



Lynch and Kennedy Haberdashery and Dry Goods Store



The Lynch and Kennedy Haberdashery and Dry Goods Store is one of Skagway's finest examples of false front architecture. This building tells many stories of Skagway's frontier past and commercial present and future.

A New Beginning

By 1907-1908, Skagway's glory days as a gold rush boomtown had passed. Vacant buildings, derelict shacks and debris were visible everywhere. One visitor described Skagway as "the scrap-heap of creation." In an attempt to revitalize the town, businessmen Fred Patten and Chris Shea led a drive to centralize the town's business district on Broadway.

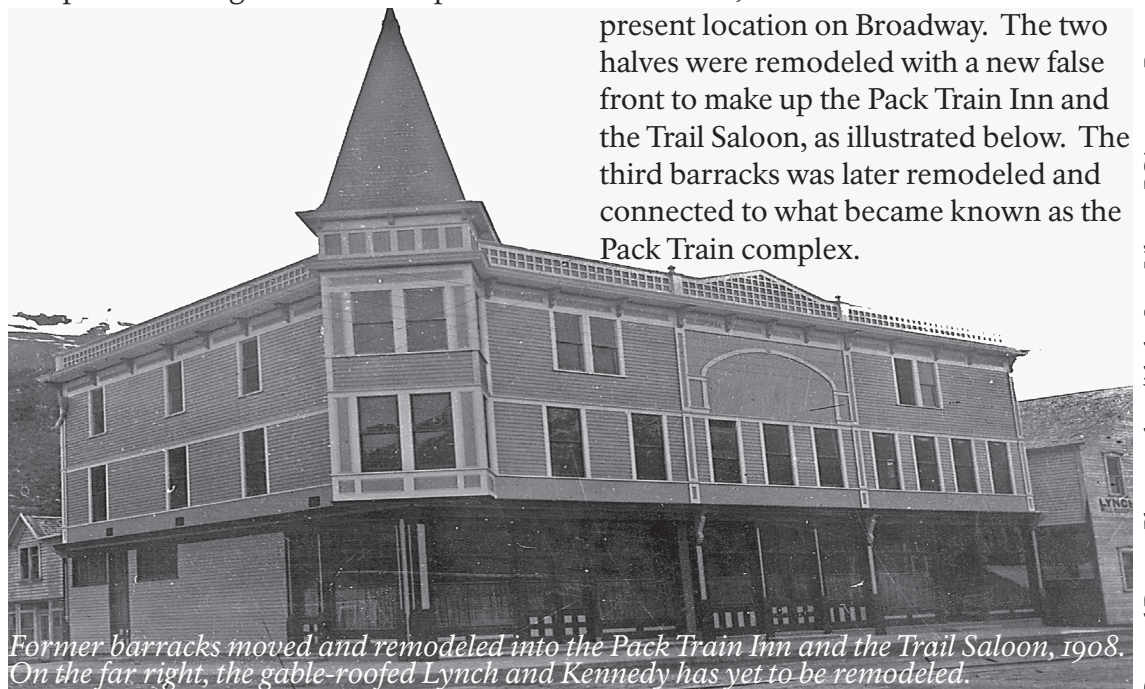
The Lynch & Kennedy Haberdashery and Dry Goods Store became a symbol of prosperity and of a new beginning. It was one attempt to give Skagway a face lift and help revitalize the local economy. A fine example of false front architecture, Lynch & Kennedy reflected confidence and hoped-for stability in Skagway.

Building History

Oddly enough, this symbol of prosperity had a much humbler beginning. The Lynch & Kennedy Store actually started out as an army barracks. In 1900, a plain 25 foot by 50 foot structure was constructed to house the enlisted men in the all black Company L, 24th Infantry. This building, originally located on 6th Avenue, became part of Camp Skagway. These troops were brought to Alaska to protect

American territory during the gold rush. They departed Skagway in 1904 for the newly completed Fort William H. Seward in Haines.

After the troops left, Camp Skagway was closed and the buildings stood vacant for a few years. In 1908, Shea and Patten purchased two barracks, sawed the longer one in half, and moved all three to their present location on Broadway. The two halves were remodeled with a new false front to make up the Pack Train Inn and the Trail Saloon, as illustrated below. The third barracks was later remodeled and connected to what became known as the Pack Train complex.



Former barracks moved and remodeled into the Pack Train Inn and the Trail Saloon, 1908. On the far right, the gable-roofed Lynch and Kennedy has yet to be remodeled.

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The original barracks can still be seen in spite of the massive remodeling effort. A walk to the rear of these buildings will reveal the barracks still behind the false fronts.

Haberdashers Henry J. Lynch and James F. Kennedy rented the former barracks building and opened their Haberdashery and Dry Goods store in September 1908. The Daily Alaskan reported on the opening: "The store is just about the handsomest in the city....It is a fine addition to the business life of the city." The store, and the city of Skagway, seemed to be on the up and up.

As it would turn out, however, Shea and Patten had over-extended themselves and went bankrupt in 1909. Lynch and Kennedy dissolved their partnership in 1910 and H. J. Lynch continued the business alone until his death five years later. Businessman Albert Reinert took over the dry goods store but closed it by the end of the decade. Despite its rosy beginning, the store seemed to be unable to sustain itself for the long duration.

Advertisement for Lynch's store from the October 1, 1910 issue of the Skagway Daily Alaskan.

Later History

During the 1920s and into the early 1930s, the building was rented out or left vacant. For a time, it was remodeled into the Sugar Bowl restaurant. During World War II, the building once again became barracks. After the war, the building changed hands several times but remained vacant for many years.

The National Park Service purchased the structure in 1977. Using historic images, archeology, and historical research, the National Park Service was able to restore this building to its 1908-1915 appearance. The remainder of the Pack Train complex has been restored by private owners.

With its restoration in the early 1990s, this prominent Skagway building is once again able to project a look of prosperity within the community.

Historic Building Leasing Program

The Lynch and Kennedy Haberdashery and Dry Goods Store is one of over a dozen historic buildings owned by Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park. This building is leased to a private business under the provisions of the National Historic Preservation Act.

Annual lease payments help offset the costs of maintaining this and other historic buildings in the park. The compatible commercial use of this structure continues Skagway's long tradition as a bustling center of business activity.