

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDING SURVEY**CRAIG CANNERY, ADMINISTRATIVE BUILDING**

(Wards Cove Office, Bunkhouse, and Mess Hall)

- Location:** Craig Cannery, Main Street, Prince of Wales-Hyder Census Area, Alaska
- The Administrative Building is located at latitude: 55.477061 N, longitude: -133.153385 W. This point was obtained on January 30, 2022, using Google Earth (WGS84). There is no restriction on its release to the public.
- Significance:** The Administrative Building, constructed ca. 1912, is significant at the local level as a contributing resource to the Craig Cannery, which is significant for its association with the Alaska fishing industry and settlement and incorporation of the City of Craig.¹
- Description:** The Administrative Building is a two-story, mixed-use wood frame building with some Italianate style features. The building is rectangular in plan, clad in wood drop siding (shiplap) with an overhanging cornice and low-pitched shed roof with a parapet. The building is constructed on a log pier foundation.
- The primary façade faces north, looking out onto the water. The primary entry is located at the building's northwest corner and through a recessed corner porch. The wood primary entry door is set in the corner of the porch and is partially glazed with two lights and a transom. The entry door is flanked by a tall, fixed, four-light window to the north and a tall fixed two-light window to the west. The porch has been enclosed by plywood. All windows are wood sashed.
- Two additional entries are located on the primary façade. Both doors are paneled wood. The door furthest east opens into the building's office and is labeled by a hanging placard sign above. Two emergency ladders are affixed to the primary façade. Ladders are constructed of wood and lead from second-story windows to the first story, stopping approximately six feet from the ground. Utility duct and water drainage pipes are also affixed to the north façade.
- Typical fenestration on the building consists of tall, narrow, one-over-one double-hung, wood sash windows with flat board surround on the second story and south, east and west facades, and then two sets of tall fixed picture windows on the north façade. An eight-light wood sash window flanked on either side by a six-light wood sash window comprises the westernmost set, while the set further to the east is comprised of four narrow wood sash one-over-one windows.

¹ Pierce 2014

The roof is pitched to drain southward, and a parapet surrounds the roof on the north, east and west sides, giving the illusion of a flat roof. A gabled roof projection with south-facing clerestory windows is present on the roof's west half. A cricket is located north of the projection to orient drainage to the south-draining side of the roof. Additionally, two painted brick chimneys are present.

A wide-overhanging cornice projects on the north, east and west facades at the top of the building's façade but below the parapet. The cornice meets with the shallower roof eave that runs the length of the north façade. The cornice is covered in metal panel, and the underside features intricately pieced small wood planks resembling lath or beadboard.

On the building's interior, flooring and wall treatments vary and reflect the building's many years of use. Original wood-paneled doors are largely present throughout. Floors include narrow wood plank, linoleum, and carpeting. The first-story flooring is primarily narrow wood plank, while second-story floors are a combination of narrow wood plank, carpeting, and linoleum. Notable interior features include narrow wood plank ceilings, second-story pop-up with clerestory windows, a large range, a commercial oven, a safe, and the office fish ticket window.

The building faces the water and opens onto a long wooden boardwalk leading to downtown Craig and a graveled driveway leading to the Cannery complex itself. Boat grids (also known as waves) are in the water in front of the building and on the beach northeast of the building.

Architectural features consistent with the Italianate style include the building's two-story height, tall narrow windows, low-pitched roof with parapet, and wide overhanging cornice. Character-defining features of the building include its orientation to the water, now-enclosed recessed corner entry, cornice with detailed woodwork, parapet, wood sash windows, fenestration pattern, office sign, fish-ticket window, and pop-up with clerestory windows.

History:

The Craig Cannery's first documented year of operation was 1912,² when Lindenberger Packing Company opened the Cannery. Lindenberger Packing Co., owned and operated by brothers Robert and Bernard Lindenberger, operated the Cannery until 1917, when they dissolved their partnership³ and sold the Cannery to Sea Coast Packing Co.⁴ By 1928, the Sea Coast Cannery was packing over 70,000 cases of salmon.⁵ In 1929, Libby, McNeill & Libby acquired ownership of the Cannery from Sea Coast Packing Co.⁶

² ADFG 1949

³ Lindenberger 1973

⁴ ADFG 1949

⁵ Pacific Fisherman, January 1929

⁶ Pacific Fisherman, September 1929

In the early years, the Cannery workers were hired and brought up from Seattle. Edith Rosenberg Lindenberger, the wife of Robert Lindenberger, one of the Cannery's original owners, noted most of the Cannery workers during the Lindenberger years were of Chinese descent and brought by steamer ship up from Seattle.⁷ She explained that the Cannery would purchase fish from local Alaska Native fishermen, and if additional labor was needed, local Alaska Native workers were hired.⁸

Crew manifests from the Cannery's early Libby, McNeill & Libby years indicate Cannery positions were segregated, with primarily Japanese workers working Cannery lines and white workers in most other jobs.⁹ Throughout the 1930s, Libby, McNeill & Libby contracted with Geo Y. Nishimura in Seattle to hire and supply the Japanese crews.¹⁰ The crews were segregated onto different Cannery-bound ships - a ship for the white workers and a ship for the non-white workers.¹¹ By the late 1930s, Libby, McNeill & Libby substantially increased the percentage of local residents hired for Cannery positions.¹²

Despite the depression, fluctuating salmon prices, and union activity and labor unrest that characterized the salmon canning industry throughout Alaska and the west coast in the 1930s,¹³ Libby, McNeill & Libby's ownership instituted a period of consistency for Craig Cannery operations that continued up through the 1950s. Often Cannery supervisors opted to return year after year.¹⁴

Table 1. Libby, McNeill & Libby Craig Cannery Supervisors between 1930-1956¹⁵

Years Operated	Name of Supervisor
1930	Charlie Carlson
1931	Harry Berry
1932	No supervisor named
1933	Minard
1934-1939	Albert L. Dorks
1940-1944	A.R. Pearmain
1945-1954	J.A.(Al) Torwick
1955-1958	A.R. Pearmain

⁷ Lindenberger 1973

⁸ Lindenberger 1973

⁹ Libby, McNeill & Libby (Cannery) Collection: Folder "Seasonal Employees, Canneries & Ships, 1936, 1938, 1939"

¹⁰ Libby, McNeill & Libby (Cannery) Collection: Folder "Synopsis of Chinese Contracts, Years 1917 to 1932 inc."

¹¹ Libby, McNeill & Libby (Cannery) Collection: Folder "Seasonal Employees, Canneries & Ships, 1936, 1938, 1939"

¹² Libby, McNeill & Libby (Cannery) Collection: Folder "Seasonal Employees 1939"

¹³ Arnold 2008

¹⁴ Guy V. Graham papers: Folder "Record and History of Libby, McNeill & Libby Operations"

¹⁵ Guy V. Graham papers: Folder "Records and History of Libby, McNeill, & Libby Operations"

The Craig Cannery was expanded in 1935, and despite government requisitioning of Cannery resources such as boats, the Craig Cannery operated through WWII.¹⁶ By the mid-1950s, however, with declining fish stock and falling fish prices,¹⁷ Libby, McNeill & Libby reduced operations, consolidating Craig operations with the Nakat Packing Co. Waterfall Cannery on western Prince of Wales Island, south of Craig.¹⁸

In 1958, the Wards Cove Packing Co., owned by A.W. (Alexander Winterbourne) Brindle and family, acquired, in partnership with the Columbia River Packers Association Inc., the Alaska salmon canning operations of Libby McNeill & Libby.¹⁹ As a result, all Libby McNeill & Libby operations, including the Craig Cannery, were consolidated under the Columbia Ward Fisheries name.²⁰

That same year, a catastrophic fire destroyed much of the Cannery. The fire was concentrated within the cannery operations buildings constructed over water, and all were destroyed.²¹ Also burned was the original web loft building.^{22 23} Saved from the fire were the administrative building, warehouse, shop, bunkhouses, and other buildings and facilities located to the south, up the hill, and away from the beach and water. Ralph Mackie, a local Craig resident, remembered the fire as follows:

"I remember the night of the fire. The fire hall siren went off, and my Grandpa Tom grabbed his coat and rushed out the door. A couple hours later a man knocked and told Grandma Jessie that we needed to leave the house and head down to Shelter Cove, because the Standard Oil tanks might explode, and the whole town could burn. We bundled up and hurried in the dark down to Maudi Richard's place, where the floatplane dock is now. I looked out her kitchen window to the west, and the whole sky was blood red.

They fought the fire all night, but it was a losing battle, and by morning much of the Cannery was destroyed. Somehow they got word to Carl [Aspelund, Cannery Superintendent that year], who was down at Dall Island on his way home to Seattle for the winter. When he flew back in to Craig the next morning, he said the burnt pilings were glowing like a sea of birthday candles"²⁴

¹⁶ Guy V. Graham papers: Folder "Records and History of Libby, McNeill, & Libby Operations"

¹⁷ Pierce 2014

¹⁸ Guy V. Graham papers: Folder "Records and History of Libby, McNeill, & Libby Operations"

¹⁹ Johnson 1993

²⁰ Stanley and Charles 1996

²¹ Pierce 2014

²² Pierce 2014

²³ Paulu T. Saari Collection: Aerial View of Craig, Alaska, May 1956.

²⁴ Mackie 2018

Following the fire and the Cannery's purchase by Columbia Ward, the Craig Cannery ceased canning operations permanently and became "*a major maintenance and supply station*"²⁵ for the purse-seine fleet. Fishermen would offload their catch at the Craig Cannery and sell it to a tender, who would haul the fish to a cannery elsewhere. Seiners used the Craig Cannery as a base. They could store gear and mend and maintain their nets in the Web Loft and haul their boats onto the semi-submerged grids, wait for the tide to go out, and then perform boat maintenance work during the few precious hours of exposure at low tide.²⁶ Grids located above the high tide line on the beach in front of the Administrative Building were used as a dry dock for the seine boats in the winter.

During its time of operation (both as a cannery and as a seine fleet support center), the Craig Cannery was "*like a vital organ, the heartbeat of town and the primary source of livelihood and activity.*"²⁷ Ralph Mackie recalled that as a child in the 1960s, the Cannery provided annual seasonal excitement:

*"it was a fantastic playground. The large green lawns were freshly mowed, and we were allowed to play there. We gathered for games of steal the flag and various forms of tag. At noon the cannery cook rang a big triangle, calling the crew to lunch, and all the kids in earshot to the back door of the kitchen for cookies...the sandy beach in front of the cannery office was our favorite spot to go swimming. The low grids...were just right for wading on and jumping off of, depending on how high the tide was."*²⁸

Over the years, the Cannery became known as the Wards Cove Cannery (not to be confused with the Wards Cove Cannery on Revillagigedo Island near Ketchikan). In 2002, Wards Cove Packing Co. ceased Alaska salmon operations, shuttering its Alaska facilities, including the Craig Cannery.²⁹ In 2006, the City of Craig purchased the Cannery complex and has used the buildings for various community-related purposes since that time.

Built ca. 1912, the Administrative Building served as the Cannery office headquarters until the closure of the Cannery in 2002. Over the years, the building housed a commercial kitchen, radio room, chart room, accounting office, dining, meeting, and storage rooms on the first story and residential apartment and bunkrooms on the second story. Following the City of Craig purchase in 2006, the Administrative Building has been used for various community-related purposes.

²⁵ Mackie 2018

²⁶ Mackie 2018

²⁷ Mackie 2018

²⁸ Mackie 2018

²⁹ Alaska Journal of Commerce 2002

Modifications to the building include the installation of metal panel (agricultural panel) roofing to the cornice and plywood enclosure of the primary entry. It is unknown when these modifications occurred.

Sources:

Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADFG). Annual Report No. 1 for the Year 1949, Alaska Fisheries Board and Alaska Department of Fisheries. Juneau, Alaska. 1949.

Alaska Journal of Commerce. "Wards Cove Shuts Down Salmon Plants Statewide." December Issue 1, 2002.

Arnold, David F. *The Fisherman's Frontier*. University of Washington Press, Seattle, Washington. 2008.

Guy V. Graham papers, Special Collections, University of Washington Libraries. Collection No. 1104.

Guy V. Graham Libby McNeill & Libby Photograph Collection, Special Collections, University of Washington Libraries. PH Coll 1033.

Ickes Collection, Anchorage Museum at Rasmuson Center. AMRC-b75-175-621.

Johnson, Kaylene. "Alaska Business Hall of Fame; Owner of Wards Cove Packing Co., Alexander Winterbourne Brindle." *Alaska Business Monthly*. January 1, 1993.

Libby, McNeill & Libby records, Special Collections, University of Washington Libraries. Collection No. 4449.

Lindenberger, Edith Rosenberg. Oral History Interview, 1973. Special Collections, University of Washington Libraries. Accession No. 2127-001, Digital Collection No. OHC0863.

Mackie, Ralph. "Then and Now: Craig Cannery." *Neighbors Capital City Weekly*. March 16, 2018.

Paulu T. Saari Collection, Ketchikan Museums. KM 2003.2.63.1628.

Pierce, Shona. Letter to Ms. Judith Bittner dated 11/28/2014 with subject "Revised Craig Harbor Federal Undertaking Letter to SHPO, sent November 6, 2014."

Stanley, Karen, and Doug Charles. *Salmon in Cans. A Historical Survey of Ketchikan Canneries, including AHR Survey #95320*. Prepared for the Ketchikan Historical Commission. Ketchikan, Alaska. 1996

Victor Rivers family papers, 1915-1976. UAA-HMC-0209. University of Alaska Anchorage Consortium Library, Archives and Special Collections.

Historian: Tracie Krauthoefer, Corvus Culture, 2021-2022

Project Information: The Administrative Building was documented in October of 2021 under the guidance of Brian Templin of the City of Craig Planning Department per a draft Memorandum of Agreement between the Alaska State Historic Preservation Office, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the City of Craig. Brian Templin provided helpful information on the history of the use of the buildings, and Anjuli Grantham assisted with Cannery research leads. Tracie Krauthoefer completed the short form report and field photography.



Figure 1. Administrative Building. View of North (Primary) and East Facades. View looking S.W.



Figure 2. Primary (North) Facade of Administrative Building. View Looking S.



Figure 3. West and North Facades of Administrative Building. View Looking E.



Figure 4. West and South Facades of Administrative Building. View Looking NE.



Figure 5. East and South Facades of Administrative Building. View Looking N.W.



Figure 6. Administrative Building, Maintenance Building and Web Loft. View Looking S.W.



Figure 7. Administrative Building Original Primary Entry. View Looking S.E.



Figure 8. Enclosed Primary Entry. View Looking E.



Figure 9. Administrative Building Roof Projection with Clerestory Windows. View N.



Figure 10. Administrative Building Office Sign. View E.



Figure 11. Administrative Building Office Sign, View W.



Figure 12. Primary Entry From Interior. View N.W.



Figure 13. Administrative Building Roof Projection. View from Interior.



Figure 14. Administrative Building, Cornice Detail.



Figure 15. Administrative Building Main Room, First Story. View Looking NE.



Figure 16. Administrative Building Main Room, View of Primary Entry.



Figure 17. Administrative Building Dining Room, First Story. View Looking NE.



Figure 18. Administrative Building Commercial Range and Kitchen, First Story.



Figure 19. Administrative Building Commercial Oven, First Story.



Figure 20. Administrative Building Chart Room, First Story.



Figure 21. Administrative Building Chart Room and Office Supply, First Story.



Figure 22. Administrative Building Radio Room, First Story.



Figure 23. Administrative Building Fish Ticket Window, First Story.



Figure 24. Administrative Building Office Safe, First Story.



Figure 25. Administrative Building, Second Story Hallway.



Figure 26. Administrative Building, Second Story Room.



Figure 27. Administrative Building, Second Story Room.



Figure 28. Administrative Building, Second Story Kitchen.



Property of University of Washington Libraries, Special Collections

Figure 29. Historical Image of Administrative Building ca. 1929-1959. "Office at Libby, McNeill & Libby Cannery, Craig, Alaska, between 1929 and 1959." From the Guy V. Graham Libby McNeill & Libby Photograph Collection, PH Coll 1033. Special Collections, University of Washington Libraries.



Anchorage Museum of History & Art. Library & Archives.

Figure 30. Historical Image of Administrative Building ca. 1938. "Craig. Dock and waterfront from tower. 1938." From the Ickes Collection, Anchorage Museum at Rasmuson Center. AMRC-b75-175-621.



University of Alaska Anchorage. Archives & Special Collections

Figure 31. Historical Aerial Image of Craig Cannery with Administrative Building, Date of Image Unknown. "Air View- Craig Alaska." From the Victor Rivers family papers, 1915-1976. UAA-HMC-0209. University of Anchorage Alaska, Consortium Library, Archives and Special Collections. Uaa-hmc-0209-pa-s1-p40.



University of Alaska Anchorage. Archives & Special Collections

Figure 32. Historical Aerial Image of Craig Cannery with Administrative Building, Date Unknown. "Air view-Craig Alaska-Lindenberg Cannery in Foreground." from the Victor Rivers family papers, 1915-1976. UAA-HMC-0209. University of Alaska Anchorage Consortium Library, Archives and Special Collections. Uaa-hmc-0209-p1-s1-p39.