

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED FEB 8 1980

DATE ENTERED

3330-1 Reception

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 Reception Building (AHRS SITE NO. COR-115)

AND/OR COMMON

Reception Saloon

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER Second and B Streets

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN Cordova

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT
Alaska, at large

VICINITY OF

STATE Alaska

CODE
02

COUNTY Cordova-McCarthy Div.

CODE
080

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 checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	<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 Clifford W. Collins (907) 424-7401

STREET & NUMBER P.O. Box 698

CITY, TOWN Cordova

VICINITY OF

STATE Alaska 99574

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. District Recorder (907) 424-7417

STREET & NUMBER P.O. Box 696

CITY, TOWN Cordova

STATE Alaska 99574

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE Alaska Heritage Resource Survey (AHRS) (907) 274-4676

DATE February 10, 1978 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<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

The Reception Building (as it has always been known) is a long, narrow structure which cuts noticeably into the hillside at the rear and along the B Street side. It fully occupies the corner lot facing 2nd Street and is central to the historic business district. The strongly rectangular, two-story structure, measures 25' wide and 100' long. Of frame construction throughout, it retains the original horizontal shiplap siding, with endboard joints and corners. The roof is flat and tarred, with wooden eaves; the eave trim is boxed, with decorated cornice and plain frieze.

The original first floor front was highly distinctive; representing an inset porticoed gallery, supported by four columns. Just to the right of this (on the B Street side) was a large, black, plate-glass window with the word RECEPTION embossed in gold leaf. When prohibition, in 1918, caused closure of the saloon, the spacious front section was converted into two apartments. This singular architectural feature suffered accordingly. The portico space was unimaginatively brought out flush to the front, with a central entrance door framed only by two plate glass windows. The attractive, embossed glass nameplate was replaced by a conventional and smaller windowlight.

Other than this, the building has had no alteration except of a cosmetic nature. The original exterior paint is believed to have been a pleasant pastel color with white trim on the endboards, cornices and window sills. Over the years this style has been reversed; with the siding re-painted white (or off-white) and the trim always of darker colors. The building still retains its boardwalk at front and side; one of the very few still existing in Cordova.

When Link Waln sold the building in 1941 it was in prime condition. A photograph even 20 years later, indicates it as still well kept-up. Since that time, however, it has gradually deteriorated. At present, and for more than a decade, there has been no occupancy other than the front portion of the main floor. This now comprises two offices for Mr. Collins and his son Phil.

The present owner, the Cordova Historical Society, and others are anxious to further stabilize, and if possible, restore, this landmark structure as an important vestige of the place that once envisioned itself as destined to be "the Pittsburgh of the North."

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 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 1908	BUILDER/ARCHITECT	O.W. (Link) Wahn Bill Williams
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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Reception Building epitomizes the first decade of the founding and dynamic growth of Cordova; resulting from the exploitation of the rich Kennecott Copper Mines and the building of the spectacular Copper River & Northwestern Railroad to haul the concentrated ores. It commemorates Link Wahn, a pioneer who contributed to Alaska's commercial history. This also is one of the oldest and most representative surviving business buildings in the place called "OMAR", immortalized by Rex Beach's novel The Iron Trail.

Historical Background

In 1908, with the certainty that the Morgan-Guggenheim interests would make Cordova into a major Alaskan city--if not "the Pittsburgh of the North" as proclaimed by the most ardent promoters--this would be, at the least, a new seaport, Cordova offered long-range hopes for development of industries based on copper, oil, coal, timber, transport, and fisheries. Thus in 1908, a new, and much larger townsite adjoining the rail headquarters (which in the preceding three years, Mike Heney had superimposed on the fishing Village of Eyak) was opened. Lots sold like hotcakes. Sourdoughs and entrepreneurs from all over Alaska converged here on a scale previously equalled only at Skagway and Nome. But for the most part, the men and women who came here were of a different breed. They had witnessed the boom and the bust cycle of the goldcamps; the disillusionment of back-breaking toil. Many had married or brought their families to Alaska. Almost all had moved up from "mushing and mucking" to trades, small businesses and the professions. They yearned for stability.

Typical of such men was Owen Webster Wahn--always called "Link". Born of pioneer stock in Iowa in 1864, Link grew up and reached maturity on the Wyoming frontier near Buffalo. With the first word of the sensational Klondike gold strike he was on his way to Dawson, but (as with a high percentage of the 60,000 who converged there) he was disappointed. In 1899 he came down-river to the new gold camp of Nome, arriving in time to mine the beach placers; and with sufficient success to enable the purchase of a saloon at Unalaska. Unalaska in 1900 was a thriving port, the midway fueling stop for ships plying between Seattle, Nome and St. Michaels, (for the Yukon River trade). Link Wahn soon met and married Sophie Reinken, and a family ensued. After 1905, as the gold strikes appeared to have run their course and business began declining at Unalaska, he watched, with more than passing interest, developments in the "railroad race" in the Gulf of Alaska. The timing of his arrival at Cordova was not accidental. He sold the Unalaska saloon, booked the earliest passage possible and arrived with his family and their belongings early in the summer of 1908.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

(See Continuation Sheet)

UTM NOT VERIFIED

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY -1

ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

QUADRANGLE NAME Cordova (C-5)

QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:63 360

UTM REFERENCES

A 0, 6 | 5, 6, 8, 5, 2, 5 | 6, 7, 1, 3, 4, 2, 0

B | |

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C | |

D | |

E | |

F | |

G | |

H | |

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

All of Lot 16, Block 10, facing 2nd Ave., and extending along B Street as shown on 1912 Townsite Plat; also as located on SANDBORN MAP, Cordova, August 19, 1927.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

11 FORM PREPARED BY

(907) 274-4676

NAME / TITLE

Philip Collins

Assisted by: Michael S. Kennedy, Historian
Alaska Div. of Parks, Anchorage

ORGANIZATION

Cordova Historical Society

DATE

March 1, 1978

STREET & NUMBER

P.O. Box 138

TELEPHONE

(907) 424-7401

CITY OR TOWN

Cordova

STATE

Alaska 99574

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 Shanahan

TITLE State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE 1/21/80

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

W. Ray Luce

DATE 4/9/80

ATTEST: *Kristin O'Connell*

DATE 4/9/80

CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

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Reception Building (AHRS SITE NO. COR-115)

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 1 of 2

Waln purchased a lot, and in partnership with a man named Bill Williams--as the city rose around them--speedily opened the Reception Saloon (and Apartments). This building quickly became a landmark in the community described as: "populous and prosperous, with two daily newspapers, a gravity water system, electric lights and telephones, substantial business and office structures, a bank and two fine Hotels." Although the boom aspect waned with completion of the railroad in 1911, many more residences, two theaters, a hospital, schools and another bank had been built when the population peaked, at 5,000, in the early 1920's.

During these years Link Wahn remarried, served on the city council, helped organize, and became an officer of the local chapter of the Pioneers Of Alaska. With the coming of prohibition in 1918, Bill Williams sold his interest in the Reception Building to Link; who then remodeled the saloon portion into apartments. (The most drastic alteration that the building would experience). Wahn also began managing the Windsor Hotel that year.

Although Cordova's smelting industry never materialized, this was compensated by the development of nine canneries in the vicinity. But closure of the Kennecott mines in 1938; soon followed by abandonment of the Copper River & Northwestern Railroad, proved a severe blow to the community.

Now 77 years of age, with the world at war and his family grown, Link Waln sold his interests in Cordova and moved to El Monte, California. His successor at the Reception Building was Frank Iverson of McCarthy, who had witnessed that town rise and fall with the fortunes of Kennecott and the railroad. Iverson managed the Reception, successfully, for several years; but thereafter a series of owners allowed it to decline. Even after the fire of 1963, which destroyed almost half of the business district (including many of the most historically significant) the Reception owner failed to take advantage of the situation.

The Reception had deteriorated to the point of condemnation when acquired by present owner, Cliff Collings in 1973. He has since provided essential stabilization and now strives for "final recognition and restoration of this structure as a vital step in the preservation of Cordova's heritage."

FHR-8-300A
(11/78)

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

Reception Building (AHRS Site No. COR-115)

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 2 of 2

With the recent loss of the LeFevre building, by snowfall, after it had been stabilized and was awaiting recognition on the National Register; and late in 1979 a city ruling has placed an even more significant structure, Hegg's Photo Gallery, on the endangered list, it is now imperative that the Reception Building be saved. If Hegg's studio is lost, Reception becomes the final structural link remaining of early-day Cordova.

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Reception Building (AHR SITE NO. COR-115)

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 9

PAGE 1 of 1

Janson, Lone, The Copper Spike, Northwest Pub. Co., Anchorage, 1975.

Beach, Rex, The Iron Trail, Harper, N.Y., 1913.

Harrison, E.S., AlaskaYukon Magazine, 1909, 1910, Seattle; also Alaska Almanac, 1909.

Pratt, Lee C., The Alaska Yearbook, 1928 Ed., Pub., The Alaska Weekly, Seattle, Washington.

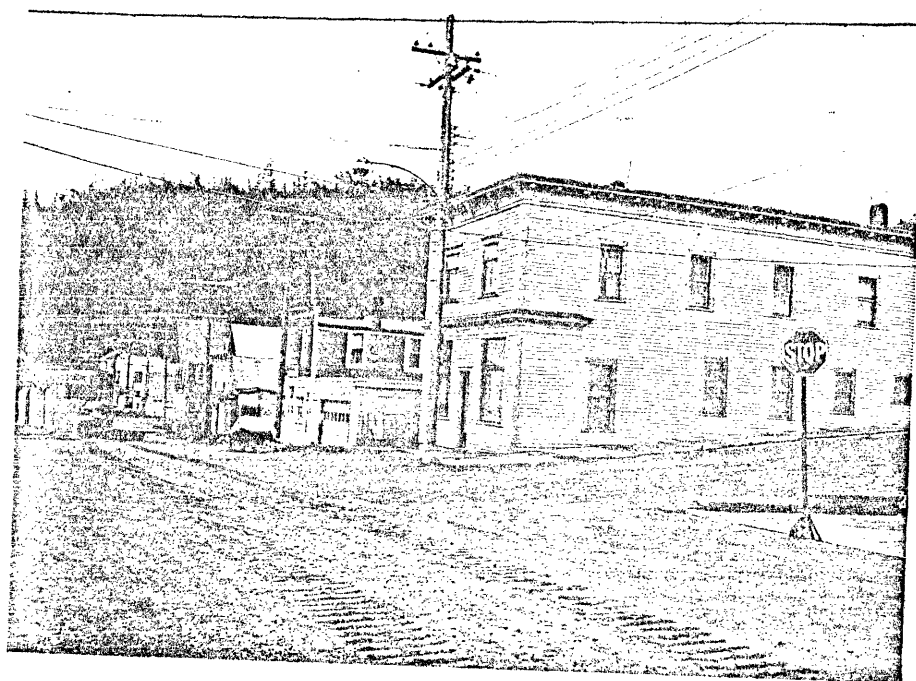
Lower Copper & Chitina Rivers: Resource Study, ADP, Hist. & Arch. Series 5, Anchorage, August 1974.

Newspaper Files, Cordova: Alaska Times; Alaskan; Daily Alaskan; Daily Herald.

Correspondence, Cecil Wahn, Redmond, Washington, 1978-79, ADP Files.

3. RECEPTION BUILDING, CORDOVA

FEB 8 1980



← Reception Bldg.

1908-11 blggs on 2nd Street

Cordova, Alaska

McCarthy Division Neg. No. 2435

Charles W. Snell

July 6, 1961

Negative or photo, National Park Service
San Francisco Regional Office

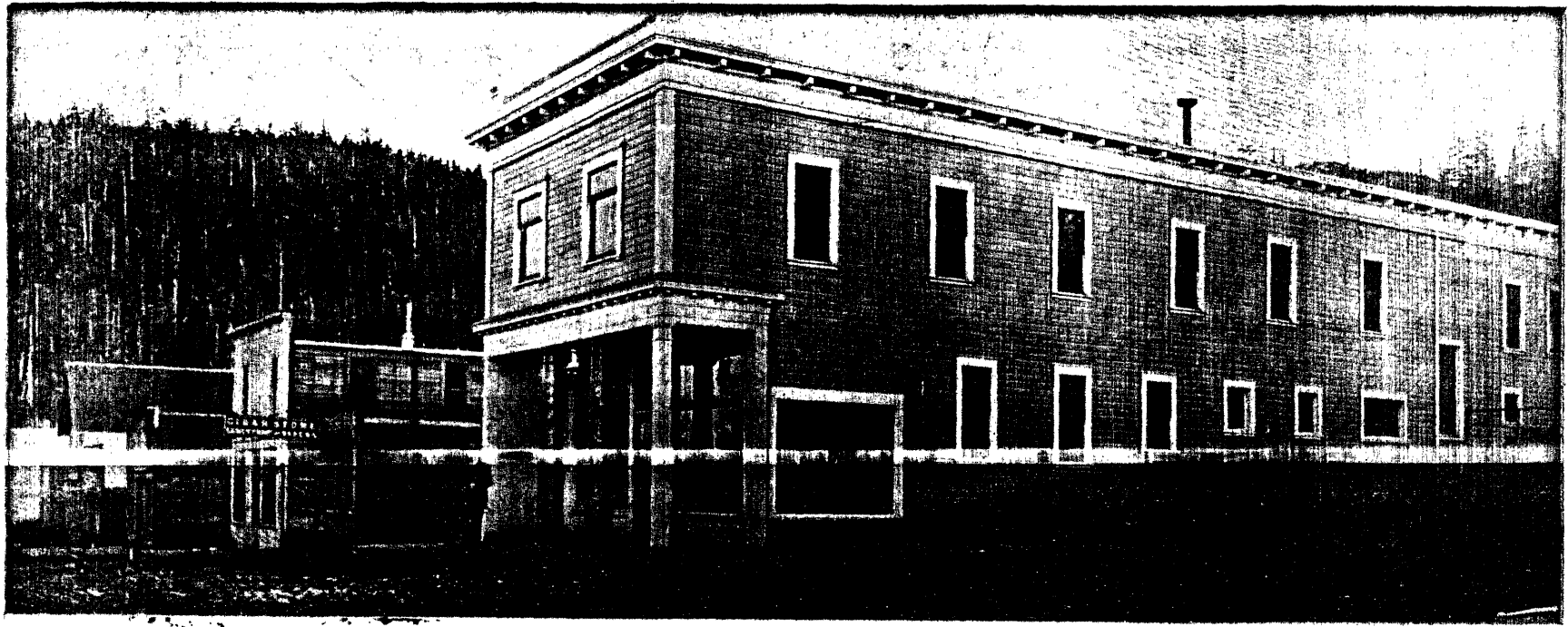
4.

RECEPTION BUILDING, CORDOVA (AHRIS SITE NO. COR-115)

FEB 8 1980

Division of Parks

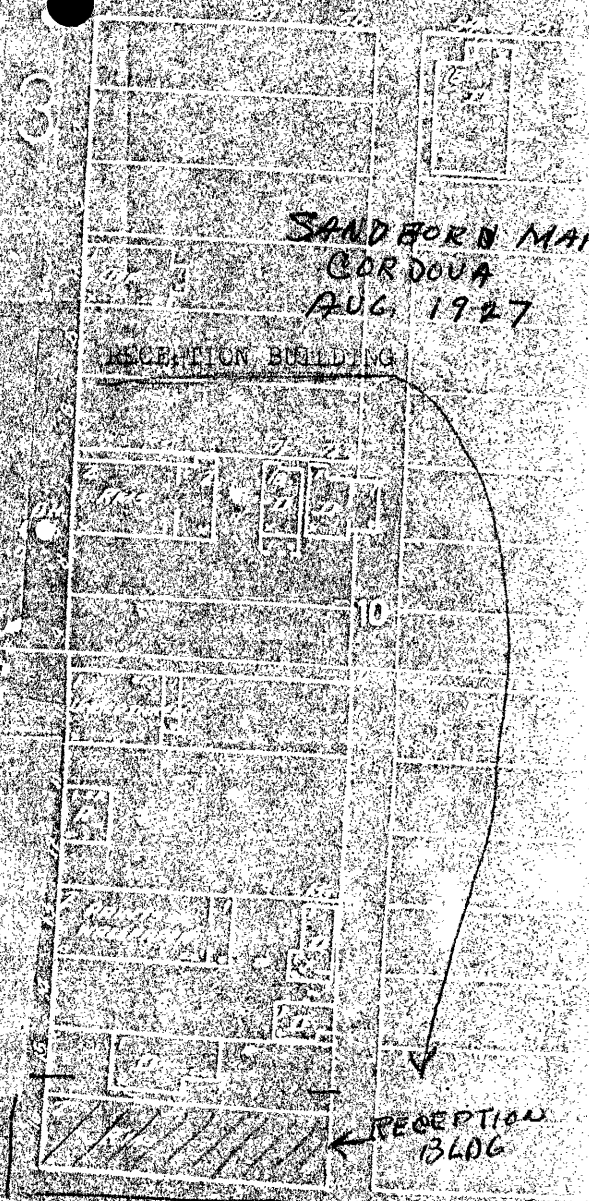
JAN 10 1980



Reception (Saloon) Building
Ca. 1909-10. From an early photo
(not identified: Probably Hegg)

Submitted by Cliff Collins, owner.

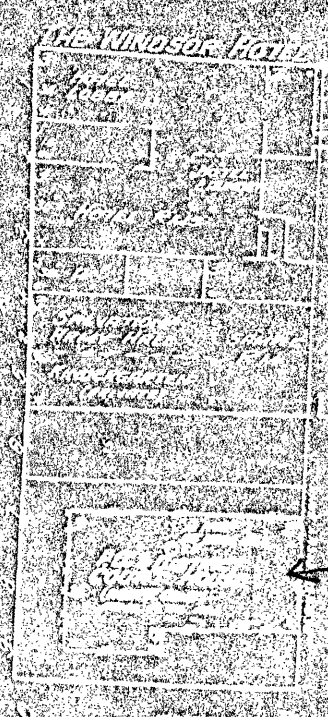
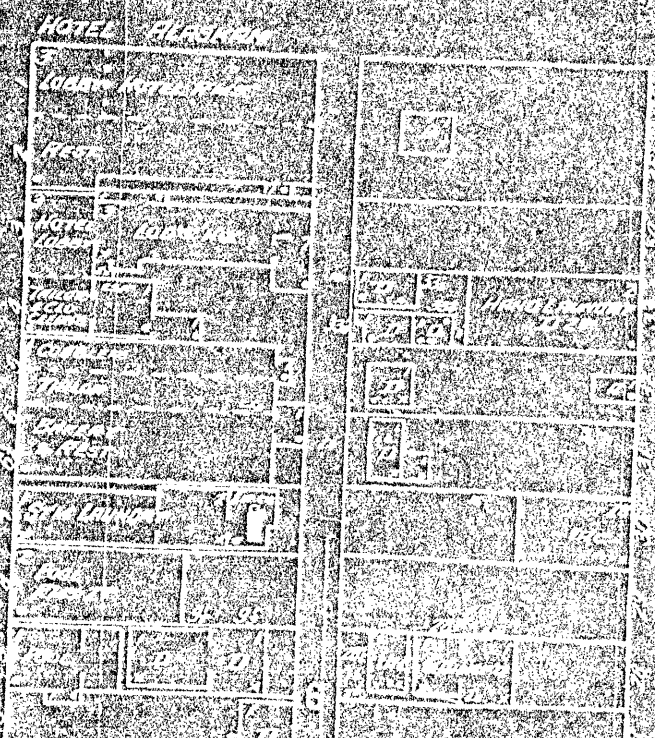
SANDHORN MAP
CORDOVA
AUG. 1927



AVE.

B AV.

B ST.



ON NATIONAL REGISTER

FEDERAL AV.

Reception Building
Cordova, Alaska, 1909



CORDOVA, ALASKA. OCT. 5, 1909.

El Paso