

A Trip to Great Bear Lake

Historic Mine Site Investigations
Including Contact Lake, Port Radium, Elbonanza,
Bonanza, Crossfault Lake, and Cameron Bay

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Introduction:

The author spent one week between July 17th and July 23rd 2005 in the historic Echo Bay-Port Radium area of Great Bear Lake. I was invited to the area by Tim Coupland, president of a junior mining exploration company called Alberta Star Development Corporation who own mineral claims covering practically all of land in the Echo Bay area. In exchange for information pertaining to the history of mineral exploration and the history of the mine sites, Mr. Coupland flew me to Great Bear Lake so that I might visit some of the old mines for my research. I was boarded at the company's summer camp (the former Branson's Lodge at Cameron Bay) and was allowed use of their rented helicopter.

The trip was scheduled to last only three nights (July 17th to July 19th) with me being flown on out a re-supply plane, but the expeditor was not able to send in this plane until July 23rd. I had basically accomplished all that I had set out to do by July 18th, so for the remaining five days I hung around camp, doing some fishing and exploring the nearby ruins of the Cameron Bay townsite.

My main objectives of this trip was to investigate and take pictures of the Contact Lake mine site, which Alberta Star Development is most interested in. Geological mapping of the country north of Contact Lake has discovered interesting contact zones which might carry economical copper, uranium, and bismuth. I came to Great Bear Lake not knowing what the company would allow me to visit, since obviously use of a helicopter is not cheap. But I was surprised and very thankful that Mr. Coupland allowed free use of the helicopter wherever possible. As a result I visited other mines in the area, including Port Radium (Eldorado and Echo Bay), Elbonanza, and Bonanza. Aerial reconnaissance of other old mining sites was performed. Some old ruins were also visited by boat.

Nine rolls of film consisting of about 200 photos were taken. A journal was kept of the week's experience with many hand drawings and maps detailing the results of my investigations.

Information on file at the National Archives of Canada, referenced in this document, and other historical sources on hand, were very helpful for an analysis of ruins at the Cameron Bay settlement.

Contact Lake Mine:

The site was visited on July 17th 2005, after lunch. I was dropped off at the site by the helicopter with a scheduled pickup in 5 hours time.

Location:

The mine site is on the north shore of Contact Lake, south of Echo Bay on NTS Map 86 F-13. Coordinates are 65° 59' 30" N, 117° 48' 00" W. Access is by float plane or helicopter. If visiting from Echo Bay via boat, there is an old road which heads south. This road is identified on NTS Maps (86 F-13 and 86 K-4). I did not travel nor see this road from the air. Its condition is reported as fair with spots of bad overgrowth. I tried to follow the road from the mine site side, but was stopped by thick overgrowth.

History:

Rich silver and radium minerals were discovered here in the summer of 1931 by Tom Creighton, a prospector working for N.A.M.E. (Northern Aerial Mineral Exploration). B.E.A.R. (Bear Exploration and Radium Ltd.) acquired the property in 1932 and dispatched Major Bernhard Day, engineer, to investigate the claims. The mineralized zone began at the base of the hill and extended up over an 80 foot ridge to the northeast. Early work consisted of trenching and pitting this vein, and then late in the year an adit tunnel was started at the base of the ridge along the strike of the deposit. Work continued into 1933-1934 under the enthusiasm of rich silver veins, and late in 1935 production began with a small 25 ton per day gravity-concentration mill. Operations were spastic between 1935 and 1938 due to mechanical problems with the mill and powerplant, and a drop in the price of silver in 1939 ended the original term of operations. A small amount of uranium concentrate was also recovered during this period.¹

Uranium minerals became the focus of all work during the 1940s. International Uranium Mining Corporation bought the property in 1942 and proposed reopening the mine to produce uranium concentrates for the war effort. A fire that burned down the original mill in 1946 perhaps impeded those plans, but considerable underground development was conducted between 1947 and 1949. Evidently, the property had little economic worth as far as uranium production was concerned.²

The mine was thereafter a silver prospect, and in 1969 underground work continued in order to prove the silver resource. The old tailings pile also contained good silver values because the original 1930s mill was not very efficient. Ulster Petroleum Ltd was the owner of the property in the 1960s, and in 1973 they negotiated a deal with Echo Bay Mines Ltd for the processing of ores from Contact Lake Mine at their mill at Port Radium, 15 kilometers away. Tailings and some surface stockpile was trucked over winter road and treated during 1975-1977, and then underground ore was mined and trucked to Port Radium in 1979-1980. No work was being done at Contact Lake Mine after 1982 as the silver market plummeted.

Site Overview:

The old property can be split into three areas: the camp site, the mine and mill site, and the Bay 66 wharf. Each is connected by an old road which is still passable at the higher elevations, but closer to lake the road is badly overgrown. When the mine was originally in operation, most freight was barged in from Great Bear Lake. Freight was received at Bay 66 of Echo Bay and hauled or trucked over this road a distance of three kilometers to the mine site on Contact Lake. Air freight was received by float planes landing below the camp on Contact Lake.

Camp Site: The camp site consisted of log cabins and tents, occupying what was once a thinly vegetated forest patch of ground, about 30 feet above the elevation of Contact Lake and 75 feet in land from the shore. This area is now badly overgrown with weeds and shrubs, but most of the log buildings still stand.

Mine Site: The mine site is located further up the shore about 1500 feet from Contact Lake. The original buildings would have been clustered around the headframe and adit portal, and most of the buildings were interconnected with framed corridors as a way of central heating. The only original 1930s vintage buildings at the minesite are the headframe, what appears to be a log garage, and the explosive magazines. All other buildings are 1940s vintage

¹ Lord, C.S., 1941. Mineral Industry of the Northwest Territories. Geological Survey of Canada, Memoir 230, 1941.

² Lord, C.S., 1951. Mineral Industry of District of Mackenzie, Northwest Territories. Geological Survey of Canada, Memoir 261, 1951.

when underground development resumed. The mill burned down in 1946, and its location was adjacent to the headframe to the west.

There are today a total of 11 buildings at the mine site and consist of the following: headframe and hoist room, quonset hut warehouse, log blacksmith shop, log office annexed onto a frame dry building, three small log sheds or cap magazines, two explosive storage buildings, and a long log/frame building presumably used as a garage. Ruins of a powerhouse and shop building dating from the 1940s era consists of timber ruins and a large concrete pad. There is also the underground adit portal which is sealed, a small network of rail track, a small junk pile of old machinery, and other scattered debris. The mine site is quite littered with trash, and the buildings are in poor state of repair, having not been used in about 25 years.

During the 1930s, mill tailings were deposited downhill towards a little lake south of the mine. In the 1970s these tailings were removed and trucked to Port Radium for processing. The two explosive magazines are located to the east of the minesite and are accessible by following the old road to Bay 66. Those buildings were not visited due to distance and the overgrowth encountered on the road.

Bay 66 Wharf: The old Bay 66 wharf was not visited nor seen from the air, but I was told by the geologists who are mapping the area that two buildings and an oil tank are located here.

Mine Site:

The minesite occupies a flat, built-up pad of mine waste along the edge of a sharp 80' escarpment, below which is low-lying vegetation and marsh and thin outcropping towards Contact Lake. Buildings are built on the waste rock on timber or log sills, on concrete pads poured overtop of the waste rock, or presumably concrete pads anchored into the bedrock below the mine waste.

Underground Workings: The mine was original developed with an adit portal in 1932-1933, following the strike of the vein at a depth of approximately 80 feet below the surface exposures of the deposit. In 1934 an inclined winze (or internal shaft) was sunk to open up a second level, 125 feet below the adit. A drive was then pushed south-west beneath the adit portal, and a raise was blasted to the surface near the face of the portal. The raise was reconditioned into a working shaft, and in 1935 the headframe was built. The shaft was then sunk to the third level. Stopping was conducted on all three levels and stopes from the adit level open up to the surface along the hillside above. This was the stage of the mine in the 1930s.

Considerable underground work was conducted on the third level in the 1940s when uranium was the target, and a second winze was sunk in an attempt to open a fourth level. No lateral work was done at this level, however. Development in the 1960s and mining in the 1970s has taken place, but no major additions were made to the underground workings.

The adit portal is sealed off with timbers and plywood, and there is a crude fence or wire mesh covering the hole. There is also a crude fence surrounding the open stopes above the adit, with these open holes extending about 150 feet northeast up the hill. An old wood ladder system climbs up the face of the hill parallel to the open stopes, but it is not safe to climb.

Headframe: The headframe was built in early 1935.³ It is a timber frame structure, approximately 40 feet in height. It has no doubt received numerous repairs over the years during the different reactivation periods. The south side of the headframe has been partially reconstructed with frame-plywood materials, and the front hoistroom and corridor is obviously not original, dating from the 1970s. The back of the structure is actually not an ore bin, although when the original mine was in operation in the 1930s there would have been a second deck in this area as the corridor into the mill exited the back of the headframe at that height. Ore was brought up the shaft in ore cars and the cars were rolled outside the headframe and dumped either into the mill, or later, out the back door into the surface stockpiles. The back of the headframe has been reinforced with new 8x8 timbers. Both compartments (manway and hoisting) of the shaft have been sealed with heavy timbers. There is an aluminum cage sitting overtop of the sealed shaft. A thin ladder climbs up the headframe's interior shaft sets, and presumably continues to the sheave deck. The single sheave wheel is still atop the headframe. The exterior of the headframe is badly burned, the result of the 1946 that destroyed the old mill. Most of the tarpaper that once covered the headframe has been weathered off. The structure is supported by bracings on the north side, which appear to be pinned into the parallel ridge.

³ The Northern Miner, January 10, 1935

Hoist Room: The hoist room is a plywood structure attached to the front of the headframe by a plywood corridor. The room itself has collapsed and is full of debris. The hoist is gone and all that is left is a concrete mount and the hoist man's chair, which is actually an old lazyboy-style lounge chair.

Adit Portal: The underground adit portal is sealed with plywood and some crude fencing. Some rock from above the hill has rolled into the adit portal.

Cap Magazine 1: Timber and shiplap construction, dimensions 6' x 7'. Empty.

Cap Magazine 2: Timber and shiplap construction, dimensions 6' x 6'. Empty.

Blacksmith Shop: Dimensions 16' x 25'. The building is made of log with a log-frame roof, the roof being sheeted with shiplap. There are two vent ducts on the roof. It would have been built in the 1940s, after the mill fire of 1946. There is a large bay door on the side facing the headframe, and at one point a rail track would have branched into the building at this point. The floor is practically all dirt. There are two or three concrete pads within the structure that likely held shop machinery, like a drill press or a forge. No machinery remains. There is some shelving and tables, and littered debris.

Miner's Dry: This building was used in the 1970s as a miners dry, and it presumed to have been used as such in earlier times. It is frame and shiplap construction, dimensions 20' x 20' plus a 6' x 12' addition annexing to the adjacent Log Office. The building was built over top of the old mill location, so that means it was built in the late 1940s. The floors are shiplap, covered with linoleum. The floor is rotting in numerous spots, and the exterior grey tarpaper is quickly weathering. There was a heater of some kind mounted up against the east wall, and there must have been a fire because there are big burn marks above the old timber mount. The 12' x 6' addition on the east side appears to have been a shower room. A plywood addition which probably held some electrical equipment or a water tank on the northeast side has collapsed. A separate building (Log Office) is annexed onto the northeast side, but are not connected from the inside.

Log Office: This building is log construction, dimensions 12' x 14'. It has a cement floor, which suggests that it may originally been used as a shop, or perhaps covers over the original location of the mill. A drafting table and scattered paperwork from the 1970s era suggests that it was last used as an office when Echo Bay Mines Limited mined here in 1979-1980. Since it occupies where the old mill was, the building was built in the 1940s.

Quonset Hut Warehouse: This building is a steel frame Quonset hut design, dimensions 20' x 48'. It appears to have been used as a warehouse. It was probably built in the late 1940s period of operations. Walls are corrugated metal siding. There is a small frame-porch addition on the south side. The building has three areas: the west side has a garage door which opens into an empty area, used as a garage and storage. The floor is mine waste material. There is some material/junk on the ground, but nothing of interest. There are wooden bins on the far wall. Shiplap partitions separate this section from the next room, which is a thin, empty room, into which the frame addition on the south side enters. The next room is divided from the former room by an unfinished frame-stud wall, through which is a door way. This was another storage room, but it is empty. There is a steel-frame window on this side of the building.

Garage: This long building appears to be on the verge of collapse as it leans heavily to one direction. Its location corresponds to the location of a building seen on an old property map from the 1930s, so it may date from that era. It is frame construction, dimensions 12' x 28', sided with cut logs in a vertical fashion, cut side facing inwards and rough side facing outwards. The building has large doors on either end, so this was probably a garage. It contains some debris and junk, but nothing of interest.

Cap Magazine 3: Frame construction, dimensions 8' x 8'. A telephone or power pole is built onto one corner, and there are still insulators at the top. Building is empty.

Ruins of the Powerhouse: This large concrete foundation was the powerhouse, built circa 1946. The building has been demolished and all the machinery has been removed. Timber and tarpaper ruins is scattered all around the area. The layout was split into two sections at two separate elevations. The lower section must have been a shop or a garage, its dimensions being 17' x 18'. The upper section adjacent to the north is raised up about 4 feet and contained the powerhouse machinery, including diesel engines and air compressors. Only the concrete pedestals remain. The dimensions of this section are 30' x 17', with a 7' x 14' addition on the west side.

Explosive Magazines: I did not visit these buildings, but I saw them from the air. There are two buildings, probably log construction. They are located about 1/4 km east of the mine site buildings, and are accessible by traveling the road southeast from the old tailings pile area. They date back to the 1930s and were used to store explosive

materials. Typically, these structures are built further away from the other mine infrastructure in case of fire or explosion.

Tailings Pile: The tailings pile is basically gone, all the material having been removed in 1975-1977 for milling at Port Radium or otherwise eroded away. Some material is still evident in a few places.

Rail Track: There is a series of rail track leading from the mine opening. Two dump points were used for waste. One track leaves the mine portal opening. Another set of tracks leaves the rear of the headframe connecting to the blacksmith shop and a waste dump..

Other Structures: A length of rail track connects the headframe to the blacksmith shop, and overtop of this rail is a small rigging bunk designed to offload pallets onto a rail car. This rigging is basically an overhead crane consisting of an I-beam supported by timbers, cradling the rail track. An old flat-deck rail car is still on this track.

Other Items: At one point there was a pipeline of some kind between the camp site on the lake shore and the mine site, but no ruins were found. However, lots of wood debris was noted along the edge of the road. Old, rotting timber bundles are located southwest of the mine site.

Interesting Equipment: The only interesting items of equipment found were a fleet of 1-ton end-dump ore cars, stockpiled behind the blacksmith shop. There is some old machinery buried in deep bush to the east of the powerhouse ruins. I was able to identify a few things, including two jaw crushers, the top lid of a portable Gardner-Denver air compressor, some flywheels, and other gears. The vegetation here is very thick and I did not go out of my way to explore this area, due also to bad bugs. There is also some junk sticking out of the ground at the south end of the old tailings pile, but I was unable to identify it. It might have been old parts of the mill. Down from the powerhouse are two dozer tracks, probably for a Cat tractor.

Camp Site:

The camp site consisted of log cabins and tents, occupying what was once a thinly vegetated forest patch of ground, about 30 feet above the elevation of Contact Lake and 75 feet in land from the shore. This area is now badly overgrown with weeds and shrubs, but most of the log buildings still stand.

In the 1930s, there were several permanent log structures (cookery, warehouses, bunkhouses, office, assay lab, manager's house), and smaller structures including outhouses, ice house, and several tents on log frames.



Contact Lake camp buildings, c.1938
(from Yellowknife: An Illustrated History...misidentified as
Burwash Yellowknife Camp)

See the attached maps for a layout of the camp. Buildings 1 and 2 are gone, Building 2 evidently having burned down (this was the cookery). Buildings 3 to 14 are still standing. Most of the buildings date to the 1930s....probably only one was erected in the 1940s period of operations. They were occupied in the 1960s-1980s during later exploration and mining at Contact Lake.

Building 1: Seen on old photos, but no ruins found. Heavy overgrowth in location.

Building 2: Old log cookery, looks like it has burned down.

Building 3: A log building, two-seater outhouse, 8' x 5'. In good shape. Has a solid door and a small window.

Building 4: Log cabin, dimensions 23' x 18'. Interior is finished with white painted donnocona. There are no room partitions, and the building is empty except for a small shelf on one wall and an armchair. It is in poor shape as a section of the roof is open and leaking water, creating a patch of mould and green moss. There are two ventilation ports on the roof. Large windows on the front and back. It is an original 1930s vintage log cabin and was a bunkhouse living quarters.

Building 5: Log cabin, with frame roof. Blue tarp covers one section of the roof. Dimensions are 10' x 14.5'. Single room. The interior walls are donnocona painted white. Condition is good. One wooden table and four metal beds inside. A single small window on the front of the building. A small wooden porch and stairs at the entrance. The

cabin was likely built as a warm warehouse in the 1930s. There were no windows on old 1930s photos but there was smoke rising from the chimney so the building had heat.

Building 6: Log cabin, dimensions 26' x 15.5'. Frame roof and frame eaves. Split into two rooms but the separating wall is a very large archway cut through the log wall. Entrance to the building is through two doors on the south side. There are aviation oil containers in one corner of the building, a pile of old windows, a pile of garbage and stubby beer bottles, rusted out air-tight heaters, and an old cot leaning against the north wall. Other wise empty, and in poor shape. Log walls on the front side are rotted and collapsing. This may have been the office building in the 1930s.

Building 7: Log cabin about 18' x 22', split into two sections. The back side is only accessible through a door way at the back of the building. The original doorway in the exterior has been covered over. The back entrance appears to have been a cellar door, and the back room was probably a cellar or storage room. The ground elevation is much higher at the back, and the door is actually only four feet high. You have to step down into the building. The front section has wood flooring, white-painted donnacona, several large windows, a bed frame, small chair, barrel wood stove, and small shelves along the walls.

Building 8: Collapsed log cabin buried in deep overgrowth. Roof has collapsed. This may have been a living quarters. Dimensions about 23' x 18'.

Building 9: This is a framed dwelling, about 12' x 20'. It was probably built in the 1940s during the second term of operations, and may have been the manager's house. There is a small porch entrance on the south side. The building is in very good shape. It was originally sided with tarpaper. There is red roll-roofing which has not deteriorated at all, suggesting perhaps more recent occupation (1970s-1980s). The building is empty except for a small wood table. The porch entrance is full of beer bottles.

Building 10: A small outhouse about 5' x 5' next to the above frame house. A single seater.

Building 11: Log building with collapsed flat roof, about 16' x 20'. Buried in deep bush. This may have originally been an ice house or warehouse but was later made into a sauna as in one corner of the building there is a wooden platform with a pile of neatly-placed stones and stovepipe.

Building 12: Log cabin with two frame additions. This was the assay lab in the 1930s-1940s. The original log section is about 18' x 14'. Inside this part there is a stack of drill core wooden trays and some spilled rock core. There is also some shelving and a small frame partition for a storage closet (with red shelves). To the rear of the log cabin is a small frame addition, about 18' x 6' in dimensions. Here there are more shelving so this was a storage addition. The roof has collapsed so this area is in disarray. There are two wood-stave kegs, rotted and crushed, and some assay crucibles and a barrel of what might be assay litharge on a shelf. To the north of the log section is another frame addition that extends the main building about 12'. This section is empty except for more spilled piles of core. Through the roof of the log section there is a wooden ventilation port. This building corresponds to a historic image in the NWT Archives, N-1991-052: 0003 (which was originally labeled as being the Main Office, but matches perfectly so was an assay lab).

Building 13: Log cabin 14.5' x 31'. This building is split into two rooms about evenly down the center, divided by a log wall. Each room has a separate outside entrance and small windows. They have stark differences in interior décor – the north room has 1970s-era wood paneling on all walls and the ceiling, and red-stained floor and window molding. On the south room the interior walls are baby-blue painted donnacona which has rotted out in several places and made a mess of the floor. The building is empty of furnishings except for a small wooden shelf on a wall. This was very likely a living quarters at one point in time, but could also have been the mine office (unsure if Building 6 or 13 was mine office).

Building 14: Outhouse, single-seater. About 4' x 4'.

Contact Lake Tunnel:

The site was spotted from the helicopter on July 17th 2005. I did not land at the site.

Location:

The mine tunnel is located on the northeast side of Contact Lake. Coordinates are 65° 58' 45" N, 117° 44' 45" W, NTS Map 86 F-13. Access is by float plane or helicopter only. There was probably an old trail connecting this site to the Contact Lake Mine road, but that was over 70 years ago so no doubt it is no longer visible.

History:

The claims were staked in 1931 by John Michaels, based on silver and radium showings. The mine tunnel was blasted in 1933-1934 by a group called Contact Lake Mining Company. The tunnel is reported to have a length of about 115 feet, with a small amount of drifting to the east. No other work is reported. ⁴

Site Overview:

The mine tunnel is located right on the lake shore, driven into the side of a high escarpment. Some old ruins to the east of the tunnel (approximately 1/2 kilometer away) may have been the camp for this mine.

Details of Investigation:

The site was not really visited, having only been viewed some the helicopter for a few seconds. The mine tunnel is barely visible amidst rock fall from cave-ins and probably land slides from the hill above, and some vegetation along the lake shore. It is a strange spot for a mine tunnel, with hardly any ground at the portal on which to have started the hole. It basically backs right onto the lake. A high cliff continues in both directions of the tunnel. There is no road or trail heading to the site. Crews must have boated over from their camp.

A camp site was spotted about half a kilometer east along the shore of the lake, and is probably the ruins of the camp for this mine. The ruins look like a tent frame pad. Not enough time was spent looking at it to provide any more details.

⁴ Cummings, A.L., 1934. Memorandum to Mr. Turner. January 24th 1934. (*National Archives of Canada. RG 85. Vol 1625. File 11337*)

Elbonanza Mine:

The site was visited in the morning of July 18th 2005. I was dropped off at the site by the helicopter with a scheduled pickup in five hours time.

Location:

The mine site is on the east side of Miles Lake, southwest of Echo Bay on NTS Map 86 E-16. Coordinates are 66° 00' 15" N, 118° 04' 15" W. Access is by float plane or helicopter. There is an old road which leaves Great Bear Lake from Dowdell Point and connects to the south end of the mine site. This road is not identified on NTS Maps, and its condition is generally unknown. I did not travel nor see this road.

History:

Silver was discovered on this property in 1930 by Spud Arsenault and Charlie St. Paul. The original claim group encompassed both the current Elbonanza and Bonanza Mines, and were owned by Eldorado Gold Mines Ltd. In 1934, the eastern half of the claim block was acquired by a new company, El-Bonanza Mining Corporation Ltd, of which Eldorado was a major shareholder. The western half of the claims was retained by Eldorado, and would later be developed by them as the Bonanza Mine in 1937-1938.

El-Bonanza Mining Corporation sank three shafts in 1934-1936 and shipped a bulk sample for processing, recovering 30,000 ounces of silver. The mine did not enter production probably due to the low price of silver and the erratic mineralization of the silver veins.⁵ It was reactivated for exploration numerous times, in 1950, 1956, 1965, 1969, and in the late 1970s-early 1980s. Some 1,000 tons of ore are reported stockpiled on the surface, together with 1,500 tons of ore broken underground. No attempt has been made to process this ore, and Echo Bay Mines Ltd., the last company to perform work on the original claims, concluded that the silver potential of the property was too insignificant to warrant major development.⁶

Site Overview:

The mine site and camp buildings occupy a sandy area between Miles Lake and a small unnamed lake. The silver veins outcrop on the hill above the mine, and the buildings are basically lined along the edge of the ridge of this hill. The primary shaft, known historically as the #2 shaft, dips westerly, but the underground workings extend easterly beneath the hill. The #1 shaft is actually an internal shaft (winze) that was sunk from an adit tunnel, located on the north end of the mine site. #3 shaft is apparently not very deep and is located up on the hill. The #1 and #3 shaft sites were not visited.

The camp buildings are located on the south side of the mine. One of the buildings has burned down. The bunkhouse is plywood construction and probably 1970s vintage. A stream drains the unnamed lake into Miles Lake just beyond this area.

The mine site includes six intact buildings, and one collapsed building. Most of these structures if not all are not original 1930s vintage, and were more likely built in the 1950s. The site is generally clean although there is some trash scattered about. Vegetation is thick on the north and south ends of the mine, but most of the site occupies a sandy area where vegetation has not yet taken hold. The old road to Great Bear Lake landing site at Dowdell Point leaves the mine at the south end. Newer trails leave the mine at the north end and connect to Bonanza Lake. There is a beach landing near Dowdell Point where freight was received for the mine in the 1930s. Apparently there is some kind of landing strip there, an oil tanks or two, and some old machinery abandoned on the beach. This area was not visited.

Details of Investigation:

#2 Shaft Headframe and Shafthouse: The headframe at the Elbonanza #2 inclined shaft was probably built in 1935, although it is possible that this is a rebuilt structure. Its height is approximately 25 feet from the shaft collar to the sheave wheel deck, if one was to measure vertically. The inclined length of the headframe from the shaft collar to the sheave deck is probably 30 feet. The shaft inclines at a direction 72 degrees southwest, so the hoist would have been positioned up on the hill to the northeast of the headframe. No hoist building or concrete mount was found, but

⁵ Scott, A.W., 1935. Progress Report for El-Bonanza Mining Corporation. November 1935.

⁶ Moffett, R., 1981. 1980 Exploration of El-Bonanza Mine. Echo Bay Mines Limited, March 1981.

an area of rock and sand was clearly disturbed suggesting the hoist might have been located in this spot, perhaps pinned into bedrock. So far as I can tell, the sheave wheel is still inside the top of the headframe.

This headframe is interesting because of the lack of stiff legs. It was built up against a rock ridge, so it is assumed that the mid-front of the headframe structure is anchored into the rock. See drawings for a rough diagram of the structure. This headframe was not a production structure, and the hoisting capacity of such a setup was probably very small. This kind of headframe, without proper stiff leg supports, would not have worked well if the mine was to enter full operation.

The headframe is timber built with 8x8 timbers, sheeted with shiplap and covered with red tarpaper. Its condition can be considered good. Men accessed the shaft through manway ladders; there is no elevator cage, and ore was hoisted in buckets. Ore was dumped down a short chute, which fed a rail car positioned on the northside of the shaft. Material was carted out of the headframe building and dumped. There is also a small area at the back of the headframe where there is a bench and work station.

Adit Tunnel and #1 Shaft: Not visited due to overgrowth. Condition is unknown. The site was not specifically seen from the air, but it is not believed there any buildings at the site. The #1 shaft is actually an internal winze located about 50 feet in from the portal entrance. The portal is probably sealed off.

Shop: This is a log building attached to the headframe structure on the south side. Dimensions are 17' x 12'. It could date back to the 1930s. It was probably used as a shop or garage, and there is a large garage door on its south side. Counter tables and scattered machine parts suggests it was used as a shop. The building is in fair shape.

Dry: Maps from the 1970s identify this as a miner's dry. It is plywood construction, so probably dates from that era. Dimensions are 12' x 18'.

Small Shed: Dimensions 8' x 8'. Probably a pumphouse, vintage 1970s. Plywood construction, empty.

Small Shed on Hill. Located above the headframe. Probably a cap magazine. Timber frame and shiplap.

Warehouse: Probably dates from the 1950s, this looks to have been a shop or warehouse building. It is timber frame and shiplap construction, dimensions 31' x 20'. There are many shelves and work tables. The floor is littered with junk and debris. The roof is on the verge of collapse.

Powerhouse Ruins: This building has collapsed. 1970s property map identifies it as the powerhouse. Ruins are plywood and timber frame.

Bunkhouse: Plywood and timber frame, likely built in the 1970s during later exploration of the property by Echo Bay Mines Ltd. Dimensions are 28' x 40'. There is a kitchen/common room and 7 double-man bedrooms. A hallway runs down the middle of the building with doors on each end.

Ruins 1: A building, probably 1950s vintage, has burned down. A large clear patch of burned ruins marks the spot. This was probably a cookery or bunkhouse, and is marked on 1970s property maps. Dimensions are 40' x 16'. Burned debris includes a stove, kitchenware, and a tub.

Ruins 2: A timber foundation next to the bunkhouse, dimensions 14' x 16'. Possibly a tent frame.

Ore Stockpile: The ore stockpile has been dumped west of the #2 shaft. No samples were taken.

Waste Stockpile: Waste was dumped out into the unnamed lake west of the #2 shaft.

Rail Track: There is a single line of rail that leaves the #2 shaft headframe westward for a length of about 50 feet. The line once continued for a length of 200 feet out onto the waste pile in the lake, but in order to have a road going through the mine site the rest of the rail was removed. The rail was built on a trestle as it approached the lake. The trestle is now buried under the waste piles and the rail has been removed, with only the posts of this trestle sticking out from the top of the waste piles.

Interesting Equipment: Not much equipment is left at the site. There is the box from an old end dump ore car but with no base or wheels, the body, frame, and engine of a Canadian Ingersoll-Rand portable air compressor, and an Athey wagon/half track trailer. Inside the headframe are two ore buckets made from galvanized drums.

Bonanza Mine:

The site was visited in the morning of July 18th 2005. I was dropped off at the Elbonanza Mine by helicopter. After investigating Elbonanza, I hiked over the terrain to Bonanza, and was picked up by the helicopter there.

Location:

The mine site is on the west side of a small lake unofficially known as Whale Lake, southwest of Echo Bay on NTS Map 86 E-16. Coordinates are 66° 00' 30" N, 118° 05' 45" W. Access is by float plane or helicopter. If visiting by boat from Great Bear Lake, it is recommended that you land at Dowdell Point and try to follow the old road to Elbonanza Mine, and then hike over the hills to this site. There is no road connecting to Bonanza.

History:

Silver was discovered on this property in 1930 by Spud Arsenault and Charlie St. Paul. The original claim group encompassed both the current Elbonanza and Bonanza Mines, and were owned by Eldorado Gold Mines Ltd. In 1934, the eastern half of the claim block was acquired by a new company, El-Bonanza Mining Corporation Ltd, of which Eldorado was a major shareholder. The western half of the claims was retained by Eldorado, and would later be developed by them as the Bonanza Mine in 1937-1938. During that period a shaft was sunk at Bonanza to 100 foot depth and some drifting was completed at that depth. The price of silver then dropped, and all work stopped. Eldorado never published any work detailing their results on this property, but it is generally believed that the silver occurs in erratic lenses and is uneconomic.⁷

Site Overview:

The shaft site is located on the southeast side of a small lake, unofficially known as Whale Lake. The only building here is the combination headframe/shop. No other buildings probably existed here. Waste rock or ore has been dumped out the back of the headframe in two piles. Six parallel trenches follow the vein to the north of the shaft. There is a trail connecting Bonanza Lake and Whale Lake, along which are the ruins of the original 1930s vintage camp and a log cabin of unknown vintage.

Details of Investigation:

Headframe/Shop: This is the only building at the minesite. It is a combination headframe, shop, and powerhouse building, with the shop/powerhouse section built onto the front. The hoist would have been in this section as well. It is a rough timber/log structure, approximately 30 feet high. Dimensions of headframe section is 13' x 11'. Dimensions of the shop annex is 19' x 13'. The exterior is sheeted with shiplap and rough lumber. Ore and waste was dumped out the back of the headframe via a small chute. An ore car was used to tram the material a short distance into two stockpiles. There is no sheave wheel at the top of the headframe.

Inside the shop/powerhouse section there is no original equipment remaining, but there is a newer vintage pump. There is also a barrel wood stove which would have heated the structure. Original equipment would have been placed on timber bunks, which still exist. The floor is littered with junk. On the wall against the headframe section is an old peg-board, used to measure the amount of ore cars brought to surface per shift.

Condition of the structure could be considered good for its age (1937-1938). The shaft is open, and is filled with water about 10 feet down. The shaft collar is cribbed with logs.

Other Things in the Shaft Area: Two piles of waste or ore material are stockpiled behind the headframe. There would have been a short section of rail at one point. As the shaft was sunk on an outcrop patch, the waste was dumped down the side of the bedrock. The trestle is now buried under the waste piles and the rail has been removed, with only the posts of this trestle sticking out from the top of the waste piles.

The rail car they used appears to have been a wooden design. There is no box left, but the wheels are mounted unto a timber base. The remains are next to the headframe.

Old Camp Ruins: A large amount of timber ruins marks the location of the original camp at the Bonanza Mine, built and used in 1937-1938. The buildings were reportedly demolished in 1950 or 1951 and useable material was sent to Elbonanza for buildings there. The approximate dimensions of this building was 17' x 32'.

⁷ The Northern Miner, December 16, 1937; January 6, 1938; April 1, 1938

Old Log Cabin: It is not known if this cabin dates from the 1930s period of operation. It may have been a more recent (1940s-1950s) trappers cabin, although its proximity to the old mine site would seem to suggest that there is a relationship. Dimensions are 14' x 24'. There is also a small tent frame foundation (10' x 12') to the north of the cabin. The building has been abandoned for many years. Hugh Arden probably occupied the cabin when he owned the mineral claims here in the 1980s. The windows are all smashed out and the floor is littered with sawdust insulation. There are some home made furnishings like a chair, tables, shelving, and a bed frame. The building is other wise empty except for some tin cans, and a pick axe.

Port Radium Area:

The site was visited briefly on the ground on July 17th 2005, in the area of the old cairn and plaque right on Labine Point. I did not explore the site from the ground, and several aerial passes of the property make up the details of this investigation.

Introduction:

The Port Radium townsite and Eldorado and Echo Bay Mines are located at Labine Point at the entrance to Echo Bay, on NTS Maps 86 L-1. Coordinates of Labine Point are 66° 05' 00" N, 118° 02' 00" W.

History:

There is little need to digress on a detailed history of this site. High-grade radium, copper, and silver minerals were discovered here in 1930 by Gilbert Labine. The Eldorado Mine went into operation at Labine Point in 1932 and production of radium salts began in 1933. The Echo Bay Mine was owned by Cominco in the 1930s and was located further up the hill. It did not enter production at this time, but two adits were dug into the hill. At Eldorado, radium, silver, and copper production continued until 1940 when the mine closed. Uranium became the focus during the war, and in 1942 the mine was reopened. By this time, the townsite was being called Port Radium. Eldorado became a government entity in 1944, and the mine continued the produce uranium until 1960. In 1964 the Echo Bay Mine entered silver production, and the old Eldorado mill and buildings were rehabilitated. In 1976 the Eldorado Mine reopened to recover old silver and copper values underground. The mines closed in 1982, and practically all buildings at Port Radium were demolished and burned.

Site Overview:

The site is very large, encompassing two mine sites, camps, one satellite mining operation, airstrip, and old radio tower location. All of the buildings except a few have been destroyed. The roads are in fair repair. Concrete foundations mark the location of many buildings. The shafts and adit portals have been sealed or covered over with waste rock. The Crossfault Lake headframe is still standing.

Details of Investigation:

Cairn and Plaque: This concrete cairn was erected in 1985 upon the completion of the cleanup at the Port Radium site. The plaque pays homage to the history of the site. Two additional plaques were erected on the other side of the cairn to honour John Zigarlik (Echo Bay Mines Ltd. president) and his wife, who passed away in the late 1980s.

Old Cabin at Port Radium: Seen from the air and at a distance from Labine Point. The cabin was built in 1937 as a small guest house for dignitaries. The Governor General of Canada stayed here on his visit to the site in 1937. It was later used as an RCMP detachment in the 1940s-1950s. Condition of the structure could not be judged from my distance.

Echo Bay Mine Stopes: There are open stopes above the Echo Bay Mine workings. The holes are surrounded by fencing. Drift crosscuts can be seen entering and exiting the stopes on either end. There is also an open raise which has been fenced off.

Old Camp Ruins: Just south of the above mentioned open stopes, down the hill in a shallow gulley, are tent frame ruins, perhaps part of the original 1930 camps built here by Cominco when they were exploring the Echo Bay property.

Crossfault Lake Headframe and Shaft Site: This is located on the north side of Crossfault Lake (NTS 86 K-4). I did not land here, and only took pictures from the helicopter. The shaft was sunk in 1945-1946 by Eldorado with the intent of the uranium deposit underneath becoming a satellite mine. No economic uranium deposit was found. The shaft extends to a depth of over 200 feet with one level.⁸ There is also apparently a raise to surface in this area, although nothing was spotted. The headframe is the only building left at the site, but there was also a combination powerhouse and hoist building. Only a concrete foundation remains. There is no equipment. The headframe is a timber structure, looks to be about 40 feet in height. It is sheeted with shiplap. There may have been tarpaper as an

⁸ McNiven, J.G., 1967. History of the Eldorado Mine, Port Radium. *In* The Canadian Institute of Mining & Metallurgy Bulletin, November-December 1967.

exterior finish, but there is nothing left now. A large waste rock pad extends south east and south west of the shaft site. A single rail track leaves the headframe and extends into the southwest waste pile. The powerline that connected the Crossfault Lake shaft with the powerplant at Port Radium still exists on the Crossfault Lake side.

Crossfault Lake Camp: Four old timber-frame and log buildings in poor shape still stand on the south shore of Crossfault Lake, right near the road to the Glacier Lake airstrip (NTS 86 K-4). I only saw these buildings from the air so I did not record any details on them at the time. This camp was originally built in the 1930s by Consolidated Mining and Smelting Co. (Cominco) during exploration and development of the nearby Echo Bay Mine. The original Echo Bay adit portals are located only a short distance away down the road. The camp was reoccupied in the 1945-1946 period during development of the Crossfault Lake shaft by Eldorado Mining and Refining Limited. Crews boated across the lake to the shaft site.

Although I did not visit the Crossfault Lake Camp site in 2005, photographs taken by Diane Baldwin that same summer were analyzed. Four buildings remained standing. Three buildings stand at road level above the lakeshore. The main building (Cabin 1) is a two-storey log cabin that was used as a bunkhouse. The interior is empty but appears in reasonable shape. Cabin 2 is a log building of unknown purpose, with a porch entrance on the north side. Cabin 3 is a frame building with an addition on the east side, empty and practically collapsed. Cabin 4 is located down near the shore of Crossfault Lake, down hill from the other two buildings. This was the cookhouse. It is a long, log building with two interior sections, mess hall and kitchen/storage room. The interior was in poor shape. A large badly rusted kitchen range (The Goundry Foundry Co.) was inside, otherwise it appeared empty.

Mystery Island Mine:

The site is located on Mystery Island at the entrance to Echo Bay on NTS Map 86 L-1. I flew over the site on July 18th 2005 but did not land. Coordinate of the island are 66° 02' 40" N, 118° 02' 00" W.

History:

The original mineral claims were staked in 1931 by T.G. Donovan. A tunnel was reported to have been driven into a radium/silver bearing vein in 1933-1934. Little information is available. A small crew employed by Radium Corporation of Canada Limited were on location in the summer of 1933.⁹

Site Overview:

The mine site consisted of a short tunnel blasted into the south edge of the island and a small camp along the gravel beach.

Details of Investigation:

The site was seen briefly from the air. I was unable to identify any ruins of this mine. Old photos in the Glenbow Archives (PA-2218-76) identify this site from the water, and along the shore were a few rough buildings. The gravel beach today is bare of any buildings or obvious ruins. The mine tunnel was probably blasted into the ridge which cuts across the south end of the island from east-west. No tunnel was seen during our pass.

⁹ The Northern Miner, August 3, 1933

Cameron Bay (Branson's Lodge)

The old Cameron Bay townsite is located on the north side of Echo Bay on a sandy peninsula, located on NTS Map 86 K-4. Coordinates are 66° 03' 40" N, 117° 53' 00" W. Access is by float plane, helicopter, or boat from Great Bear Lake.

History:

Cameron Bay was inhabited by prospectors, trappers, and several businesses during the busy mining rush of the mid 1930s. It was an ideal harbour for float planes, the primary mode of transport for prospectors during the radium rush of the 1930s. First settlement of the site began in the spring of 1932 with prospectors tents, a trading post operated by Murphy Services Limited, and a government authorized postal office by the end of 1932. Within two years there was an RCMP detachment, Hudson's Bay Company post, Government office, several restaurants, trading posts, doctor's office, post office, aerial bases, government radio station, saw mill, private residences, and other businesses. A townsite was surveyed in 1933 and property was administered by the Federal government. Population probably peaked at 200 in 1934, not including the regional mines and camps that Cameron Bay serviced.¹⁰

The town's status was as a mining settlement, and never a municipality with any kind of local organization although capably administered by government agents and RCMP officers. It was a hub of commerce for prospectors, trappers, aboriginal families, tourists, and local mining companies and their operations. In 1937, just as the community began a short decline, the town's name was officially changed to 'Port Radium' to better reflect the region's importance as a producer of radium minerals.¹¹ By now, the boom surrounding radium and silver in the area had subsided, and only government services (RCMP, government radio station) remained, but these too had all closed in 1940 with the cessation of mining activity in the region.



Cameron Bay. Arden cabin, HBC post and warehouse, Mining Records Office, and sawmill (Glenbow Archives, PA-2218-88)

In 1942, with the reopening of Eldorado uranium mine, government services (RCMP, radio station) moved to the minesite and assumed the 'Port Radium' name. Thereafter, Cameron Bay was vacant aside from the random trapper, prospector or aboriginal family who occupied the buildings. Old buildings were demolished and scavenged for material until only four original buildings remained. In the 1960s the remaining structures were repaired and incorporated into part of the Branson's Lodge.

Site Overview:

The old townsite stretched up along the west side of Cameron Bay about 1/4 km, starting from the sandy point within Echo Bay. The lodge occupies the area of the sandy point. Only four of the original buildings still stand; all other structures have been demolished or burned down. Those buildings now form part of the lodge.

In August 1933, the Cameron Bay townsite was surveyed by the government. Block and Lot in parenthesis refer to the 1933 survey (see appended list and maps).

Details of Investigation:

D'Arcy Arden Cabin: This old log cabin was built in 1932 or 1933 by Joe Gerhard. It was used briefly by the RCMP as a detachment until they built a permanent detachment in 1934. D'Arcy Arden Sr. bought the cabin in 1934 from Gerhard and lived here with his family until the Arden's moved to Yellowknife in 1937. Dimensions are 20' x 20', construction is completely log. There used to be a frame addition at the rear but it has long been removed. The roof is sheeted with timbers and roll-roofing tar paper. The roof is very leaky. The building is used as storage normally,

¹⁰ Historical information on Cameron Bay, land use or occupancy of buildings is based on records, reports, and correspondence of the Federal Government, on file at the National Archives of Canada (RG 85, Volume 855, File 8017, and RG 85, Volume 1628, File 12076.) See list of lots and blocks appended.

¹¹ The Globe and Mail, October 14, 1937

but when I was visiting Alberta Star Development was using it as office space. There are no interior partitions. (Block 1, Lot 23)

HBC Post: The Hudson's Bay Company post was opened in summer 1933¹², and was permanently closed in 1941. Andrew Reid was post manager. It was known as 'Fort Dease'. The main post building is 36' x 26'. It is a timber frame structure, with white-washed wood siding and red shingle roofing. Condition is good. The building is used as storage for Branson's Lodge. There is the large room which was used as part of the store, and a storage room on the north side. The attic crawlspace is accessible, but is empty except for more recent beer can and other garbage. Some old wood crate pieces date back to the 1930s. The crawlspace beneath the building is boarded up and not accessible. (Block 1, Lot 21)

HBC Warehouse: This smaller version of the above building was a warehouse for the HBC. The lodge used it as a four-bed suite, but currently it is not being used. Dimensions of this timber-frame building are 18' x 24'. The attic crawlspace is empty. There is an old outhouse behind the building to the north. (Block 1, Lots 19 and 20)

RCMP Detachment: The Royal Canadian Mounted Police occupied this building starting in 1934 as a permanent detachment for Cameron Bay. Sergeant E. Baker was the first commander of the station, followed by a variety of other officers. The detachment closed in the summer of 1940, but the building as a government asset was kept in very good repair and when Branson's Lodge opened in the 1960s they too kept it in good shape and the owners were likely living here. The building has been jacked up to receive new foundational cribs. The front section of the house contains the living room and a bedroom. The back addition contains another bedroom and a storage area. The storage area is blocked off. The attic crawlspace is accessible, but it was found empty. The building is timber-frame construction, sided with grey-painted wood tongue and groove style. Red-painted trim. The main section is 18' x 26'. The back room addition is 14' x 12'. The side storage addition is 6' x 12'. The house rests on timber piles and cribs. (Block 1, Lot 31)

Log Cabins: These are located behind the RCMP detachment, and are probably not original, having been built by the Bransons in the 1960s or 1970s. They are currently vacant, but were used as suites for lodge guests.

Ruins 1: This ruin of wood marks the location of Steve Yanick's house, built in the summer of 1934. The Federal Government purchased the lot and building in September 1934 and occupied it as a Mining Recorder's office for two years. It was a two-storey log building, with a log addition on the west side. The main log house contained offices and living quarters upstairs for Paul Trudell, assistant mining recorder. The log addition contained living quarters for the family of Mackay Meikle, mining recorder and local agent for the Federal Government (Department of the Interior). The office was closed in 1936, but the government maintained the building for several years into the 1940s. At one point in the 1950s, Edward Blondin, a Dene man from the Sahtu, was renting the building from the government.¹³ The building is gone leaving only the ruins of original flooring collapsed into the dugout cellar. There are log foundation walls with two layers of shiplap floor boards. A large Enterprise No. 1030 cook stove has crashed through the floor into the cellar below the main house section. Rough dimensions of the ruins were calculated in the field, and were cross-referenced with actual construction blueprints of this building dated 1935.¹⁴ The building was 22' long and 18' wide, with the north addition being 15' long and 18' wide. The dugout cellar was 14' long, 12' wide, and 6' deep. There was a veranda screened in porch on the front of the main section, 22' long and 6' wide. (Block 1, Lot 18)

Ruins 2: Timber-floor foundation, 12' x 16'. Old wood stove sits on the floor. This was the warehouse next to the Mining Recorder's office. Construction plans for this building can also be found at the National Archives. (Block 1, Lot 17)

Ruins 3: Heavy overgrowth in this area, but indications of a building. There is a barrel wood stove here. This was the location of the sawmill in 1933-1934. (Block 1, Lot 15 or 16)

Ruins 4: Faint foundational ruins amongst heavy weeds and overgrowth. This was the location of Murphy Services warehouse cabin alongside the lakeshore. (Block 1, Lot 12)

Ruins 5: Trash pit occupying what may have been the location of a building. Heavy weeds. Some timber and tarpaper debris. This is the area of Murphy Services residence 1932-1933 what was likely the home of Vic Ingraham and family. (Block 1, Lot 11)

¹² The Edmonton Bulletin, June 13, 1933

¹³ National Archives of Canada (RG 85, Volume 855, File 8017, and RG 85, Volume 1628, File 12076)

¹⁴ "Plan of Buildings on Lots 17 & 18, Block 1, Settlement of Cameron Bay, Great Bear Lake, N.W.T." National Archives of Canada (RG 85, Volume 1628, File 12076)

Ruins 6: Heavy weeds and overgrowth in this area, no obvious ruins. This was the area of Murphy Services other log cabins (restaurant and store), one of which later became the Radium Café c.1937. (Block 1, Lot 9)

Ruins 7: Thick with weeds. Stone pathway leads up the hill from the north. Evident log foundational walls. Small dugout basement section. Building was about 20' x 40'. There is an old Adam Hall #923 stove and old bed spring. This was the area of Murphy Services store and post office 1932-1933. (Block 1, Lot 7)

Ruins 8: Clear patch within thick vegetation, possible foundation. Some timber and trash debris. This may have been the location of the NWT Prospectors Association hall. (Block 4, Lot 10)

Ruins 9: 26' x 26' foundation surrounded by log crib and piles of rock. Concrete pedestal on the north end. This was the government wireless radio station operated between 1932 and 1940. (Block 4, Lot 8)

Ruins 10: Small foundation on the sandy slope. Timber ruins down the hill. This might be the location of the log cache on stilts as seen on some old photos. This sandy beach area was the Canadian Airways Limited floatbase. (Block 1, Lot 4)



Cameron Bay, Murphy Services buildings. Warehouse, Vic Ingraham residence, restaurant, and store/post office.
(Glenbow Archives, PA-2218-87)

Loading Platform: Timber loading platform extends from shore into the water of the lake. Rail tracks mounted on the platform at about 24-inch gauge. There are also ruins of a log dock not far away. This sandy beach area was the Canadian Airways Limited floatbase. (Block 1, Lot 4)



H.A. Swanson trading post and Martin Gardner's restaurant. (Sphere Magazine)

Ruins 11: Small foundation. Some trash nearby.

Ruins 12: Large foundation with possible additions. Main section dimensions 26' x 16'. This is approximately where Canadian Airways Limited had their wireless radio station. (Block 1, Lot 4)

Ruins 13: Possibly two different buildings further back in the bush. Lots of timber and other debris. Wood stove components and dishware. One area was measured as 20' x 30'. This was the approximate area of H.A. Swanson's trading post (Block 1, Lot 2) and Martin Gardner's restaurant (Block 1, Lot 1).

Ruins 14: These ruins are across the marshy area, further north. Three foundations were identified. Other foundations were hard to spot, although no doubt they are the remains of old buildings. Scattered trash and ruins down to the shore. Heavy overgrowth nearer to the shore. Trash piles are abundant. Two circular rock foundations with a tree growing in the middle of each. Unknown purpose, maybe an old rock garden? This was the Harry and Edna Reed compound, where they operated the Lakeshore Inn (restaurant, bunkhouses, and rec hall). (Block 2, Lots 10, 11, and 12)

Large Sandy Clearing: Located on the terrace above the Lodge is a large clearing of glacial till and sand. The lodge uses it as a lay-down area and possibly a garbage dump (buried?). This was the government reservation for parkland in the 1930s, and was the scene of recreation and baseball games at Cameron Bay during the August 1 picnics of 1933 and 1934. (Block 4, Lot 18)

Old Wooden Cross: Loosely stood up against a rock face, behind Arden's log cabin, the lettering is becoming faded but it appears to read: *J.W. BLAN?BLAND / 1910-1937*

Concrete Footings with Pins: Above the HBC post on the terrace (Block 4) there are two or more areas where concrete was poured onto bedrock with heavy iron pins. One of them has a hand-written date of *19 June 37* in the concrete mass. I believe these are guide-wire pins from the government wireless station radio masts. There were two large steel-tower radio masts here in the late 1930s.

Interesting Artifacts at Cameron Bay:

Not much was found. Branson's Lodge has collected a few interesting artifacts, including an old blower forge unit, a dishwasher, and old Toledo scale, and smaller tools. There is also a set of rail car wheels. Old stoves litter the ruins of Cameron Bay buildings.

Old Ruins Near Cameron Bay:

Old Boat: Located just across the narrows from the lodge, on the east side of Cameron Bay. Old wood-built boat. Old gas engine is still inside. Rotting badly. Large iron rudder.

Old Camp: Located about 1 kilometer east of the lodge on the north shore of Echo Bay. It must be an old prospector's camp. A tent frame 12' x 10' was found, along with some scattered garbage. Nothing of interest. Dates back to the 1930s.

CAMERON BAY SETTLEMENT LOT AND BLOCK SURVEY – August 1933

(including notes on uses of land after 1933)

Proposed Allotment of Lots in Cameron Bay Townsite-Great Bear Lake, N.W.T., August 29, 1933

National Archives of Canada, RG 85, Volume 855, File 8017

BLOCK LOT LEASE HOLDER AND USE

1	1	Marion L. Ryan owner of Anna 2 mineral claims
1	2	Marion L. Ryan owner of Anna 2 mineral claims
1	3	Canadian Airways Limited wireless station and storage buildings
1	4	Canadian Airways Limited wireless station and storage buildings
1	5	Department of the Interior government office (never occupied as such)
1	6	Murphy Services proposed cooks residence (never occupied as such)
1	7	Murphy Services restaurant (log cabin 38x18'. Up for sale in 1934. Was later used by Mary and Tony Onraet for Radium Café until 1937)
1	8	Murphy Services cabin (bunkhouse)
1	9	Murphy Services store and post office
1	10	Murphy Services storage yard for boats
1	11	Murphy Services residence (for Vic Ingraham and family?)
1	12	Murphy Services warehouse (actually off the lot on shoreline reserve)
1	13	Murphy Services proposed machine and carpenter shop (never occupied as such)
1	14	Northern Waterways Ltd proposed warehouse
1	15	J.G. Hebden sawmill-machine shop (actually off the lot on shoreline reserve)
1	16	J.G. Hebden sawmill-machine shop (actually off the lot on shoreline reserve)
1	17	J.F. McDonald (government warehouse 1934)
1	18	Steve Yanick Jr. vegetable warehouse (Steve Yanick built a log house in the summer of 1934 and sold it to the Department of the Interior for a Mining Recorder's office in August 1934. It was used as such until 1936 and then sat vacant for many years. The government rented the cabin to Ed Blondin in the 1950s)
1	19	Hudson's Bay Company trading post (warehouse, is divided between Lots 19 and 20)
1	20	Hudson's Bay Company trading post (warehouse, is divided between Lots 19 and 20)
1	21	Hudson's Bay Company trading post (Main post, built August 1933, closed in 1941)
1	22	J.D. Nicholson
1	23	J. Gerhard for residence and business (Joseph Gerhard log house 20x20' with lean-to kitchen 18x13' in 1934. RCMP had occupied this house winter 1933-1934. Joseph Gerhard sells log cabin to Darcy Arden in April 1934)
1	24	J. Gerhard for residence and business (sold to Darcy Arden in 1934)
1	25	Nere Robert for residence and business
1	26	W.H. McDougall for residence and business
1	27	E. Van Humbeck for residence and business
1	28	North West Radium Minerals mining business (lease not executed)
1	29	D.F. Lent residence and business
1	30	Anglican Mission residence (Bishop Geddes 1933)
1	31	RCMP detachment buildings (log cabins built 1933, permanent detachment built 1934, closed 1940)
2	1	Marion L. Ryan owner of mineral claim Anna 3
2	2	Marion L. Ryan owner of mineral claim Anna 3
2	3	Eldorado Gold Mines Ltd mining business
2	4	Clifford C. Macklin residence and business (had a 14x12' log cabin that was rented to government in 1934 prior to establishment of permanent mining recorder's office)
2	5	A.S. Dart residence
2	6	Pete Racine residence (log cabin 18x15' in 1934)
2	7	H.A. Swanson residence and boats
2	8	Radford Syndicate Ltd residence
2	9	C.M.&S. Co. of Canada mining business
2	10	Harry Reed restaurant and residence and bunkhouse (Lakeshore Inn)

2	11	Harry Reed restaurant and residence and bunkhouse (Lakeshore Inn)
2	12	Harry Reed restaurant and residence and bunkhouse (Lakeshore Inn)
2	13	G.B. Lake Mines Ltd. mining business
2	14	B.E.A.R. mining business house
2	15	B.E.A.R. mining business house
3		
4	1	Martin Gardner restaurant (sold in 1934)
4	2	H.A. Swanson trading post
4	3	H.A. Swanson stationary etc store
4	4	Department of the Interior wood and material stockyard
4	5	Pete Racine pool room (Did not open until 1934. Sold to W.J. Wylie 1935-1936)
4	6	Pete Racine pool room (Did not open until 1934)
4	7	Lambert A Turcotte residence
4	8	Royal Canadian Corp of Signals government wireless station (opened 1932, closed 1940)
4	9	(Department of National Defense reservation 1938)
4	10	NWT Prospectors Association, association hall
4	11	Ben Alexander residence
4	12	Reserved, suitable for bank
4	13	Andrew Nelson residence
4	14	Dr. T.O. Byrnes medical office (Dr. Byrnes was stationed here from 1933-1935)
4	15	D.J. McDonnell residence
4	16	Arthur Bird residence
4	17	Anglican Mission church (Bishop Geddes 1933)
4	18	Surveyed for public park (baseball field and parkland)
4	19	
4	20	
4	21	
4	22	
4	23	W.J. Wylie residence (lease cancelled Jan 1937)
4	24	W.J. Wylie residence (lease cancelled Jan 1937)
4	25	(Department of National Defense reservation 1938)
4	26	(Department of National Defense reservation 1938)
4	27	Steve Yanick Jr. residence (Department of National Defense reservation 1938)
4	28	Martin Gardner bunkhouses etc
5	1	RCMP detachment buildings (RCMP reservation Oct 18, 1938) (never occupied for such)
5	2	Department of the Interior government representative residence (Dept of Resources and Development reservation Oct 18, 1938) (never occupied for such)
5	3	Royal Catholic Mission, possible mission, hospital, school, garden, etc
5	4	Royal Catholic Mission, possible mission, hospital, school, garden, etc
5	5	Royal Catholic Mission, possible mission, hospital, school, garden, etc
5	6	Royal Catholic Mission, possible mission, hospital, school, garden, etc
5	7	Royal Catholic Mission, possible mission, hospital, school, garden, etc
5	8	Royal Catholic Mission, possible mission, hospital, school, garden, etc
5	9	Royal Catholic Mission, possible mission, hospital, school, garden, etc
5	10	
5	11	
5A	1	Department of the Interior government representative residence (never occupied for such)
5A	2	Mrs. Vic Ingraham residence (never occupied for such)
5A	3	Royal Catholic Mission, for mission purposes (never occupied for such)
5A	4	Royal Catholic Mission, for mission purposes (never occupied for such)
5A	5	Royal Catholic Mission, for mission purposes (never occupied for such)
5A	6	Royal Catholic Mission, for mission purposes (never occupied for such)
5A	7	Royal Catholic Mission, for mission purposes (never occupied for such)
5A	8	Royal Catholic Mission, for mission purposes (never occupied for such)

BLOCK 5A was not surveyed in 1933, lies northeast of Block 5

6		
7		
8		
9	1	A. Keer and J.M. McAfee residence
9	2	William Johnson residence
9	3	J.P. Dolan residence
9	4	John McWilliam residence
9	5	R.A. McClure residence
9	6	
9	7	D.H. McDonald residence
9	8	
9	9	
9	10	(William R. Wilson lease cancelled Mar 3, 1938)
9	11	

10

11

12

13

14

15	1	R. Caldwell cabin built in 1932-1933
15	2	
15	3	
15	4	
15	5	
15	6	
15	7	Frank Chaisson possible future business
15	8	Frank Chaisson cabin built 1932-1933
15	9	John LaBine tentative residence
15	10	
15	11	
15	12	

15	13	Joe Radermacher cabin built 1932-1933
----	----	---------------------------------------

15A	1	Dr. T.O. Byrnes residence (never occupied for such)
-----	---	---

15A	2	Dr. T.O. Byrnes residence (never occupied for such)
-----	---	---

15A	3	
-----	---	--

15A	4	
-----	---	--

15A	5	
-----	---	--

15A	6	
-----	---	--

15A	7	
-----	---	--

15A	8	
-----	---	--

15A	9	
-----	---	--

15A	10	
-----	----	--

15A	11	
-----	----	--

15A	12	
-----	----	--

15A	13	
-----	----	--

BLOCK 15A was not surveyed in 1933, lies northeast of Block 15

unsurveyed

lot:	W.L. Olmsted southeast Cameron Bay entrance (south of Cameron Bay entrance)
------	---

unsurveyed

lot:	A.G. Eccles cabin southeast shore Cameron Bay
------	---

unsurveyed

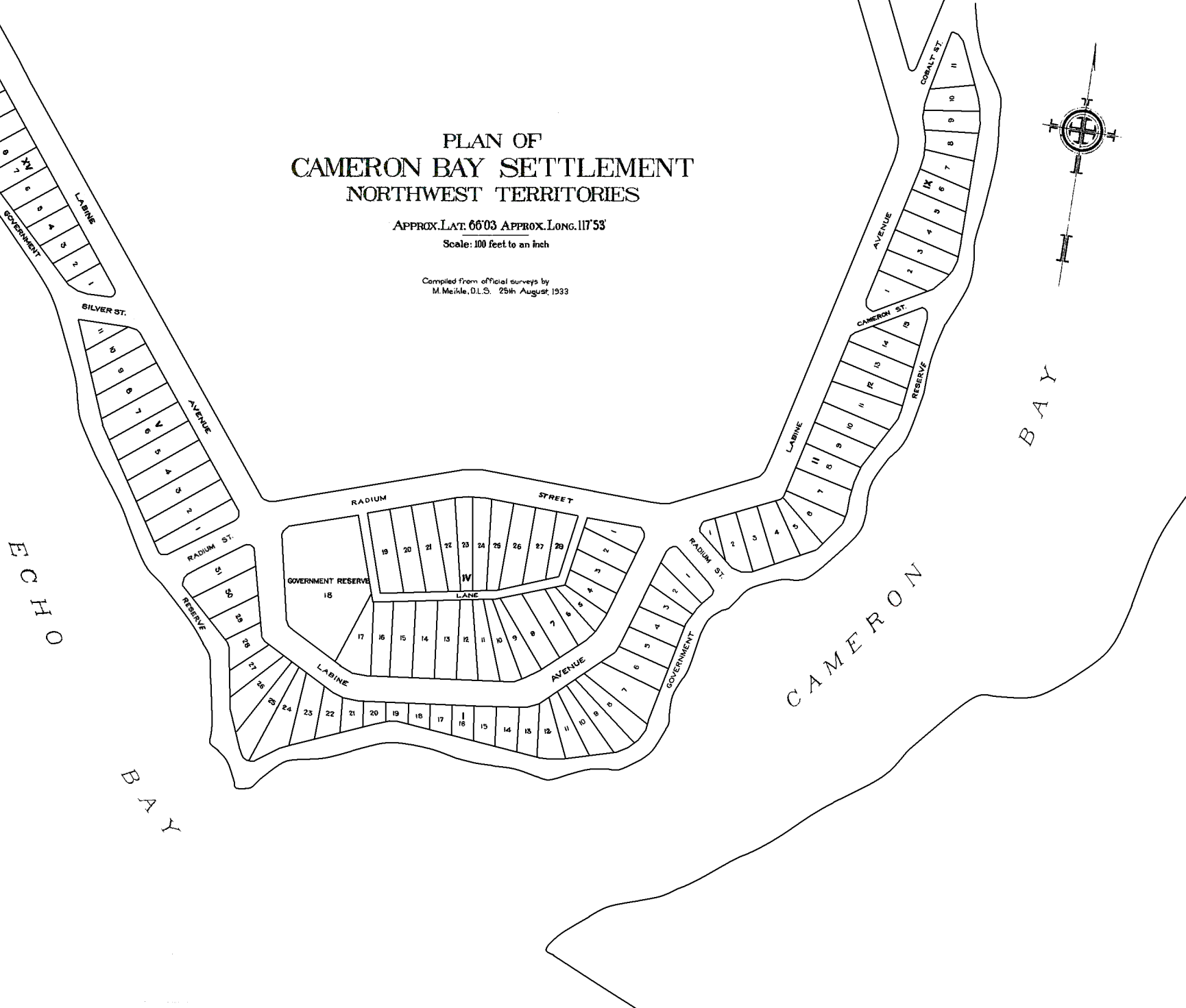
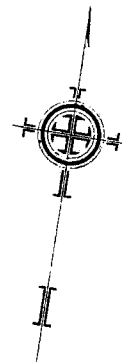
lot:	D.J. McDonnell lumber yard east side of Cameron Bay
------	---

PLAN OF
CAMERON BAY SETTLEMENT
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

APPROX. LAT. 66°03' APPROX. LONG. 117°53'

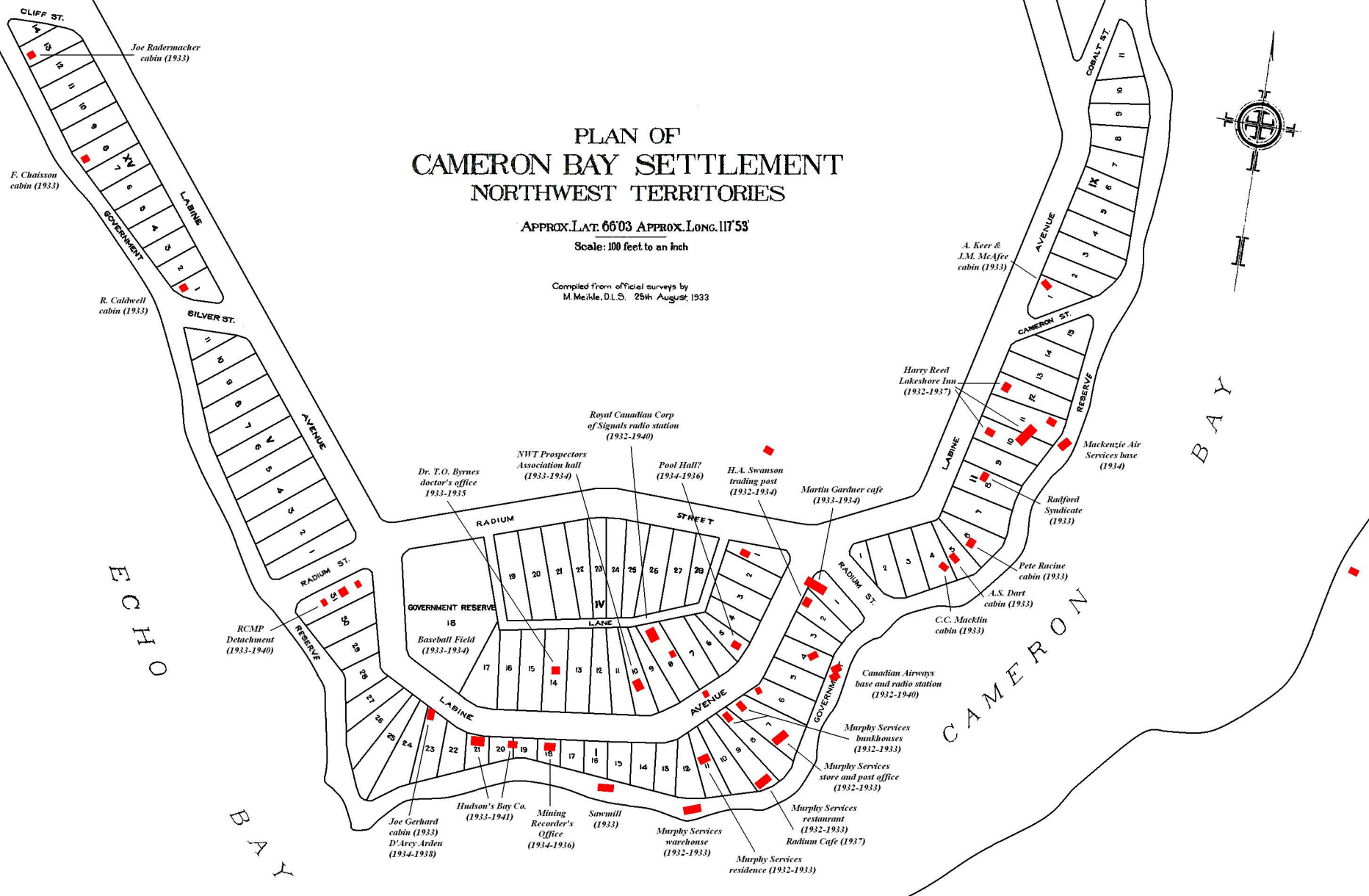
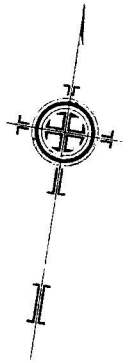
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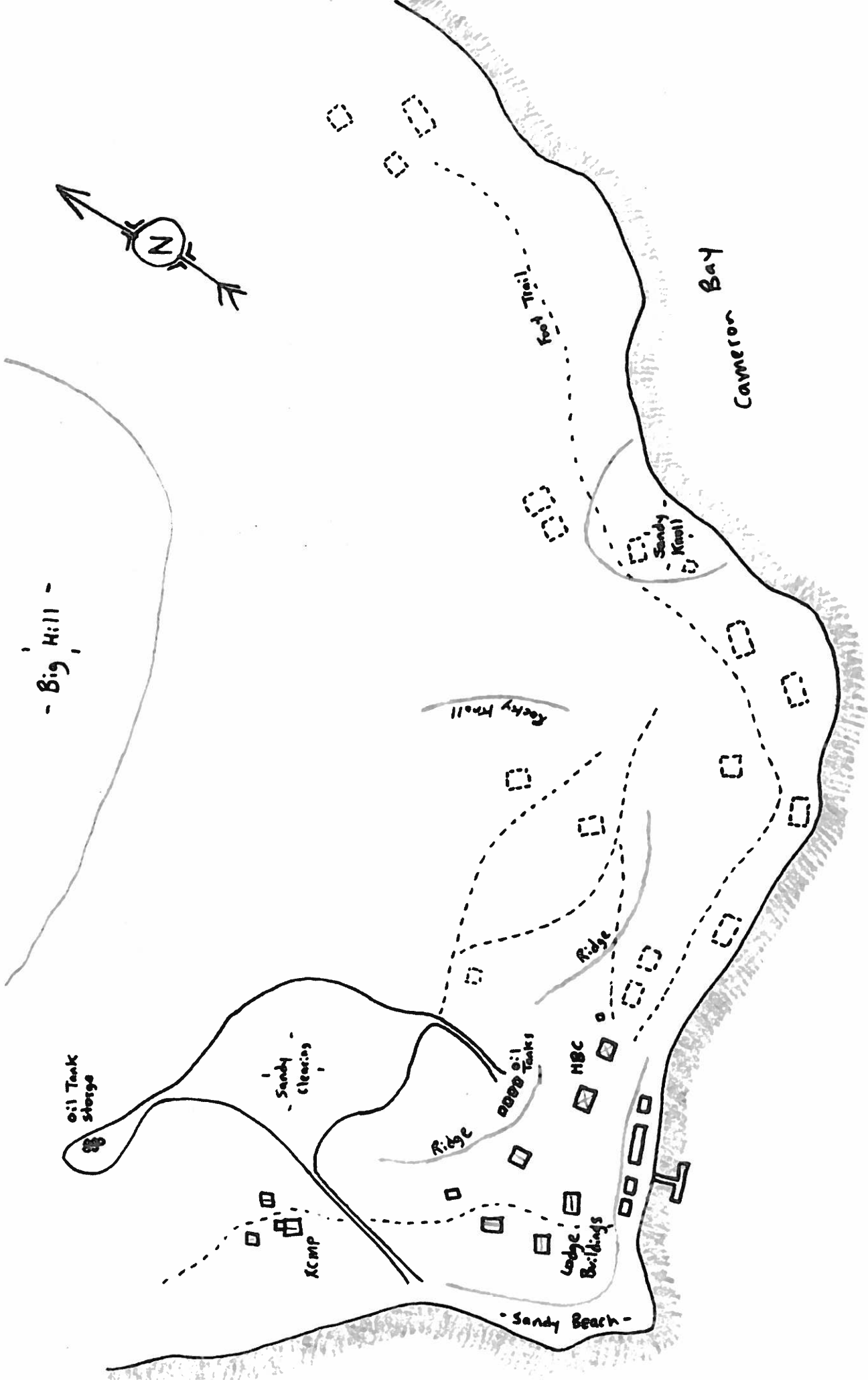
Compiled from official surveys by
M. Meikle, D.L.S. 25th August, 1933



Scale: 100 feet to an inch

Compiled from official surveys by
M. Meikle, D.L.S. 25th August, 1933

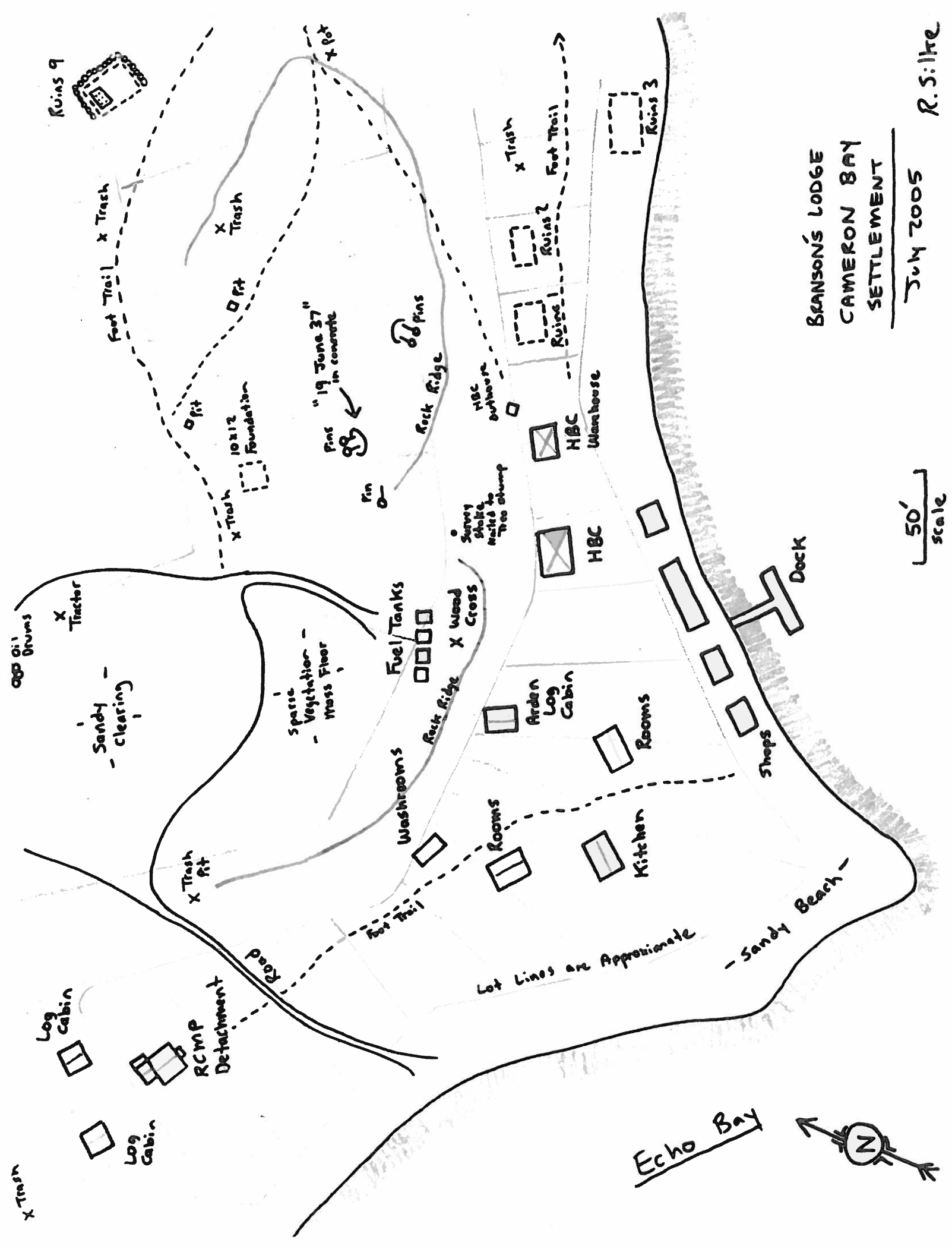


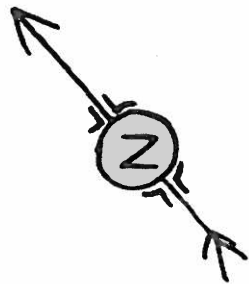


BRANSON'S LODGE
CAMERON BAY

July 2005

R.S. Ike





X
Trash

X
Trash

Rock
Garden - Overgrowth -

Rock
Garden

Ruins 14

X
Trash

- Overgrowth -

Lot Lines are Approximate

Cameron
Bay

X
Trash

Foot
Trail

- Overgrowth -

- Marshy -

Ruins 13

Sandy -

- Knoll

Big
Tree

Ruins 12

Log
Deck

X

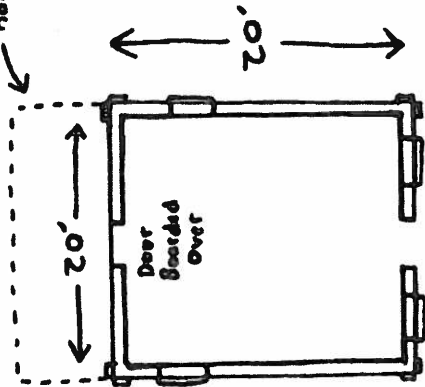
50'
Scale

CAMERON BAY
SETTLEMENT

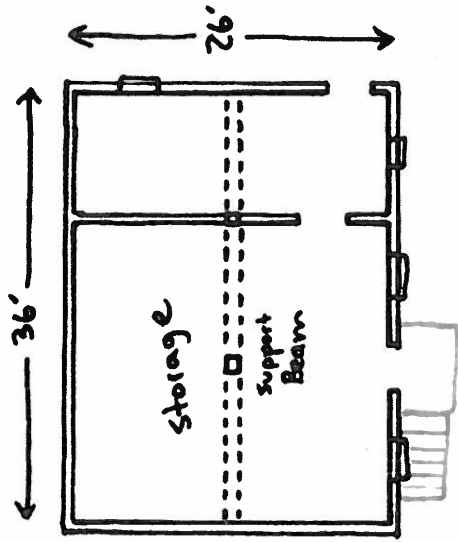
JULY 2005

R.S. Ike

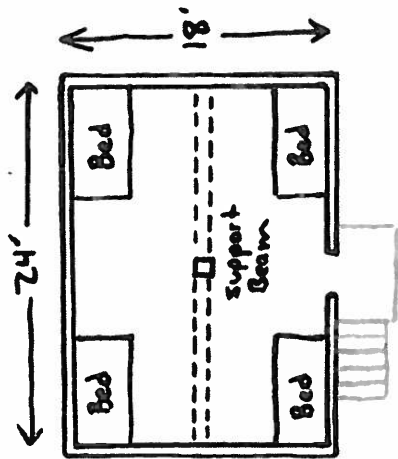
← Addition is gone



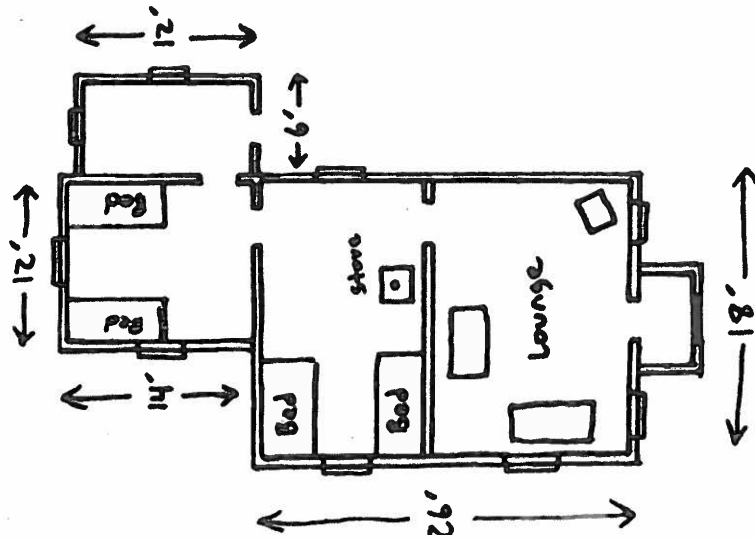
Arden Cabin



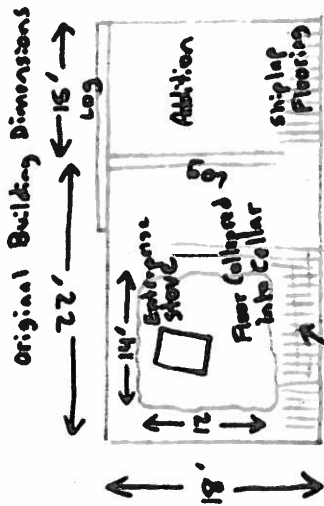
HBC Post



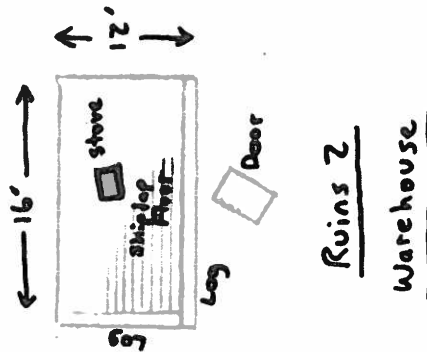
HBC Warehouse



RCMP House



Ruins 1
Mining Recorder's Office



Ruins 2
Warehouse

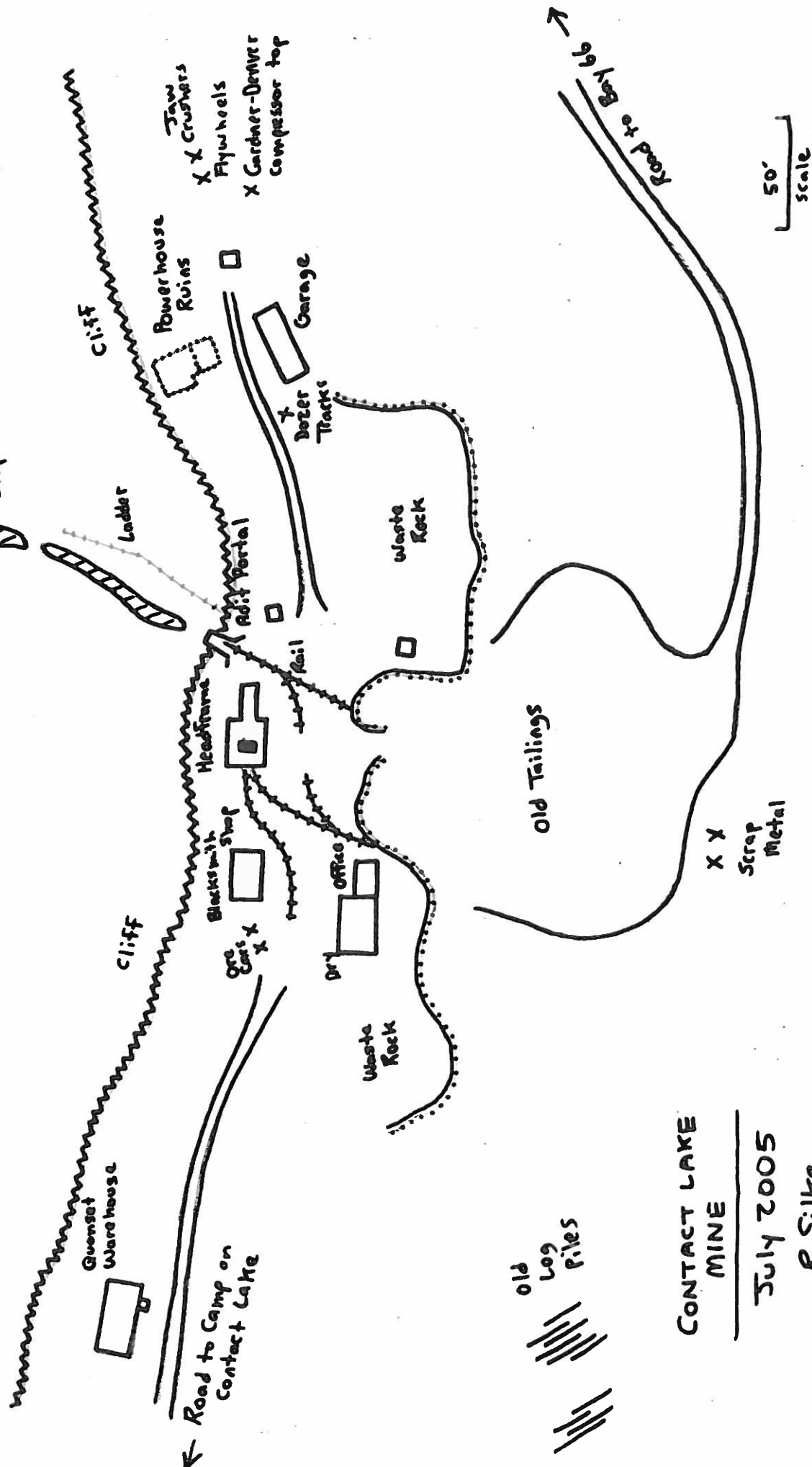
CAMERON BAY
BUILDING DETAILS

July 2005

R.S. like



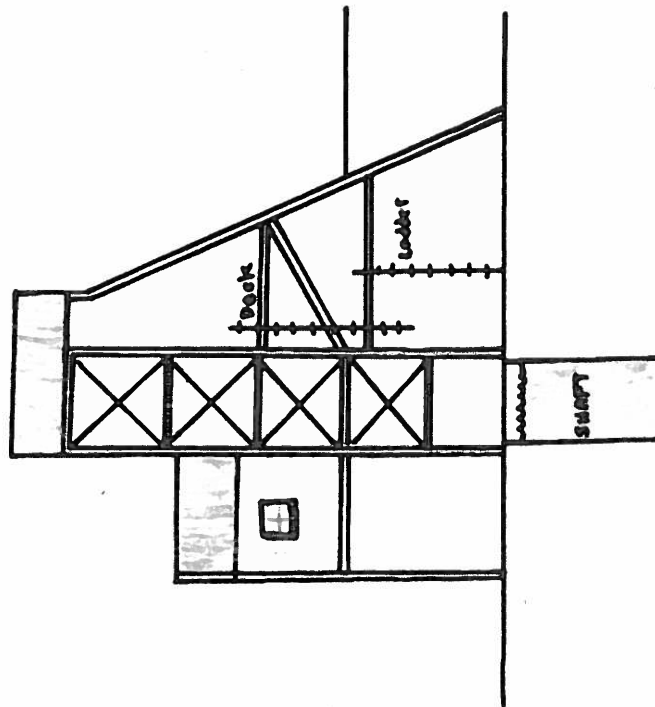
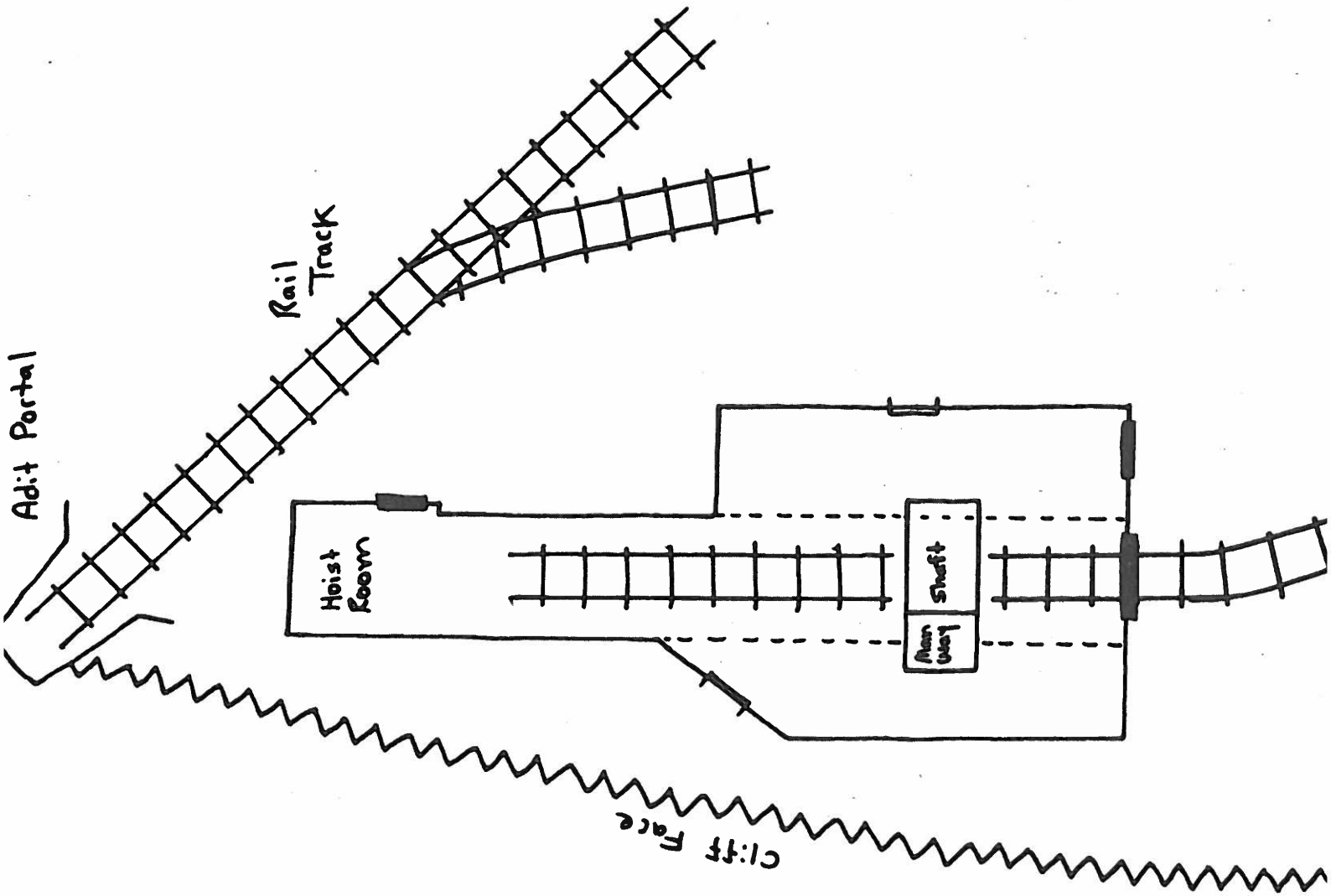
High Hill



CONTACT LAKE
MINE

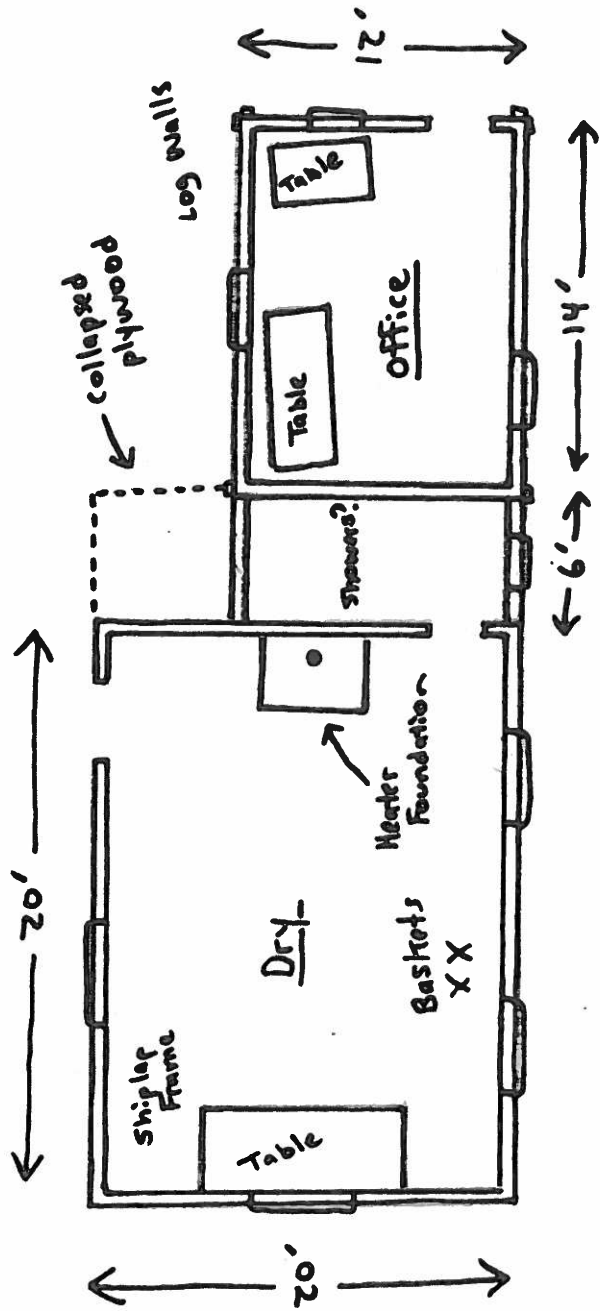
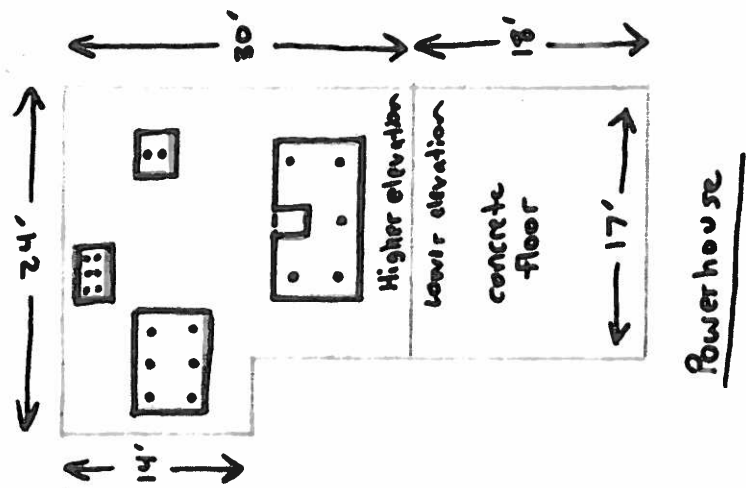
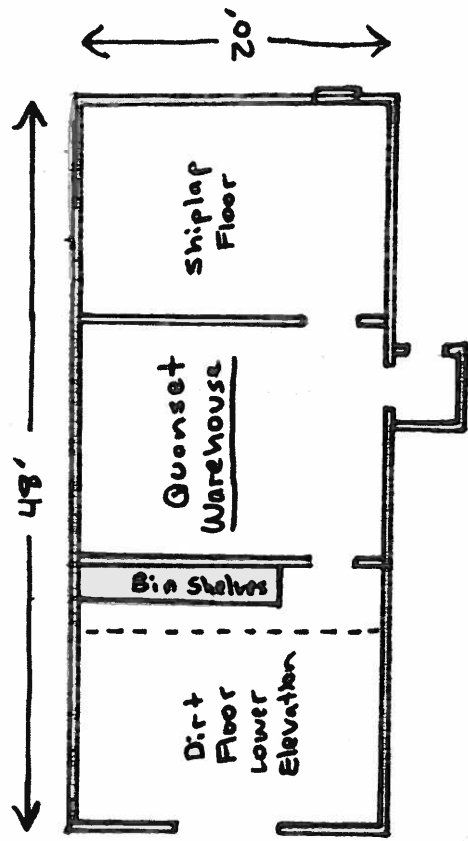
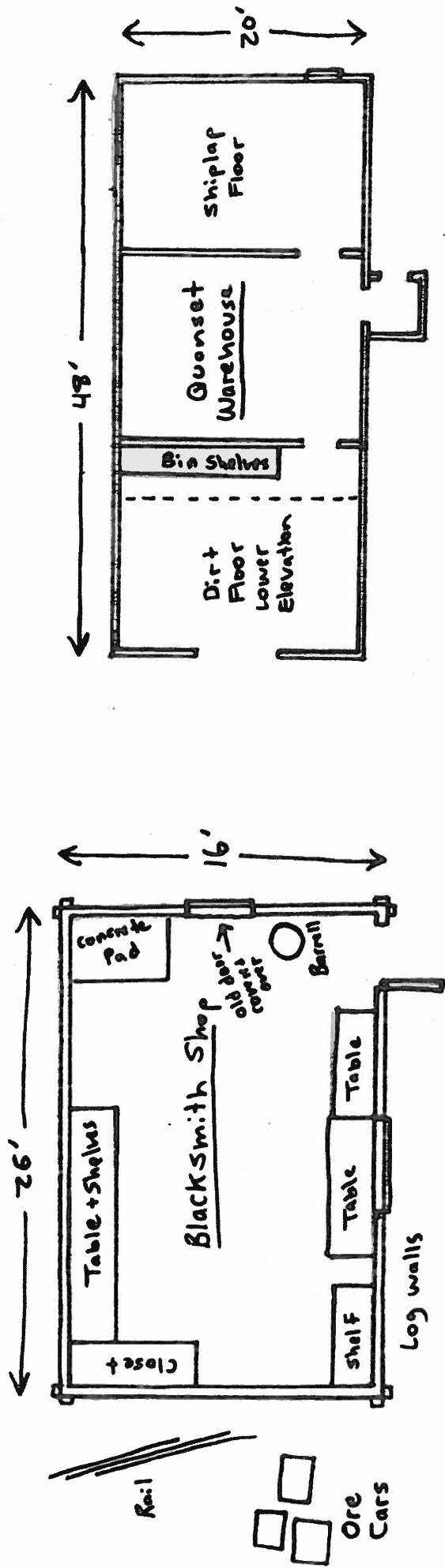
JULY 2005

R. Silke



CONTACT LAKE MINE
HEADFRAME

July 2005
R. S. Ike



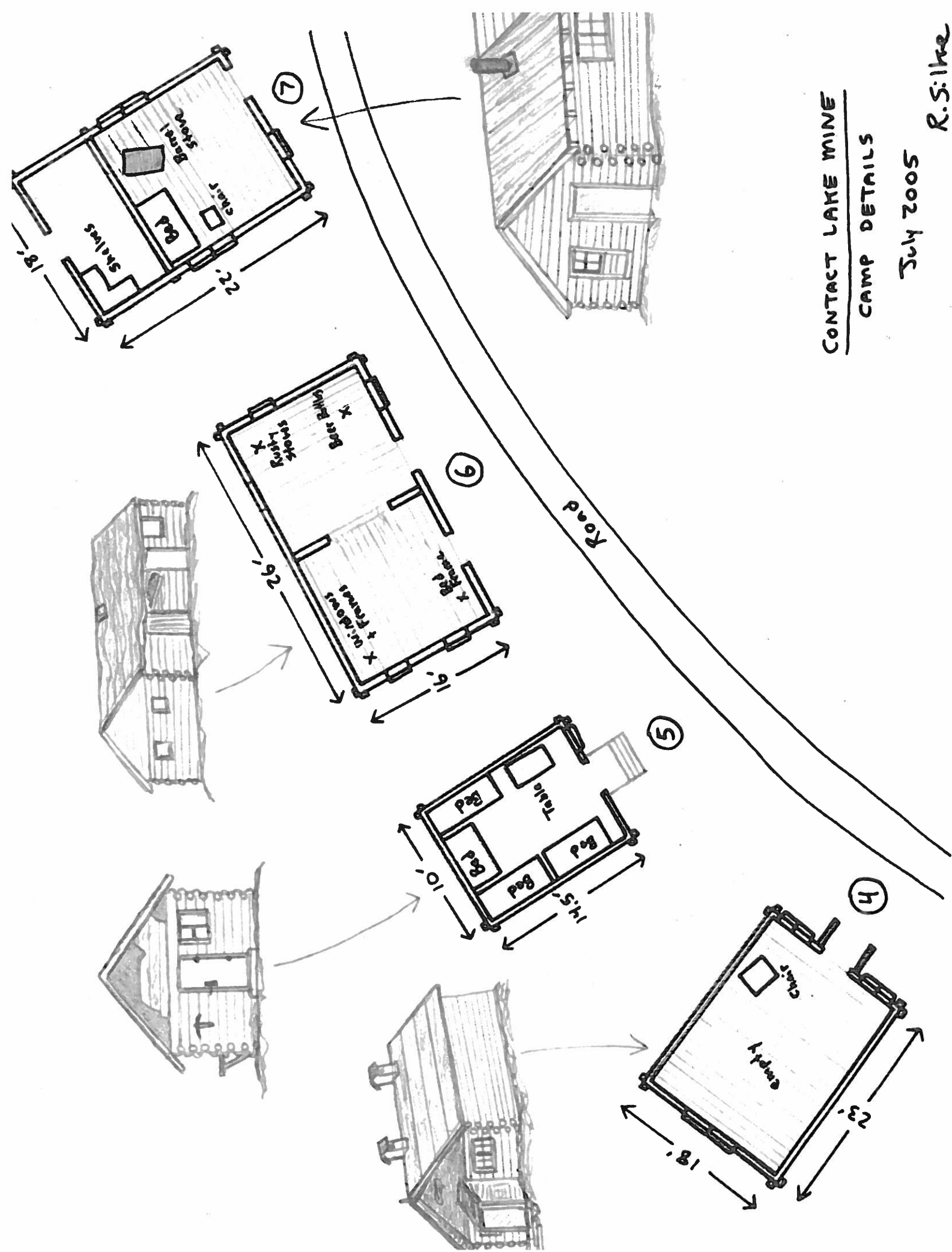
CONTACT LAKE MINE - BUILDING DETAILS

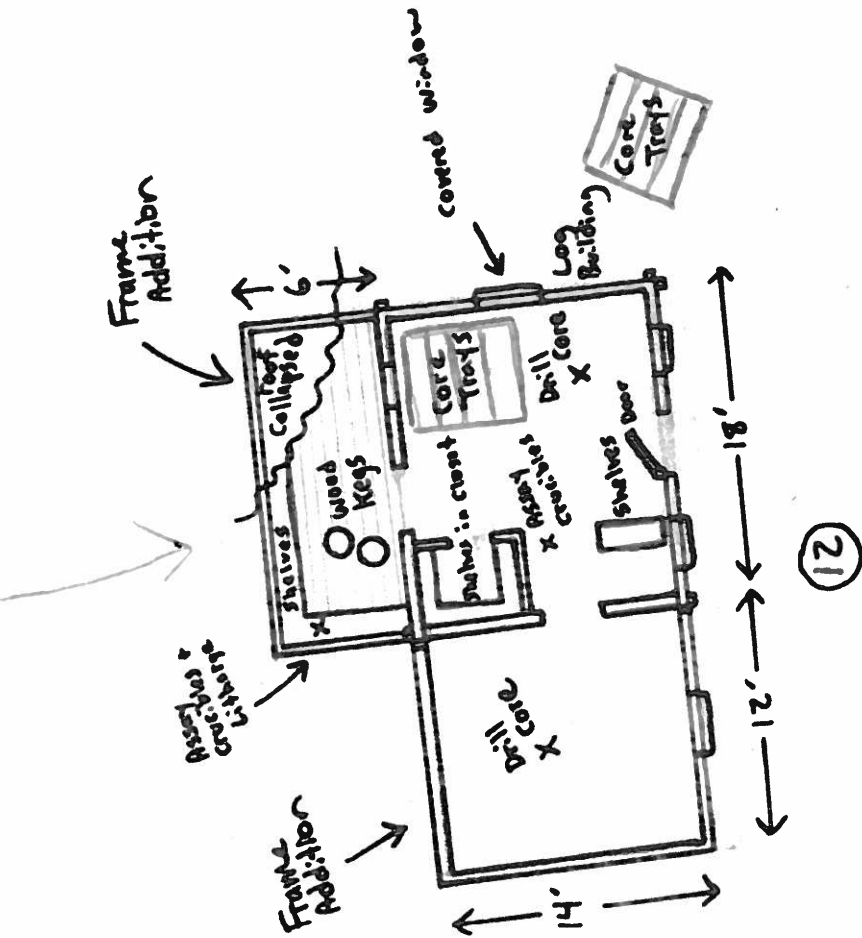
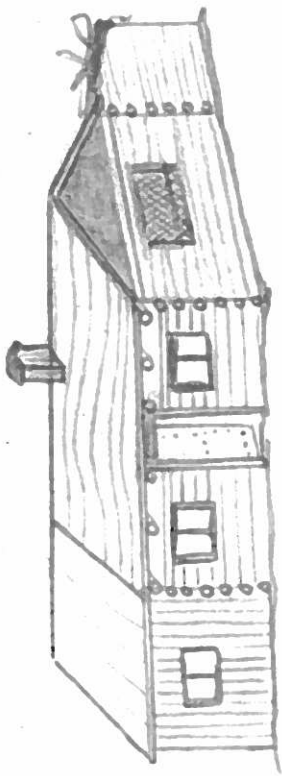
R.S:ke

CONTACT LAKE MINE
CAMP DETAILS

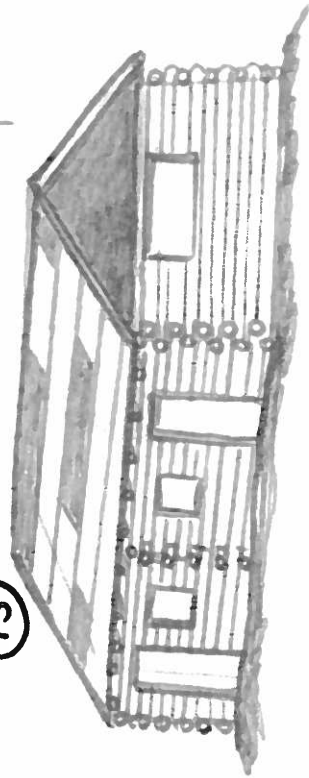
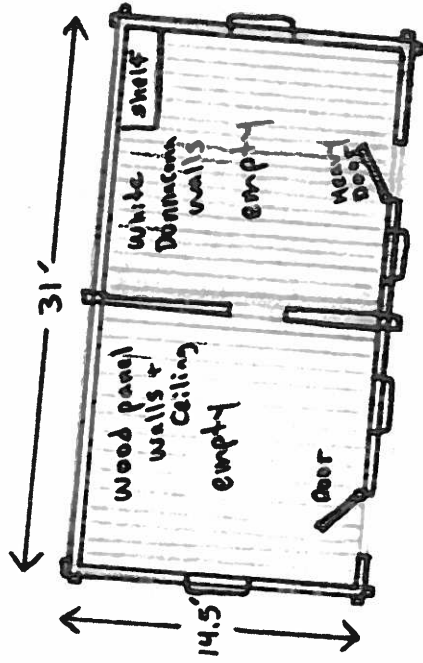
July 2005

R.S. Iker



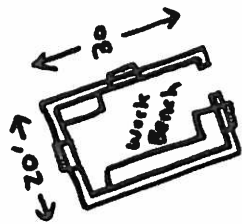


Assay Lab



CONTACT LAKE MINE
CAMP DETAILS

JULY 2005 R.S:ike



Miles
Lake

- Hill -

Adit
Portal

- Overgrowth -

Shed

House

shop

oil

X Drums

Ruin

Burnt

Ruin

Core

Rack

Bunk

House

Ruin

House

Dry

X

Wagon

Pump

Wagon

X

Wagon

Ruin

Wagon

X

Wagon

Ruin

Wagon

X

Wagon

Warehouse

Road

Creek

Trail

Wagon

X

Wagon

Ruin

Wagon

X

Wagon

Ruin

Wagon

X

Wagon

Ruin

Wagon

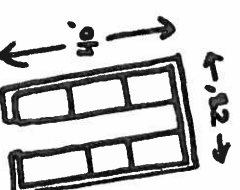
Lake

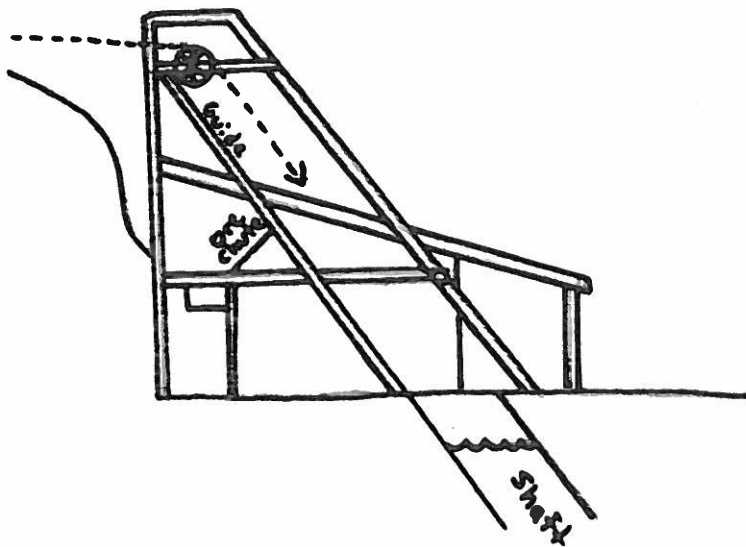
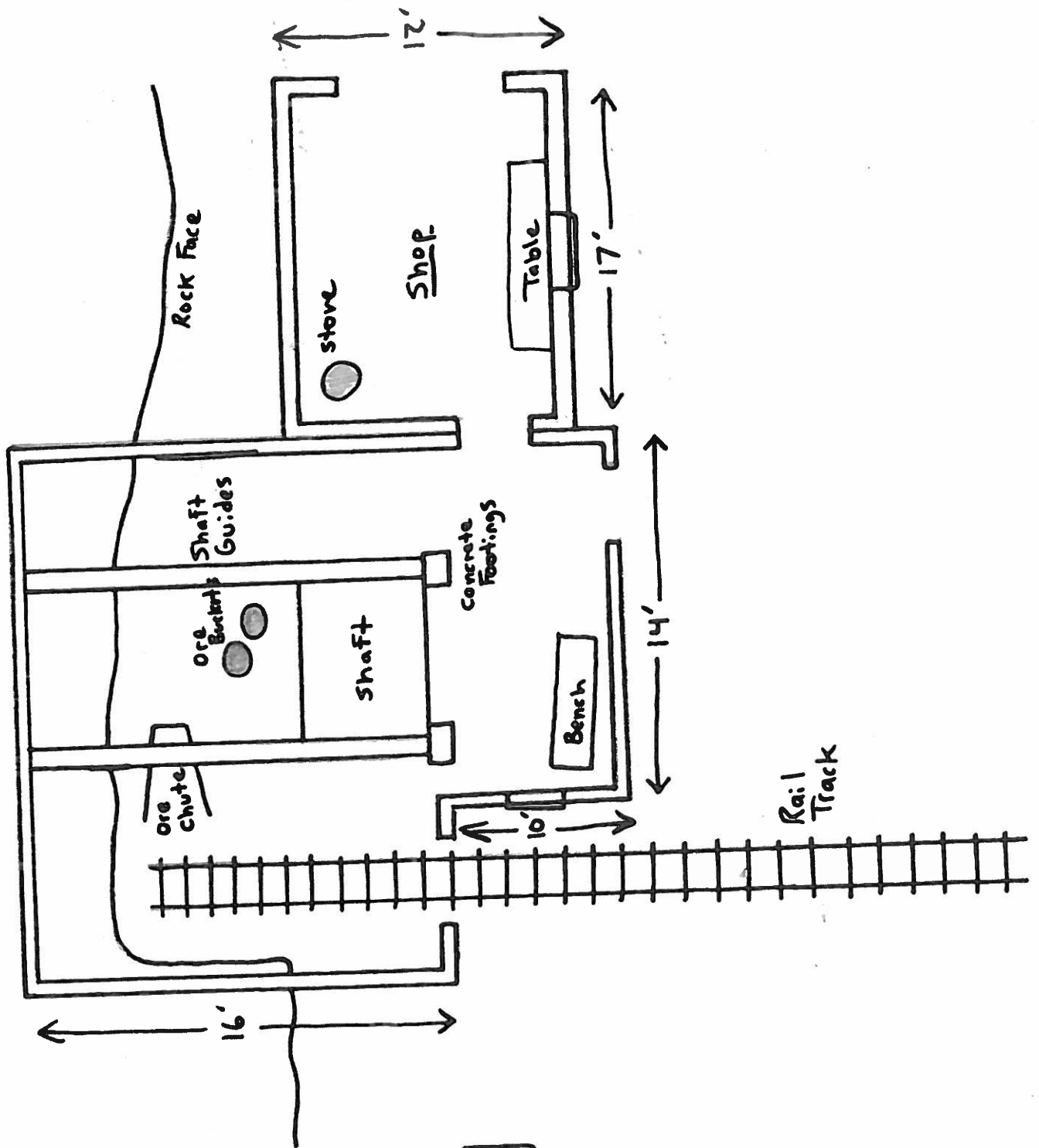
ELBONANZA MINE

July 2005

R. Silke

50'
scale

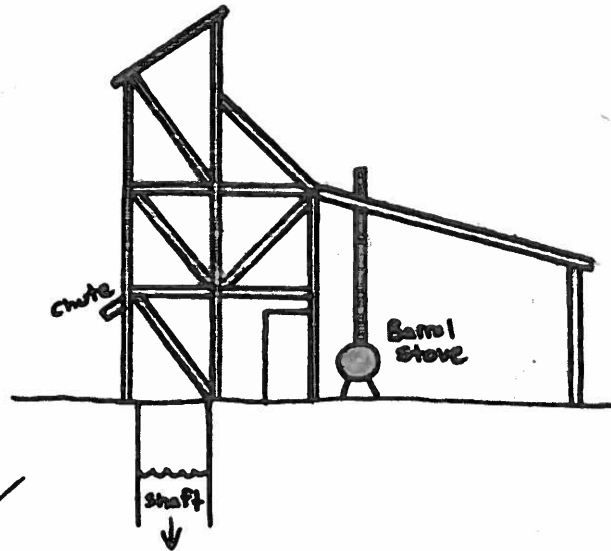




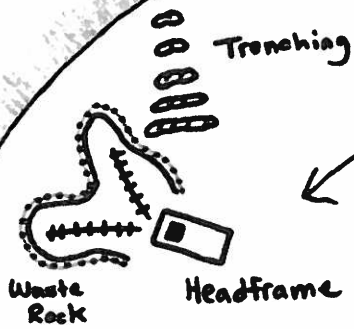
ELBONANZA MINE
HEADFRAME

July 2005

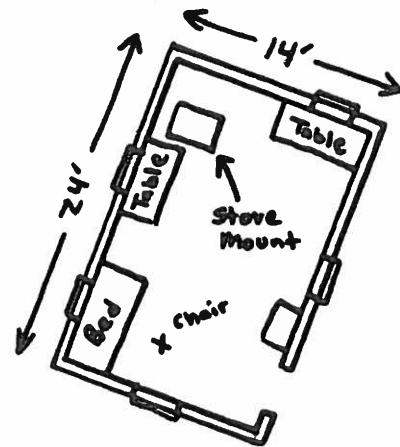
D.C.H.



Whale Lake



Hill



Steel X Tub



Trail

Hill

-Sandy-



X stove

X Trash

Bonanza Lake

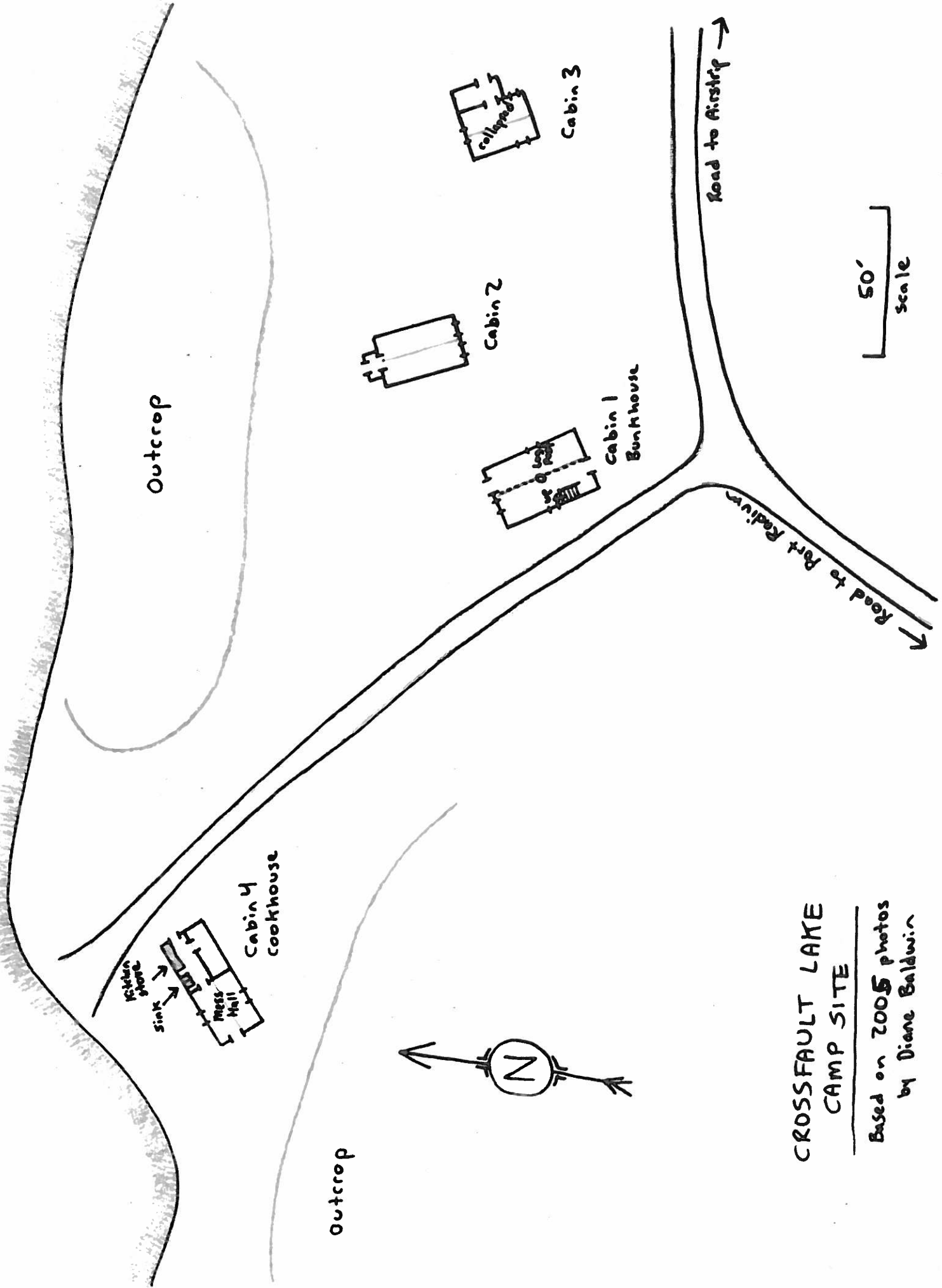
BONANZA MINE

July 2005

R. Silke

50'
scale

Crossfault Lake



CROSSFAULT LAKE CAMP SITE

Based on 2005 photos
by Diane Baldwin