NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS	USE ONL	Y		
DECENCER				
HELEIVEL	· APR 2	2 1 1989	IN 3	1980
DATE EN	TERED	~	~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~	1300

services

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

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Oddfellows Hall (First Avenue Bathhouse) AHRS SITE NO. FAL-038

AND/OR COMMON

Oddfellows Hall (Golden North Rebekah Lodge)

2 LOCATION

сіту, тоwм Fairbanks	VICINITY OF	NOT FOR PUBLICATIO	
state	CODE	county	CODE
Alaska 99701	02	Fairbanks	090

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRES	ENTUSE
DISTRICT	PUBLIC		AGRICULTURE	MUSEUM
X_BUILDING(S)	X_PRIVATE	UNOCCUPIED	COMMERCIAL	PARK
STRUCTURE	BOTH	WORK IN PROGRESS	EDUCATIONAL	PRIVATE RESIDENCE
SITE	PUBLIC ACQUISITION	ACCESSIBLE	XENTERTAINMENT	XRELIGIOUS
OBJECT	IN PROCESS	X YES: RESTRICTED	GOVERNMENT	SCIENTIFIC
	BEING CONSIDERED	YES: UNRESTRICTED	INDUSTRIAL	TRANSPORTATION
		NO	MILITARY	<u>Xother</u> Civic

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME Golden North Rebekah Lodge No. 4 A

STREET & NUMBER		
P.O. Box 508		
CITY, TOWN	an ain air - an 1988 a'r a annar ar falwenn ann a ang gennarann - An Ma'r Enner annar ann	STATE
Fairbanks	VICINITY OF	Alaska 99701
5 LOCATION OF LEGAL	DESCRIPTION	
COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS,ETC. District	Recorder	
STREET & NUMBER 607 Barne:	tte Street	
CITY, TOWN		STATE
Fairbanks		Alaska 99701
6 REPRESENTATION IN	EXISTING SURVEY	'S
πīτ∟e Fairbanks: A City H Alaska Heritage Reso	istoric Building Survey urces Survey (AHRS site	, by Janet Matheson, architect, 1978. no. FAI-136).
DATE 2 Feb. 1977	FEDER/	AL _XSTATECOUNTYLOCAL
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS Alaska Divisio	on of Parks, 619 Wareho	use Drive, Suite 210
CITY, TOWN		STATE
Anchorage		Alaska 99501

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE CHECK ONE		DNE
EXCELLENT GOOD _X _{FAIR}	DETERIORATED RUINS UNEXPOSED	UNALTERED X_ALTERED	X ORIGINAL MOVED	SITE DATE

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Oddfellows Hall, which began as a bathhouse, stands at its original location in downtown Fairbanks on First Avenue. Built in 1907 by Madame Renio, a fortune teller, and her partner Doc Overgaard, the structure is a typical turn-of-the century, two-story building with horizontal shiplap siding and a peaked roof of corrugated metal. In the rear the building drops abruptly to one story and originally it tapered to a low shed containing the bathhouse boiler.

The entrance on First Avenue is set back about fifteen feet from the front of the building. Historically the door led into a small entry-room to the right of which was the health clinic fronting on First Avenue. The bathhouse receiving room stood to the left of the entry, and from it a long hallway extended back to the boiler shed. A door off the right of the hallway led into the three back stalls, each partitioned by walls open at top and bottom to allow warm air circulation, and a steam room with a slab for massages. Small rooms, each with a high window, were located behind the bath stalls. Customers could rest after bathing or spend the night in these rooms. At the end of the hallway was another small room with one high window.

The stairway to the second story rises opposite the front entry. On the second floor, to the right of the stairs, the owners cut a skylight into the roof to light the bath area on the first floor. Under the stairs Doc Overgaard had a small living apartment. To the left of the stairs Madame Renio had her second floor rooms. She entered through the kitchen that contained a stove, woodbox, sink and open shelves fitted against the slanting roof. Her main room, above the clinic, had one long window overlooking First Avenue and the Chena River and another window on the west side facing toward Cushman Street. This room and the clinic below both measured about twelve by eighteen feet.

During the winter of 1909-1910 the water and steam pipes of the bathhouse froze, the business closed, and the local chapter of Oddfellows purchased the building. They modified the interior to meet their needs as a meeting hall, converting the clinic into a kitchen, the downstairs apartment into a bathroom, and the bath area into one large hall approximately seventy-five feet long and twenty-four feet wide. The organization has also painted both the exterior and the interior periodically and removed the skylight.

In 1963 the Golden North Rebekah Lodge, a sister organization to the Oddfellows, purchased the building for use as their meeting hall. They have made some alterations, removing the original boiler room in the early 1970s and remodelling the kitchen. To provide greater privacy for meetings, the lodge boarded up the high windows along the west side. The old barrel stoves that heated the building have been replaced with steam heat provided by the city. Today the Rebekahs continue to own and maintain the hall.

In 1967 the Chena River flooded, but the Oddfellows Hall, sitting on high ground, was not damaged. However, over time the extremes of freezing and thawing have caused the rough stone foundation to deteriorate. The poor condition of the foundation has led to settling noticeable in the uneven alignment of the shiplap

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AR ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	EAS OF SIGNIFICANCE CH	LECK AND JUSTIFY BELC	
FREMISTORIC	ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	COMMUNITY PLANNING	LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT	
1400-1499	ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	CONSERVATION	LAW	SCIENCE
1500-1599	AGRICULTURE	ECONOMICS	LITERATURE	SCULPTURE
1600-1699	XARCHITECTURE	EDUCATION	MILITARY	X SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
1700-1799	ART	ENGINEERING	MUSIC	THEATER
1800-1899	COMMERCE	Xexploration/settlement	PHILOSOPHY	TRANSPORTATION
X.1900-presen	t_communications	INDUSTRY	POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	XOTHER (SPECIFY)
		INVENTION		civic group meetings, youth gatherings.
SPECIFIC DATE	^{ES} 1907 - present	BUILDER/ARCH	ITECT	

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Oddfellows Hall is significant for architectural, historic, humanitarian and social reasons. Architecturally it represents a traditional turn-of-the-century wood frame building--only a few examples of this style remain in Fairbanks. Socially, its beginnings as a bathhouse and subsequent use by a prominent civic and human-itarian organization reflects the changing social character of the city.

Architecturally the hall is of traditional turn-of-the-century wood frame construction. The unusual positioning of its components in conjunction with the clean and simple moldings and corner trim give the structure a feeling of stature, grace, and balance, a visual landmark in the minds of local people and visitors alike.

Built in the gold rush town of Fairbanks in 1907, "Mrs Madole's First Avenue Bathhouse and Clinic," located on First Avenue overlooking the Chena River, is one of several early structures still standing in Alaska's major interior city. During its brief but colorful history as a bathhouse for the town's leading citizens, as well as miners from outlying districts, made use of the baths. Run by Madame Renio, fortune teller, and her partner Doc Overgaard, the baths were a luxury.

With Doc Overgaard from Denmark, Mrs. Madole (Madame Renio) built the bathouse on First Avenue, opening for business in 1907. They were in competition with five or six such businesses operating in Fairbanks at the time--hot running water was a luxury and bathhouses served the entire population of the town and mining region. Not surprisingly, some of the bathhouses were less respectable than others and Doc Overgaard, not a real doctor, did a brisk "health clinic" trade sobering men. An excellent description of the bathhouse in these early days can be found in <u>This Old House</u>: <u>The Story of Clara Rust</u> written by Jo Anne Wold, prominent Fairbanks journalist.

In the winter of 1909-1910 the water pipes froze, forcing the business to close. Soon afterwards, the Oddfellows Lodge purchased the building. Since this purchase, the "Hall" has matured as a focal point for the activities of civic organizations essential to the cultural growth of the community. This change in ownership paralleled the changing social character of Fairbanks from raw mining town to more stable permanent community.

The Oddfellows and their sister Rebekahs, owners of the building since 1910, are an international civic organization dedicated to public service. For seventy years they have used the hall to hold fund-raising activities for community projects, to shelter and offer first-aid to victims in times of disaster, and to house churches

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

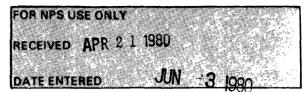
Alaska-Yukon Magazine. Seattle, 1906-1912.

The Pathfinder: Magazine of the Alaska Pioneers. Valdez, 1912.

This Old House: The Story of Clara Rust. by Jo Anne Wold, Northwest Publishing Co., Anchorage, Alaska.

	IIIM NIII VEKAFIRII
10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than 1	ACREAGE NOT VERIFIED
QUADRANGLE NAME	QUADRANGLE SCALE
UTM REFERENCES A 0,6 4 6,5 6,9 5 ZONE EASTING NORTHING C	B ZONE EASTING NORTHING
	FLI LIIIIII
Lot 8A, Block 17, Fairbanks Townsite.	
LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPER	RTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES
STATE CODE	COUNTY CODE
STATE CODE	COUNTY CODE
11 FORM PREPARED BY NAME/TITLE David Libbey, archeologist	
ORGANIZATION	DATE
Cooperative Park Studies Unit	10 May 1979
STREET & NUMBER Gruening Building, University of Alas	теLEPHONE ska (907) 479-7370
CITY OR TOWN	STATE
Fairbanks	Alaska 99701
12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATIO THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE O	ON OFFICER CERTIFICATION F THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:
NATIONAL STA	TE LOCAL X
hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service	National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the e.
TITLE State Historic Preservati	ion Officer DATE 4/15/80
I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED	D IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER
M. Kay Nuce	DATE 6/3/80
ATTEST: Justin JO Connell	DATE 6/2/80
CHIEF OF REGISTRATION	

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM



Oddfellows Hall, AHRS Site No. FAI-038

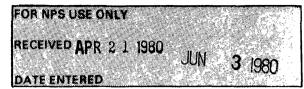
CONTINUATION SHEET ITEM NUMBER / PAG	E	1
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siding. In addition the roof of corrugated metal, a popular material in northern climates, is rusting and in poor condition.

Structural changes to the building's exterior have been minimal. While interior changes have been of a more extensive nature, details of the original construction are still visible. The structure sits on its original townsite lot, important to the historic integrity of the building as it continues to command a view overlooking the Chena River. The boundaries of the nomination conform to the original legal description on file at the District Recorder's Office in Fairbanks.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM





CONTINUATION SHEET ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE]

newly arriving in Fairbanks. Active with youth, the lodge encourages gatherings for Fairbanks' young people. It also allows fellow civic organizations to rent the hall at a nominal fee for business meetings.

In keeping with their motto, "Friendship, Love and Truth," the work of the Oddfellows and Rebekahs encompasses many aspects of public service. Between 1910 and 1920 the Fairbanks chapter gave support to the newly built St. Matthews and St. Josephs hospitals. They held fund-raising plays and bazaars at the hall in addition to making direct donations. The lodge continues this support today donating the use of hospital beds and wheel chairs, visiting hospitals and the Fairbanks Pioneer Home to sit with the bedridden, entertaining the infirm with music provided by local talent, taking the elderly for drives, and assisting them in shopping. The local chapter contributes to an eye bank run by the International Lodge as well as donating yearly to such charities as the Heart Fund and the Cancer Fund

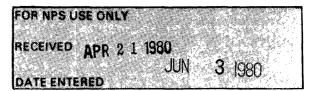
In times of general distress the Oddfellows and Rebekahs have been active. In 1914 and again in the 1940s when a large downtown fire burned part of the Cushman Street area in Fairbanks, the lodge opened its doors providing first-aid, food, clothing, and shelter to the needy and the rescue crews. The lodge performed the same services during the destructive earthquakes of 1937 and 1967 and again after the Chena River flood in 1967.

Always active with youth the Fairbanks chapter encourages the use of their hall for social gatherings of young people. At one time they ran a coffee house for teenagers "The One-Way Inn." The local lodge sponsors their own youth groups, gives scholarships to high schools students, and in support of civic awareness, sponsors a local student in the national student group visit to the United Nations.

Throughout its history the Oddfellows Hall has provided a home-away-from-home for associate members, often military personnel from other chapters. Here they congregate and participate in the community service that is the hallmark of their organization. To encourage civic awareness, the hall has long been made available for rent to community groups. Organizations that regularly use the Fairbanks hall include: the two black masonic chapters and their sister chapters of the Eastern Star, the Sons of Norway, the German Club, and the Curling Club which holds its social meeting here during the annual statewide "bonspeil".

While the Oddfellows and Rebekahs are non-denominational, they are church oriented. The hall is available for services by churches newly arriving in Fairbanks. Churches that had their start in the Oddfellows Hall include: the Corinthian Church, the Polar Evangelistic Church and several Baptist churches. The Pentecostal Youth Group currently meets at the hall.

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Oddfellows Hall, AHRS Site No. FAI-038

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The Hall stands for a continuing social tradition. Often Oddfellows are also members of the Rebekah Lodge showing the close relationship between the two organizations. In the late 1930s the Fairbanks Oddfellows disbanded and did not reactivate until 1945. In the interim the Rebekahs maintained and used the hall, finally purchasing it in 1967.

The simple but traditional lines of their building symbolize the quiet and dignified character of these brother and sister organizations. But they also remind the community of the service that has contributed significantly to the social well-being and cultural continuity of Fairbanks.