

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

PH0351393

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

SEP 1 1976

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

1 NAME

HISTORIC Rika's Landing ^{Roadhouse} Site (AHRS SITE No. XBD 059)

AND/OR COMMON

McCarty Roadhouse / Big Delta Roadhouse

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

Mile 252, Old Richardson Highway

__NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Big Delta

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

STATE

Alaska

__ VICINITY OF

CODE

02

At Large

COUNTY

Southeast-Fairbanks

CODE

240

3 CLASSIFICATION

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

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Alyeska Pipeline Service Company (907) 278-1611

STREET & NUMBER

1835 Bragaw

CITY, TOWN

Anchorage

STATE

Alaska

__ VICINITY OF

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTIONCOURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

District Recorder

STREET & NUMBER

607 Barnette Street

CITY, TOWN

Fairbanks

STATE

Alaska

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Alaska Heritage Resource Survey (AHRS)

DATE

1970

__FEDERAL STATE __COUNTY __LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Alaska Division of Parks, 323 E. 4th Ave.

CITY, TOWN

Anchorage

STATE

Alaska

7 DESCRIPTION

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

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Original Physical Appearance

This roadhouse was built in 1909. It was more ambitious in design than the roadhouses built during the first wave (1904) of such buildings constructed along the Valdez Trail. Construction materials not locally available were transported to the site by riverboat along with the materials for summer 1909 work scheduled to upgrade the McCarty-Fairbanks section of the trail to wagon road status.

The house was built in a massive single detached "L" shape, measuring 40 feet on the front by 75 feet deep. The walls were of horizontal log construction, the southernmost corners were joined saddle-cornered, and all other corners made in a V-plate type joint, two stories and an attic in height. The front entrance was a centre located door on the gable facade, on the heel of the "L" shaped building. Flat window forms were built into every one of the six main wall surfaces, including all vertical wall facings, both of the main building and of the left hand wing section, and the three outer wall surfaces of the attic dormitory spaces. Internal architectural examination of the wall fabric will reveal whether all of these windows were original or were cut at later dates. The two roof sections were a medium gable of approximately 48° pitch. Midway on the outer surface of each of the main roof sections was a medium gable, of the same pitch as the main roofs, each built with a minimum overhang, practical rather than decorous, designed to provide an additional measure of light and ventilation to the attic sleeping spaces. There was no centrally constructed chimney and no constructed fireplace. Instead, apertures were cut at various appropriate places in the walls for stove pipes for the stoves used for cooking and heat.

The interior was spaced to provide a large dining room and kitchen, a spacious parlor, eleven private rooms or compartments, and a large dormitory-like sleeping area on each floor, plus the sleeping loft in the attic.

Present Physical Appearance

The external appearance of the roadhouse has changed little with the passing of time. The basic structure is stable and in no immediate danger of serious natural deterioration. The interior has deteriorated and is unsafe to enter prior to structural evaluation.

This is a flat, sandy area, marked by growths of birch and alder. A windmill stands in back of the roadhouse building, and eleven other outbuildings of this former roadhouse complex dot the area, as shown in the June 1975 map. The roadhouse was built and stands nearer to the Tanana River than any of the other buildings of the group, except for the ferry operations building.

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		

Rika's Landing Site (AHRS SITE NO. XBD 059)

SPECIFIC DATES 1909 (constructed) BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Significance

Rika's Landing Site at Mile 252 on the Old Richardson Highway remains much as it was when operations began in 1909 and terminated in 1947. Together with its windmill and group of outbuildings, it is now owned by Alyeska Pipeline Service Company and is closed to the public. The roadhouse and outbuildings are physical evidence of a major enterprise which functioned at this most significant location on this route to the Alaskan interior-- the Valdez Trail, later called the Richardson Trail, which became the present Richardson Highway.

Historical Background

Because of the Klondike gold discoveries of 1897-1898, Congress provided for construction of land transportation routes into interior Alaska. A trail was surveyed and established from Valdez, an all weather port on Prince William Sound, to Eagle, on the Yukon River, in the interior bowl of Alaska. As the population pattern emerged in the Tanana Valley, additional routes were opened. The Valdez Trail was surveyed in 1904-1905 from a point on the Trans-Alaska Military Road, northward, then northwestward, to Fairbanks. This became the main route of access from the outside to the interior. Later this route was renamed the Richardson Highway for its entire length between Fairbanks and Valdez, honoring the name of the Army officer, Major (later General) Wilds P. Richardson, who was Chairman of the Alaska Road Commission during the early years of its operations, 1905-1917.

These early "roads" were of a pioneer character, but a 100% improvement over the trails they replaced. The Valdez-Fairbanks road was developed to serve immediate requirements in the Territory of Alaska for transportation and communications. In 1909 the objective was to widen the road throughout its length, improve the grades, increase and perfect the drainage by further ditching, with additional culverts where necessary.

A vital element in making the route functional was the establishment of roadhouses to provide food and shelter for travelers of all kinds, for freight and stage services, and for the U. S. Mails. They were established at distances approximating one day's travel from each other. At the junction of the Delta and Tanana Rivers the McCarty Telegraph Station was established by the U. S. Army Signal Corps in 1904, when the Valdez Trail was established. It was on a tract of land adjacent to that on which the roadhouse was later built in 1909.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

See continuation sheet.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 2.55 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A	016	556-500 5589177	700 71114652	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Tracts No. 1, U. S. Survey No. 1483

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

9 January 1976

STREET & NUMBER

323 East 4th Avenue

TELEPHONE

(907) 272-4401 X225

CITY OR TOWN

Anchorage

STATE

Alaska

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. Owners Notified.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

William Stansfield

TITLE

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

April 24, 1976

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DATE

9/1/76

Acting DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST

Charles A. ...

DATE

8-27-25

Acting KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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The roadhouse and its outbuildings are now owned by Alyeska Pipeline Service Company. They are unused and not open to the public.

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When compared with the more basic 1904 period roadhouses built along this route, these larger roadhouses built in 1909 (and some in 1910) are representative of the elevation in the level of accommodations provided for the type and use level of the Valdez Trail, as it was improved from a sled trail to a wagon road in 1909-1910. These larger roadhouses were built, in common with the 1904 buildings, with a view to speed and economy in construction. Though larger and somewhat more pretentious in appearance, they are a relic of a slightly later order of the same age, evidencing a larger form of the same type of construction for very much the same purpose, a food and shelter service station in the wilderness. They represent the ultimate in functional design and construction in the Alaskan interior.

in another building,

The Washburn Post Office was established here, or near here, and operated from 1905 to 1913. The name Big Delta came into common use to pinpoint the community's location at the junction of the Tanana and Delta Rivers and to differentiate the location from Delta Telegraph Station on the nearby Little Delta River. The name of Big Delta was applied to the Post Office which operated here from 1925 to 1959. The postmistress, from 1925, until her death in 1947, was Rika Wallen, who was, simultaneously, the owner-operator of the roadhouse. Following local custom, the roadhouse at Big Delta was usually referred to as Rika's, and the location as Rika's Landing. During her proprietorship it was described in a 1928 Travelogue of the Richardson Highway as:

...one of the most important centers of trade along the road, being the supply point for the inhabitants of the entire region of the headquarters of the Tanana River. A War Department radio station here maintains communication with the outside world. Here also is located a commodious roadhouse boasting of such luxuries as fresh milk, and domestic fowls, including chickens, geese, ducks, and turkeys, as well as all kinds of wild meats, berries, fish, etc.. The Tanana River never freezes over at this point, however cold it may be in the winter. This is due to the warm springs emptying into it above McCarty. The river is navigable in summer for small steamboats, between Fairbanks and Grundler, providing there is a wise and careful pilot at the wheel. We cross the river on a ferry at this point. The ferryman, like Charon, works 24 hours a day...

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The first automobile drove the length of the highway from Valdez to Fairbanks in 1913, a pioneering two weeks trip. By 1936 a two-ton truck would ordinarily schedule the drive in 18 hours, including the ferry crossing at Big Delta.

World War II-related construction projects upgraded transportation in the area and hastened the end of the roadhouse era. These were the Big Delta airstrip, built in 1936 and enlarged in 1939; the Alcan Highway, joining the Richardson south of Big Delta in 1942, for the final leg of military traffic past Big Delta to Ladd Field and Fairbanks; and, in 1943, completion of the two 300-foot steel spans bridging the Tanana at Big Delta. Within a few years an average of almost 700 vehicles each day in summer crossed this bridge. Their daily range was the entire length of the highway, not merely the torturous distance of shanks mare, from one roadhouse to the next.

This roadhouse, which was built and began operation in 1909, was closed down in 1947.

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