

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

PH0503339  
FOR NPS USE ONLY  
RECEIVED AUG 29 1977 DATA SHEET  
DATE ENTERED MAY 23 1978

**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

Cooper Landing Post Office (AHRS Site, SEW-146)

AND/OR COMMON

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER

(None)

\_\_ NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Cooper Landing

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

\_\_ VICINITY OF

Alaska, at large

STATE

Alaska

CODE

02

COUNTY

Kenai-Cook Inlet Dist.

CODE

120

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

**CATEGORY**

\_\_ DISTRICT

X BUILDING(S)

\_\_ STRUCTURE

\_\_ SITE

\_\_ OBJECT

**OWNERSHIP**

\_\_ PUBLIC

X PRIVATE

\_\_ BOTH

**PUBLIC ACQUISITION**

\_\_ IN PROCESS

\_\_ BEING CONSIDERED

**STATUS**

X OCCUPIED

\_\_ UNOCCUPIED

\_\_ WORK IN PROGRESS

**ACCESSIBLE**

\_\_ YES: RESTRICTED

X YES: UNRESTRICTED

\_\_ NO

**PRESENT USE**

\_\_ AGRICULTURE

X COMMERCIAL

\_\_ EDUCATIONAL

\_\_ ENTERTAINMENT

X GOVERNMENT

\_\_ INDUSTRIAL

\_\_ MILITARY

\_\_ MUSEUM

\_\_ PARK

\_\_ PRIVATE RESIDENCE

\_\_ RELIGIOUS

\_\_ SCIENTIFIC

\_\_ TRANSPORTATION

\_\_ OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Betty J. Fuller, Postmistress

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Cooper Landing

\_\_ VICINITY OF

STATE

Alaska 99572

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

District Recorder

(907) 283-4891

STREET & NUMBER

Drawer I

CITY, TOWN

Kenai

STATE

Alaska

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

Alaska Heritage Resources Survey (AHRS)

DATE

October 15, 1976

\_\_ FEDERAL X STATE \_\_ COUNTY \_\_ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

Alaska Division of Parks

CITY, TOWN

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

This chalet-type log structure, extensively ornamented at the overhang porch front entrance, is the oldest utilized building in Cooper Landing. It is one of the most picturesque rustic structures on the Kenai Peninsula--extensively photographed by visitors and tourists.

Originally a single room, dog-team mail runner's cabin, it was considerably enlarged after 1921. The latest extension at the rear, of matched logs and carrying the same roof lines, did not modify the front visual effect; nor do the low concrete and brick front steps appear incongruous. The building faces the site--long since denuded--where Joseph M. Cooper built a trading post, the first structure at Cooper Landing, in the late 1880's.

Closely related to the Post office-store chalet are the relics of a trapper's cabin, believed to predate any existing structure; as well as some remnants of the dog-pens from the initial period of habitation by sled-running mail carriers.

A significant part of the charm, both present and past, of the postoffice entrance is the extensive front ornamentation of trophy-size moose, mountain sheep and Caribou antlers, artifacts and driftwood; a beer and wine sign from an earlier period, and a bird-house. On the front porch under the overhang is a sizeable collection of miner's tools, discarded household objects, mineral specimens and other memorabilia dating from the 19th century.

Surrounded by towering snow-capped peaks and virginal forest, Cooper Landing retains the spaciousness and charm of an alpine village. The community's focal point is the picturesque post-office, the 27th homesite patented after the first U.S. Survey of the vicinity.

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

SPECIFIC DATES

1921 - present

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE This is a prime example of historical preservation recycling.

Prefatory history

The existence of Kenai gold was reported by Malakov in 1834. Some of the earliest gold prospecting--the first in Alaska--was done in the vicinity of Cooper Landing. Peter Doroshin from 1849-53, made extensive Russian prospects along the length of the Kenai River and into the mountain tributaries; with the most notable evidence of their placer digging on the nearby Russian River. Although signs were quite evident, no substantial amount of placer gold was recovered. Yet Russian artifacts associated with mining, have been found from the mouth of the Kenai River and over the mountains (north of Cooper Landing) to what became the Hope-Sunrise Mining District; on Resurrection Creek and in Slaughter and Devil's Gulches.

While prospecting on Bear Creek in 1893, for example, George Beady, F.R. Walcott and Patrick Reilly noted evidence of Russian mining. Charles Hubbard, at an earlier date, found miscellaneous tools, kettles, samovars and the ruins of squared-log buildings while prospecting at the junction of the Kenai and Russian Rivers. Early in this century, George Slayback and Tom Wells, prospecting south from the head of Resurrection Creek and down Shaft Creek near Cooper Landing, located a Russian Tunnel, a copper (or bronze) pick, an axe and other items.

The Cooper Chronology

Joseph M. Cooper, was the first American miner to report the presence of gold near the Landing and Creek (which would thereafter bear his name) in 1884. He did not, however, file a claim. Shortly thereafter, travelling east with a pack-horse party of several miners who had been frustrated along Russian River drainage, he established the Cooper Landing Trading Post, and in 1888 married 16-year old Elizabeth Kvasnikoff of Ninilchik. This was the first settlement of Cooper Landing, a slight distance from the present settlement, which came into being with the building of the first wagon roads across the Kenai Peninsula. The original buildings at the present site, predating the highway and shortly after Cooper's death, in 1900, were built by Frank Young, of Seward, who boated a Ruble Elevator gold dredge down the Kenai River, but after a few year's effort abandoned the prospect because of the massive size of the boulders with which the free gold was intermingled. Sylvester McMahan and William Prior were also mining men at that time, working out of Cooper Landing.

With the bloom of the Hope-Sunrise rush to the north fading, more prospecting and mining return. By 1904 several fairly productive claims were being worked on Cooper Creek. From 1906 through 1911, the Kenai Mining

## 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Barry, Mary J., A History of Mining on the Kenai Peninsula, Alaska Northwest Pub. Co., Anchorage, 1973.  
 Tuck, Ralph. Alaska Mines and Mineral Resources, Kenai Peninsula; USGS Bulletin 849-I, Government Printing Office, Wash. D.C., 1933. Moffit, F.H. Bulletin 227, 1906.  
 Odule, Tom. Notes and interviews with Mary J. Barry files, Anchorage, 1977.  
 Fuller, Betty J. Cooper's Landing, personal records and recollections.

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY --1

UTM REFERENCES

A 06 344333 6709159  
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING  
 C         

B           
 ZONE EASTING NORTHING  
 D         

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Homesite 27, U.S. Survey 2527

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

Michael S. Kennedy, State Historian

ORGANIZATION

Alaska Division of Parks

DATE

Feb. 1977

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

619 Warehouse Avenue, Suite 210

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

## 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL   

STATE   

LOCAL X

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 Skanable*

TITLE

State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

Aug 10, 1977

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

ATTEST *Charles Adams*  
 SUPERVISOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
 KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE 5-23-78  
 KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER  
 DATE 5-3-78

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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Cooper Landing (AHR SITE NO. SEW-146)

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 2

and Milling Co. was headquartered at Cooper Landing for the logistical support of two giant hydraulic operations, a Ruble Elevator, and a 40,000 board feet capacity sawmill producing lumber for flumes for these and other placers. About the same time the Kenai Dredging Co., developed by Charles D. Cunningham, and then acquired by a mining engineer, Charles G. Hubbard, also operated out of here; along with smaller-scale miners such as Tom Tessier, Fred Bryant and Wm. Fairman. By 1914 Hubbard withdrew in favor of Wrangell Mountain copper mining which consolidated into the great Kennecott complex.

Highway-related employment, sporadic mining, fur-farming, trapping, logging, and small sawmills--and eventually tourism and recreation--gradually expanded the community of Cooper Landing after the 1920's. Even as late as the 1930's, miners such as Bill Knook, backpacked and dogsleded supplies to remote mines out of Cooper Landing.

At this site--probably dating from Frank Young's dredge venture--were located three small, closely related, cabins. All had been abandoned by 1921 when Jack Lean selected Cooper Landing as his base for mail delivery on the Seward-Kenai route. Also an experienced woodsman, trapper and guide, Lean utilized the best logs from two of the cabins to build a more commodious single cabin with a high pitched roof; and some dog pens. An addition was attached to this--again utilizing cured logs from other older structures--when it became a general store in the 1930's. The front overhand, "A-frame style" emerged more predominately at this time. In 1969, postmistress Betty J. Fuller completed the structure as it now exists--again recycling logs from earlier structures. The postoffice occupies the "Jack Lean Wing", or oldest segment; and the store is in the newest addition.

The lifestyle and harmonious relationship with nature has altered less perceptibly at Cooper Landing than at any place on the Kenai Peninsula. This despite the fact that no existing, utilized structure predates 1920. Much credit for this notable continuity resides in the judicious recycling of the rustic historic fabric, best exemplified by the postoffice building.