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NPS Form 10-900  
(Rev. 10-90)

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

JAN 17 1996

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM

INTERAGENCY RESOURCE UNIT  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

=====

1. Name of Property

=====

historic name Alaska Engineering Commission Cottage No. 25

other names/site number AEC Cottage 25  
AHRS Site No. ANC-330

=====

2. Location

=====

street & number 645 West Third Avenue not for publication N/A

city or town Anchorage vicinity N/A

state Alaska code AK county Anchorage code 020 zip code 99501

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this  X  nomination   request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  X  meets   does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant   nationally   statewide  X  locally. (   See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Judith E. Batten  
Signature of certifying official

Dec 15, 1995  
Date

Alaska  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property   meets   does not meet the National Register criteria. (   See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

~~Entered in the~~  
National Register

entered in the National Register  
  See continuation sheet.

Angela D. Dappalony 2/16/96

determined eligible for the National Register

See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register

removed from the National Register

other (explain): \_\_\_\_\_

for \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Keeper

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Action

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Alaska Engineering Commission Cottage No. 25

Anchorage, Alaska

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5. Classification

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Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>  1  </u>	<input type="checkbox"/> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> sites
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> structures
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> objects
<u>  1  </u>	<u>  0  </u> Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register   0  

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)   N/A  

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Anchorage, Alaska

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: domestic Sub: institutional housing

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: commerce Sub: business

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

late 19th and early 20th century American movements, bungalow/craftsman

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation concrete
roof asphalt
walls wood/weatherboard
other

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Alaska Engineering Commission (AEC) Cottage No. 25, is located at 645 West Third Avenue, Lot 18, Block 16, of the Original Anchorage Townsite. When the AEC platted the townsite in 1915, 240 acres of land were cleared and divided into 1,400 lots, each measuring 50 by 140 feet. Lot 18, Block 16 is slightly irregular because Christensen Road was platted on a diagonal and the lot was cut 20 feet at its northeastern end. In 1956, the City of Anchorage added 10 feet to the western lot line. Cottage 25 is at its original location. It fronts on Third Avenue. The back yard is broken by a steep slope. Cottage No. 25 is an example of early railroad housing and, with neighboring Cottages No. 26 and No. 27, forms one of the few remaining historic streetscapes in Anchorage.

The original architect of the AEC cottages is unknown. Commission employee H.U.M. Higgins may have designed Cottage No. 25 and several AEC engineering offices because his initials appear on drawings of the proposed cottages. However, the design of the cottage might have been taken from plan catalogs that were popular at the turn of the century. These catalogs advertised designs for as little as \$5.00 a plan. Local contractors Balch and McDonald constructed many of the cottages.

Cottage No. 25 is a two story rectangular building with a low-pitched gable roof. Exposed rafter tails make up its overhanging eaves. The south wall, fronting Third Avenue, was the main facade. It has a centrally placed entry with a glazed panel door and double hung sash windows evenly spaced

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Alaska Engineering Commission Cottage No. 25

Anchorage, Alaska

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.) N/A

- A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or a grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

community planning and development

Period of Significance 1917-1926

Significant Dates 1917

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Alaska Engineering Commission

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Alaska Engineering Commission Cottage No. 25

Anchorage, Alaska

9. Major Bibliographical References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Antonson, Joan M. and Hanable, William S. Alaska's Heritage. (Anchorage: The Alaska Historical Society for the Alaska Historical Commission, 1986).

Atwood, Evangeline. Anchorage: Star of the North. (Tulsa, Oklahoma: Continental Heritage Press, Inc., 1982).

Carberry, Michael E. and Donna L. Lane. Patterns of the Past. (Anchorage: Municipality of Anchorage, 1988).

Office of Statewide Cultural Programs, Alaska Division of Parks. The Alaska Railroad: Probing the Interior. (Anchorage: History and Archaeology Series No. 15, 1975).

Wilson, William H. Railroad in the Clouds: The Alaska Railroad in the Age of Steam, 1914-1945. (Boulder, Colorado: Pruett Publishing Company, 1977).

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.

previously listed in the National Register

X previously determined eligible by the National Register

designated a National Historic Landmark

recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #

recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

Primary Location of Additional Data

State Historic Preservation Office

Other State agency

Federal agency

X Local government

University

Other

Name of repository: Anchorage Historic Properties, Inc.

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of Property less than one acre

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing	Zone	Easting	Northing
1	06	344640	6790615	3		
2				4		
		See continuation sheet.				

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Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

Lot 18, less west 10 feet, Block 16 of the original townsite, NW 1/4, Sec. 18, T13N, R3W, Seward Meridian (Municipality of Anchorage). The lot size is 9,842 square feet.

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The nominated property includes the original townsite lot and the house historically associated with the lot.

=====  
11. Form Prepared By

name/title Karen Theimer, Intern

organization Anchorage Historic Properties, Inc.

date August 17, 1995

street & number 645 West Third Avenue telephone (907) 274-3600

city or town Anchorage state AK zip code 99501

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Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

=====  
Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Anchorage Historic Properties, Inc.

street & number 645 West Third Avenue telephone (907) 274-3600

city or town Anchorage state AK zip code 99501

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Alaska Engineering Commission Cottage No. 25

Anchorage, AK

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on each side. Originally, a covered open porch protected the entry with its roof an extension of the cottage's gable roof. All double hung sash windows had twenty four lights in the upper sash and one light in the lower sash. Four posts evenly spaced with balustrades between them supported the porch. Within a year, the porch roof was changed. The new gable roof eliminated the problem of snow dumping from the roof onto the sidewalk. At the same time, the porch was enclosed to form an arctic entryway. It has two windows symmetrically placed on the south, or front, facade of the entryway.

The east and west elevations of the cottage had two double hung sash windows evenly spaced on the first floor and a horizontal sliding double hung sash window in the second floor under the gable roof. The north elevation had two double hung sash windows in its western two-thirds. The original covered open porch protecting the rear entry at the eastern end was enclosed at a later date. Cottage No. 25 has a concrete foundation and a partial basement. The land slopes downward towards the north, and two windows provide light into the eastern side of the basement. Steps enclosed in the rear entryway lead to the basement.

Cottage No. 25 originally had shiplap siding painted a light grey and trim painted white. Initially, exposed roofing felt covered the roof.

Today, Cottage No. 25 maintains its historic integrity. Changes include black asphalt shingle roofing, the addition of a wall dormer with shed roof across the rear elevation, replacement of the horizontal sliding gable wall windows with standard double hung sash windows that mimic the original first floor windows, and changes to the window openings on the end and rear elevations. These changes do not impact the views of the house from the front.



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**Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)**

Alaska Engineering Commission Cottage No. 25, built in 1917, is associated with the Alaska Railroad and the early development of Anchorage. The Department of the Interior formed the Alaska Engineering Commission (AEC) in 1915 to construct a railroad from Seward to Fairbanks. The commission employed many people who remained in Anchorage, a town created as a construction camp, platted by the AEC, and later made the railroad's administrative headquarters. The AEC constructed nineteen cottages to house railroad employees and their families in Anchorage. The AEC sold most of the cottages in the 1920s. It transferred ownership of Cottage No. 25 to the Signal Corps in 1926. The cottage has remained under government ownership throughout its existence. It is an excellent example of employee housing provided by the AEC in Anchorage.

In 1912, Congress authorized President William H. Taft to study and evaluate those railroad routes which would best "develop the country [Alaska] and resources thereof for the use of the people of the United States." The president created an Alaskan Railroad Commission to survey prospective routes. The commission made two recommendations: one to extend the Copper River & Northwestern Railway from Cordova to the interior city of Fairbanks, tapping into the Bering River coal fields; and the other to link the Alaskan Northern Railway through the Matanuska-Susitna Valley with the Innoko-Iditarod mining district. Before the commission's report was adopted, Woodrow Wilson replaced Taft as president.

Shortly after taking office, Wilson created the Alaskan Engineering Commission and appointed a new three-person commission to study feasible railroad routes in Alaska. Members included William C. Edes, Thomas Riggs, and Lt. Frederick Mears. The AEC saw long-range benefits in opening the Matanuska and Susitna river valleys to develop agriculture and to tap coal resources. After extensive ground location surveys, this second commission recommended a route originating at Seward and continuing to Fairbanks. Congress passed an Enabling Act on March 12, 1914, and approved \$35 million for construction. On April 10, 1915, President Wilson announced his selection of the Seward-Fairbanks line for the new Alaska Railroad. Wilson authorized the Secretary of the Interior to purchase the 72 miles of the privately owned Alaskan Northern Railway, and the privately owned Tanana Valley Railway from the Chatanika mining area to Fairbanks.

Prospective employees gathered at the mouth of Ship Creek as soon as the announcement was made that the site was to be a major railroad construction camp. Within a few weeks, tents and log houses stood on the north side of Ship Creek, underneath what is now called Government Hill. The AEC contracted with independent construction firms to build 100-foot sections of the railroad north and south from Ship Creek, enticing contractors to move to Anchorage. The presence of the AEC stimulated entrepreneurs to establish restaurants, entertainment, clothing, and supply stores.

In addition to building the railroad, the AEC surveyed townsites and held auctions to sell lots at Anchorage, Matanuska, Wasilla, Talkeetna, and

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Nenana. The auction in Anchorage took place on July 10, 1915, and 655 lots in the townsite sold for almost \$150,000. AEC Commissioner Lt. Mears and Andrew Christensen, Chief of the Alaskan Field Division of the General Land Office, oversaw the survey and townsite development of Anchorage. The AEC established water and sewage systems, a school, hospital, and federal and municipal government facilities.

By the spring of 1916, 1,108 lots had been sold and Anchorage had 4,500 people. The AEC moved its administrative operations from Seward to Anchorage because the Cook Inlet town was more central to the overall rail line. With this transfer, the AEC built a series of cottages to provide housing for its employees in Anchorage on lots which had been retained by the commission. The AEC built fourteen cottages on Government Hill in 1915, and a second set of nineteen cottages on the original townsite the next year.

The AEC management regarded comfortable living arrangements as essential. They explained in a government report: "Providing of ample sanitary housing facilities for employees was wise and was necessary for returning ample working forces, the maintenance of a proper morale amongst the workers employed on the enterprise, and necessary to the preservation of the health, and the maintenance of order in the new communities."

Cottage No. 25 was one of the second set of cottages constructed. Originally, nine different house plans were developed. Examples of five plans remain today. Work on Cottage No. 25 and the others in the original townsite began in the summer of 1916 and the houses were ready for occupancy by February 1917.

J.G. Watts, townsite engineer in 1916 and townsite manager from 1917 to 1921, occupied Cottage No. 25. Watts managed the school, utilities, and government buildings in the townsite. This included determining the assessments charged for such services. The federal role in town management ended when Anchorage officially incorporated on November 23, 1920.

On July 15, 1923, President Warren G. Harding drove the golden spike at Nenana to celebrate completion of the railroad. The AEC, having completed its mission, was officially renamed the Alaska Railroad. The various properties along the railbelt, including the Anchorage cottages, were transferred to this federal agency. In 1926, the railroad gave leaseholders the opportunity to purchase the cottages. All the cottages in the West 2nd and West 3rd Avenue vicinity, except Cottage No. 25, went into private ownership. The Signal Corps took Cottage No. 25 and used it as housing. Later the Army and Coast Guard used the house. On July 18, 1991, the Municipality of Anchorage acquired Cottage No. 25 and it is managed by Anchorage Historic Properties, Inc., a grantee of the municipality. Cottage No. 25 is a good example of the town's early residential buildings, marking the railroad roots and early development of Anchorage.

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INTERAGENCY BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

Section Photograph identification

1. Alaska Engineering Commission Cottage No. 25  
Anchorage, Alaska  
H.G. Kaiser  
1917  
Anchorage Museum of History and Art, 121 West 7th Ave., Anchorage, AK 99501  
looking north at cottages 26, 27, 28, and 15. Cottage No. 25, which is just west of the cottage on the far left, was similar to the two cottages on the left.
2. Alaska Engineering Commission Cottage No. 25  
Anchorage, Alaska  
P.S. Hunt  
September 30, 1916  
Anchorage Museum of History and Art, 121 West 7th Ave., Anchorage, AK 99501  
looking northeast at cottages 25, 26, 28, and 15
3. Alaska Engineering Commission Cottage No. 25  
Anchorage, Alaska  
P.S. Hunt  
September 30, 1916  
Anchorage Museum of History and Art, 121 West 7th Ave., Anchorage, AK 99501  
looking east at the west elevations of cottages 23, 24, 25, 26, and 28
4. Alaska Engineering Commission Cottage No. 25  
Anchorage, Alaska  
Karen Theimer  
July 1995  
Anchorage Historic Properties, Inc., 645 W. Third Ave., Anchorage, AK 99501  
looking north at front elevation
5. Alaska Engineering Commission Cottage No. 25  
Anchorage, Alaska  
Karen Theimer  
July 1995  
Anchorage Historic Properties, Inc., 645 W. Third Ave., Anchorage, AK 99501  
looking southwest at east and rear elevations

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Alaska Engineering Commission Cottage No. 25

Anchorage, Alaska

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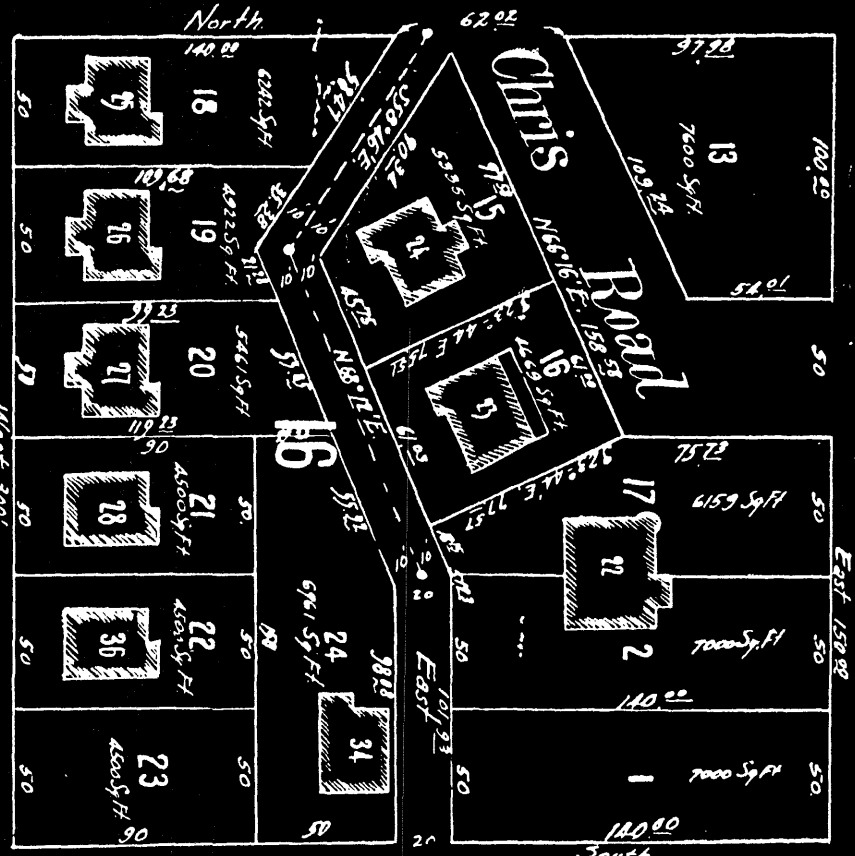
United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET

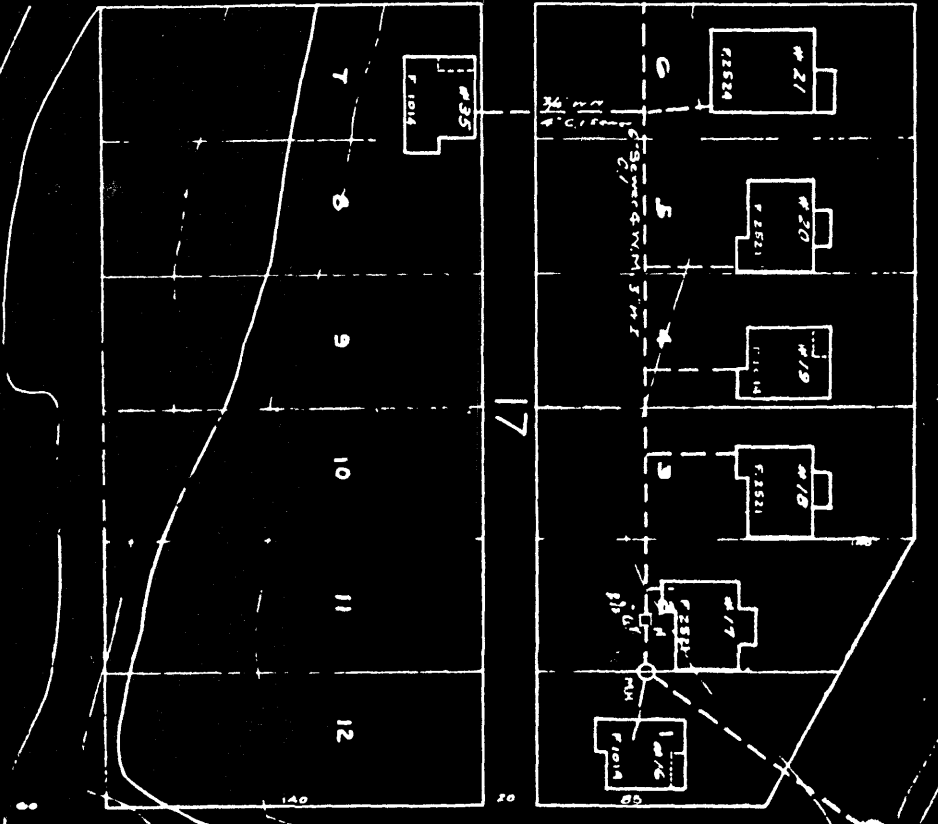
Section Photograph identification  
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6. Alaska Engineering Commission Cottage No. 25  
Anchorage, Alaska  
Karen Theimer  
July 1995  
Anchorage Historic Properties, Inc., 645 W. Third Ave., Anchorage, AK  
99501  
looking southeast at rear elevation
  
7. Alaska Engineering Commission Cottage No. 25  
Anchorage, Alaska  
Karen Theimer  
July 1995  
Anchorage Historic Properties, Inc., 645 W. Third Ave., Anchorage, AK  
99501  
looking northeast at west and southern facades

# G Street



# F Street



Revised to conform to Official Plat of Amended Survey of Block 16, Anchorage Town-Office, dated Washington, D.C. Feb. 27, 1925 S.W. Approved *Kenneth B. ...* Mayor of Anchorage

Department of the Interior  
 THE ALASKA RAILROAD  
 Office of Chief Engineer  
 Anchorage, Alaska  
 Plat of Block 16, Anchorage Township,  
 Showing Proposed Resubdivision.  
 Approved *Kenneth B. ...* Chief Engineer  
 Anchorage, Alaska  
 D.M.A.C.D. File No. 118

Alaska Engineering Commission  
 Cottage No. 25  
 Anchorage, Alaska  
 Note: G Street was never built. The right-of-way was vacated in 1956 and 10 feet was added to the west side of Lot 18.

Note: ...  
 ...  
 ...