

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form

received JUN -8 1987

date entered JUL 21 1987

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*

Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name 5 SITES

historic YUKON RIVER LIFEWAYS

and/or common

2. Location

street & number YUKON-CHARLEY RIVERS NATIONAL PRESERVE not for publication

city, town vicinity of

state code county code

3. Classification

|  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|
| <b>Category</b>                                    | <b>Ownership</b>                           | <b>Status</b>                                  | <b>Present Use</b>                     |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> district                  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public | <input checked="" 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 checked="" 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                      | <b>Public Acquisition</b>                  | <b>Accessible</b>                              | <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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Thematic Group | <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 National Park Service

street & number 2525 Gambell Street

city, town Anchorage vicinity of state Alaska

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Bureau of Land Management

street & number 701 C Street

city, town Anchorage state Alaska

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title See Continuation Sheet has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date federal state county local

depository for survey records

city, town state

---

## 7. Description

---

|  |  |   |   |
|--|--|---|---|
| <b>Condition</b>                         |  | <b>Check one</b>                              | <b>Check one</b>                                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> excellent       | <input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> unexposed    |   |   |

---

**Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance**

### YUKON RIVER LIFEWAYS: A DESCRIPTIVE OVERVIEW

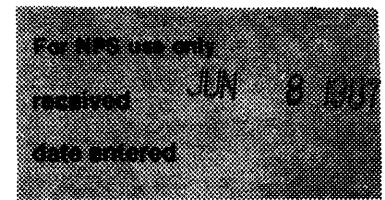
The five sites which comprise the Yukon River Lifeways thematic group are associated with the exploration and settlement of the Alaskan interior. They are representative of a linear community that developed along the Yukon River, the vital transportation corridor, in the early twentieth century. All of these sites were owned by gold miners who came in search of gold, but turned to other occupations when they settled along the river. The sites include those associated with the Yukon mail trail, roadhouse operations, fishing, and trapping.

The sites are all located on the banks of the Yukon River between Eagle and Circle, an area now encompassed by the Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve. There is a geographic coherence to the approximately 160-river miles between these two communities. Between Eagle and Circle the Yukon flows through the boreal forest. The high bluffs on one side of the river open onto magnificent mountain vistas on the other side, a landscape which may alternate side to side with each bend in the river. The river is bordered by white spruce on the bluff which, moving inland, drops down to black spruce bogs. Moving away from the river, the altitude increases, the wetlands give way to aspen and birch. The hardwood forest is backed by low brush and berry bushes which merge with tundra at higher elevations. The tundra eventually gives way to bare ground at the highest elevation. Alder thickets are interspersed throughout the landscape, especially at the mouths of tributary streams and along streambeds at higher elevations. Here the alders grow twenty to thirty feet, seemingly in all directions, horizontal as well as vertical, in their search for light, creating an almost impenetrable maze.

There are three kinds of flat land along this section of the Yukon: the beach, the bog, and the terrace. The beaches along the banks of the Yukon are suitable only for temporary structures. Here a fisherman may set up moveable fish racks and cleaning tables near a suitable eddy, placing the work

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet

Item number 6

Page 1

"Yukon Frontiers: Historic Resource Study of the Proposed  
Yukon-Charley National River," by Melody Webb Grauman,  
Occasional Paper Number 8, University of Alaska, Fairbanks, 1977.

HABS No. AK-40, Ed Biederman Fish Camp  
HABS No. AK-41, James Taylor Cabins  
HABS No. AK-42, Frank Slaven Roadhouse  
HABS No. AK-43, George McGregor Cabin  
HABS No. AK-44, Woodchopper Roadhouse

Alaska Heritage Resource Survey  
Site #CHR-030, Frank Slaven Roadhouse  
CHR-031, James Taylor Cabins  
CHR-087, Ed Biederman Fish Camp  
CHR-088, George McGregor Cabin  
CHR-005, Woodchopper Roadhouse

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only  
received JUN 8 1987  
date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 7

Page 2

place near the resource. The fish racks and cleaning table can be dismantled at the end of the season and moved to high ground. The bogs are only suitable for building when frozen; in the summer the ground is too wet and the insects too thick. The white spruce river terrace is the most suitable flat land for constructing permanent buildings. On the bench above the river, buildings are relatively secure from flooding and "bulldozer" ice, masses of ice six to eight feet thick that during spring break up can launch themselves as far as one hundred yards through the woods, clearing everything in their path.

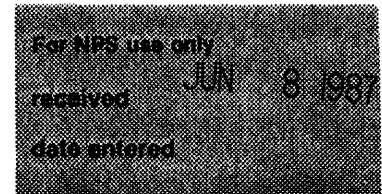
All nominated sites are situated on the river terrace, fifteen to twenty feet above the river in the white spruce. During the period of significance, the sites were cleared. There were vegetable and flower gardens. Outdoor cookpits, tables, and benches were situated to afford a view of the passing river scene. This touch of civilization in the wilderness stood out like a beacon to the river traffic. Passers-by stopped for social as well as commercial reasons, always assured of being offered a cup of coffee, tea, or a swig of something.

These sites are representative of the linear community that existed along the Yukon in the early twentieth century. They are within a fifty-five-mile section of the river, beginning about fifty miles downriver from Eagle. Two of the sites are about thirty-river miles apart. The other three sites are within two or three miles of each other between Coal Creek and Woodchopper Creek. (I1,2) The mail trail connected them in the winter as it followed the Yukon, sometimes over the frozen river itself, other times over the frozen land, but they were not connected by any system of all-season paths or overland trails. They were linked all year only by the river, the primary access route through the Alaskan interior.

The buildings at the sites are similar. They are simple, as they were designed by the builders who used materials at hand and few tools. All are constructed of logs, although

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet

Item number

7

Page

3

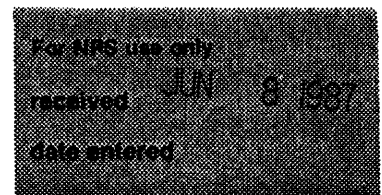
not necessarily from the trees that were on-site. Logs were felled by hand and hauled by dogs or horses. Machine-sawn wood is found in these buildings, unlike those in other Alaskan wilderness areas, because it was available from the Fort Egbert sawmill at Eagle. Beaded siding and drop siding are particularly likely to have come downriver from Fort Egbert, where the dismantling of buildings began in the mid-1920s. Thus the Frank Slaven Roadhouse has a large addition of drop siding, the Ed Biederman Fish Camp has an arctic entry of plain sawn wood, and the James Taylor Cabin has doors of beaded siding. With the exception of Slaven's Roadhouse, which is squarenotched, and Taylor's Cabin, which appears to be notched into corner posts, the corners are saddlenotched. The gable roofs are insulated with about 6" of sod, which is laid over round or split poles anchored by pegs in the purlins or over planks. In nearly all cases the sod was once covered with tin, probably surplus from Fort Egbert. Except for the roadhouses, the buildings have a single entrance which is located in the gable end. The windows are usually fixed sash with rough plank surrounds. These buildings are fine examples of a vernacular architecture which reflects the sub-arctic climate: sod roofs, few openings, spruce logs, and mud and moss chinking.

Function is also an element of design. The two roadhouses, which provided trail-oriented lodgings and served as supply points for off-river mining communities, reflect these functions in their unusual two-story, multiple room design. Biederman's and the George McGregor Cabin served as fish camps, where a year's supply of food for the dogs and the table was caught and processed in a few summer months. Taylor's and McGregor's also functioned as home cabins for trappers who had worked as miners for many years. These buildings are typical one-or two-room cabins, although of a higher quality of construction than others found in the region.

The outbuildings at each site also reflect the occupation, space, and time of the Yukon River Lifeways theme. Most of the sites have an extant cache, which is a storage building

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet

Item number

7

Page

4

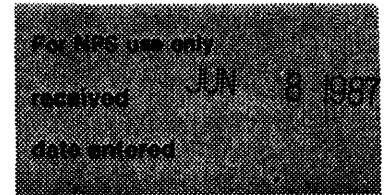
for meat, fish, and other provisions, usually raised above ground and symbolic of the Alaskan bush lifestyle. The importance of dog teams to life on the Yukon is illustrated by the presence of dog houses, dog barns, and dog corrals. Greenhouses, used to increase the yield of the short but intense growing season, are also present. In addition, storage sheds, outhouses, and smokehouses, essential to a subsistence lifestyle, are extant on-site. All are typical visual representations of early twentieth century life along the Yukon.

The five sites which comprise the Yukon River lifeways thematic group retain a high degree of historic integrity. The cultural landscape remains intact, although the passage of time has inevitably left its mark. These sites, with the exception of Woodchopper, are still able to offer emergency shelter for travelers. Slaven's Roadhouse, maintained by the National Park Service in the historic spirit of hospitality, still stands as a landmark along the river. The Yukon Quest sled dog race between Fairbanks, Alaska, and Whitehorse, Yukon Territory, follows the old mail trail route between Eagle and Circle through the frozen Yukon corridor. The river remains the primary supply route for the small river population. These individuals and families keep alive the spirit of the linear community and historic lifeways.

The condition of the sites represents decreasing use, caused, in part, by federal action since 1969 to disallow homesteading and later the efforts to create Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve. Visitors and local residents also have used the log ruins for firewood, thus increasing degradation. The wilderness has reclaimed some buildings at these sites, leaving only moss covered sill logs. Brush and trees have overgrown the clearings and gardens, camouflaging extant buildings and historic debris. But time has not altered the way in which these sites are used. Since the period of significance, the sites have been used within their historic context, or have been intermittently abandoned. The dredges, railroads, airplanes, and the state highway system that had such an impact on life in the

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet

Item number 7

Page 5

Alaskan interior, did not destroy the feeling of the historic period at these sites. There have been no encroachments upon the land, no new elements introduced. The landscape and uses remain consistent with the historic period.

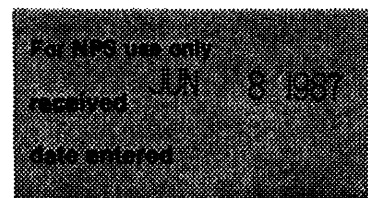
METHODOLOGY

The present nomination grew out of a decade of research in separate phases. Initially Melody Webb (Grauman), historian, National Park Service, was responsible for a historic resource study of the proposed Yukon-Charley National Rivers (Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve). She spent sixty days in the field in the summer of 1976 conducting a historic site survey of the proposed area. She used primary sources at the Library of Congress, the National Archives, the University of Oregon and Washington, the Oregon Province Archives of the Society of Jesus at Gonzaga University, the Alaska Historical Library, and the Elmer E. Rasmuson Library at the University of Alaska, Fairbanks. The result of her study was the publication "Yukon Frontiers: Historic Resource Study of the Proposed Yukon-Charley National River," Anthropological and Historic Preservation, Cooperative Park Studies Unit, University of Alaska, Fairbanks, Occasional Paper Number 8, November, 1977. She identified 143 historic sites of different classes, including: building sites associated with communities, supply centers, and individuals; trail and mining roads; mining camps and equipment; and Alaskan native villages and gravesites.

In 1982 a second phase of research emerged. The Alaska Regional Office of the National Park Service (NPS) began the preparation of a historic structures report under the direction of regional historian Robert Spude and, in 1984, regional historical architect David Snow. In 1982 buildings and structures at these five sites were measured for Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) documentation by Steven Peterson, architect, NPS; in 1984 by David Snow and David Anderson, architect, NPS; and in 1985 by Randall

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet

Item number

7

Page 6

Skeirik, architect, NPS, and William Vandeventer, architect, NPS. Alison K. Hoagland, NPS, WASO, was project historian. In 1984 Jet Lowe, photographer, NPS, photographed the sites for HABS documentation. In 1986 Sandra Faulkner, historian, NPS, transmitted HABS documentation for these sites to the HABS office, Washington, D.C., for inclusion in the HABS Alaska collection of the Library of Congress.

In 1985 project historian Alison K. Hoagland began the final phase of this project. In addition to known secondary and primary source research, she interviewed long time area residents, used the collections of the Eagle Historical Society, consulted the U.S. Census (1910), and examined mining and other civil records in Fairbanks, Alaska. The result of her work was a narrative essay which indentified the Yukon River Lifeways theme. In 1986 Sandra Faulkner, historian, NPS, compiled this nomination using Hoagland's narrative and additional sources, most particularly information provided by William Brown, historian, NPS, who has assisted this project from its inception.

These properties were selected for nomination to the National Register on the basis of fulfillment of NR criteria of historical integrity and accessibility and because they were representative of various aspects of the unique Yukon River Lifeways of the early twentieth century. Subsurface archeological testing was not part of this nomination as it is part of the historic structures report in process, project compliance, and on-site historic preservation work.



# 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/<br>humanitarian    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799            | <input type="checkbox"/> art                    | <input type="checkbox"/> engineering                       | <input type="checkbox"/> music                  | <input type="checkbox"/> theater                    |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899 | <input type="checkbox"/> commerce               | <input checked="" 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify) |
|   |   | <input type="checkbox"/> invention                         |   |   |

Specific dates 1910, 1916, 1924, 1930 Builder/Architect

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)  
1938

## SUMMARY

The five sites which comprise the Yukon River Lifeways thematic group are significant under Criterion A in the areas of exploration and settlement and transportation, as they are representative of the occupation, space, and time unique to the linear community that developed along the Yukon River in the early twentieth century. The Yukon River was the main avenue for the exploration and settlement of the Alaskan interior. It was the transportation corridor for both travelers and commerce for the river community and the gold fields. Constructed between 1910 and 1938, these buildings and their inhabitants were irrevocably connected to the river and these themes. All were located on the banks of the Yukon, were owned by miners who turned to other occupations when they settled along the river, and were constructed of logs and other local materials by local craftsmen. Some of the sites are more closely associated with transportation along the Yukon, some with transportation from the Yukon up the creeks to the mining camps, and some with early miners who were part of the lateral river community. Together they illustrate the decades of life along the Yukon after the initial flush of gold rush activity in 1898 until the late 1930s when corporations replaced individuals, and airplanes replaced steamboats and dogsleds. Today trails have grown over, mining shafts have filled in, scores of temporary shelters have been reclaimed by the earth, and few people live year round on the Yukon between Eagle and Circle.

## EXPLORATION AND SETTLEMENT

The search for gold served as the impetus for white exploration and settlement of the Alaskan interior. While the fur trade sparked initial exploration efforts, it wasn't until the search for gold began in the mid-1880s that whites

# 9. Major Bibliographical References

See Continuation Sheets

# 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property \_\_\_\_\_ See Inventory Sheets  
Quadrangle name \_\_\_\_\_ Quadrangle scale \_\_\_\_\_

### UTM References

|   |                      |                      |                      |   |                      |                      |                      |
|---|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|---|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|
| A | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | B | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |
|   | Zone                 | Easting              | Northing             |   | Zone                 | Easting              | Northing             |
| C | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | D | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |
| E | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | F | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |
| G | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | H | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> |

### Verbal boundary description and justification

See Inventory Sheets

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

|       |        |      |        |      |
|-------|--------|------|--------|------|
| state | ALASKA | code | county | code |
| state |        | code | county | code |

# 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Alison K. Hoagland and Sandra M. Faulkner, Historians

organization National Park Service date March 30, 1987

street & number 2525 Gambell Street telephone 271-2724

city or town Anchorage, Alaska 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.

State Historic Preservation Officer signature *Judith E. Butler*

title SHPO date April 15, 1987

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

date

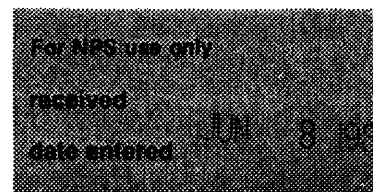
Keeper of the National Register

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_ date

Chief of Registration

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 2

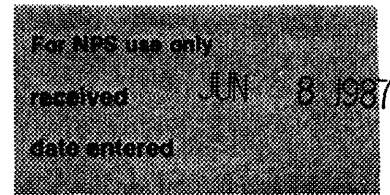
penetrated the Alaskan interior to any great extent. One of the great rivers of the continent, the Yukon, was the main avenue of exploration for Americans and immigrants working their way upriver from Saint Michael or downriver from the Klondike.

In the 1880s a trading post was established near the future site of Eagle City. By 1898, as the first American city on the Yukon River at the international border, Eagle was a mining supply center for a major mining district that had developed in the area south and west of Eagle. In 1898 the population of Eagle exceeded one thousand. In 1899 the military established Fort Egbert at Eagle and by 1901 Eagle was the second incorporated city in Alaska and the first judicial seat in the Alaskan interior. Beginning in 1893, the Birch Creek mining area developed near Circle. Between Eagle and Circle, all the gold bearing streams were on the left bank of the Yukon. The more productive ones were Woodchopper Creek, Coal Creek, and Fourth of July Creek. In 1899 Captain W. P. Richardson reported cabins or bunkhouses at each of these creeks on his journey as well as the communities of Independence, Ivey [sic], Nation City, Star, and the town of Seventy-Mile. He also reported traffic on the trail, including one-hundred twenty-five government reindeer en route to Circle City (Richardson). After the rush moved on to the Tanana River in the first decade of the twentieth century, the population declined. In 1908, the population of Eagle was one hundred.

Gold mining was first carried out by individual prospectors who explored new territory for likely gold bearing streams. They selected a particular stream for any number of reasons, for example, the width of the stream, the taste of the water, or the particular way the trees leaned (Wharton, 94-95). If instinct proved wrong, they moved on to explore new territory. If instincts proved right, they staked and worked a claim. The ones who stayed after the initial rush, or stampede, developed mining methods suitable to the region. As these individualistic mining methods proved

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet

Item number

8

Page

3

unprofitable, miners who settled along the river often sold their claims to corporations and turned to other occupations in order to remain in the community. In this way, individual mining gave way to more effective hydraulic mining which required larger associations and small companies. By the 1930s, when larger corporations came to the area with two dredges, the era of exploration and settlement that was tied to the individual prospector and his search for gold was coming to an end.

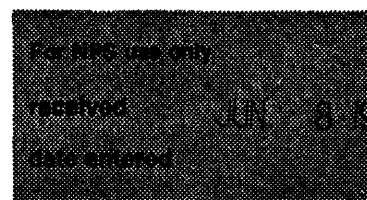
TRANSPORTATION

The Yukon River was the main access route through the Alaskan interior. Winding 1300 miles from the Bering Sea through remote and often impassable terrain, the Yukon River served as the transportation corridor for people, supplies, and mail headed for the river community and the gold fields. A variety of river craft plied the waters in the summer. In the winter the Yukon served as the pathway for the mail trail run by dogsled. Without a system of year round trails, wagon roads, or a railroad, there was a dependence on navigable rivers for transportation. Towns, roadhouses, and individual cabins were built along the river in response to the economic opportunities afforded by the transportation industry. Miners were able to settle along the Yukon after the gold rush because alternative occupations existed as a result of the transportation corridor, creating the unique Yukon River lifeways.

In 1869 the first steamboat, aptly named the Yukon, appeared on the river. Thus began a tradition, as steamboats became the primary means of supply for the Yukon River communities, which were supply centers themselves for the mining districts. In 1898 and 1899, in response to the Klondike gold rush, there were 100 steamers on the Yukon servicing such American towns as Circle City and Eagle, as well as Dawson and Whitehorse in Yukon Territory (Collier, #218,13). Over a ninety-year period, some two hundred and fifty steamers plied the Yukon (Cohen, 83) More than thirty

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 4

transportation companies organized, of which about seven actually went into operation. In 1901 several companies merged to form the viable Northern Navigation Company for river transportation and the Northern Commercial Company for mercantile business. North American Transportation and Trading Company remained their only real competitor on the American side of the border. On the Canadian side, the British Yukon Navigation Company acquired the fleet of its largest competitor (Webb, 209-211). These companies operated primarily on the Yukon until the Fairbanks rush in mid-decade shifted attention to the Tanana River.

The average Yukon steamboat used wood as fuel, although a few experimented with coal and petroleum. In order to insure a sufficient wood supply en route, transportation companies contracted with woodchoppers at necessary intervals along the river. Webb describes the woodchoppers as "hardy outdoor individualists who came to Alaska searching for gold" (Webb, 218). Woodchopping provided a viable alternative source of income for miners who decided to settle along the river.

During the long winter, dog teams replaced the steamboat along the frozen Yukon transportation corridor. The winter trail served as a linear community in itself. Built by the United States Army between 1898 and 1901, the 160-mile trail between Eagle and Circle became the regular mail route. (P1,4) Roadhouses appeared along the route, not only as shelter for the mail contractors, but for other travelers attracted to the maintained and well traveled mail trail. The necessary maintenance of the winter trail also served to unite otherwise isolated communities along the river. Mail contracts and the roadhouse business provided other forms of income for miners who became part of the linear river community.

Another lifeway that attracted miners in need of income was trapping. A trapper located his residential cabin at the confluence of a fresh water creek and the Yukon River. He chose a fresh water creek for drinking water and as a base

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

|                     |
|---------------------|
| For NPS use only    |
| received JUN 8 1987 |
| Date entered        |

Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 5

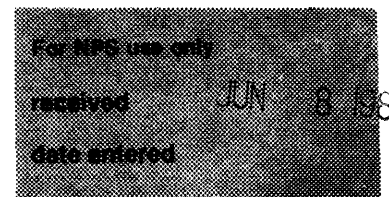
for his trapline. In the winter he set and checked traps for animals such as lynx, wolf, marten, and beaver. (P3,36) Using a dog team or snowshoes, he traveled, usually in a circuitous route, following the creeks. He stayed at small shelter cabins, which he built and stocked. He located his base cabin on the Yukon, near a supply center, in order to transport large amounts of supplies when the river was navigable and to fish for salmon in the summer. This not only met his needs, but those of his ever hungry dog team. A winter of trapping was necessarily complemented by a summer of fishing. Some entrepreneurs turned fishing into yet another source of income, selling dried salmon as dog food or table food.

After the first decades of the twentieth century, the riverbank community declined as the Yukon was replaced as the primary access route to the Alaskan interior. In 1923 the Alaska Railroad connected the interior with the central coast. Goods and passengers traveled by rail from Anchorage to Nenana, then offloaded onto railroad owned steamboats to destinations along the Tanana and Yukon Rivers. From the railroad terminus at Fairbanks first trails, then roads extended to Eagle and Circle. Only one commercial steamer, the American Yukon Navigation Company's Yukon, remained in the water between Dawson and Fairbanks. On August 18, 1955, the Yukon steamboat tradition came to an end when the last sternwheeler on the Yukon steamed into Dawson. (Webb, 221)

The linear community along the Yukon deteriorated even further when airplanes replaced the dog sled. In 1938 the mail plane permanently replaced overland and river mail delivery. That year, the only mail delivered between Eagle and Circle was to Coal Creek, which was, by some reports, a seasonal post office. In 1927 the Steese Highway linked Fairbanks to Circle. In 1954 the Taylor Highway was completed to Eagle. Once Eagle and Circle were supplied by their roads in the summer and by air year round, they had less reason to look to each other, or the Yukon between, with a sense of community.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form



Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 6

The five sites which comprise the Yukon River Lifeways thematic group give insight into transportation along the Yukon River corridor as well as the exploration and settlement of the Alaskan interior. These sites were associated with: river and winter trail traffic, both passenger and commercial; alternative occupations for miners who stayed in the country rather than follow a new stampede; and with early miners who explored and settled the Yukon River region between Circle and Eagle. They stayed in the area until the river community declined around the time of the second World War. The roadhouses on the trails, a few miners' cabins, and some unmistakably disturbed stream beds are the only signs of a gold rush population. Their lifeways persist in a few small mining operations, among the few families and individuals who still live in traditional ways along the Yukon, and in the symbolic Alaskan, the sourdough whose archetype partook of the last great frontier effort. (P5,6,7,8,9)

Each of these sites represents a different aspect of Yukon River lifeways. Woodchopper Roadhouse, the oldest and largest building on the Yukon between Eagle and Circle, is an excellent example of a roadhouse associated with the transportation corridor. It served as shelter for mail carriers and other winter travelers on the mail trail; it was a woodstop for Yukon steamboats and served as a center for the Woodchopper mining community. The Frank Slaven Roadhouse, situated at the mouth of Coal Creek, is a fine example of a roadhouse most closely associated with transportation from the Yukon up the creeks to the mining camps. The George McGregor cabin, situated about midway between Woodchopper and Slaven's, is representative of the small log cabins built by the solitary trapper as a base in the winter and fish camp in the summer. The James Taylor Cabins show the careful construction and ingenuity for which Taylor was known. It is a trapper's cabin site with unique features, such as the dog corrals. The Ed Biederman Fish Camp is an excellent example of a large, working fish camp

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only  
received  
date entered

Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 7

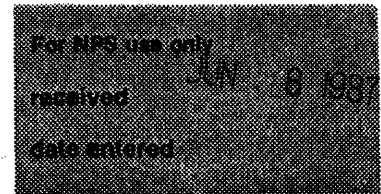
which processed large amounts of fish and housed many people. The buildings also served as the summer home of the Biederman family, who held the mail contract for decades. In the winter, it was used as a shelter on the mail trail. These sites are the most complete and representative of those extant along the Yukon between Eagle and Circle. Other resources in the area were excluded from the group because they lacked integrity. The exact location is unknown for some of these sites which are recorded in the literature. At other sites, the buildings no longer exist, some having burned to the ground, and others reclaimed by the wilderness. The sites selected have historic integrity, are of high quality construction, and are most representative of the various aspects of the Yukon River lifeways.

Information compiled as a result of this project was forwarded to the State of Alaska, Office of History and Archeology. All of these sites are now listed on the Alaska Heritage Resource Survey (AHRs), a State planning tool.



**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet

Item number 9

Page 2

I. BIBLIOGRAPHY

Alaska Road Commission. Annual Reports, 1906-1932

Brooks, Alfred Hulse. Blazing Alaska's Trails. 2nd ed.  
Fairbanks: University of Alaska Press, 1973.

Brooks, Alfred H. "The Circle Precinct," in Alfred H. Brooks  
et al., Report on Progress of Investigations of Mineral  
Resources of Alaska in 1906. USGS Bulletin #314. Washington,  
GPO, 1907.

Brown, Cary. "Circle to Eagle Historic Trail: An Overview,"  
Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve, 1986. Typescript.

Chapin, Theodore. "Placer Mining in the Yukon-Tanana  
Region." in Alfred H. Brooks, et al., Mineral Resources of  
Alaska, 1913. USGS Bulletin #592. Washington: GPO, 1914. pp.  
357-362.

Circle and Eagle Districts Mining Locations. District  
Recorder's Office, Fairbanks.

Cohen, Stan. Yukon River Steamboats: A Pictorial History.  
Missoula, MT: Pictorial Histories Publishing Co., 1982.

Collier, Arthur J. The Coal Resources of the Yukon, Alaska.  
USGS Bulletin #218. Washington, GPO, 1903.

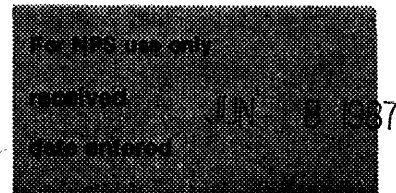
Ellsworth, C.E. and G.L. Parker. "Placer Mining in the  
Yukon-Tanana Region," in Alfred H. Brooks, Mineral Resources  
in Alaska, 1910. USGS Bulletin #480. Washington: GPO, 1911.  
pp. 153-172.

Grauman, Melody Webb. "After Klondike: Mining on the Alaska  
Yukon," in Mining in Alaska's Past. Office of History and  
Archeology, Division of Parks, 1980.

Grauman, Melody Webb. "Yukon Frontiers: Historic Resource  
Study of the Proposed Yukon-Charley National River."  
Archeology and Historic Preservation, Cooperative Park  
Studies Unit, University of Alaska, 1977. Typescript.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet

Item number

9

Page

3

Gray, James T. Papers. Manuscript Collection. University of Oregon.

Hurja, Emil Edward. "Mining in the Far North, the Upper Yukon: Circle City, Eagle, and Woodchopper." Mining and Scientific Press 109 (December 5, 1914): 887-888.

Johns, William Douglas. "The Early Yukon, Alaska, and the Klondike Discovery As They Were Before the Great Stampede Swept Away the Old Conditions Forever, By One Who Was There." Manuscript Collection, University of Washington, typescript, n.d. [1939~?]

Knutson, Arthur E. Sternwheels on the Yukon. Snohomish, Washington: Snohomish Publishing Co., 1979.

McGregor, George. Diaries, 1943-1962. Collection of the Eagle Historical Society.

McPhee, John. Coming Into the Country. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1977.

Mertie, J.B., Jr. Geology of the Eagle-Circle District, Alaska. USGS Bulletin #816. Washington, GPO, 1930.

Mertie, J.B., Jr. "Gold Placers of the Fortymile, Eagle, and Circle Districts." Mineral Resources of Alaska. USGS Bulletin #897-C. Washington: GPO, 1938. pp. 133-261.

Orth, Donald J. Dictionary of Alaska Place Names. USGS Professional Paper #567. Washington: GPO, 1967.

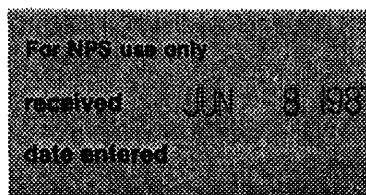
Ott & Scheele, Letters, 1909-1924. Collection of the Eagle Historical Society.

Patty, Ernest. North Country Challenge. New York: David McKay Co. Inc., 1969.

Prindle, L.M. The Yukon-Tanana Region, Alaska: Description of the Circle Quadrangle. USGS Bulletin #295. Washington: GPO, 1906.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet

Item number 9

Page 4

Prindle, L.M. and J.B. Mertie, Jr. "Gold Placers Between Woodchopper and Fourth of July Creeks, Upper Yukon River." Mineral Resources of Alaska, USGS Bulletin #520. Washington: GPO, 1912. pp.201-210.

Reynolds, Arthur D. Diaries, 1903-1945. Transcribed by Elva Scott, 1984. Collection of the Eagle Historical Society.

Richardson, W.P. "Notes of Trip to Eagle City, Yukon River, Alaska." Record Group 107. National Archives.

Ricks, Melvin B. Directory of Alaska's Postmasters and Post Offices, 1867-1963. Ketchikan: Tongass Publishing Co., 1965.

Scott, Elva. "Mail Service and Mail Carriers, Upper Yukon River: Ben Downing, Elie Verreau, John Powers, Adolph Biederman, Percy DeWolfe." Eagle City, Alaska, 1985. typescript.

Smith, Philip S. Mineral Industry of Alaska in 1932. USGS Bulletin #857-A. Washington: GPO, 1934.

Webb, Melody. The Last Frontier: A History of the Yukon Basin of Canada and Alaska. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1985.

Wharton, David. The Alaska Gold Rush. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1972.

White, Sam. Typescript of Stories. Collection of Archives, Alaska Polar Regions Dept., University of Alaska, Fairbanks.

Wickersham, Hon. James. Old Yukon: Tales- Trails-Trials. St. Paul: West Publishing Co., 1938.

II. INTERVIEWS

Biederman, Charlie. Interviewed by Steve Ulvi and Alison K. Hoagland, July 16, 1985. Tape in collection of Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve. Follow-up interview July 28, 1985.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**

For NPS use only

received

date entered

JUN 8 1987

Continuation sheet

Item number 9

Page 5

Hansen, Barney. Transcript of a talk given to the Eagle Historical Society, May 1974. Collection of Eagle Historical Society.

Juneby, Isaac. Interviewed by Alison K. Hoagland, July 18, 1985.

Knutson, Arthur E. Interviewed by Leslie Taylor, August 10, 1984. Tape in collection of Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve.

Patty, Stanton. Interviewed by David Mihalic, July 29, 1984. Tape in collection of Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve.

Paul, Louise. Interviewed by Don Chase and Alison K. Hoagland, July 20, 1985.

Stout, Al and Roberta. Interviewed by Steve Ulvi and Alison K. Hoagland, July 18, 1985.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

JUN 8 1987

National Register of Historic Places  
Continuation Sheet

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_

Multiple Resource Area  
Thematic Group

Name Yukon River Lifeways TR  
State Yukon-Koyukuk ALASKA

Nomination/Type of Review

Date/Signature

Cover

~~Substantive Review~~

X Keeper

*[Signature]* 7/21/87

1. Biederman, Ed Fish Camp

~~Substantive Review~~

for Keeper

*William B. Bushong*  
7/20/87

Attest

2. McGregor, George, Cabin

~~Substantive Review~~

X Keeper

*[Signature]* 7/21/87

Attest

3. Slaven, Frank, Roadhouse

~~Substantive Review~~

for Keeper

*William B. Bushong*  
7/20/87

Attest

4. Taylor, James, Cabins

~~Substantive Review~~

for Keeper

*William B. Bushong*  
7/20/87

Attest

5. Woodchopper Roadhouse

~~Substantive Review~~

for Keeper

*William Bushong*  
7/20/87

Attest

6.

Keeper

Attest

7.

Keeper

Attest

8.

Keeper

Attest

9.

Keeper

Attest

10.

Keeper

Attest