EVERGREEN HISTORY

Between 1881 and 1891, the first city cemetery was set along the ridge above downtown. Shortly after its establishment, “Ridge Cemetery” became overcrowded with mining claims and residential development of the Chicken Ridge neighborhood. Relocation of the original cemetery commenced and, in 1891, Evergreen Cemetery Association was established with a Board of Directors including Juneau businessman B.M. Behrends, John Olds and Frank Bach.

A committee of five individuals was assigned the task of designating the cemetery site. A location outside of the residential and commercial areas was selected for the 9-acre cemetery, which brothers George William and Charles Garside surveyed in 1891. In the following year, volunteers constructed the road connecting downtown to the rural cemetery along a narrow cart track originally carved out of the Bonanza Ridge. “Cemetery Road” — as it was known until 1902 — follows present day Calhoun Road.

At its origination, Evergreen included three sections — Protestant, Catholic and Alaska Native — but over time was further divided to include the American Legion, Masonic, Moose/Masonic, Odd Fellows, Elks and Serbian sections. In 1907, Evergreen Cemetery was deeded to the City of Juneau and continues to be maintained by the CBJ Parks and Recreation Department. The once rural Evergreen Cemetery has since been surrounded by residential neighborhoods developed in the early and mid-20th century as well as commercial development along Glacier Avenue.

EVERGREEN MAPPING PROJECT

The City and Borough of Juneau Community Development Department (CDD), the Juneau-Douglas City Museum and the Parks and Recreation Department partnered on the Evergreen Cemetery Mapping Project to confirm gravesite locations and consolidate existing burial records into a digital database. The project included locating and mapping gravesites and transferring the data to a searchable, digital database utilizing Geographic Information Systems (GIS). The database provides the opportunity for factual record checking and a tool for historians, genealogical researchers, heritage visitors and curious residents alike. Accurate location and record keeping will enable preservation of physical grave markers and plots and conserve this historical resource for future generations.

Since Evergreen’s establishment in 1891, over 8,000 Juneau residents have been interred in the cemetery; all of whom have a story to tell. Through contributions to our built environment, industry, political leadership and social movements, Juneau’s residents have shaped the town into Alaska’s Capital City. With guidance from the Historic Resources Advisory Committee, CDD and Museum staff identified a small selection of individuals and extant buildings in the greater downtown area that are associated with their lives and accomplishments. Visit the complete database on the CBJ Historic Preservation Home Page www.juneau.org/history.

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The information in this brochure complies with the Secretary of the Interior’s Standards and Guidelines for History and Archaeology.
In the heart of the early commercial district, Juneau businessmen and political leader, EMERY VALENTINE [1], constructed the VALENTINE BUILDING (119 Front Street) in 1904 through 1913. In his own words, Valentine wanted to build “...a quality structure that would give Juneau a truer air of urbanity.” A jeweler by trade, Valentine arrived to Juneau in the mid-1880s and later served on the City Council and several terms as Mayor. He was an organizer of the Volunteer Fire Department and a strong supporter of the Public Library.

Reinforced concrete became a prominent building material in the early 1900s, and architects played with applied designs and styles to beautify the building technique. The HELDENTHAL BUILDING (140 Front Street) is an early example of this stylized reinforced concrete. Commissioned in 1914 by brothers Jack and SIMON HELDENTHAL [2], the building housed their law offices on Front Street.

A graduate of Colorado School of Mines, GEORGE ALEXANDER PARKS [3] came to Alaska in 1907. In 1925, he was appointed Territorial Governor by President Calvin Coolidge and reappointed in 1929 by President Herbert Hoover. During his second term, the STATE CAPITOL BUILDING — originally the Federal and Territorial Building — was constructed between 1929 and 1931. Parks was instrumental in building airstrips in bush communities and encouraged development of agriculture in the Matanuska Valley to aid in self-sufficiency of the territory. He also promoted a contest to design the Alaska flag, which remains a prominent image today.

The proliferation of the Art Deco and Art Moderne style in Juneau coincided with the rising use of reinforced concrete and peak production of the Alaska Juneau Mine Company. Despite the Great Depression, a collaboration of Seattle and Juneau investors sparked the construction of the first class, luxury hotel in the Territorial Capital. Among those responsible, WALLIS GEORGE [4] — owner of Juneau Cold Storage — was instrumental in the construction of the Art Moderne BARANGAY HOTEL (127 N. Franklin Street) completed in 1939.

The Art Deco jewel in W.D. GROSS’ string of theaters, the GROSS 20th CENTURY THEATER and Apartment building (220 Front Street) opened in 1940. William D. Gross — a native of Russia — immigrated first to Seattle and followed the Gold Rush to the Yukon Territory in 1899 at the age of 19 to work as a tailor for prospectors. Enamored with motion pictures, Gross began traveling to mining camps and towns with a projector and films. The first of Gross’ Coliseum theaters opened in Ketchikan in 1911 and subsequently throughout Southeast Alaska. Though Gross is buried in Seattle, the Gross Family Mausoleum [5] — the first mausoleum in Evergreen Cemetery — was completed for him in 1939.

The MERCHANTS WHARF is a standing testament to Juneau’s aviation history. The original Alaska Air Transport building burned in 1938. The following year Shell Simmons rebuilt and merged his business with ALEX HOLDEN [6], operator of Marine Airways. A native of Victoria, B.C., Holden learned to fly during WWI with the Royal Canadian Air Force. In Alaska, Holden first flew the Nenana to Bethel mail run out of Fairbanks and later for Pacific International in Anchorage. Simmons and Holden later merged Alaska Coastal Airlines with Bob Ellis’ Coastal Airlines in 1962 and ultimately with Alaska Airlines in 1968.

In the 1930s, a community of mixed Tlingit and Filipina families developed in Juneau as Tlingit women married Filipino born cannery workers. Feeling ostracized, many of these women banded together to raise funds for the FILIPINO COMMUNITY HALL (249 S. Franklin Street) as a place for social gatherings, birthdays and cultural presentations. Among them, BESSIE QUINTO [7] (nee Jackson) — a native Tlingit woman married to Marcello Quinto of Santa Cruz, Philippines — was one of the seven signers of the the Articles of Incorporation of the Filipino Community Inc. in 1956.
As miners flocked to the area, the Aak'w Tlingit established permanent residences at the mouth of Gold Creek growing to approximately 20 houses by the mid-1880s. The Aak'w Tlingit fishing camp changed dramatically to a densely populated community enclave with approximately 100 residents living in 20 houses in 1886 and later damaged by the fire of 1903 and its aftermath. They saw the remaining houses of early residents continue to tell their story.

Shug Creek Mary James – Yeatláng (Henna) clan of the Aak’w Tlingit – has become a representative symbol of the generation that dealt with the massive changes brought by Euro-American settlement in Tlingit territory. Having the first Aak’w Tlingit land deeds issued, she was the first Aak’w Tlingit to put her families land deeds into American title. Mary owned much of the land comprising Thane and claimed 160 acres at the time of her death in 1920. Although she ultimately lost her land, her efforts were able to protect some of the Aak’w peoples’ lands through the 1940s.

Being a family of prominent leaders, her son, JAMES WATSON, 2d, and her daughter in law, MARY EDEN WATSON 8 would go on to become founding members of the Aak’w Nation Brotherhood and Alaska Native Sisterhood, and would advocate for Alaska Native rights in these organizations. James Watson, in addition to fighting to keep Euro-American homebuilders and other establishments off of Aak’w Tlingit land and around Anka Bay, worked for Alaska Native access to public libraries and for the rights of Alaska Native prisoners.

JAKE CROPLEY 9 and his wife MARGARET BLANC CROPLEY 9 were active members of the Aak’w Nation Brotherhood and Sisterhood. Along with Walter Soboleff, Jake helped revitalize the API in the Depression Era and served for some time as its president. The CROPLEY RESIDENCE at 358 W. Willoughby Avenue was constructed in 1939. Many conversations were had at the Cropley house with other influential members of the Aak’w Nation community including Roy and Elizabeth Dapcevich.

CECILIA KINZ 1d, Tlingit name Kintana’ L’uckak dìi’ (Sheep Creek) clan married Aak’w Tlingit resident, Idle Keeper, 5c, and lived in the village. She joined the Alaska Native Sisterhood in 1929 and was an active member until she passed in 2004. Cecilia was the first teacher of the Tlingit language in Juneau schools and instrumental in establishing the first Native dance group in Juneau educating younger Tlingit generations of their culture and language. Throughout her life, Cecila made her mark on the city by educating public officials of the Tlingit culture advocating for the rights of the Tlingit community and battling racial discrimination.

Newly arriving miners settled adjacent to the downtown commercial center creating a variety of residential neighborhoods in the surrounding hillsides. One of the most distinctive buildings in Juneau today, the actonegal-plus St. NICOLAS ORTHODOX CHURCH was completed in 1914. Local contractor, WINTHROP C. RUDOLPH 1d, and EDWARD ELLINGON 1d, were credited with supervising its construction using plans sent from the Orthodox Missionary Society while recently converted Orthodox Natives and Serbian miners provided the labor. FATHER ANDREW PETROVICH KASHEVAROFF 9 – born in Russia – served the Orthodox Church at Sitka, Hatchet, Ketchikan, Klawock and Wrangell before arriving in Juneau in 1912. In addition to serving the church, Kashevaroff was appointed curator of the Alaska State Library and Museum in 1920 until his death in 1940, writing numerous articles on Alaska’s history and ethnology.

Complied in 1893, the JOHN MONTGOMERY DAVIS and FRANKS BROOKS DAVIS HOUSE at 202 6th Street one of the working houses owned by original founder. JOHN MONTGOMERY 1d – an English born prospector and Superintendent of the Newel Mine – and FRANCES BROOKS 1d – an English born artist – met and were married after Frances arrived as a visitor to Juneau. The pair are responsible for eight houses on Sixth Street as well as the street itself. Several of the houses were relocated to the upper portion of Sixth Street in 1927 when the High School was constructed.

At the foot of Starr Hill, stood the homes of many prominent Juneau residents, including Wisconsin born DR. LEONARD FRANK DAVIS 1d, at 59 EAST STREET. Davis practiced medicine in Juneau from his arrival in 1913 until his retirement in 1946, serving as Flight Surgeon for the Aeronautics Branch of the Department of Commerce in the 1930s. HIS WIFE LULU BELL DAVIS 1d, 15 – a concert artist from Albany, Missouri – studied voice at the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music, in Chicago and in Europe. In Juneau, Mrs. Davis was the choir director for the Northern Light Presbyterian Church, and after the tragic loss of her voice, discovered her expressive talent as a poet.

Starr Hill – one of the first residential neighborhoods outside of the original townsite – developed over an early trail along Sixth Street leading to the mines at Silver Bow Basin. In 1913, business and home construction boomed after the Alaska Janovas Mining Co. agreed not to build company housing at the request of city leaders. Representatives of the speculative housing boom, CONRAD M. FRITZ 16 – a German immigrant and inventor in Southeast Alaska mines – constructed six identical Craftsmen bungalows in the 500 block of Kennedy Street.

Starr hill was a diverse enclave, housing miners native to Serbia, Russia, Norway, Finland and the Lower 48. In the 1920s and 1930s, Janovas was home to a vibrant and cosmopolitan community of Serbians, Croatians, Montenegrins and Slovenes acquiring primarily to work in the mines. SAM and STANA DVARCEVIC 17

During the outbreak of WWII disrupted life for the Tanakas and other Japanese families as community members, encouraged by community friends, were able to return to their homes on Carroll Way and reaped the City Gar.