

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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RECEIVED MAR 29 1978  
DATE ENTERED JUL 12 1978  
DATA SHEET

**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 **\*\***  
Ballaine House (AHRS SITE NO. SEW-023)

AND/OR COMMON  
Frank L. Ballaine House; Neve House

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER  
437 Third Avenue

CITY, TOWN Seward VICINITY OF Alaska, at large  
STATE Alaska CODE 02 COUNTY Seward Division CODE 210 ✓

**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 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 checked="" 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. and Mrs. Richard A. Neve (907) 224-3621 ✓

STREET & NUMBER  
P.O. Box 555

CITY, TOWN Seward VICINITY OF Alaska 99664 STATE Alaska 99664

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. District Recorder

STREET & NUMBER  
P.O. Box 596

CITY, TOWN Seward STATE Alaska 99664

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE  
Alaska Heritage Resource Survey (AHRS)

DATE April 10, 1972  
\_FEDERAL  STATE \_COUNTY \_LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS Alaska Division of Parks, 619 Warehouse Dr., Suite 210

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 building was built as a residence and has been in continuous use for this purpose since its construction in 1905. Only minor alterations have been made to its interior or exterior appearance.

The site was well prepared, including a full basement of concrete about two-thirds recessed into the ground with narrow fenestration at the roof line just below the first floor level. The external measurements are approximately 22 feet in width by 45 feet in depth.

The front of the house is dominated by the entranceway portico at the right, since enclosed, and a wide "picture" window at the center of the left half of the face. The wide picture window was a feature of the original construction, a window of unusually large dimensions for that time in residential construction. The entrance portico, one story in height, is capped by a medium (40°) gable, which intrudes upon the design of the second story central bay window, as described below. The original ascent to the first floor level and onto the portico landing from the street was by a stairway the same width as the portico. With the subsequent enclosure of the portico by four fifteen-pane window panels and a similarly fenestrated center door, the stairway was reduced to one-third its original width and is flanked by a pair of unadorned banister rails. Entrance from the portico to the house is through the original glass panelled doorway, with a built-in bell turner at belt level.

All around the first floor is a maze of windows, most unusual at the time and place, a mark of extravagant affluence but good for supplying light and ventilation. The left side of the first floor is dominated by a massive chimney base that extends to the top of the first floor, then narrows by one-half at the belt line as it becomes free standing above the roof. Just at the rear of the chimney base is a dormer containing three double hung windows. It is of an unadorned design, simply seven lateral surfaces -- three wide expanses for the windows and their upper and lower wood trim, and four narrow surfaces of separation--all set directly into the first-second floor beltline, with the joint or flashing hidden artfully under the eave of the roofline. To the rear of the house is attached a modest flat-roofed pantry, with access to the kitchen.

The second floor front is dominated at the second floor level by a bay of windows of an unadorned design similar to that of the first floor left side bay. Due to the gable roof of the entrance portico cutting across the right face of the bay, the two flanking windows are only upper half windows, while the central window is a full double hung window. From the bay upwards to the front peak of the roofline, the bay is crowned in relief by three segments of what would be an octagonal crown-roof if carried out in full circle. This design of an uncluttered and unadorned bay adorned by a roof-type capping provided a design motif which was utilized in each of the other six houses constructed simultaneously in this same row, though each is of a different floor plan and each has individual distinction.

# 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 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 type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)     |
|   |  | <input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION                         |   |  |

SPECIFIC DATES      Built 1905      BUILDER/ARCHITECT      not yet identified

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

This house is significant as the residence of Frank L. Ballaine, one of the major figures in the creation of the Alaska Central Railway, a predecessor to the Alaska Railroad, and the individual who brought into existence the townsite of Seward, Alaska. The house was built at the inception of building on the Seward townsite, was the home of its builder for many years, and has continually been the residence of families significant in the history of Seward and of the state of Alaska.

## HISTORICAL NARRATIVE:

John E. Ballaine managed the organization and construction of the Alaska Central Railroad from Seattle, while his brother, Frank L. Ballaine, was the on-scene manager, and founded and developed the townsite of Seward, Alaska, as the base of railroad construction.

A surviving son of John, Jerrold F. Ballaine, is today a Seattle businessman. He wrote to the Seward Community Librarian on March 23, 1972, concerning the Ballaine House in Seward, as follows:

The House. . . was built by my uncle, Frank L. Ballaine, in the latter part of 1905. My father, John Ballaine, never took residence in Seward, but operated during the early years of the town through his brother Frank. My uncle, Frank Ballaine, married Genevieve Knight in Seattle in March of 1905, and went directly to Seward with his new bride. Shortly after his arrival in March, he started construction of this house and my cousin, Francis Ballaine, was born there on February 14, 1906. . . my Uncle Frank, Aunt Genevieve and Cousins Francis are now deceased. . . .

The house was built by Frank Ballaine for his bride. The story of the home is but one chapter of the work of the two Ballaine brothers in the creation of the town and of their Alaska Central Railroad.

The Alaska Central later served as the nucleus for construction of the Alaska Railroad. Contemporary accounts credit John E. Ballaine with founding Seward. He was characterised in the July 1911 issue of Alaska-Yukon Magazine as:

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

(See Attached)

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY -1

UTM REFERENCES

A <sup>06</sup>

|      |   |         |   |   |   |          |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|------|---|---------|---|---|---|----------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0    | 4 | 3       | 6 | 4 | 3 | 4        | 0 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 5 | 6 | 3 | 3 |
| ZONE |   | EASTING |   |   |   | NORTHING |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |

B 

|      |  |         |  |  |  |          |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
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| ZONE |  | EASTING |  |  |  | NORTHING |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

C 

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| ZONE |  | EASTING |  |  |  | NORTHING |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

D 

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|      |  |         |  |  |  |          |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| ZONE |  | EASTING |  |  |  | NORTHING |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Lots 1-5, Block 25, Original Seward Townsite, Seward, Alaska.

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

Alfred Mongin, Architectural Historian

ORGANIZATION

Alaska Division of Parks

DATE

August 3, 1977

STREET & NUMBER

610 Warehouse Drive, Suite 210

TELEPHONE

(907) 274-4676

CITY OR TOWN

Anchorage

STATE

Alaska 99501

## 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 Marshall*

TITLE

State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

March 23, 1978

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

*W. H. ...*

DATE

7/12/78

~~DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION~~

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST

*William Marshall*

DATE

6-29-78

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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Ballaine House (AHRS SITE NO. SEW-023)

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The left surface of the roof is broken just back of the center line, by an unusually large gable roofed dormer, which reflects and repeats the angle and face of the main roof. This gable is lighted by a pair of double hung windows. In the original construction there was a similar gable of somewhat smaller dimensions on the forward segment of the right roof surface. This latter gable was replaced at a date not yet known by a shed roof dormer which presents a measure of minor conflict with the dominant angles of the silhouette of the house. The original design of the house is so eclectic that this is not destructive of any significant architectural or historic value of the house.

The interior of the house has been well maintained, and much lived in. The Alaska Central Railroad described the house, with a photograph, in a January 1906, promotion publication advertising the modern residences already available in the new town:

. . . has every modern improvement, such as electric light, furnace heat, hot and cold water, and concrete basement. It illustrates the substantial character of Seward's growth.

From the beginning there has been a central furnace in the basement. The wide chimney base at the first floor level provides for the fireplace in the family or drawing room. There are also dining room, kitchen, and utility rooms on the first floor. At the back of the house a narrow second inside stairway was installed at an undetermined date. What was possibly a servants' room has been converted into a children's play room. On the second floor the conversion of the former gable-roofed dormer on the right side to a shed roof has served to provide additional space for bedrooms to the right of the off-center hallway. There are now four bedrooms and a bath on the second floor. Much of the fixtures both in the bathroom on the second floor and in the kitchen on the first floor may be original. The bath tub is the claw-footed type from early in the century. From the bathroom there is a portal entry into the attic.

The house has recently been sheathed in new siding. Additional examination will be required to determine the original type and color of the siding, so it is yet to be determined how close or remote from the original the siding and color are now.

Access to the house is limited and is by permission of the present owners and residents, noted in Item #4.

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. . . a successful promoter and builder of the first twenty miles of the Alaska Central Railway. . . , a Westerner born and bred. His boyhood and early manhood were spent in Oregon and Washington Territory. He began life as a newspaper man and for many years was editor of The Gazette, published at Colfax, Whitman County, Washington. In 1897 Governor John R. Rogers selected him to be secretary to the governor and adjutant-general of the Washington National Guard with the rank of major. He resigned this position to become first lieutenant of a Spokane company in the Washington regiment that was sent to the Philippines. He served throughout the Spanish war and the Aguinaldo insurrection that followed in the Philippines. Soon after returning to his home state he began the work of promoting the Alaska Central Railway, and has ever since been identified with Seward.

In the same issue Frank L. was characterised as "a younger brother of Major John E. Ballaine. . . associated with his brother in Alaskan development and has been a permanent resident of Seward since the founding of the town. His residence is at Seward, where he has charge of the townsite company's interest."

The idea of building a railroad from the southcentral coast to the interior of Alaska consumed the energies of the brothers from 1902 onward. John, the elder, experienced in politics and journalism, is given credit for initiating the enterprise, but it was his younger brother, Frank, who spent much of his life from that time on in Alaska, who carried out in Seward what John conceived of in Seattle.

A company of Seattle businessmen was formed, and in June 1902 dispatched seven parties of surveyors and engineers to survey possible routes from the southcentral coast to the interior. The field surveys of that summer, combined with simultaneous studies by the Ballaine brothers of all extant government reports of exploration and surveys of Alaska, constitute the most objective and comprehensive evaluation of economic, environmental, physical, and engineering factors to be considered in locating and building a railroad (or any other transportation system) in south-central Alaska, that has been executed to this day. It is a model followed only in planning the Alaska Railroad, and is still little known or appreciated. Their surveys and reports and subsequent published articles provided information which has been used extensively since and always credited to others who were merely copying or rediscovering information revealed by the Ballaine survey.

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Ballaine House (AHRIS SITE NO. SEW-023)

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They considered, and rejected, a route north from Cordova, which later was to be the route of the Copper River and Northwestern Railway. They considered, and rejected a route north from Valdez, which later became the Richardson Highway. They considered, and rejected, a route from an inlet in the northwest corner of Prince William Sound, where in 1940 the U.S. Army would found the port of Whittier. Ballaine employed engineers mapped the tunnels and projected the drilling costs for the Whittier tunnels, which in 1950--and today-- the Army Corps of Engineers was given, and still glowingly accepts, full credit. They considered, and rejected, other terminal sites in upper Cook Inlet, including the mouths of the Susitna River and of Ship Creek. Their engineers had gained their experience during the years of the railroad building boom in the lower western states and Canada, and provided a reservoir of professional talent of a caliber rare at any time. The depth and objectivity of the survey and engineering reports would have been outstanding at any time or place.

John Ballaine selected Resurrection Bay as the coast terminus of the road on account of the harbor being absolutely landlocked, protected from severe storms, entirely free from ice at all seasons of the year, and having terminal facilities ample to accommodate growing demands of population and trackage to be required by a future seaport metropolis.

John Ballaine himself described his motivation:

In planning and organizing the Alaska Central Railway, . . . in 1902, and in selecting a starting point on the southern coast of Alaska, I was guided by three fundamental considerations. They were:

First, a trunk line railroad north and south through Central Alaska, tapping the widest diversity of mineral and agricultural resources, where the largest permanent populations will dwell, and so situated that feeders might radiate eastward to the Matanuska and Copper River valleys and westward to the Kuskokwim valley, draining every productive part of interior Alaska into one channel.

Second, the best possible harbor and the most commodious terminal facilities on the southern coast for a starting point, where vessels of any size might safely come and go every hour of every day in the year.

Third, a northern terminus central to the great system of navigable rivers of interior Alaska.

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After a year and a half of examination and investigation with the aid of seven crews of engineers, subjecting all possible routes and harbors to the test of those three fundamental considerations, a process of elimination left but one route and one harbor that measured up to every requirement,--the route from Resurrection Bay through the Susitna valley to the Tanana River, and the harbor of Resurrection Bay. I accordingly selected that route and that harbor.

To this account, John Ballaine added, "Thus was Seward born." But it was not that simple. The Board of Directors he has organized for his railroad enterprise were not convinced that the landing place would be any more than a temporary railroad camp. Ballaine was convinced it would grow into a major metropolis. The directors ". . . were so skeptical that they declined to join [Ballaine] in an expanse of \$2,000 apiece to acquire grounds for a townsite where Seward now stands, and refused to expend company money for that purpose." They did, however, give their assent to Ballaine's acquisition of the townsite as an individual.

On the decision of fellow Alaska Central Railway directors to abstain from joining Ballaine in acquiring a site for a railhead town on Resurrection Bay, he sent a crew of surveyors to a landing at the head of the bay to survey the landing area for a townsite. There was a cabin on the shore, the long-time home of Mary Lowell, an Alaskan Native, originally from Kodiak. Ballaine's Chief Clerk assisted Mrs. Lowell in filing a homesteader's claim to her property, and purchased her rights for \$4,000 in cash plus a block of thirty-two town lots in the proposed townsite, valued at \$40,000.

The townsite lay on the west shore of Resurrection Bay, on a slate gravel formation like a large fan projecting into the bay, the "handle" being at an elevation of one hundred and ten feet above tidewater. It commands a view of the bay for about ten miles to the south. The utility of the harbor, the beauty of the setting, and the economic potential, were a combination approached by few harbors anywhere. The first two factors might be found in a few other harbors, such as Halifax, Nova Scotia. But the third factor, the expectation of mineral wealth in Alaska is now, three-quarters of a century later, the hottest political and economic issue in the nation, and continues to draw the rapt interest of the First World, the Second World, the Third World, as well as the Fourth Estate.

John Ballaine gave attention to every detail of the emerging townsite, which he christened Seward. Since his personal and business life was in Seattle, he sent his brother, Frank, to Seward, providing him with legal documents constituting Frank the agent of John. Even at that distance, through Frank as his agent, John gave his personal attention to plans for surveying and platting the townsite, naming the streets, and to naming of the town itself. In 1904, after the first



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twenty miles of track northward had been laid, Ballaine sold his interest in the railroad, but retained all his interests in Seward, which he continued to monitor through his brother and resident agent. As the sole proprietor of the townsite, Ballaine controlled who might settle there, with the exception of the lots given to Mrs. Lowell in exchange for her homestead claim. During the formation period of the town, John Ballaine was its architect, while his brother Frank, on the scene, was the builder.

At this juncture in their fortunes, following the founding of the town and sale of the Ballaine interest in the railroad construction, Frank Ballaine married in Seattle, then returned to Seward to build this house in time for the birth of his first child. That same summer of 1905 the government communications cable, from Seattle to Valdez, was extended to Seward, and in December 1905 Seward was made a sub-port of entry into the Territory, permitting direct communication and making transportation commercially feasible with Pacific coastal ports, ending the necessity of having all freight delayed four or five days enroute by way of Valdez. Though John Ballaine's combine in Seattle had sold its controlling interest in the railroad construction project, contracts were being executed calling for expenditure of more than two million dollars and the completion of the road-bed to Knik arm, 1200 men were at work in the field construction camps, and the population of Seward exceeded 1000. At the same time that Frank Ballaine built his house for his new bride, six other houses of similar quality, but of individual design, were built on the same block. This was called "Millionaires' Row", because all the occupants believed that Alaska would soon have 1,000,000 inhabitants, and that Seward would be their Gateway. A year earlier, in 1904, Frank Ballaine had brought in printing equipment and started the first newspaper, calling it the Seward Gateway, to publicise his belief in the future of the town which he co-founded, and of the Territory of Alaska.

Frank Ballaine built his house in the midst of this activity which was the main work of his life. It stands today as a monument to the solidity of his personal life, as Seward stands as a monument to his public life. He was a pioneer working to open up Alaska, though his vision for all Alaska is yet to be fully realized.

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Alaska Central Railway Industrial Department, Through the Alaska Gateway to the World's Richest Storehouses of Mineral Wealth. Seattle, The Ivy Press. 1906.

Ballaine, John E., "Seward: Its Beginning and Growth," Alaska-Yukon Magazine, XI, No. 6, July 1911, pp. 29-32.

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Carpenter, Frank G., "The City of Seward," Alaska Our Northern Wonderland. N.Y. Doubleday, Page & Co., 1925. Chapter XXXI, pp. 250-255.

Duffield, M.S., "The Alaska Central Railway," Engineering and Mining Journal, April 21, 1906, pp. 755-759.

Joy, H. Everett, "Seward -- Gateway to the Kenai Empire," Alaska Life, January 1915, page 9.

Ltr, Jerrold F. Ballaine to Margaret Deck, Seward Community Librarian, March 23, 1972, "Re: Ballaine House, Lots 1-5, Block 25".

"Original Plat, [Seward Townsite], Scale 1"=300', C.M. Anderson, Engineer, . . . Description and Dedication." Filed for Record by Frank L. Ballaine, Cook Inlet Precinct and Recording District, June 7, 1905, Deeds, Book 2, pages 4-6.

Paulsteiner, John, Seward . . . the Sinful City on Resurrection Bay. [John Pualsteiner, Seward]. 1973.

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"Some Prominent Men of Seward," Alaska-Yukon Magazine, XI, No. 6, July 1911, p. 71.