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THE ALASKA ASSOCIATION FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Oscar Anderson House Museum



**Step Back in Time with
Anchorage's only Historic
House Museum!**

*The Oscar Anderson House
420 M Street
Anchorage, Alaska 99510*



The Oscar Anderson House was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1978, for its architectural significance and for Oscar Anderson's role in the development of early Anchorage.

The Oscar Anderson House is a National Trust for Historic Preservation "Distinctive Destination." It is owned by the Municipality of Anchorage and managed by the Alaska Association for Historic Preservation.

The Oscar Anderson House is located at 420 M Street, adjacent to Elderberry Park and the Tony Knowles Coastal Trail, in downtown Anchorage.

Hours: Summers only, excluding holidays. Tuesdays through Sundays from 12 noon to 4:00 pm. 45 minute guided tours. Special Swedish Christmas Open House in December.

Admission: \$10 adults; \$5 age 12 and under. Alaska residents all ages \$5. AAHP members free.



**Distinctive
Destinations**

National Trust for Historic Preservation



Oscar Anderson

House Museum

Why is the Oscar Anderson House so special? The Oscar Anderson House is a one and one-half story bungalow with four rooms downstairs and three rooms upstairs. Quality of construction, materials, and the number of rooms made this house stand out among the one-room log cabins and tents located throughout the early Ship Creek Townsite. It is said to be the first wood-framed home in Anchorage. Miraculously this original 1915 building remains relatively unaltered.

The house was owned by the Oscar Anderson family, and deeded to the Municipality of Anchorage in 1976. The house was moved downhill about 60 feet and stands today, an endearing example of our past. How did this little house become a museum?

The Oscar Anderson House has provided locals and visitors a glimpse into the everyday life of an early Anchorage family for over thirty years.

Restoration of the house took place from 1978 through 1982, with financial support from Oscar's widow, and daughter Ruth. Historic Anchorage, Inc. commissioned the restoration, painstakingly completed by volunteers. The interior décor includes period wallpaper, paint and antiques. Anchorage's only house museum was opened to the public in 1982.

OSCAR ANDERSON

Who was Oscar Anderson? By his own account, Oscar Anderson was the 18th person to arrive in Ship Creek's Tent City. Oscar was born in Fakerskog, Sweden on June 2, 1883. He immigrated to the United States in 1900, and eventually moved to Seattle, Washington. Oscar met and married another Swedish immigrant, Miss Elizabeth Jonsonn, in 1905. Three children were born to Oscar and Elizabeth: Maurice, Ruth, and Vincent. Oscar was an entrepreneur and an astute businessman determined to try his luck in Alaska when he arrived at Ship Creek, in early 1915. He wanted to capitalize on the many opportunities the Last Frontier held and purchased several lots at the 1915 auction. The lot located on the Cook Inlet was seen as an ideal home site and the place to build the family home. Two Swedish carpenters were hired to build Oscar's house.



**The Anderson Family.
(Oscar Anderson House
Collection; Anchorage
Museum, B1991.021.3)**

Oscar sent for the family, but despite his good intentions, Oscar, Elizabeth and the children found themselves living in a tent overlooking the construction site from October into the cold month of December. Christmas 1915 found them celebrating in their new little house with the million dollar view!

Oscar made many contributions to the development of early Anchorage. He partnered in several efforts including a cold storage plant and the Ship Creek Meat Corporation. The meat market located to 4th Avenue and sold wholesale and retail meats in town and the surrounding areas. Descendants of Oscar's employees recalled that

Oscar was a "very good boss." Oscar also financially benefitted from involvement in the Evans Jones coal mine, and contributed to Alaska aviation with support to Anchorage Air Transport, Inc. During Oscar's life the railroad boom town transitioned from a place that one could not only prosper, but more importantly raise a family.