

Pullen House

Address: End of 6th street, to the right of City Hall Skagway, Alaska 99840

Type: Property

Name: Pullen Hotel

Function: Served as a personal home, then boarding home owned by William Moore. Eventually sold to Harriet Pullen who then transformed the building into a luxury hotel.

Build date: 1897-1907

Architect: William Moore.

Style: unsure; frontier?

Photos date:

Source: see below

Status: Ruins, uninhabited, frequent hangout for junior high/young elementary school kids

Details: Skagway is famously known as the 22 x 4 block city. This tiny town was built during the Klondike Gold Rush as an entry point to the gold fields further north. After the boom, families remained in Skagway and began building the small community that still exists to this day. Over the years, Skagway's deep water harbor has brought industry to the town, and now tourism. People from all over the world and from all walks of life have spent time in town, creating all kinds of fascinating stories and experiences. In the end, each of Skagway's 22 x 4 blocks has a unique building, function, and history.

6th and Spring Street block is unique in the sense that no visible structure can be seen. Sitting directly next to City Hall, nestled next to the mountain, the block is wildly overgrown. Tall brush and grass reach higher than the eye can see. If you walk the perimeter of the brush you can find tunnels through the overgrowth, trails forged by the local kids that use the area for hide and seek. Follow along the brush trails and you will eventually pop out into a cleared area surrounded by brush and invisible from the rest of the city.

Inside of this clearing sits a single stone chimney. The stones are held together by some kind of plaster or concrete. The chimney hearth reads PULLEN, mosaiced in river stones. Noises from the tour buses on the other side of the brush are muffled and the clearing sits quietly. The chimney and a few hard stone pieces are all that remains of the original Pullen House, the most luxurious hotel in Alaska at the turn of the century.

The original building was designed by Captain William Moore sometime between 1897-1899. As Moore aged, and the Gold Rush boom slowed, the building was sold to Harriet Pullen. Harriet was a local woman who had been living in Moore's house as a boarding agent. She had also worked several jobs with Moore upon first moving to Skagway.

Pullen transformed the giant house into a luxury hotel, complete with electricity and hot baths. The hotel served as a tourist destination and where Harriet would tell stories of the Gold Rush and Alaska adventurers. Harriett, herself, is credited with some of the earliest tourism work done in Skagway, an industry that the town now relies on. This frontier woman, who arrived in Skagway right as the Gold Rush began, owned and operated the Pullen House Hotel until her death in 1947. At her request, she was buried behind her property, directly next to the mountain side.

At some point in the early 1990s, the property was destroyed. Since then, the National Park Service has placed a small informational sign on the outside of the brush, in front of the original entrance. Some tourists may notice the sign as they wait while their children play on the playground/restroom area there. Pullen's descendents still live in town, and tend to the grave behind the property.

Whatever reasons that led to 6th and Spring Street's destructive fate, seemed to infect the adjacent block of 7th and Spring Street. This block is also heavily overgrown. Streams cut through the block, and surround it on all sides. If you can hop the stream, and wriggle your way through the brush, there are several abandoned structures sitting on the block. Many appear to be old wooden homes, left to

rot in the brush. Most of the homes are beginning to fall in on themselves. Machinery, pipes, and other refuse lay scattered in the brush.

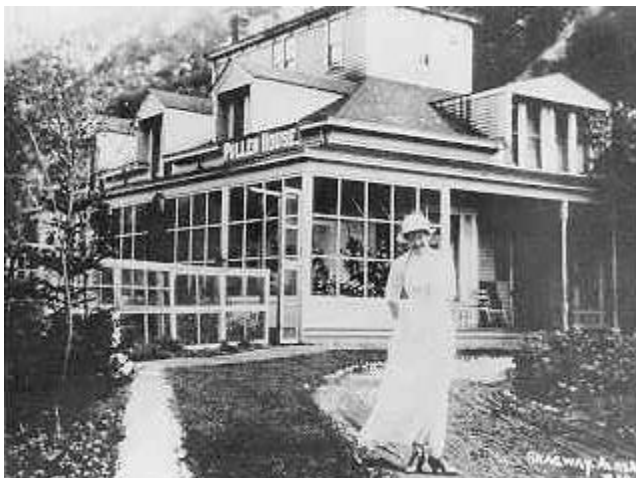
The famous 22 x 4 block city of Skagway was developed due to the Klondike Gold Rush boom, when thousands of men and women chasing the luxury commodity of gold rowed ashore and set up camp. Since then, the town has adapted to shifting markets and continues to grow. However, the geographic placement of the town creates an intense barrier to building outside of the 22 x 4 block framework. Despite this complication, the town of Skagway receives new long term residents each year. This makes land in Skagway incredibly scarce, and a luxurious commodity of its own. It is fascinating the the entire town has left the block of Pullen's House vacant, even though the building itself has been destroyed. Perhaps it is in memoriam for Harriett herself, and the foundational work she did in early Skagway. I'd like to think of it that way.

???, accessed 24 November 2018

[Harriett Pullen - Ma](#)

Smithsonian National Postal Museum She bought Captain Moore's home and turned it into the Pullen House Hotel, which she opened a year after she arrived. Her businesses were extremely profitable and before long she was able to send for her children. The hotel-keeper became famous for her hospitality, and became known as "Ma" Pullen.

- Harriet remained in Alaska, transforming Pullen House into an elegant hotel filled with the finest china and silver, soft beds and what was a supreme luxury for the time, bathtubs.
- "Ma" Pullen died on August 9, 1947 and was buried near the site of her hotel.



???, accessed 24 November 2018

[Captain William Moore: founder of Skagway, Alaska](#)

ExploreNorth As Skagway developed and settled down from the boom years, Captain Moore had a hand in many businesses, and became a wealthy man as well as a strong influence in the community. He built a palatial home near the original cabin and home.

- The large home that Captain Moore had built in Skagway later became the Pullen Hotel, one of the most famous hotels in Alaska.

2018, accessed 24 November 2018

[Pullen House](#)

Alaska.org The stone chimney seen on your left is all that remains of the Pullen House, once Alaska's most famous hotel. It was a popular stopping place for interior residents and tourists for more than 50 years. Harriet "Ma" Pullen ran it most of that time. This indomitable spirit arrived in Skagway in September 1897. In a story she later told to thousands of tourists, she first baked pies in a tent restaurant on the beach. Later, she rented out the majority of her three-story residence as a rooming house. She soon bought the building, and brought several other buildings onto the property. She operated them until her death in 1947. The hotel operated for another decade before being abandoned.

- Note: The chimney sits on private property. Please do not trespass

27 August 2018

[Story Time with Aunt Phil: The Pullen House](#)

KTVB Pullen used some of the profits gleaned from her successful freighting business to rent Capt. Billy Moore's boarding house, which she later purchased and converted into Alaska's largest and most elaborate hotel – the Pullen House. Its tables were laden with vegetables grown on land she owned near the old townsite of Dyea, once the major gateway to the Chilkoot Trail, and with milk from her own cows.

- Even during tough times, the Pullen House retained its elegance. President Warren G. Harding made it a point to visit the outstanding hotel during his visit to Alaska in 1923.

21 March 2018

[Harriet Pullen \(U.S. National Park Service\)](#)

NPS Harriet gained a hospitable reputation for her accommodations which boasted hot baths and soft beds. Guests staying at her Pullen House mansion enjoyed fresh vegetables picked from her gardens along with milk and cream from her farm in **Dyea**. Harriet also provided dramatic presentations in the parlor of Pullen House, drawing on her personal stories and experiences with Skagway's colorful cast of gold rush characters and events

- Harriet became affectionately known as "Ma Pullen" with respectful notoriety, sharing her hospitality with visitors in her vibrant hotel until she died in 1947.

1922

[Alaska / photo by Olaf Dale](#)

Library of Congress



1900

[House, Skagway, Alaska, ca. 1900](#)

Alaska State Library



Pullen's Hotel Skagway Mrs. Pullen - Alaska