant architecturally as an example of the earliest frame construction in Fairbanks. It also derives historical significance as a monument to a man who directly influenced the growth of Fairbanks during a critical period in its early settlement.

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1909 "Railroad Building in Alaska." Alaska-Yukon Magazine, Vol. 7, no. 4, pp. 245-250.

Matheson, J.

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1959 "The Development of Settlement in the Fairbanks Area: A Study of Permanence." Ph.D. dissertation, McGill University, Montreal.

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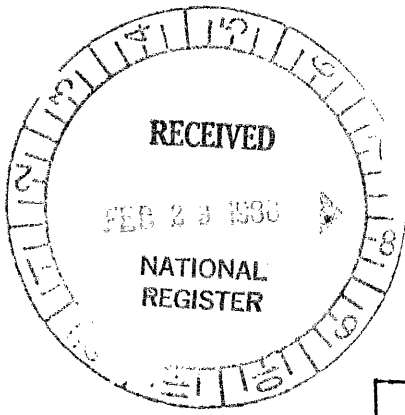
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1977 Ghosts of the Gold Rush. Fairbanks.

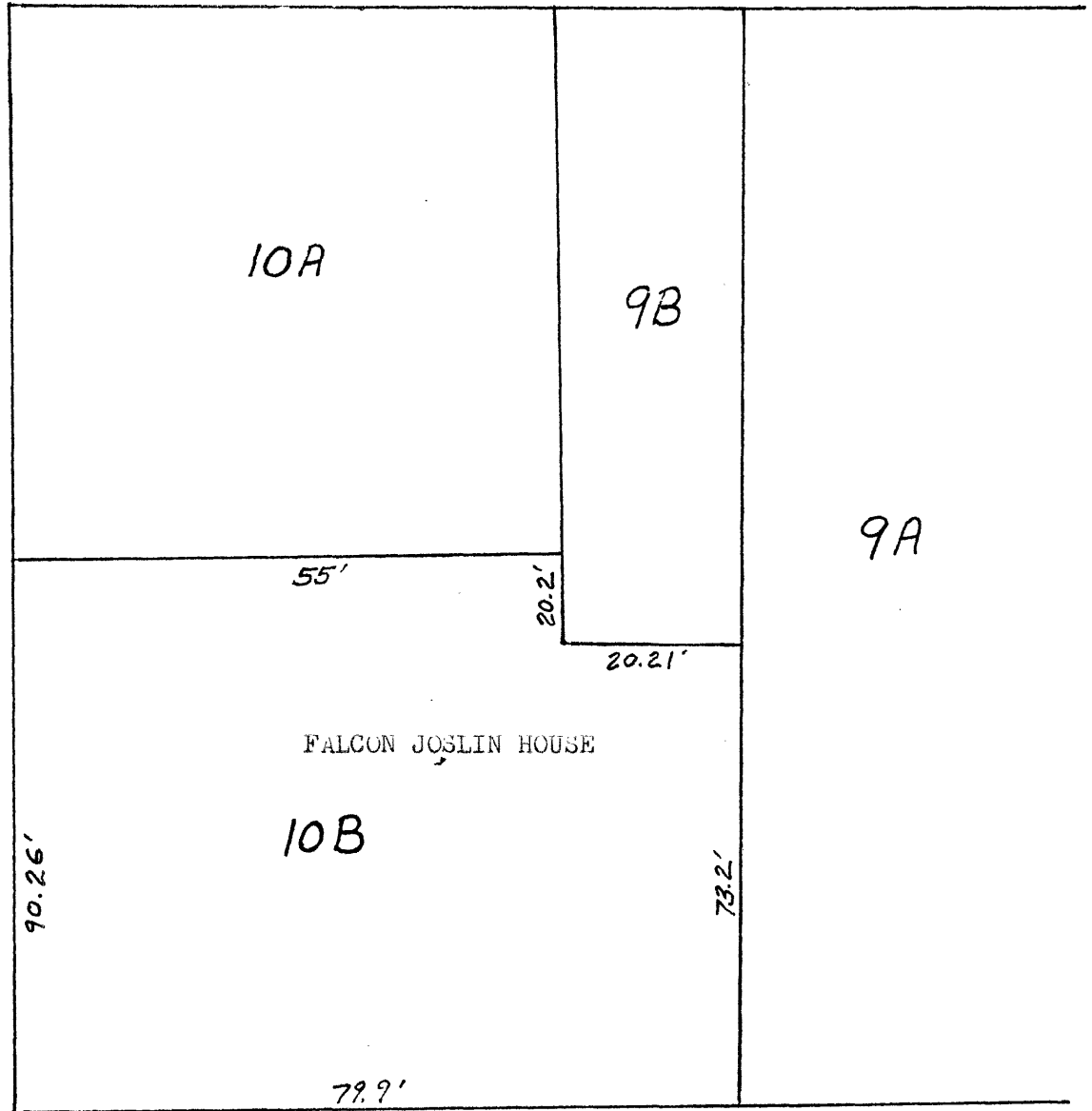
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FOURTH AVENUE

COWELS STREET



FIFTH AVENUE

FALCON JOSLIN HOUSE, FAIRBANKS, AK.

LOT 10B, BLOCK 64

FAIRBANKS, ALASKA

SKETCH MAP

NO SCALE

BOB BETTS

APRIL 20, 1979