The Sheldon Jackson School is a National Historic Landmark located in Sitka, Alaska. This place is meaningful not only for the architecture and building design, but also for the words of the people who lived it. There was sacrifice and loss, conflict and hardship, but also lifelong bonds - many who were part of the school community played, and cried themselves to sleep for homesickness. The school also played an important role, through its students, in the development of Native society, language and identity. The Sheldon Jackson School was designated a National Historic Landmark in 2001. It is nationally significant for its role in the education of Alaska Natives during the first half of the twentieth century, and for its role in the transformation of Native cultures in this period.

Designed by the prestigious New York City firm of Ludlow and Peabody, the current campus quadrangle, the first in Alaska, replaced the original campus in 1911.

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Photograph by E. W. Merrill, collection of Rebecca Poulsen

For more information on the historic campus, and sources for this brochure, go to www.fineartscamp.org

Today, most of this campus is home to the Sitka Fine Arts Camp, a summer art camp for youth. Alaska Arts Southeast is working to fill the campus year-round with culture and education. This place is meaningful not only for the architecture but for the lives that went on here; generations of students who left home, language, and culture - staff who devoted their lives with a sense of mission. Students laughed and played, and cried themselves to sleep for homesickness. There was sacrifice and loss, conflict and hardship, but also lifelong bonds - many who were part of the school say it was “like family.”

The story of the school is difficult, rich, and complicated. Alaska Arts Southeast is working to restore these buildings, and to bring the school’s story to the public, in the words of the people who lived it.

The Sheldon Jackson School was designed by the prestigious New York City firm of Ludlow and Peabody, the current campus quadrangle, the first in Alaska, replaced the original campus in 1911.

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North Cottage circa 1886
This was housing for staff, including Matilda "Tillie" Paul Tamaree, staff member 1888-1906, and her young sons. It was later a Model Cottage, for training in domestic skills. It was moved to its current location from across the street and up the hill in 1995. Now a private residence.

Tillie Paul Manor 1927
Named for Tlingit missionary Matilda "Tillie" Paul Tamaree, this was the school infirmary. From 1949-54, it was also Sitka's community hospital; 116 babies were born here 1949-51. It was later used for student and staff housing, and is now the Sitka International Hostel.

Houk House 1928
Named for teacher Cora Mae Houk, this Dutch colonial cottage was purpose built for teaching domestic skills to female students. It is now a private residence.

Sage Building 1929
This concrete building was designed by school engineer N. Lester Troast. It is named for Russell Sage by his widow, philanthropist Olivia Sage. This was the industrial arts building, with shops for small-boat building, printing, metalworking and carpentry. It also has a hydroelectric plant, used to generate electricity for the entire school. It replaced an earlier industrial arts building that had a large water wheel for power. The Indian River flume now supplies a salmon hatchery, a program begun by the college and continued by the Sitka Sound Science Center, the current owner of the building.

Ada F. Pears Cottage 1926
Named for a prominent member of the Pittsburgh Presbyterian Society, which funded its construction. Built for staff housing, it is now a private residence.

Nancy Craig Cottage 1914
Built for staff housing, this cottage is now part of the Alaska Arts Southeast property.

Ocean Vista Cottage 1914
This bungalow was the Presbyterian Manse, the home for the minister and his family. It is now a private residence.

Sheldon Jackson Museum 1895
This unique, octagonal structure was the first concrete building in Alaska. It was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1972. It was built to house Dr. Jackson's large collection of Native artifacts, still its purpose today. It is now part of the Alaska State Museums.

Power Plant and Laundry Building 1911
Part of the 1911 plan, an innovative steam heating plant for the entire campus. A laundry facility in the foreground section took advantage of the heat. It once had a tower for a school bell.

All photographs by James Poulson