

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service



NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM

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1. Name of Property

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historic name: Ernest Gruening Cabin

other name/site number: Gruening State Historical Park  
AHRS Site No. JUN-119

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2. Location

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street & number: Mile 26 Glacier Highway

not for publication: N/A

city/town: Juneau vicinity: X

state: AK county: Juneau code: 110 zip code: 99801

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3. Classification

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Ownership of Property: public-state

Category of Property: building

Number of Resources within Property:

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u>1</u>	_____	buildings
_____	_____	sites
_____	_____	structures
_____	_____	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: N/A

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

4. 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.   See continuation sheet.

Judith E. Butner  
Signature of certifying official

April 24, 1992  
Date

Alaska  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property   meets   does not meet the National Register criteria.   See continuation sheet.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

- 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): \_\_\_\_\_

Cheryl A. [Signature] 6/8/92

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Keeper Date of Action

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 6. Function or Use  
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Historic:	<u>Domestic</u>	Sub:	<u>Camp</u>
Current:	<u>Recreation and culture</u> <u>Domestic</u>	Sub:	<u>Outdoor recreation</u> <u>Institutional housing</u>

 =====  
 7. Description  
 =====

 Architectural Classification: No Style

 Other Description: N/A

Materials: foundation:	<u>Concrete</u>	roof:	<u>Metal</u>
walls:	<u>Wood</u>	other:	<u></u>

 Describe present and historic physical appearance.  See continuation sheet.

Built during the summer of 1947, the Ernest Gruening Cabin is twenty-six miles northwest of downtown Juneau. Gruening leased the 4.9 acre tract of land on which the cabin stands from the U.S. Forest Service in 1946, under provisions of the Small Tract Act of 1935, and later received title to it. The cabin is oriented with a view to the west and overlooks Favorite Channel of Lynn Canal in southeast Alaska. The northeastern edge of the property is bordered by Salt Lake, where a low waterfall empties into Eagle Harbor. The southern boundary adjoins Amalga Harbor Road. The forest looks much today as it did in 1946, for Gruening was adamant that no trees be cut on the property.

The cabin is a wood frame building, designed by Juneau architect MacKay Malcolm. It was built by local carpenter Fred Jacobsen with the help of Ernest Gruening's son, Hunt, and local laborers. The one-and-a-half story building rests on a foundation of concrete posts and footings, originally unskirted. The ground plan is rectangular, 24' (north/south) x 28' (east/west). The orientation is parallel. The twenty-two foot high exterior frame is clad in cedar shiplap siding, milled to resemble logs. The siding is placed horizontally on the first floor and vertically on the second floor. This siding is its original barn red color. The gable roof has projecting eaves and a central concrete chimney. The 8' x 12' porch at the northeast entrance has a gable roof, single window, and single door.

The building's fenestration is of two types, a large twelve light fixed-sash and a nine light casement. The placement of the windows is asymmetrical, with the exception of the west elevation where a band of five 60" x 55 1/2" windows span the entire wall. The windows have wood frames. The frames are painted their original light yellow color. A wood door in the southwest corner of the cabin opens onto a twenty-one foot long wooden deck with a three foot high railing. This deck extends over the sloping west bank of the property for fourteen-and-a-half feet.

Gruening's grandson, Clark, made minor alterations to the cabin exterior in 1983. He replaced the original asphalt shingled roof with corrugated sheet

## 8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties: Statewide

Applicable National Register Criteria: B

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): G

Areas of Significance: Politics/Government

Period(s) of Significance: 1947-1958

Significant Dates: 1947 1954

Significant Person(s): Ernest Gruening

Cultural Affiliation: N/A

Architect/Builder: MacKay Malcolm, architect  
Fred Jacobsen, Hunt Gruening,  
builders

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

X See continuation sheet.

In 1947, Ernest Gruening, Territorial Governor of Alaska from 1939 to 1953, had a one-and-one-half story cabin built at a site twenty-six miles north of downtown Juneau. Although less than fifty years old, the cabin is the only building in Alaska, other than the Governor's Mansion (listed in the National Register of Historic Places), directly associated with Gruening. During his years in Alaska, Gruening fought for statehood, for a strong military presence in Alaska, and for more equal treatment of all Alaskans. In the spring of 1953 when President Eisenhower appointed a new territorial governor, Dorothy and Ernest Gruening moved from the Governor's Mansion to the cabin. There, Gruening wrote The State of Alaska (1954), a number of articles for national magazines and newspapers, and countless letters promoting statehood for Alaska. Of the many Alaskans who devoted themselves to the campaign, Ernest Gruening was one of the principal architects of Alaska statehood. The cabin served as Gruening's principal residence from 1953 until November 1958 when Alaskans elected him one of their first U.S. Senators and he moved to Washington, D.C.

In his 1974 eulogy of Ernest Gruening, Carey McWilliams observed, "The persona never engulfed the self with Ernest Gruening. The public citizen and the private person were one and the same . . . and few Americans of his generation had a richer or more varied experience in public affairs. He was a man of impeccable honor and integrity, indomitable spirit and extraordinary moral courage . . . and, more than any one person, was responsible for the successful drive to acquire statehood . . . for Alaska." (The Nation, July 20, 1974, pp. 36-37)

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

OMB Approval No. 1024-0018

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Section number 7

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metal, enclosed the east porch with T-111 plywood to form an arctic entry with storage, and skirted portions of the foundation. The original outhouse, several yards from the south side of the cabin, was replaced with a similar building.

Originally, the interior was one large room with a sleeping loft that was reached by a wooden staircase along the south wall. The loft extends twelve feet from the east wall and runs the length of the cabin. It is partially enclosed by a half wall surfaced with knotty pine paneling. This paneling is used throughout the rest of the interior. The concrete fireplace (4'7" high x 6'9" long) is faced with argillite and slate from the area. Two spruce logs originally provided structural support between the ten-and-a-half inch wide mantle and overhead ridge beam. Above the west window-wall is a twenty-five foot long bookshelf, constructed in 1953. Below the bookshelf and windows, built-in banquette seating extends the length of the wall. The kitchen is in the northeast corner.

The Gruening family modified the interior over the years. In 1983, the stairs to the loft were replaced with a wrought iron circular staircase to make room for a Franklin wood stove. Electric baseboard heating was added at this time. A system to collect rainwater in a 1,100 gallon cistern beneath the cabin's north side was installed. In the southeast corner a sink and shower were placed in a small enclosure. A gas fired range and electric refrigerator replaced the original oil stove and ice chest. Vinyl sheet flooring was laid in the kitchen, and carpeting in the living room. In 1985, two twenty-six inch carved pine totem poles replaced the spruce logs above the fireplace.

Although the cabin's interior and east entrance have been altered, the additions do not involve any major structural changes. The cabin looks much the way it did when built. As a result of Gruening's insistence that no trees be removed, the original appearance and feel of the site remain.

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Ernest Gruening was born in 1887 in New York City. He received his medical degree from Harvard Medical School in 1912, but never practiced medicine. Instead, he pursued a career in journalism, and was managing editor of The New York Tribune newspaper and later The Nation. In 1934, President Franklin Roosevelt appointed Gruening to be the first director of the Division of Territories and Island Possessions in the Department of the Interior. Gruening served in this position until his appointment as governor of the Territory of Alaska in 1939.

Gruening first visited Alaska in May 1936, to deliver the commencement address at the University of Alaska in Fairbanks. On his tour through southeast, southcentral, and interior Alaska, Gruening noted the lack of adequate health facilities, inadequate harbors and housing, separate school systems for white and native children, and the high shipping costs between Seattle and Alaska. His interest in helping the territory get the many necessary and basic services it lacked led to his appointment as territorial governor.

As governor, Gruening pushed statehood for Alaska. He addressed the concerns expressed by members of Congress and the Department of the Interior: spearheading a personal income tax bill to show that Alaskans were willing to pay for state government, encouraging the Territorial Legislature to create a statehood commission, and promoting economic development. Recognizing the strategic importance of Alaska in the war against Japan--and the development and revenue military activity would bring to the territory, Gruening campaigned exhaustively for construction of air bases in Alaska. He termed Alaska the "first line of defense" for America and organized the Alaska Territorial Guard. After World War II, Gruening fought for continued military involvement in Alaska. He also worked to end discrimination against Alaska Natives, and to get funding to combat tuberculosis that was epidemic in Alaska. In 1953, the new Republican president, Dwight D. Eisenhower replaced Gruening as territorial governor. Gruening moved from the Governor's Mansion and to his cabin. There he continued to advocate Alaska statehood and tirelessly wrote articles for national magazines and newspapers. His 606-page book, The State of Alaska, was published in 1954.

The State of Alaska chronicles Alaska's history and advocates statehood for Alaska. One reviewer wrote that the book "presented a powerful argument for statehood, [and] was undoubtedly written with that purpose in view. The case it makes is all the more compelling because it is predicated not upon an emotional plea by one whose emotions are so surely involved, but rather upon a relentless review of facts which expose with dramatic clarity the disheartening effect of Governmental neglect, confusion, and bureaucracy on the one hand and exploitation by powerful economic interests on the other" (Saturday Review, February 12, 1955, p. 17).

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Alaska achieved statehood on January 3, 1959. It took the combined efforts of many Alaskans, but Gruening was one of the chief architects and a seemingly tireless crusader.

While he was territorial governor and after, Gruening entertained many notable guests at the cabin, among them presidential aspirant Adlai Stevenson, New York Governor Thomas E. Dewey, novelist Edna Ferber, Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas, and Senator John F. Kennedy. Although away from the cabin quite a bit promoting statehood, the Gruenings lived there from 1953 until 1958, when Alaskans elected Gruening as one of the first United States Senators from the new State of Alaska. After they moved to Washington, D.C., the couple visited the cabin whenever they were in the state. After his death in 1974, Gruening's ashes were scattered on the mountain behind the cabin, now named Mount Gruening. The family owned the cabin until 1989 when the State of Alaska purchased the property for an historic park.

9. Major Bibliographical References

X See continuation sheet.

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:

- X State historic preservation office
Other state agency
Federal agency
Local government
University
Other -- Specify Repository:

10. Geographical Data

Acreeage of Property: 1 acre

UTM References table with columns: Zone, Easting, Northing, Zone, Easting, Northing. Rows A, B, C, D.

See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description: See continuation sheet.

The boundaries of the property are within Lot A, U.S. Survey 2387, as shown on the attached map.

Boundary Justification: See continuation sheet.

The boundary includes the cabin and land providing views to the north and west of the cabin that have historically been associated with Ernest Gruening.

11. Form Prepared By

Name/Title: Sylvia Elliott, Student Intern
Office of History & Archaeology
Organization: Alaska Division of Parks Date: May 8, 1991
Street & Number: P.O. Box 107001 Telephone: 907-762-2622
City or Town: Anchorage State: AK ZIP: 99510-7001



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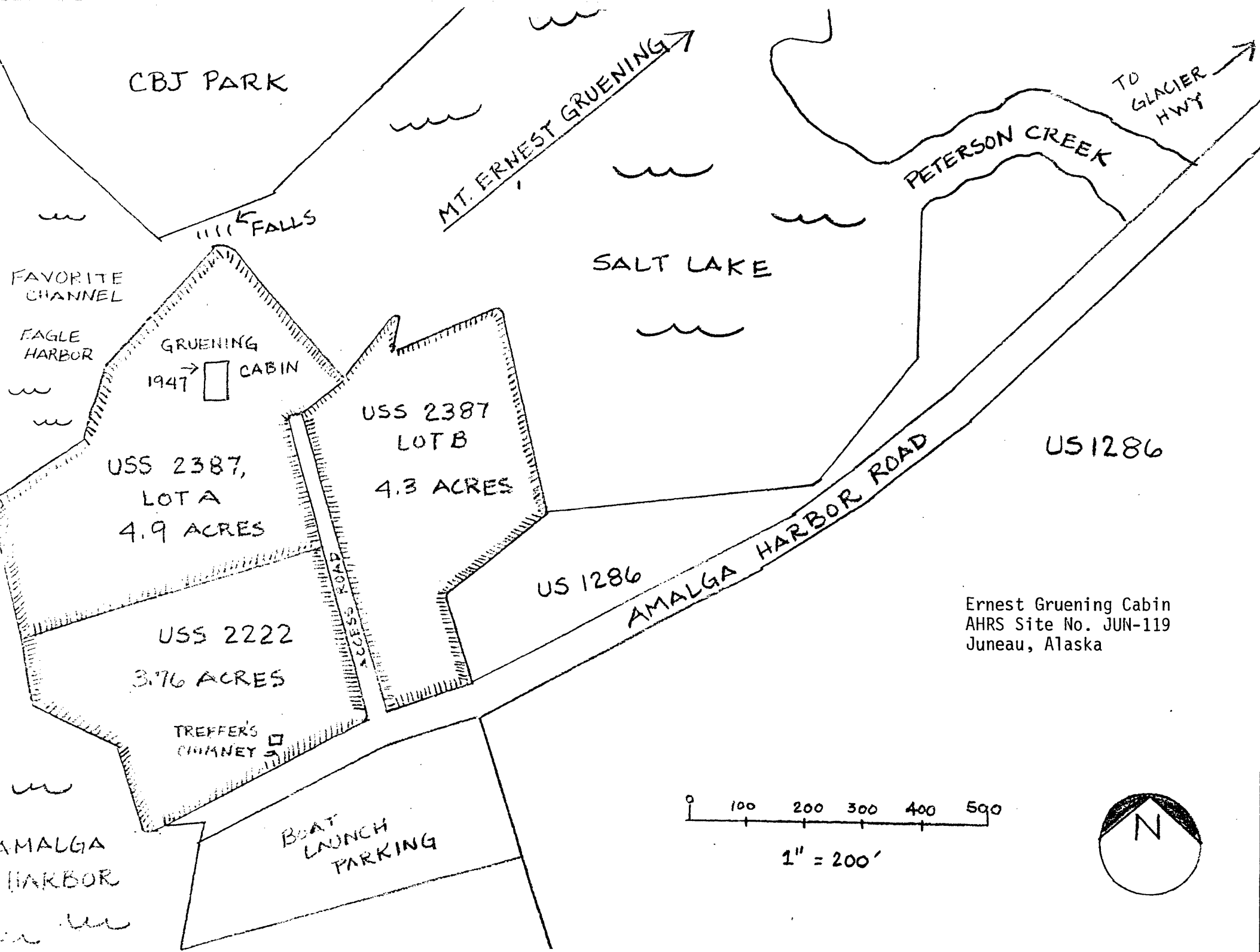
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Section number Photograph identification

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1. Ernest Gruening Cabin (AHRS Site No. JUN-119)  
Juneau, Alaska  
Sylvia Elliott  
June 1990  
Office of History and Archaeology, P.O. Box 107001, Anchorage, Alaska  
99510  
Looking east at front of cabin
2. Ernest Gruening Cabin (AHRS Site No. JUN-119)  
Juneau, Alaska  
Sylvia Elliott  
June 1990  
Office of History and Archaeology, P.O. Box 107001, Anchorage, Alaska  
99510  
Looking north at side of cabin
3. Ernest Gruening Cabin (AHRS Site No. JUN-119)  
Juneau, Alaska  
Sylvia Elliott  
June 1990  
Office of History and Archaeology, P.O. Box 107001, Anchorage, Alaska  
99510  
Looking west at back of cabin
4. Ernest Gruening Cabin (AHRS Site No. JUN-119)  
Juneau, Alaska  
Sylvia Elliott  
June 1990  
Office of History and Archaeology, P.O. Box 107001, Anchorage, Alaska  
99510  
Looking south at side of cabin
5. Ernest Gruening Cabin (AHRS Site No. JUN-119)  
Juneau, Alaska  
N/A  
June 16, 1947  
Photocopy of cover of Time magazine  
Ernest Gruening



CBJ PARK

MT. ERNEST GRUENING

PETERSON CREEK

TO GLACIER HWY

SALT LAKE

FAVORITE CHANNEL

EAGLE HARBOR

GRUENING 1947 CABIN

USS 2387, LOT A  
4.9 ACRES

USS 2387 LOT B  
4.3 ACRES

US 1286

AMALGA HARBOR ROAD

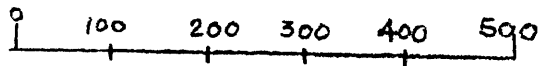
US 1286

USS 2222  
3.76 ACRES

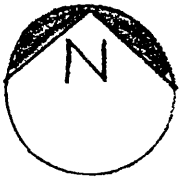
TREFFER'S CHIMNEY

BOAT LAUNCH PARKING

Ernest Gruening Cabin  
AHRS Site No. JUN-119  
Juneau, Alaska



1" = 200'



AMALGA HARBOR