

OUR TOWN

Pick up the most colorful and complete source for contemporary and historical views of Ketchikan. More than 100 pages in full color cover industries, businesses, personalities, economy, lifestyles, statistics, and more. **OUR TOWN** is a publication of Historic Ketchikan Inc.

AVAILABLE FREE AT VISITOR CENTERS AND AT MANY BUSINESSES, INCLUDING:
The Landing Hotel, Restaurant and Pub - 3434 Tongass Ave.
Scanlon Gallery - 318 Mission St. / N3 on the map
Parnassus Books - 105 Steadman St. / P4 on the map



Rainbird Trail
Rainbird Trail was closed indefinitely in August 2024 due to a landslide. See information on trail access at www.kgbak.us/985/Rainbird-Trail and at Ketchikan Gateway Borough social media sites.

NOTE ON DISTANCES
Maps are distorted for ease of use. Distances are not uniform in scale. The walking distance between blue dots at H3 and T4, using Water, Front, Mill and Steadman streets, is about 1.0 mile.

Inter-Island Ferry terminal 0.9 mile
Alaska Marine Highway ferry terminal 0.9 mile
U.S. Post Office 1.0 mile
Ketchikan International Airport ferry 1.2 miles

Historic Ketchikan Inc. NEWTOWN & WEST END WALKING TOUR

- Newtown and West End Walking Tour points of interest. The two-mile tour, following points in order, can be walked in about 2.5 hours.
- Newtown and West End Walking Tour
- Pedestrian ways: boardwalks, stairs, sidewalks, footpaths
- Len Laurance Memorial Waterfront Promenade

Map is not to scale. Projection was altered to improve ease of use.

KEY TO SYMBOLS

Historical information kiosk	Public facility
Business location	Visitor-oriented business
Public restroom	Auto or pedestrian bridge
Photo viewpoint	Elevation above sea level

KETCHIKAN PUBLIC LIBRARY

NEWTOWN & WEST END START HERE

Historic Ketchikan Inc. DOWNTOWN WALKING TOUR

- Downtown Walking Tour points of interest. The entire Downtown tour, following points in order, can be walked in 1.5 to 2 hours.
- Downtown Walking Tour route
- Pedestrian ways: boardwalks, stairs, sidewalks, footpaths
- Memorial Waterfront Promenade
- Crosswalk on tour route

Map is not to scale. Projection was altered to improve ease of use.

DOWNTOWN START HERE

Ketchikan Walking Tours are programs of Historic Ketchikan Inc., a nonprofit organization that promotes economic development through historic preservation and heritage tourism.
www.historicketchikan.org 907-225-5515

Deer Mountain Trail
A short day hike (3-5 hours) offers a spectacular view of Ketchikan and nearby islands. Follow Fair Street to Ketchikan Lakes Road, signs guide you to the trailhead. The trail to the 3,001 foot summit is suitable for moderately strong hikers. There is some wet terrain. The first overlook is about a mile from the trailhead. Hikers should stay on the trail.

Ketchikan Salmon Walk
A 1.5-mile route with 21 interpretive sites outlines the vital roles of salmon in ecology & history. Start at the museum / O4 on map.

Joseph Williams Sr. waterfront pedestrian and bike path
1 mile to U.S. Coast Guard Base, 2 miles to Saxman and its totem park.

NEWTOWN & WEST END WALKING TOUR

HISTORIC NEWTOWN This pioneer neighborhood was cut off from the creekside townsite by a rock knob. Ricketty pedestrian boardwalks and then a narrow viaduct on pilings connected the districts. Bustling Newtown boasted a harbor for the fishing fleet; salmon canneries; businesses serving the fishing industry; and homes of prosperous residents. The tunnel pierced Nob Hill in 1954 to establish easy transit between Newtown and the old town. Before you commence this walking tour, look to the landward side of Water Street for Zimmerman House, built in 1902 by pioneer merchant Nick Zimmerman and one of the finest in Newtown. Next door is century-old Kubley House, which retains features of its Craftsman-era origins, such as cedar shingle siding and decorative windows.

◆ **Hopkins Alley.** Wood-plank Hopkins Alley was laid in 1902 and widened in 1907. It's the only area of Ketchikan that approximates the appearance of the town in its early days. During Prohibition, it was nicknamed Home Brew Alley and featured several speakeasies. The wedge-shaped building at the entrance, dating to 1912, housed the Horse Shoe Saloon and later a hand laundry. 5 minutes to next site

◆ **Warren Street, G Street, Harding Street.** Many homes in this area date to the 1910s and 1920s. Street names commemorate the visit to Ketchikan in 1923 of President Warren G. Harding—on his way to the Interior to drive a spike completing the Alaska Railroad. Harding died in San Francisco on his way back to D.C. Legends variously ascribe his demise to inclement Alaska weather or to food poisoning. 5 minutes



President Warren G. Harding stopped in Ketchikan just days before his death. Street names in Newtown commemorate his visit. KETCHIKAN MUSEUMS PHOTO

◆ **Hopkins Hole.** Hopkins Alley and Bauer Way flank an open tideland area where you can view Ketchikan's tidal differential—commonly 16 feet or more. At low tide, Hopkins Hole goes dry. Several historic buildings front this tideland area. A historic residential neighborhood clings to the hillside above.

◆ **Schloth's Building.** (49er Bar) This structure arose with others in the late 1910s to the early 1920s, when Newtown expanded rapidly to serve the burgeoning fishing industry centered around City Float and nearby canneries. 3 minutes

◆ **Dunton Street Trestle.** The wood trestle on the hillside plainly shows how Ketchikan's civil engineering has long challenged difficult terrain and made more land accessible to a fast-growing population. The original street atop the trestle was wood planking; it's now concrete. 3 minutes

◆ **First Lutheran Church.** The fishing industry boomed across Southeast Alaska in the 1910s to 1920s and Scandinavians flooded in, Norwegians most numerous of these newcomers. They were principal founders of the First Lutheran Church congregation in 1925. This grand church on a rock promontory was finished in 1930 and anchored Newtown neighborhood. 1 minute

◆ **The Exchange.** Henry Henn was a clerk at the Talbot's store when he opened his own shop across the street in 1920. It was originally a second-hand store featuring items he found on his rubbish-hauling route. The Exchange evolved into a hardware store that operated into the late 1950s. 5 minutes



Newtown's commercial buildings look much the same today as they did in the 1920s when volunteer firefighters took a fire truck for a spin. KETCHIKAN MUSEUMS PHOTO

◆ **Elliot Street.** All the public streets in Ketchikan were originally wood planks or stairways. Elliot Street connects Tongass Avenue and Upper Water Street. There was a small mine in this area in pioneer days. Elliot provides a good vantage for the Water Street trestle, Ketchikan's longest. A massive, multi-year construction project, completed in 2019, replaced the older trestle. 3 minutes

◆ **Cannery cottages.** These single-story cottages with one or two bedrooms apiece were built in the early 1920s to provide year-round housing for cannery workers who didn't bring families. 2 minutes

◆ **White Cliff Elementary School.** Built in 1927, it was the oldest operating school in Alaska at its closing in 2002. A developer renovated the school building, now home for most administrative offices of the Ketchikan Gateway Borough. 15 minutes

◆ **Tongass Towers and Marine View.** Two 10-story concrete buildings were built in the early 1950s to house hundreds of workers who built and operated the pulp mill north of town. The residences are now condominiums. 15 minutes to next site

◆ **West End commercial district.** Where the sea once splashed close to today's Tongass Avenue, countless cubic yards of rock fill trucked from local quarries in the 1960s and 1970s provided a foundation for today's business area: the Plaza mall and a supermarket; condominiums; a motel; retail, office and residential buildings; and acres of commercial land. 1 minute

◆ **E.C. Phillips and Sons.** One of Ketchikan's two remaining cold storage plants, processing salmon, halibut and other seafood products. Phillips flash-freezes and packages seafood bound for the Lower 48 and overseas. The company was founded in 1926, originally packing salted salmon in wooden barrels. 2 minutes

◆ **Webber Air.** (Helicopter Air Alaska) Originally an early cannery site, this area has been a hub for air taxi operations since the 1960s. Although flightseeing keeps air carriers busy in summer, transport of local passengers, supplies and mail sustains some operators in the off-season. 3 minutes

◆ **Ellis Hangar.** (Southeast Stevedoring) Ellis Air Transport was founded in 1936 by Bob Ellis, a Vermonter whose one-plane local operation grew into a major regional carrier, re-named Ellis Air Lines. Ellis merged with Alaska Coastal Airlines in the 1960s and Alaska Airlines acquired them thereafter. Ellis was posthumously inducted into the Alaska Aviation Pioneers Hall of Fame in 2004. Southeast Stevedoring is one of Alaska's biggest providers of shoreside and loading services to the merchant marine industry and cruise industry. 2 minutes



Ellis Air Lines' logo dressed Grumman Goose amphibious aircraft flying all over the region for decades. COURTESY BOB ELLIS AVIATION SCHOLARSHIP FOUNDATION

◆ **Alaska Outboard.** Props and politics mixed here for decades. The business was established by Oral Freeman, elected to the first Alaska State House of Representatives in 1959 and later serving five terms, from 1972 to 1982. He was among the founders of the Alaska Permanent Fund and had a hand in creating the dividend program that spins off oil-royalty revenues to Alaskans. For decades, aspirants for local and state offices put campaign posters in the shop's windows; Freeman's sons, Jim and Charlie (himself a longtime City Council member), retained posters for losing candidates and pinned them up in the back of the shop. The business closed in 2019. 1 minute

◆ **Amphibian Room.** The Amphibian Room was a popular restaurant for three decades. Its name referred to the Grumman Goose amphibious seaplanes used by Ellis Air Lines, whose waiting room was next door. Ellis flew passengers around the Panhandle and to a World War II landing strip on nearby Annette Island, where passengers caught prop and jet planes. (Ketchikan International Airport on Gravina Island wasn't built until 1973.) 1 minute

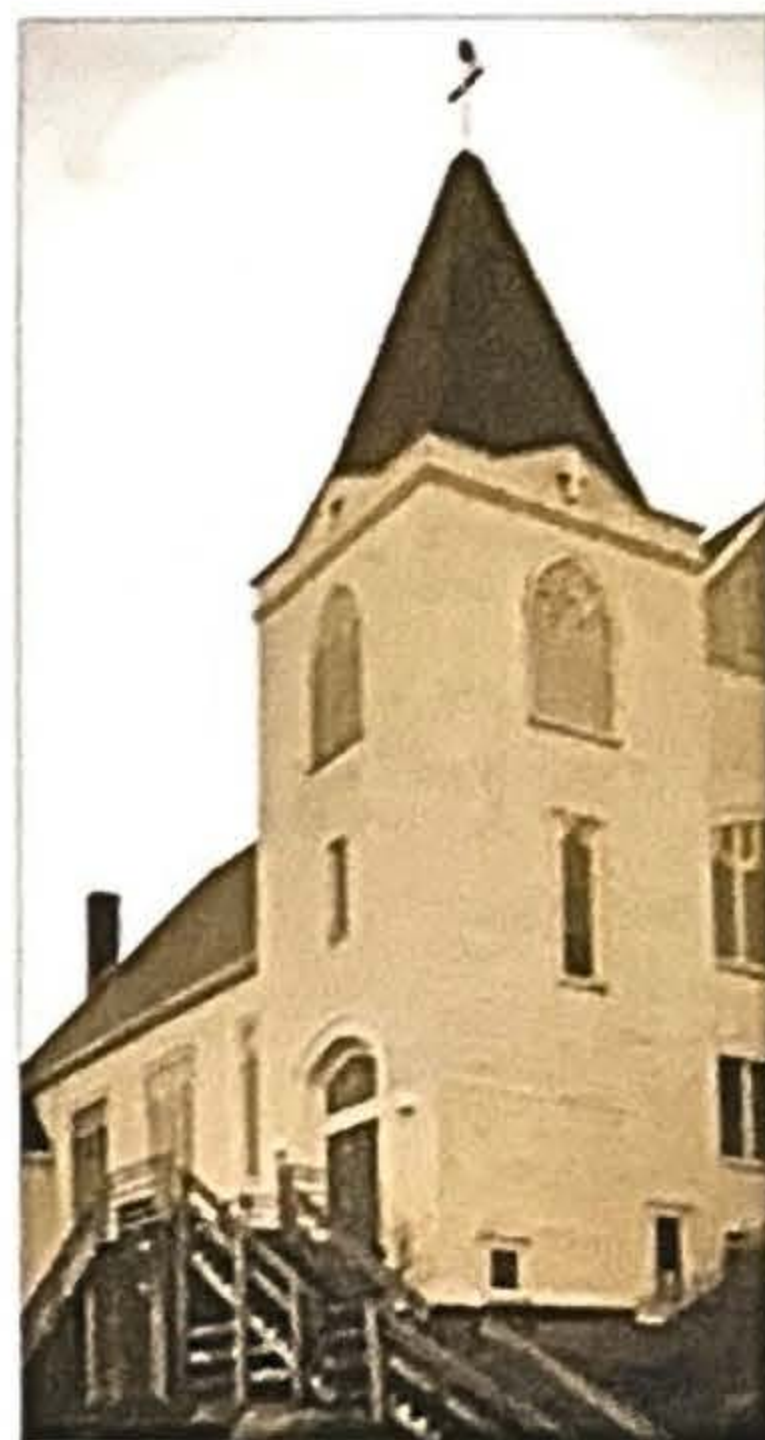
◆ **Ellis Airlines Hangar.** (Seawind Air) In 1924, Tongass Trading Co. built this warehouse for its rapidly expanding business. American Can Co. later put in an office and shop associated with its sale and service of equipment for salmon canneries. In the 1950s, the building was purchased by the expanding Ellis Air Lines. 1 minute

◆ **View of lower Captains Hill.** You're standing on a road once called Cliff Avenue: a narrow plank street built in 1915 as Ketchikan grew northward. On the water or on the rock high above, builders stubbornly and ingeniously challenged natural obstacles. A number of fine Craftsman-style homes remain in this area. Most were built between 1904 and 1925, many by prosperous captains who liked to be able to see their boats safely tied at City Float.

◆ **Talbot's.** This former building supply store is on dock frontage built early in the 1900s and used by the U.S. Lighthouse Service. Three generations of the Talbot family operated the business after World War I. The company's huge sign painted on the warehouse to advertise its wares was a landmark for decades and is faintly visible under an overlay of paint. After rounding the curve to Schoenbar Road, stroll the promenade above the tides; you'll see our City Float harbor and look up at the impressive skylines of Nob Hill and Deer Mountain. 3 minutes

◆ **Casey Moran Harbor / City Float.** Used by commercial fishers, visitors and the local recreational fleet. In the 1920s and '30s, this harbor was home for a fleet of halibut boats believed to be the world's largest. 1 minute

◆ **Harbor View Park.** This wooden waterside park offers benches, tables and close-up looks at fishing, commercial and pleasure vessels—and sometimes seafood sales.



Built on a rock, First Lutheran Church's landmark sanctuary and steeple have stood prominently over Newtown for 95 years. HISTORIC KETCHIKAN PHOTO

DOWNTOWN WALKING TOUR

DOWNTOWN NATIONAL HISTORIC DISTRICT The central downtown area was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2017. This walking tour takes visitors through the historical core of the business district and into adjacent residential blocks.

1 Ketchikan Visitor Center. Nearby is "The Rock," artist Dave Rubin's sculpture depicting Ketchikan's first peoples and pioneers. A Historic Ketchikan Inc. history kiosk and the famed "rain gauge" are close by. 1 minute to next site.

2 Welcome Arch. The first arch in the early 1920s welcomed visitors on steamships. An arch with neon was put up by the Chamber of Commerce in the 1950s. This replica was erected by Historic Ketchikan Inc. in 1996. 3 minutes

3 Yates Memorial Hospital. Built in 1905 as the Clergy House for the Episcopal Mission, the building was re-purposed in 1909 as a hospital in Ketchikan's boom years. The building later housed *Alaska Sportsman* (forerunner of *Alaska* magazine) and a seaman's center. Historic Ketchikan Inc. acquired this property for restoration in 2024.

4 St. John's Episcopal Church. St. John's, built in 1902, is the oldest church building in Ketchikan. The sanctuary, paneled in cedar from a Saxman mill, originally stood on pilings above tidewater. 2 minutes

5 Whale Park and Chief Kyan Totem Pole. Enjoy greenery, a history kiosk and a bench for people-watching. Chief Kyan pole carved by Israel Shoridge in 1993 replicates a pole raised in 1898 for a Tlingit chief; this pole is depicted on page 25 of the U.S. passport. Billingsley Clock is our oldest public timepiece. 1 minute

6 Chief Johnson Totem Pole. This 1989 pole by Israel Shoridge replicates a 1901 pole raised by Chief Johnson in honor of the Kadjuk House, Raven Clan; the original is at Totem Heritage Center. 1 minute

7 Tongass Historical Museum. See our history as a Native fish camp, mining hub, salmon-canning capital and timber town. (Fee.) Centennial Building commemorates the purchase of Alaska from Russia in 1867. The Raven Stealing the Sun pole was carved by Dempsey Bob in 1983. 4 minutes

8 Grant Street trestle. From the sidewalk, see how we conquer terrain with engineering. Near the trestle are houses, dating from 1900 to 1920, on the National Register of Historic Places. 3 minutes

9 Water warehouse and creek overlook. The warehouse is one of our oldest commercial structures, built in 1912 and reclaimed in a project by Historic Ketchikan Inc. A platform on the creek is a good site for viewing salmon. 1 minute

10 Fish ladder. Salmon struggle back to their native streambed, fighting lower falls and then using a concrete fish ladder to avoid the roughest white water. 1 minute

11 Harris Street Bridge. An excellent overlook for salmon in season. 5 minutes

12 Ketchikan Creek. Rainfall, springs and mountain snowpack keep the creek flowing clear and cold year-round. In summer, see salmon by the thousands spawning in the gravel beds where they were born. 4 minutes

13 Hatchery. Hatcheries operated on the creek since the 1930s, augmenting natural salmon runs. A local private, nonprofit aquaculture group took over in 2015. 1 minute

14 City Park. Small pools in the park go back to the early 1900s, when they were holding ponds for salmon in the city's first hatchery. The lighted fountain, originally built in the 1930s, was restored by volunteers in 1989. 2 minutes

15 Totem Heritage Center. A world-renowned collection of original, unrestored totem poles from Tlingit and Haida villages reflects artistry of Alaska Native carvers. The center, part of the City of Ketchikan museum department, exhibits Alaska Native arts. Guided and self-guided tours. (Fee.) 3 minutes

16 St. Elizabeth's Church. The church was built by Ketchikan Native Episcopal Community around 1927, when congregations in Ketchikan were segregated. A church until 1962, it now serves as Ketchikan Mortuary. (Note: The mortuary is closed to the public. Visitors are not welcome.) 2 minutes

17 Ketchikan Indian Community. This tribal government was organized in 1939 under the Indian Reorganization Act and acts in health, education and culture for Alaska Natives. 4 minutes

STEDMAN-THOMAS NATIONAL HISTORIC DISTRICT The neighborhood was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1996. This area of historic properties on Stedman and Thomas streets extends to Ketchikan Creek. Diaz Cafe, Union Machine Shop, Potlatch Bar, New York Hotel and other historic businesses are still active.

18 Sun Raven Totem Pole. Tlingit artist Israel Shoridge, in 2003, gave this pole to the Tongass Tribe and community; he replicated a pole dating to the early 1900s on Tongass Island, ancestral home of the Tongass Tribe. Another Sun Raven replica from 1939 stands in Saxman. Take East Street toward the water for the next stop. The Waterfront Promenade extends out the Thomas Basin breakwater for spectacular views of Deer Mountain, the harbor and downtown. 6 minutes

19 Thomas Street. This wood-plank street fronts the site of an early dock; in the 1890s it was a makeshift log raft. Thomas Street has been home to boat yards, carpenters, machine shops, bars and bordellos. 2 minutes

20 Thomas Basin viewing platform. The Ketchikan Creek mouth was a broad tidal flat that served until the 1920s, at low tide, as Ketchikan's baseball field. In 1922, pilot Roy Jones splashed down here in a small seaplane—the first to fly non-stop from Seattle to Ketchikan. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers dredged the creek mouth for this harbor in the 1930s. 5 minutes



Yates Memorial Hospital patients enjoyed the band on July 4, 1922. KETCHIKAN MUSEUMS PHOTO

Roy Jones splashed down here in a small seaplane—the first to fly non-stop from Seattle to Ketchikan. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers dredged the creek mouth for this harbor in the 1930s. 5 minutes

21 Stedman Street bridge. In season, see thousands of salmon gathering to run up the creek. Anglers fish from the wide sidewalk on the seaward side. Cross carefully at the crosswalk. 1 minute

22 Bayside Hotel. First known as Thomas Basin Rooms, Bayside Hotel was built in 1927 by Forest and Harriet Hunt. It was a cafe/pool hall and boardinghouse for fishermen and cannery workers, then a "sporting house" in Creek Street's brothel era. Recent restoration features historically appropriate design. Adjacent is a deck with views of Ketchikan Creek, salmon runs, birds and seals. 1 minute

CREEK STREET NATIONAL HISTORIC DISTRICT This area was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2014. It's been the scene of a Tlingit fish camp, sawmills and bawdy houses. Design standards preserve much of the early-20th century charm.

23 Creek Street. The area became a red-light district in 1902. More than 30 bawdy houses with one or two "working girls" lined the creek over the years. With Prohibition, some became speakeasies; bootleggers rowed in to deliver booze. The city outlawed prostitution in 1953; Creek Street became a mixed residential and commercial area. Star House (No. 5 Creek St.) was a dance hall and the only registered brothel in the Territory of Alaska; it's on the National Register of Historic Places.

24 Dolly's House. Dolly Arthur was Ketchikan's most famous madam in the heyday of Creek Street. Her house, preserved much as she left it, features antiques, caches and garish decor typical of the time and milieu. Tours are provided. (Fee.) 5 minutes

25 Footbridge. Observe unique Creek Street, where historic buildings on pilings flank a salmon stream. See the historical kiosk at the head of the bridge. 5 minutes

26 Ketchikan Daily News. The lone survivor of more than a dozen papers published here since 1900, the Daily News was founded in 1935 and remains family-owned.



Boats gave way to bats on the tide flats at the Ketchikan Creek mouth in the early 1900s. Local men are seen here playing in 1916 against a team from Prince Rupert, B.C., Canada. Dredging for Thomas Basin boat harbor a decade later let the sea take a unique baseball field. LIBRARY OF CONGRESS PHOTO

27 Edmond Street. A long wooden stairway named for a mission teacher, Agnes Edmond, leads to views of the business district and boat harbor. 10 minutes' round trip

28 Main and Dock streets. Ketchikan's historic business center. The Heckman Building, from 1912, is one of the oldest concrete structures in Alaska. 2 minutes

29 Ketchikan Fire Department / KPAC KFD's former downtown station; the department moved out in 2012. KFD was founded by volunteers in 1900. Next door up the hill is the former Elks Lodge 1429, built in 1949. The present owner, First City Players, plans to renovate the building and establish the Performing Arts Center.

30 Ketchikan Area Arts and Humanities Council. KAAHC supports Ketchikan's arts community and presents arts events. Main Street Gallery features visual artists, most local. The building was formerly a Christian Science reading room. 1 minute

31 Red Men Lodge. Ketchikan's first fraternal organization dates to 1900 and featured many Ketchikan civic leaders. The group was restricted to white men until the 1960s. The original lodge was at the corner of Mission and Main streets. 4 minutes

32 Burkhart-Dibrell House. This turreted Victorian was built in 1904 for H.Z. Burkhart, a founder of Ketchikan Power Co., predecessor of Ketchikan Spruce Mill. It's among our last examples of the Queen Anne style of the early 1900s. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1982. 4 minutes uphill

33 Nob Hill overlook. This walkway offers a tremendous view of Newtown and First Lutheran Church and passes Nob Hill homes dating as early as 1901. 5 minutes

34 Front Street stairway. First built in 1902, this 117-step boardwalk played an important role in providing pedestrian access from Nob Hill to businesses, recreation, government, employment and social activities in the earliest days.

35 Tunnel. Ripley's *Believe It or Not* called our tunnel the only tunnel in the world that can be driven through, driven around and driven over (on upper Front Street). Finished in 1954, it eased access to Newtown; for half a century before, narrow plank streets on pilings skirted the rock. Use the crosswalk and be careful. 1 minute

36 Eagle Park. Tlingit master carver Nathan Jackson's "Thundering Wings" graces the park. Across Front Street is the Gilmore Hotel, built in 1927 and listed on the National Register of Historic Places. 1 minute

Pioneers of Alaska. This was the U.S. Custom House when it was built in 1900, then was a rooming house. Pioneers of Alaska took over in 1922 for their men's and women's civic and social clubs. It's the city's oldest building. A Ketchikan group is designing renovations and raising funds for the project.



Custom House (seen in 1901), the city's oldest building, became home for Pioneers of Alaska.