

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

PH06-2306

FOR NPS USE ONLY

MAY 31 1977

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

DEC 16 1977

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORMSEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS**1** NAME

HISTORIC

W.P. Mills House (AHRS SITE NO. SIT-025)

AND OR COMMON

Cushing House Longenbaugh House; Island Home

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

11 Maksoutoff Street

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY TOWN

Sitka

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

VICINITY OF

Alaska, at Large

STATE

Alaska

CODE

02

COUNTY

Sitka Division

CODE

220

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 YES RESTRICTED YES UNRESTRICTED NO

PRESENT USE

 AGRICULTURE COMMERCIAL EDUCATIONAL ENTERTAINMENT GOVERNMENT INDUSTRIAL MILITARY MUSEUM PARK PRIVATE RESIDENCE RELIGIOUS SCIENTIFIC TRANSPORTATION OTHER**4** OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Dr. and Mrs. George Longenbaugh (907) 747-3457

STREET & NUMBER

P.O. Box 377

CITY TOWN

Sitka

STATE

Alaska 99835

VICINITY OF

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE

REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC

District Recorder

STREET & NUMBER

P.O. Box 910

CITY TOWN

Sitka

STATE

Alaska 99835

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Alaska Heritage Resource Survey (AHRS)

DATE

27 October 1972

 FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDSAlaska Division of Parks
Suite 210, 615 Warehouse Drive

(907) 274-4676

CITY TOWN

Anchorage

Alaska 99501

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7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
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<input 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		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

This house is situated on an island located 400 feet offshore from the center of the community of Sitka, with the historic and architecturally distinguished Russian Orthodox Cathedral located 800 feet in a straight line from its front wall. The island is connected to the mainland by a causeway, which has an overall length of 400 feet, built in 1961 to replace the last of a sequence of bridges which had provided access to the island. 100 feet of the causeway rests in open water of the Middle Channel.

This homesite on the island was occupied during the Russian era by a salt curing and storage facility of the Russian trading authority. Following departure of the Russians in 1867, the facility was little used for some time. Most of the structure was removed and used for other structures in the community, or for other purposes. The present foundation floor and walls remain from the original 18th Century saltery. The foundation serves the present structure, but exceeds in size and strength the structural requirements of this imposing and solidly built house. Part of the foundation serving the main structure is composed of large sections of fractured rock, of good quality, filled in at a later date with cement or concrete. At floor level the rear wall measures 54 inches in thickness, and the foundation floor and outer walls are believed to be as thick as 12 feet at some points. The foundation appears to be as sound as the day the rick rack was laid in place. At the rear (water side) of the foundation, the supporting wall encloses an area exceeding the dimensions of the house, which was designed and set upon the foundation in this way so as to form a courtyard within the original foundation. This provides an exotic outdoor cubicle, used for sunbathing, drying fish or clothes, and for other purposes, in an outdoor, but private, setting.

Reference to the saltery on this site dates back at least to 1814, in a description of a structure where salmon were salted down and put into barrels or tierces (42 gallon containers), for storage or shipment. Following the 1867 transfer of control of Alaska to the United States, the property was acquired by a group of local merchants, who continued to operate it for several years. The business declined and at some point late in the 19th Century, was abandoned.

The town's children were forbidden to go to the island, but, of course, went out there at every opportunity. The ruins provided an attractive nuisance to the town's youth, due to its intrinsically interesting location and appearance — a formidable abandoned structure on an island tantalizingly close by and visible from all along Governor's Walk, as well as from many other places in the town.

The Sitka merchants who operated the saltery for a few years following departure of the Russians included DeGroff and Will Mills. Either Will Mills or his son, W. P. Mills, wound up owning the island, and by 1910 had built a cabin on part of the saltery foundation, and a narrow foot-bridge between the island and the shore. The cabin was not the family's residence, but, apparently, a vacation house away from town, but close by.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE	CW
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION

SPECIFIC DATES 1915-1916

BUILDER/ARC-

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

This house is significant for its architectural construction, particularly the employment of fire-adapted an excellent basic cottage design to the site and the function of the building as a residence building all the natural vistas from the site distinction that it merged into the scene to become Sitka. The builder left his mark on the designer woodwork and chests throughout that are exceptional after sixty years of use as the day they were created.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE:

Barrett Willoughby, writing in 1930, described the beautiful modern homes in Alaska — an American bungalow, yet friendly, on a rocky little island above connected with Governor's Walk by a long wooden causeway of bay between . . . Sunshine seemed to concentrate it spelled home, comfort, stability. Built of rough gray of its walls repeated the color of barnacled lapping. The windows and the doors were touched with encircling garden gave glimpses of mossy spaces, but clumps of alders in tassel, and vistas of blue, holly and mountain ash. Florence (Mrs. W. C.) Mills relative home had been built and given to her by Mr. Mills observed that the saltery foundation

. . . had been deserted for years, and I didn't to build it. So one night I came over here [?] under the stars to get the feel of the place. something sheltering about the great stone wall itself. And something soothing in the sound. By morning I knew that I could build here a home, though he might wonder to the end of the return to its shelter.

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

W. P. Mills House (AHR SITE NO. SIT-025)

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 1 of 2

In 1915 W. P. Mills engaged a Seattle architect, Louis L. Mendal, to design a house for his family's residence, utilizing the foundation already in place, remaining from the Russian saltery. The house was completed and the family moved in on August 16, 1916. The house itself, above the massive foundation, is a frame structure, principally of spruce, fir and oak.

The basement, where the walls for the old saltery are exposed, has a utility room, bath, bedroom, utility spaces, and large storage area. A door in the bedroom, at the back (water) side of the building, opens out onto a lower deck and courtyard, formed from the continuation of the foundation walls. This forms the exotic private cubicle described earlier. At the front (northwest) wall of the basement level, there is a heavy wooden door, now painted vermilion, hinged to open outward, which remains, together with its unusual hardware, from the original Russian saltery.

The main living floor has an expansive living room, dining room, music room, maid's room and bath, breakfast area, pantry, and butler's pantry. The view outward from each room can be characterized minimally as "superb", enhanced by maximum functional fenestration. This main floor also includes another sitting room which is a traditional "sun porch", practically walled in glass, but unheated and used little during the deep winter months.

The next floor up from the main floor contains three bedrooms, a central bath, and a small room originally planned as a linen room, now used as a hobby-room. The top floor is a floored attic, with access through a trap-door reached by setting and climbing a ladder.

In 1958 the owner (Cushing, at that time) remodeled the kitchen and bathrooms, leaving the interior of the house otherwise intact, except for one significant alteration. A partition wall was removed between the master bedroom and an adjoining sun porch, to provide a more expansive room, and at the same time provide a handsome setting for a chaise lounge in a large view window and space for installation of an excellent fireplace in the corner of the master bedroom, and another fireplace in the living or drawing room on the main floor.

Throughout the interior the house is marked by woodwork remarkable for its quality, in every room, including built-in storage drawers in every nook and cranny, apparent and hidden, from the basement to the attic, as if the builder was accustomed to making use of the limited space on board ships. The craftsmanship of the woodwork and the enduring nature of the fabric of the building itself reflects the

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DEC 16 1977

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INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

W.P. Mills House (AHRS SITE NO. SIT-025)

CONTINUATION SHEET

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877

shipwright's skills, equivalent to that found in the homes of whaling and clipper captains in the old port towns of the New England coast. The construction of the house and the quality of the woodwork is attributed to Tim Demedoff, a local builder, the quality of whose workmanship enhances other notable buildings in Sitka. Another mark of Demedoff's work is the quality and design of hardware he employed, and it is possible that attribution of his work in Sitka houses can be made both by the quality of his woodwork and by the quality and design of the hardware.

Copies of some of the architect's original 1915 drawings are stored in the house, but require conservation treatment before they can be safely copied. In 1958 "as built" drawings were made of the house and the Cushing renovations. These also require conservation treatment before reproduction.

This building was designed from the inside out. It was designed to fit the framework of the saltery foundation, then to take advantage of every degree of the full circle of superb vistas -- the Russian Orthodox Cathedral 900 feet away on the land side, and the full circle of horizon elements, which include such picture post card scenes as The Sisters, Mount Edgecumbe, the small harbor islands, and the great Pacific Ocean itself. To take maximum advantage of the views outward, there is no grand front entranceway, but an attractive entranceway on the main floor nestled into the west corner of the building. If there is a "grand entranceway", it is the great door to the front (land) side of the basement, the great vermilion door from the Russian saltery. Testimony that this grand door is from the original Russian saltery was passed down through the Mills family, and recorded by Barrett Willoughby in 1930, when she described it as ". . . the quaintest door in the North . . . set in the rough masonry of the wall . . . — a door of heavy, spikes, studded planks, gray and scurred with age. Massive wrought-iron hinges spanned it top and bottom, and it had an iron latch that invited the hand irresistibly. . . . the door on the old Russian saltery. . . ."

In general outline, the building is a slightly oblonged cube crowned by a (northeast-southwest running) high gabled roof, from which spring three off-center dormers with overhangs, one double-windowed almost-centered dormer on the water (southwest) slope of the roof, and one three-windowed and one one-windowed dormer on the land (northwest) slope of the roof. Every line of the house appears designed to maintain maximum visibility outward from within the house, and to maintain maximum visibility from every approach toward but not into the house. The effort succeeds admirably.

UNITED STATES
NATIONAL

NATIONAL REGISTER
INVENTORY

W.P. MILLS

CONTINUATION SHEET

Alfred Mungin,

Miss Isabel Mills
P.O. Box 1672
Sitka, Alaska

and

Mrs. George Lor
P.O. Box 377
Sitka, Alaska

3 SIGNIFICANCE

CHECK ONE

ORIGINAL SITE

MOVED DATE _____

PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

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few years following departure
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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 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	1915-1916	BUILDER/ARCHITECT	Louis L. Mendal, Architect Tim Demedoff, Builder
STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE			

This house is significant for its architectural design and the quality of its construction, particularly the employment of fine wood craftsmanship. The architect adapted an excellent basic cottage design to the site, preserving the integrity of the site and the function of the building as a residence, while incorporating into the building all the natural vistas from the site for 360°. His design is of such distinction that it merged into the scene to become the most photographed house in Sitka. The builder left his mark on the designer's conception by providing interior woodwork and chests throughout that are exceptionally functional, and as attractive after sixty years of use as the day they were crafted.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE:

Barrett Willoughby, writing in 1930, described this as "... one of the most beautiful modern homes in Alaska -- an American home. The place," she wrote, "stood aloof, yet friendly, on a rocky little island about half the size of a city block. . . connected with Governor's Walk by a long wooden causeway which spanned the stretch of bay between . . . Sunshine seemed to concentrate on that house. Every line of it spelled home, comfort, stability. Built of rough stone and wood, the weathered gray of its walls repeated the color of barnacled rocks below, where the tide was lapping. The windows and the doors were touched with vermilion and black. The encircling garden gave glimpses of mossy spaces, bowers of wild roses and ferns, clumps of alders in tassel, and vistas of blue, blue sea between trunks of cedars and mountain ash. Florence (Mrs. W. C.) Mills related to Miss Willoughby that the home had been built and given to her by Mr. Mills as a birthday present. She observed that the saltery foundation

. . . had been deserted for years, and I didn't know whether or not I wanted to build it. So one night I came over here [in 1915?] all alone and slept under the stars to get the feel of the place. There was something benign, something sheltering about the great stone wall; about the little island itself. And something soothing in the sound of the water laving the rocks. By morning I knew that I could build here a home, and such a home that my son, though he might wonder to the end of the earth, would always want to return to its shelter.

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

W.P. Mills House (AHS SITE NO. SIT-025)

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 1 of 1

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The Mills' only child, Waldo, has related that the family had had a cabin on the site for some years, with a narrow foot bridge connecting it to shore. "We used the cabin," he said, "to 'get away from it all,' we used to walk out here on weekends, carrying supplies. . .".

"And so", recorded Miss Willoughby, "she erected her house, and called it 'Island Home'." The architect, Louis L. Mendal, is believed to have designed a campus of buildings for the University of Washington at Seattle. The Mills' family maid of many years, Sophie Thomsen, recalled that the house, ". . . took a year to plan and a year to build." "Like a poet," observed Miss Willoughby, Florence Mills ". . . has built, making Nature a part of her home, but she has also, like a practical housewife, spared no expense to equip her house with every modern electric convenience, from heat that responds to the pressure of a button to an electric egg-beater in her tiled, spotless kitchen."

"In the master bedroom," the writer observed, one stood as on the bridge of a ship. ". . . looking out across the bay to the mountains." Mrs. Mills had had the windows placed so that she ". . . might lie in bed on winter nights and watch the Northern Lights playing above the peaks." "Every window, wrote Miss Willoughby, "framed an incomparable vista of mountains, sea, or quaint Sitka street. In the spacious rooms yellow sunlight, shimmer of water, the clean spirit of Alaska itself, seemed to swell harmoniously with the soft tones of old rugs, Russian mahogany furniture, cushions, books, and paintings. The sun-room was filled with flowering plants. From it a walk under a trellised tunnel of honeysuckle led to a rock garden and a grove of slim aspen trees stirring against the blue of the bay below. There were songs of wild birds, the metallic click of oarlocks as a fisherman rowed past our line of vision, and the faint skreieing of gulls circling above a school of herring far out among the islands."

Miss Willoughby took tea with Mr. and Mrs. Mills at their home in 1929 or 1930. She observed that Mr. Mills at that time owned ". . . the bank, the principal store, the sawmill, in fact more than half of Sitka, having inherited it from his father who bought it soon after the transfer . . . His department store, modern in every other detail, occupies one of the immense log buildings erected by the Russians . . ."

The Mills residence at "Island Home" ended 4 months and 12 days short of 25 years, when Dr. and Mrs. William Charteris took up resident there on April 4, 1941. The Charteris' sold to Mr. and Mrs. John Cushing, who moved in January 29, 1949. The present owners, Dr. and Mrs. George Longenbough, and their four children, moved in on June 30, 1971.

UNITED STATES DEPT.
NATION

NATIONAL REGISTER
INVENTORY --

W.P. Mills House

CONTINUATION SHEET

In 1915 W. P. Mills house for his family remaining from the moved in on August frame structure, p

The basement, where bath, bedroom, and the back (water) s formed from the cube described there is a heavy w remains, together w

The main living fl room and bath, br each room can be fenestration. Th traditional "sun p during the deep w

The next floor up a a small room origi top floor is a floo and climbing a ladd

In 1958 the owner (ing the interior of A partition wall was to provide a more ex for a chaise lounge excellent fireplace the living or drawing

Throughout the interi in every room, includ apparent and hidden, to making use of the work and the enduring

MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Interview, Dr. and Mrs. George Longenbaugh by A. Mongin, February 1977.
 Longenbaugh, Mrs. George, "History of I Makooutoff, Sitka, Alaska." Ms. report for
 the Sitka Volunteer Historic Preservation Committee. Typescript. February 1977.
 Willoughby, Barrett, Sitka Portal to Romance. Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1930.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than 1 acre
 UTM REFERENCES

A 0 8	4 9 0 0 8 0	6 3 2 2 0 0 2	B		
ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C			D		

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Block 4, Lot 5, U.S. Survey 1474. Sitka Townsite Base Map, 1975.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVER APPX. STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME/TITLE Alfred Mongin, Architectural Historian	(SEE CONTINUATION SHEET)
ORGANIZATION Alaska Division of Parks	DATE March 10, 1977
STREET & NUMBER 619 Warehouse Avenue, 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 Chandler

TITLE

Deputy SHPO

DATE

5/25/77

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

William Chandler

DATE

12/14/77

ATTEST

Charles A. [Signature]

DATE

12-14-77

To: State Historic Preservation
 Alaska Division of Parks
 619 Warehouse Avenue, Suite
 Anchorage, Alaska 99501

From: Dr. and Mrs. George Long
 P.O. Box 577
 Sitka, Alaska 99505

Subject: 3330-1 (Guiding House)

I am the owner of the above property
 been proposed for nomination to
 I have been provided with, have
 the National Register program
 in the National Register of Historic Places
 review the nomination package.

I have the following comments:

1) Should be 333
2) 2nd paragraph
filled in in 1917-18
the house the owner

As the owner of the property, I
 nomination to the National Register

[Signature]
 (PROPERTY OWNER'S SIGNATURE)