

HOLY ASSUMPTION RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH KENAI, ALASKA

The Holy Assumption Orthodox Church has been the principal and most enduring representative of Russian culture in south-central Alaska from 1841 to the present. For the Kenaitze Indians, who are still a significant portion of the population, it was the major institution for the assimilation of western customs. In particular, it served as an educational, religious, administrative, and judicial center well into the twentieth century. It also provided the region's first access to public health. The three structures on the site represent classic Russian-style architecture on the far-western frontier. The Church of the Holy Assumption is a fine example of a village church, it is a classic example of the *Pskov*, vessel or ship, design. It is also the oldest standing Orthodox church in Alaska. The rectory is typical of the homes of the Russian village gentry and at the time of its construction was clearly a substantial landmark, being the only two-story structure in the community. The chapel is an excellent example of Russian techniques of log construction, its uncovered log walls an illustration of the skillful craftsmanship and engineering of the Russian-trained builders of the Kenai peninsula.

Documentation of the Holy Assumption Russian Orthodox Church, the Chapel of St. Nicholas, and the rectory was undertaken by the Historic American Building Survey (HABS), a division of the National Park Service. The project was executed under the general direction of Robert J. Kapsch, chief of HABS/HAER, and Boyd Evison, Alaska Regional director, National Park Service. Recording was carried out during the summer of 1986 by David Snow, project director; Randall Skerik and Ken Martin, architectural technicians; and Sandra M. Faulkner, historian.

