

PH 351415

**DATA SHEET**

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
 NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED SEP 23 1976

DATE ENTERED AUG 3 1977

**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  Gakona Roadhouse (AHRS SITE NO. GUL-065)

AND/OR COMMON  Doyle's Ranch

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER or Mile 2 Tok Cutoff  
 Mile 205 (from Anchorage) on the Glenn Highway

NOT FOR PUBLICATION  
 CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

CITY, TOWN  
 Gakona

VICINITY OF Alaska

STATE  
 Alaska

CODE 02 COUNTY Valdez-Chitina-Whittier Division CODE 260

**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 type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME Mr. & Mrs. (GERALD) (Jerry) Strang

STREET & NUMBER P.O. Box 101 GAKONA LODGE (907)822-3482

CITY, TOWN  
 Gakona

VICINITY OF Alaska 99586

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, DISTRICT RECORDER, THIRD DISTRICT  
 REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

STREET & NUMBER P. O. Box 86

CITY, TOWN  
 Glennallen

STATE  
 Alaska 99588

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE Alaska Heritage Resource Survey (AHRS)

DATE 24 September 1974  
 FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS Alaska Division of Parks, Office of History and Archaeology

CITY, TOWN 323 East 4th Avenue, Anchorage

STATE  
 Alaska 99501

## 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED    DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

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DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Gakona Roadhouse, reportedly constructed in 1904, was located at Mile 132 of the Trans-Alaska Military Road. The United States Army cut the trail to facilitate transportation and communication between Fort Liscum on the southern coast near the port of Valdez with Fort Egbert near Eagle, a port of call along the Yukon River. After gold mining activity shifted from the Klondike and Fortymile regions to the Tanana River valley, a new sled road connecting Valdez and Fairbanks was constructed in 1905. The new road followed or paralleled the Eagle Trail to Gakona and then veered north. Consequently, Gakona Roadhouse, at the junction, became a popular spot for travellers.

Originally named Doyle's Ranch, the roadhouse opened in 1905 near a telegraph station, trading post, and post office overlooking the Gakona River. The logs used to construct the two-story rectangular structure average six to ten inches in diameter and are of saddle-corner horizontal construction. The floors are of whip-sawn lumber; the roof trusses are constructed with two by four inch lumber. Covered with corrugated metal, the medium-gabled roof has the verges projecting a foot over the north and south facades. The original structure measured 20 X 30 feet, later a one-story 15 X 30 foot log lean-to was added on the east side.

The roadhouse faces south. A doorway about 5 feet high is in the center of the 20-foot side, bordered by three 9-pane fixed windows. One window is centered above the door in the second story, the other two are equidistant from the doorway on the ground level. Also, a small window, 2 X 3 feet, is centered on the south wall of the leanto. Inside, the first floor of the original structure is one large room. The stove is along the east side, the lumber stairway on the west. On the second floor small, 5 X 9 foot, private rooms neighbor the stairway. The lean-to is divided into two rooms, the one to the north the larger, 20 feet long. A door is on the north side, and another three small windows on the east wall.

When the Valdez to Fairbanks road was widened for wagons around 1910, the station at Gulkana became an important stage stop. A barn that could hold twelve horses and a blacksmith shop were built. Both log structures still stand, as do several other buildings. Increased activity warranted construction of a larger log building, the present Gakona Lodge, in 1929.

Still standing, the outbuildings and first roadhouse are used for storage. Little settling has occurred at the site. The old roadhouse is filled with old relics including oil lamps, picture, furniture, and an old roll top desk that is half buried by dirt. Although the original roads have been altered, the Glenn (Tok Cutoff) and Richardson Highways are still main overland routes into Alaska, and the Gakona Lodge remains a popular stop.

## 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 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 type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

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SPECIFIC DATES                      1904 - present                      BUILDER/ARCHITECT

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### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

#### Significance

At the junctions of the Eagle and Fairbanks trails from Valdez, Gakona Roadhouse opened in 1905 to facilitate overland transportation through interior Alaska. Today, a lodge at the site continues to operate. The original roadhouse and outbuildings are used for storage, however, they continue to represent an important aspect of Alaska's transportation history. The original trails have been altered and improved; they remain two of Alaska's major highways, the Glenn and the Richardson.

#### Historic Background

The famous Klondike gold rush is credited with drawing international attention to Alaska. Potential prospectors who came with the 1898 swarm found most of the Klondike region claimed. Rather than leave, many chose to explore other corners of the north region, but discovered that the lack of transportation routes paralyzed their plans. Interested groups began pressuring the federal government to build roads to alleviate the situation. Congress initially passed legislation encouraging private concerns to build toll roads and bridges. Construction costs and maintenance difficulties prohibited many from taking advantage of the opportunity. Legislation was passed in 1900 authorizing the United States Army to build a road that linked a southern port with the Yukon River and appropriating \$49,975.

The Trans-Alaska Military Road became the winter mail route to the interior. Increasingly, freight was hauled by sleds rather than transporting supplies by steamers along the Yukon during the short summer season. The idea to provide food and shelter at periodic intervals along the overland route was popular, and quickly instituted.

The first roadhouses varied from tents to elaborate log buildings. Most stops were small one-story log structures, with roofs covered with sod or whip-sawed lumber. Usually one room served as a living, dining and sleeping area with a lean-to kitchen attached. Meals were one or two dollars, a bed another two dollars. Doyle's Ranch, at Mile 132, was at the junction of the roads to Eagle and Fairbanks. Built during the second "phase" of roadhouse construction--simultaneous with the route to Fairbanks in 1905--Gakona Roadhouse is a two-story log building. The second floor of the lodge has two small private rooms, accommodations for women, in addition to a large dormitory area. A low shed to accommodate dog teams and feed, usually dried salmon, were available at the station. The first federal judge in the district, James V. Wickersham, was a guest at the stop the first year. Travelling in February, his notes tell of a good roadhouse at the mouth of the Gakona River. The group had to wade in overflow

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- Bundy, Hallock C. (editor). The Valdez-Fairbanks Trail. Seattle, Wn: The Alaska Publishing Company, 1910.
- Clark, John H. "From Valdez to Fairbanks in 1906 by Bicycle, Blizzard and Strategy," Sourdough Sagas: The Journals, Memoirs, Tales and Recollections of the Earliest Alaskan Gold Miners, 1883-1923. New York: New York World Publishing.

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 001

UTM REFERENCES

A	<sup>06</sup> 0 3	<sup>925</sup> 58 7 98 5	69 0 88 55	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

## VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

NW 1/4 Sec. 18, T. 6N. R. 1E, Copper River Meridian; as platted and described by alliquot in Record Books, District Recorder, Third District, Glennallen, Alaska.

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Joan M. Antonson, Historian

30 July 1976

ORGANIZATION

Alaska Division of Parks

DATE  
(907) 274-4679

STREET & NUMBER

323 East Fourth Avenue

TELEPHONE  
Alaska 99501

CITY OR TOWN

Anchorage

STATE

# 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.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

*Russell Cahill*

TITLE

SHPO

DATE 9/19/76

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

ATTEST

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHITECTURE AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

*Charles [Signature]*

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE 8/3/77  
DATE 7-29-77

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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

GAKONA ROADHOUSE (AHRS SITE NO. GUL-065)

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RECEIVED	JAN 4 1978
DATE ENTERED	

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CHANGE OF ELEMENT ON NATIONAL REGISTER PROPERTY

One of the outbuildings noted in the original nomination, the blacksmith's shop, failed and was taken down the winter of 1976-1977. This does not alter the character of the nomination nor detract from the integrity of the surviving main structures.

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water to reach the station, and upon arrival heard no better news about the condition of the trail north. A description of the roadhouse is not given. The following night's accommodations, however, are quite detailed.

"On February 27th we arrived at a roadhouse that stood in a forest of small black spruce on the Gakona (rabbit) river. It consisted of a small open-front cabin with a tent lean-to in which the owner's mule team was lodged. Travelers who came this way were advised by a rough board sign that the "Chippewa Roadhouse" furnished meals for two dollars, and place to spread your blankets for an additional dollar."  
(Wickersham, 447)

A description of a rowdy party at this second stop follows. The conclusion may be reached that Wickersham's experience at the Gakona Roadhouse had been entirely different than at Chippewa Roadhouse.

As travel over the two routes increased, the roadhouse at the junction continued to profit. When a wagon road was cut from Valdez to Fairbanks in 1910, the Gakona Roadhouse became a station for the Orr Stage. A barn for twelve horses and a blacksmith shop were built. In 1929 a larger log structure replaced the original roadhouse. The location has helped the lodge continue to be a popular stop for travellers along the present Glenn and Richardson Highways. The earlier buildings still stand, and are used for storage. They offer a look into Alaska's past that is rapidly being destroyed.

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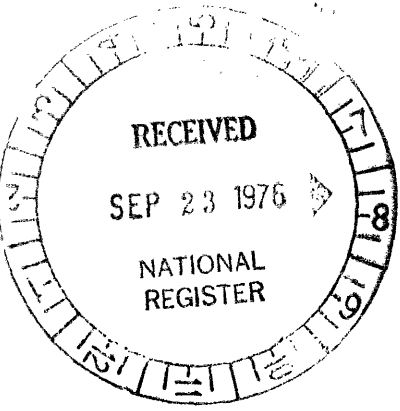
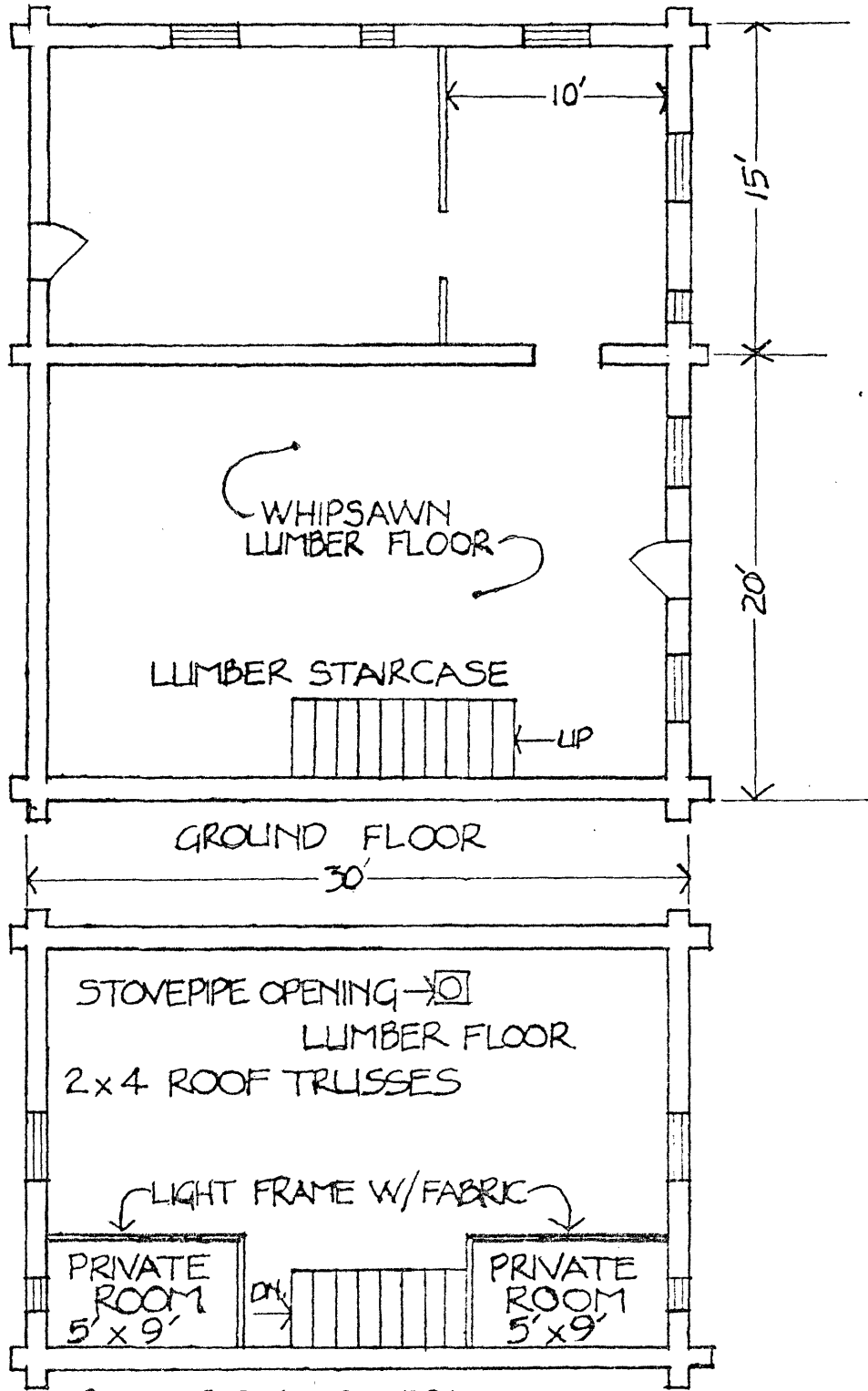
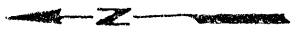
CONTINUATION SHEET

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Edman, Grace, Alice Hudson and Sam Johnson. Fifty Years of Highways. Nome, Alaska:  
Department of Public Works, Division of Highways, 1960.

Wickersham, James V. Old Yukon: Tales, Trails, Trials. Washington, D. C.: Washington  
Law Book, 1938.



AUG 3 1977

2ND STORY - SLEEPING  
SADDLE CORNER LOG CONSTRUCTION OF 6"-10" LOGS

# GAKONA ROADHOUSE

1/8" = 1 FOOT

AHRS GUL-065  
Drawn by Michael E. Smith  
October, 1974



Roadhouses: Valdez-Fairbanks-Eagle

