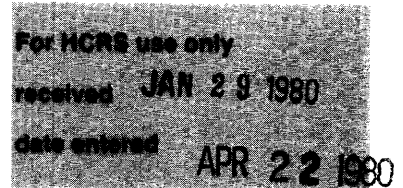


**United States Department of the Interior
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**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 Rogers-Post Site (AHRS SITE NO. BAR-005)

and/or common Walakpa Bay Crash Site. Will Rogers-Wiley Post Monuments.

2. Location

street & number Walakpa Bay near mouth of
Walakpa River about 13 miles Southwest of _____ not for publication

city, town Barrow vicinity of congressional district Alaska at large

state Alaska code 02 county Barrow-No. Slope Div. code 040

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture <input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment <input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government <input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial <input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: Memorial

4. Owner of Property

name Bureau of Land Management (907) 271-5960

street & number Federal Bldg., 701 C Street, Box 13

city, town Anchorage _____ vicinity of state Alaska 99513

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Bureau of Land Management, District Office
P.O. Box 1150

street & number Fairbanks Alaska 99701

city, town _____ state

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Alaska Heritage Resource Survey (AHRS) has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date December 23, 1971 _____ federal _____ state _____ county _____ local

depository for survey records State Division of Parks, 619 Warehouse Dr., Suite 210 (907) 274-4676

city, town Anchorage state Alaska 99501

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input 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

Initially there was but one monument, facing west from the mouth of Walakpa Bay to the bleakness of the Arctic Ocean. The Will Rogers-Wiley Post monument designed in Oklahoma, was built on the site with poured concrete using local aggregate; and faced at each step from base to top with beach boulders of diminishing size. The design was essentially that of two cubes--the smaller atop the larger--15' high with a 6' base.

Motivation for the building of the first monument in 1938--dedicated just three years after the tragic crash, by organizations in Oklahoma and Texas--is understandable. The second, and larger, built 15 years later by one man, Jesse Stubbs, is enigmatic. Both overlook the fateful lagoon crash site.

The first monument was built by public subscription of thousands of Americans, but under the organized efforts of friends and admirers in Oklahoma and Texas. It was designed by an art student at the University of Oklahoma, Vivien Kellems. The planning and dedication involved much dignitaries as Vice President Garner, Governor Allred, Senators Connally and Sheppard and Congressman Luther A. Johnson of Texas; and Senator Elmer Thomas, Congressmen Disney, Johnson and Rogers of Oklahoma; Delegate Anthony Diamond of Alaska, and the Chairman of the Will Rogers Memorial Commission, General Roy Hoffman. The memorial marker of pink granite was quarried near the Roger's family homestead at Claremore, and was carried to Alaska by the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Northland. It was carved by E.R. Bigelow, a prominent stone-cutter of Claremore.

Under instructions of Secretary of the Interior Ickes, assistance in logistics and construction for the 15 feet high, six feet square base, cemented stone memorial, was provided in 1937 and 1938 by personnel of the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Federal ^{GENERAL LANDS OFFICE (now)} Bureau of Land Management. The elaborate dedicatory ceremonies involved a 4-way Columbia Broadcasting radio program from the Nation's capitol, the statehouses of Oklahoma and Texas and from Barrow and Walakpa, Alaska. A 38-foot diesel motor yacht, Pandora, commissioned in Santa Barbara, California, made a 5,000 mile trip to the dedication. Aboard, for what was called the "Post-Rogers Dedication Expedition" was Dr. Homer Flint Kellems, Tulsa and Dr. Roy Curtis, Hillsboro, Texas; Elgen Thrapp, Clarence Lee, Ed Martin; Wilmer Sims, personal representative of the Governor of Texas; and John Keyser, son of a Chickasha, Oklahoma newspaper man.

In 1945 the Masonic Lodge added a bronze emblem to the monument. In 1972 and 1973, sinkage at the Lagoon necessitated its moving, by crews from the Naval Arctic Research Laboratory, to higher ground 95 feet away. Here it now adjoins the second monument, built by 72-year old Jesse Stubbs, in 1953. At that time, the badly-chipped pink-stone placque--victim of both frost-break and souvenir hunters -- was replaced with bronze, furnished by the Will Rogers Memorial Commission.

Discussing the necessity of relocation in a letter to John Love of the Oklahoma Memorial group, January 31, 1973, John F. Schindler, Director of the Naval Arctic Research Laboratory stated:

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/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify) Public Affairs

Specific dates 1935, 1937, 1953 **Builder/Architect** Will Rogers Memorial
Claremore, Okla; Jesse Stubbs

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The significance of these twin monuments--the most northerly in the United States-- is that they mark the site of the fatal August 16, 1935 aviation crash which took the lives of prominent Americans Will Rogers and Wiley Post. They memorialize the lives of two men who made a deep imprint on Alaska, and mark the site of a National disaster.

Brief History

Will Rogers--actor, author, pundit and homespun philosopher--"the most widely-known citizen of the U.S...and the best beloved" (N.Y. Times) was also pre-eminent to the advancement of air transportation. Wiley Post, holder of two around-the-world aviation flight records, "distinguished among the world's great pilots" had contributed prominently to the advance of international aviation, including study of the sub-stratosphere. Both Houses of Congress suspended deliberations upon receipt of the news flash confirming the death of Rogers and Post, and a period of national mourning followed; with messages of condolence issued by leaders and governments throughout the world. It was a poignant event in 20th century history, fully justifying memorial recognition.

Neither Rogers or Post was a stranger to Alaska. This particular flight was described by the Associated Press as a "happy-go-lucky aerial tour of Alaska", prelude to an important pioneering trans-Siberian flight to Moscow. They had visited several Alaskan cities. In the Matanuska Valley, near Anchorage, Rogers and Post spent part of a day visiting and "moral-building" among dispossessed farm families from Minnesota and Wisconsin who were starting a new life in an FERA agricultural colony. From Fairbanks, Rogers filed a story (N.Y. Times, Aug. 13, 1935) which said, in part: "This Alaska is great country. If they can just keep from being taken over by the U.S. they got a great future. When Seward bought Alaska for \$7,000,000 he made up for what we overpaid the Indians for Manhattan Island." He described Fairbanks as "the greatest aviation-minded City in the world." On August 16, Rogers and Post were flying from there to Barrow to visit Trader/Whaler Charlie Brower, later author of Fifty Years Below Zero, an Alaskan classic. Due to fog and low-visibility the two friends "set down" enroute both south and north of the Brooks Range. At Walakpa Bay they found a hole in the fog, landed, joked with a small party of Eskimos, and received directions for the short distance remaining into fog-shrouded Barrow.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Records, Will Rogers Memorial, Claremore, Oklahoma.
 New York Times, Aug. 17, 1935; Time Magazine, Aug. 26, 1935; Commonweal 24:416; 8/30/35.
 Brower, Charles D. Fifty Years Below Zero, Dodd, Mead & Co., N.Y., 1942.
 "A Smile Disappears" Alaskafest Magazine, August, 1979.
 Potter, Jean The Flying North, Macmillan, N.Y. 1947.

10. Geographical Data

UTM NOT VERIFIED

Acreeage of nominated property 1/2 acre

ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED

Quadrangle name Barrow (A-5) USGS

Quadrangle scale 1:63 360

UMT References

A 0 4 5 6 9 6 7 9 8 19 5 9 9 7 7
 Zone Easting Northing

B
 Zone Easting Northing

C

D

E

F

G

H

Verbal boundary description and justification

Township 21 N, Range 19 W, Section 19, North Slope Borough

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 Michael S. Kennedy, State Historian

organization State Division of Parks date Dec. 4, 1979

street & number 619 Warehouse Dr., 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

STATE *Bernice E. Hanko*
 BUREAU LIAISON - 4/11/80
 BLM CULTURAL RESOURCE PROGRAM LEADER

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 Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature *William Mearns*

title State Historic Preservation Officer date January 18, 1980

For HCRS use only
 I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register

for W. Ray Luce
 Keeper of the National Register date 4/22/80

Attest: *Kristin J.O. Connell*
 Chief of Registration date 4/17/80

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR HCRS USE ONLY

RECEIVED JAN 29 1980

DATE ENTERED

APR 22 1980

Rogers-Post Site

(AHR SITE NO. BAR-005)

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7 PAGE 1 of 1

"Preparation for the relocation of the monument started late last summer. It was known that the fragile tundra in the summer would not support the weight of equipment heavy enough to move the monument, yet in winter the monument would be tightly frozen in the ground. In Mid-August Mr. Kenneth Toovak, one of our native shop foremen, and a crew of four, went to Walakpa, on two separate occasions, raised the monument with jacks, and placed it on eight foot by ten inch skids. A hole 6' square and 20" deep was dug at the new location for replacement of the monument later. Hand tools exclusively were employed. On 9 November 1972 Mr. Toovak and crew drove a crane to Walakpa and moved the monument. An unusual rain had occurred in October, which had quickly frozen, so that the area around the monument was covered with several inches of nearly pure ice. Some concern was felt that the monument would slip uncontrollably during movement. However, Mr. Toovak ingeniously constructed a sling, which ran under the base and over the top of the monument, so that it could be partially lifted, and partially slipped, into place. No lateral slippage occurred and the monument was set firmly in place, approximately 95 feet up slope from the old location. It is located (now) on a grassy, tundra-covered rise overlooking the lagoon where the fatal crash occurred."

On September 1, 1953, a Wien Alaska Airlines crew visiting Walakpa Bay, found to their astonishment that a second large monument was in place near the original Post-Rogers memorial. More slender and almost 10' taller, it was constructed as an obolisque entirely of poured concrete in four rectangular, diminishing blocks. The base dimensions are 6' and including the metal staff at top, it is 26' high. Little is known of the one-man builder, Jesse Stubbs. News accounts identify him as 72 years of age, an "adventurer" and a "boy-hood chum of Will Rogers". (The Will Rogers Memorial records do not attest to this). Mr. Stubbs first appeared in Anchorage, with the announced intention of walking from there to Barrow, in the summer of 1953. He did walk to Fairbanks, where admirers sponsored his flight to Barrow. There he proceeded, in late summer, to personally erect the obolisque. It memorialized not only Will Rogers and Wiley Post, but also the Alaskan veteran's of World War II.

With the exceptions noted above, standing bleak and lonely on windswept tundra facing the Arctic Ocean, the twin monuments stand as silent sentinels; the most northerly on United States soil. They memorialize the lives of two great Americans--well remembered in Alaska. Neither monument is artistically eminent. Yet they poignantly provide enduring witness to a fateful place in American History.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE

FOR HCRS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	JAN 29 1980
DATE ENTERED	APR 22 1980

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

Rogers-Post Site (AHS SITE NO. BAR-005)

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 1 of 2

Post had found Alaska advantageous as a fueling stop in two previous record round-the-world flights. In 1931 with his navigator, Harold Gatty he landed the "Winnie May" at both Fairbanks and Solomon Beach, near Nome. Then in a solo flight which bettered his time by almost a day he landed "Winnie May" at Fairbanks again, and at Flat, in the summer of 1933. Born in Texas, Nov. 22, 1899 Wiley Post financed his first flying while working as a "roughneck" in the Texas-Oklahoma oil fields. His internationally recognized career, followed his unexpected win (as an unknown) of the 1930 National Air Race from Los Angeles to Chicago. He was a long-time friend and aviation counselor of Will Rogers. The 1935 plane was considered an advancement from the "Winnie May". Designed by Post, and built at Los Angeles Union Air Terminal, it was a low-wing cantilever monoplane of wood and fabric construction using a 550 h.p., Pratt and Whitney Wasp Engine. The fuselage was Lockheed Orion and the wing Sirius, similar to the plane flown across the Pacific to Japan earlier by Charles and Ann Lindberg. For Alaskan and Siberian conditions, in addition to landing wheels, it carried interchangeable skis and pontoons, At the time of the initial AP news flash, relayed by Army Signal Corps radio out of Barrow to Seattle, it was described as a "red, Arctic Sky Cruiser".

Despite the quality of the plane and pilot the final flight was barely airborne--perhaps 50 feet--when the motor failed. The aircraft plummeted into the lagoon and overturned. Oakpeha, the Eskimo who rushed to Barrow with the news, did not know the names of the fliers. Signal Corp Sergeant Stanley R. Morgan, sent to investigate, was shocked to learn their famous identity. He hurried back to Barrow and sent, at 8:16 p.m. the radio relay to Seattle which was literally heard around the world, August 16, 1935.

The Post-Rogers crash was the first fatal air accident Barrow had known. "Red Plane--she blew up". Claire Oakpeha had cried as he stumbled into the Barrow wireless Station. As told in the diary of Charles Brower: "Claire reported that Post, coming out of fog, saw him on the bank and settled in lagoon. He asked where they were and distance to Barrow, stayed a few minutes before taking off, started engine and took off toward ocean. He banked to come in over land. While on the turn, engine sputtered and stopped. They tried to straighten out for landing and crashed in lagoon about thirty feet from the sandspit. The plane was turned over with the pontoons straight on top. Three Eskimo went immediately to wreck, and one waded out to plane, found both men dead." The broken bodies, wrapped in sleeping bags, were taken to the Barrow hospital. Eskimos superstitiously refused to pose for pictures beside the wreck and chanted a dirge as they moved back to town in their skin boats. The awestruck local doctor was unable to complete the work of preparing the bodies for shipment, and Brower had to help him. No one was more shaken than pilot Joe Crosson, who flew in for the funeral mission. Haggard with grief, this outstanding bush pilot had been

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Post-Rogers Site (AHRS SITE NO. BAR-005)

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 2 of 2

one of the last to see Post and Rogers alive. It was Crosson who had driven them to the slough, near Fairbanks, for the take-off the morning before. He had helped Post arrange for rental of a house, near his own, where the round-the-world flyer and his wife intended to live. Crosson and Post had been friends for many years. Once, in a Stearman, they had made a "high-powered hunting trip" all over Alaska, killing bear and sighting so many moose and caribou that Post had talked ever since of repeating the excursion. Rogers had said he wanted to go along too. Crosson remembered well how Rogers had looked, grinning bashfully, hair tousled under a slouch hat, just before the Fairbanks take-off. We said: "Well, boys, I hope we have a forced landing. I won't be a sourdough till I learn to siwash it!"

It was inevitable that not one--but two monuments--would memorialize these world-famed men on Alaskan soil. Considering the logistics and location, it is only by the utmost tenacity and devotion that the site and its poignant markers constitute an enduring--supreme tribute--to Will Rogers and Wiley Post; great Americans!