THE IDITAROD TRAIL

A Preliminary Inventory of Cultural Resources of the Iditarod Trail between Rainy Pass and Unalakleet

DRAFT

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ABSTRACT

The Bureau of Land Management conducted a cultural resource inventory along the segment of the Iditarod Trail from Rainy Pass to Unalakleet. This included historic roadhouse sites, shelter cabins built by the Alaska Road Commission, and other cabins and features that have been built along the trail. Roadhouses were first built along the trail after discovery of gold in the Western Interior of Alaska in 1906. A number of shelter cabins were constructed by the Alaska Road Commission in the early 1920's, and trappers and reindeer herders built cabins along the route at various times. This report describes the current condition of sites and structures observed during the survey, and summarizes the known historical background information on these sites.

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dividual roadhouses and cabins on the Iditarod Trail were obtained from long time Alaska residents familiar with the trail. The information volunteered by these persons has provided valuable historical data on the cultural resources along the trail.

In addition to those people quoted directly in the text, a number of people were interviewed who supplied valuable background information on the local communities and/or guided the writer to other informants. Irv Holmes of McGrath was of great assistance in locating these people who were knowledgeable about the area. Pete and Ann Egres, Rose Winkleman and Mrs. Vanderpool, Alice Harris and Dora Stone, Amos and Kathryn Turner, Fritz and Einar Larson all contributed information on the area around McGrath. Bob Magnuson of McGrath, who piloted the airplane on low level aerial reconnaissance flights over the trail from Dalzell Shelter to Unalakleet, contributed greatly to the project through his flying skill, his knowledge of the terrain and familiarity with the local history of the area. Pete Gregori of Nicolai, Ernest Norman and John Miscovitch of Flat, Stan Frost of Farewell Lake Lodge, Ed Gurtler of Cripple Landing all contributed information on these vicinities. The cooperation of all these people is deeply appreciated.

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Preface

This report details structures that were identified and inventoried during the relatively short period of the field seasons of 1977 and 1978. At that time, the Iditarod Trail was being considered for inclusion in the National Trails System. Basic information was urgently needed about the kind and condition of sites remaining from this dramatic period of Alaskan history.

A primary purpose in publishing this report is to identify those structures that have now been analyzed; we hope it will serve as a base for more detailed future inventories. The report is not intended to be an exhaustive analysis of those structures identified, nor is it a comprehensive inventory of all objects or structures of historical significance between Rainy Pass and Unalakleet. Although an effort was made to include all of the trailway likely to remain under Federal ownership, work was concentrated on the sections likely to remain under BLM management. We have appended a U.S. Forest Service report discussing sections of the trail on land under their jurisdiction.

Since this reconnaissance was completed, the Iditarod Trail has been formally added to the National Trails System in a new category: Historic Trails.

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INTRODUCTION

The Iditarod Trail extends across Alaska from Seward to Nome. Along with its historic roadhouses and shelter cabins, it characterizes the imprint that overland transportation in the gold rush era left upon the Interior of Alaska in the early years of this century. As one gold field after another was discovered in the Alaskan Interior, people traveled to them by the best available means. In summer, ships could reach the Bering Sea coast of Alaska, bringing supplies and passengers to Alaskan ports. Riverboats plied the major rivers that extended into the Interior, and smaller watercraft were lined or poled up headwater drainages. In winter these waterways froze over for some seven months of the year, and overland travel on foot or by dogsled was the only means of getting to and from these winterbound areas. The Iditarod Trail was developed in response to this need for overland access to the mining outposts in the Alaskan Interior.

The roadhouses that sprang up along the trail were usually commercial establishments run by individuals who provided food and shelter for trail travelers and their teams. Shelter cabins were also constructed along the trail in some places by the Alaska Road Commission (ARC). Villages, trappers' and reindeer herdsmen's cabins, and other shelters can also be found along the trail. The remnants of the trail and the various associated structures comprise the subject of this report.

Purpose of Study

Subsequent to the National Trails Act of 1968, the former Bureau of Outdoor Recreation (BOR) NOW HERITAGE CONSERVATION AND RECREATION SERVICE (HCRS), Northwest Regional Office was directed to study Alaskan Gold Rush trails and evaluate them for inclusion in the National Trails System. One of the Alaskan Gold Rush trails studied was the Iditarod Trail (BOR 1977). Their findings indicated that while the trail did not meet the necessary criteria for designation as a National scenic or recreation trail, the historic role of the Iditarod Trail is of national significance and merits national recognition. The BOR proposed a new category of National trails, the National Historic Trail, so that important historic routes could be included in the National Trails system.

Even though some of the original features associated with the trail are gone, many historic sites, buildings, implements, and other remains still exist along the Iditarod route. The BOR report recommended that steps be taken to protect historic resources and stabilize significant historic buildings along the trail. It concluded that without proper management, these historic resources would be degraded, damaged, destroyed, or lost within a few years.

In 1975, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) requested funding for stabilization and protection of cultural resources along those segments of the Iditarod Trail traversing public lands under its management. Because little was known about the condition of historic properties along the trail, it was necessary to evaluate each known historic location in

the field to determine stabilization/protection needs. This report is the result of field evaluations that took place during the summer field seasons of 1976, 1977, and 1978.

Scope of Work

The Iditarod Trail is only part of a statewide network of trails used in the period when overland trails were in general use in Alaska. Some segments of the trail were long-established aboriginal trade routes that were connected and later improved. These trails were surveyed and cleared at different times as new gold fields were discovered in the Kuskokwim and Innoko River drainages of the Western Interior. The portion of the trail examined in this study extends from Rainy Pass to Unalakleet, and includes the loop extending to the Iditarod-Flat Mining District (Map 1). The summer trail from Takotna to Flat was also examined, but time did not allow for examination of the Dikeman cutoff from Shermeier's Halfway Roadhouse to Dishkakat.

During the summer of 1976 John Beck, staff archeologist for the BLM Anchorage District Office, conducted a rapid reconnaissance over the Iditarod Trail from Rohn River to Dishkakat and briefly examined several sites on the ground. At the request of BLM, Lauren Huffman, historical architect for the National Park Service Pacific Northwest Region, accompanied Beck during two days of the reconnaissance and examined several of the structures associated with the trail. He recommended further study and stabilization of certain structures. His report is included in this study (Appendix A).

Funding was not available to continue the stabilization/protection evaluation in 1977. However, in August of that year the Bear Creek Fire burned a 360,000 acre area through which the Iditarod Trail passes and burned two historic roadhouse ruins, as well as approximately 40 miles of the trailway itself. The portion of the trail affected by the fire was re-examined by Beck as part of a preliminary evaluation of fire effects on resources in the burn area.

Renewed funding enabled BLM to continue the stabilization/protection evaluation project in 1978. Detailed examinations were made of roadhouses and other historic features associated with the Iditarod Trail on portions of the trail under BLM management from the vicinity of Rainy Pass to Unalakleet (Map 1). The BLM also made an attempt to refine information available on the trail and associated features, including historical background data.

Sites along the trail on land managed by the BLM were examined in detail on the ground. Each site was mapped and photographed, and plans were made of the stuctural remains present. The immediate area around each site was cleared of vegetation where necessary to allow access and in some cases as a fire protection measure if the site had regrown heavily with vegetation. Fixed-wing aircraft reconnaissance was employed to plot and photograph sites on lands owned by or tenatively approved for transfer to the State, Native Regional Corporations, and village corporations, or those in private ownership.

Historical Overview

The discovery of gold in the Klondike and Southeastern Alaska in the late 1800's focused the interest of Americans on Alaska and created a demand for information on the Alaskan Interior. The U. S. Geological Survey (USGS) began a series of explorations in 1898 to locate routes for travel to the interior and to report on the geological resources present. That year a party headed by J. E. Spurr traveled over Rainy Pass and down the South Fork of the Kuskokwim River over much the same route that the Iditarod Trail would later follow (Brooks 1973:282). Spurr concluded that the great rivers of Alaska provided the best avenues for traffic into the Interior.

In 1898-99 the War Department also sent expeditions to look for connecting links between the coast and the Interior. One party, led by Lt. J. S. Herron, crossed the Alaska Range by way of Simpson Pass, just north of Rainy Pass. When Herron reached the Kuskokwim Basin he found winter sled trails blazed between the watercourses and evidently in regular use by the Indians of the area (Herron 1901:54). In his report, Herron recommended that these Indian trails could be economically connected for general use as part of a winter route into the Interior.

Legislation enacted by Congress on January 25, 1905, allocated money for expansion of roads and trails in Alaska. In addition, it established the Alaska Road Commission (ARC), under Major W. P. Richardson. The Commission was responsible for laying out and constructing a system of pioneer roads and trails throughout the Territory.

News of gold strikes in 1906 on Ganes Creek, in 1908 on Ophir Creek off the upper Innoko River, and at Otter Creek in 1909 at the headwaters of the Iditarod River, greatly increased interest in the western Interior. People and freight could enter and leave this area by river during the summer, but the need rapidly increased for a direct overland route to provide for cheap and rapid winter transportation of men and mails.

During the winter of 1907-08, the Alaska Road Commission sent a party headed by George E. Pulham and W. L. Goodwin to locate a winter trail route from Seward to Nome. Seward was an ice-free port open to year -around navigation, while Nome was closed to shipping for seven months each year. Starting at what was then the northern railhead of the Alaska Central Railway at Mile 54, Goodwin utilized existing trails along the way. Crossing the Alaska Range at Rainy Pass, he made his way along the Kuskokwim and Innoko drainages to Kaltag on the Yukon. Here he followed the Kaltag Portage, a historic Native trade route to Unalakleet and then traveled over snow and ice around Norton Bay to Nome. Even before Goodwin's survey, a few people made their way overland to the Innoko gold fields on the river ice adjacent to Goodwin's survey route (Alaska Yukon Magazine VIII, October 1908).

After gold was found in the Iditarod District in December 1908, the Alaska Road Commission again sent a party with Goodwin in charge to upgrade the main trail from Nome to Seward and to extend the trail to Iditarod. Because of this extension to the Iditarod District gold fields the route became commonly known as the Iditarod Trail.

Leaving Nome in November 1910, Goodwin set tripods wherever necessary to indicate the trail direction. A new and shorter overland route from Dishkakat to Dikeman was marked. The trail from Dikeman, the limit of navigation for large riverboats on the Iditarod River, to Iditarod, the extreme navigation limit even for small boats, was well broken by people who had come to mine the gold placer deposits the preceding seasons. Goodwin then marked the winter trail from Iditarod to Takotna, following the courses of Bonanza and Fourth of July creeks (Alaska Yukon Magazine, July 1911:55).

During the 1910-11 survey, Goodwin's party marked the cutoff from Berry's Big River Roadhouse to Farewell Mountain on the South Fork of the Kuskokwim River. This route was some 52 miles shorter than the earlier trail that traversed the South Fork of the Kuskokwim River north of Rainy Pass (Alaska Yukon Magazine July 1911:53). Less than five miles of this new route had been located on any pre-existing trail, and as of the winter of 1910-11 there were no roadhouses on the new trail from Big River to the Rohn River Roadhouse (Alaska Yukon Magazine, July 1911;55).

Large quantities of gold were hauled out over the Iditarod Trail on numerous occasions. In his diaries O. G. Herning (December 31, 1916) notes that 3,400 pounds of gold was freighted over the Iditarod in one shipment by 46 dogs. He also mentions a dog team arriving at Knik from Iditarod as late as November 25, 1921 with 1,500 pounds of bullion. Individual mushers often brought out the gleanings of their placer activities over the trails. Herning mentions one musher who brought 100

pounds of gold dust from "Discovery" in the Iditarod District on November 30, 1919. Even at the going rate for gold, then $20.67 per ounce, this amounted to $33,072.00.

When Archdeacon Hudson Stuck (1914:313) journeyed overland to Iditarod during the winter of 1910-11 roadhouses had sprung up along the portion of the trail west of Big River all the way to Iditarod. Goodwin's account (Alaska Yukon Magazine, July 1911:55) corroborates this, listing 11 roadhouses between Big River and the Iditarod District. Other roadhouses were built on Goodwin's cutoff within the following three years.

According to Miska Diaphon, a life-long resident of the area, Smith's Roadhouse on Blackwater Creek was erected in 1914, on a later cutoff that ran in a direct line from Goodwin's trail near the Salmon River to McGrath (Map 2). Although there is a paucity of information on the development of this cutoff from Goodwin's trail, the 1922 Rand-McNally Guide to Alaska and Yukon shows the route with Smith's and another unnamed roadhouse (Figure 1), (RandMcNally 1922:40,41).

In 1914 a contract was let to H. E. Revelle to carry the winter mail between Seward and Iditarod (Alaska Sportsman, January 1966:28). The mail run from Seward to Iditarod continued through the winter of 1918-19. By then the Alaska Railroad had been completed as far as Kobe on the northern side of the Alaska Range, and the mail to the Iditarod and Innoko Mining Districts was routed on an overland trail from there. Winter mail service was reinstituted over the Rainy Pass section of the trail

for one season only, during the winter of 1920-21 (BOR, 1976:39). After that the segment from Rainy Pass to McGrath lapsed into disuse for many years, except for the infrequent passage of trappers.

The winter mail route from Takotna to Flat was also diverted in 1918 by way of Ophir. There it passed over the Hunter Trail of the Iditarod Loop and intersected the Dikeman-Iditarod segment near Moose Creek in the vicinity of Shermeier's Halfway Roadhouse. After 1918 the Takotna-Flat winter trail was little used, and the roadhouses along this route were gradually abandoned, although they still were used for shelter by a few prospectors and trappers.

A summer pack trail roughly paralleling the old Takotna-Flat winter trail traversed the higher and drier country just to the north. It led from Flat to the mines on Ganes Creek between Ophir and Takotna. In 1921-22 the Alaska Road Commission built three cabins along the summer pack trail for shelter (ARC Annual Report, 1922:68). Travelers provided their own food and paid no fee to use these cabins, but were expected to leave them clean and with a supply of firewood cut and stacked for the next traveler.

After 1920 when the activity in the western Interior gold fields had declined, these simple one-room log shelter cabins that were not operated commercially were increasingly used for accommodations along the Iditarod Trail and other trails maintained by the ARC. Roadhouses were no longer profitable to run in isolated areas along the trails, but shelter

cabins were still needed by occasional travelers. The 1930 ARC Annual Report shows all of the ARC shelter cabins existing at that time in the Kuskokwim District (Figure 2).

Reindeer herding was introduced into the uplands northeast of Iditarod in the 1920's. The Iditarod trail was sometimes used by herders trailing reindeer to local butchers. Reindeer herders also built cabins for shelter in remote areas of their range. Two of these reindeer herders' cabins were identified in the aerial survey along the trail.

During World War II, the Civil Aeronautics Administration (CAA), later called the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), was involved in the transportation of fuel over the trail to the navigational aid station at Farewell Lake near Pioneer Roadhouse. According to Virgil Knight, retired FAA official, when the station was established in the early 1940's, fuel from San Francisco was shipped up the Kuskokwim River by paddlewheel steamer as far as Farewell Landing near the mouth of Big River, and stored in 20,000-gallon holding tanks. It was then transferred to 55-gallon drums which were loaded on barges and towed by tugboat up Big River and the Pitka Fork to the mouth of Salmon River opposite Salmon River Roadhouse. In February, when the streams and marshes were thoroughly frozen, the drums were hauled overland by tractor train along the Iditarod Trail to

Farewell Station. Diverging slightly from the main trail about 6 miles southeast of Salmon River, they diverged southward to the mouth of

Sullivan Creek where the CAA had a cabin for shelter en route. The detour skirted an area of warm springs near Sullivan Roadhouse on the main trail, thus avoiding the danger of having the tractors fall through the ice. The CAA overland fuel haul operated from 1943-44 until the late 1950's, when fuel transport by air from Anchorage was instituted. After the CAA fuel haul ceased, traffic on the Iditarod Trail dwindled to the movement of a few trappers and some winter travel between villages and mining areas, mainly around the McGrath area. In 1967, as part of the Alaska Centennial celebration, a 55-mile dogsled race was run on the trail out of Knik. This race caused a resurgence of interest in the trail by dog mushers. Organized under the guidance and inspiration of Joe Redington Sr., a dog musher for many years, the Iditarod Sled Dog Race from Anchorage to Nome was instituted as an annual event in 1973.

In the tradition of the historic trail, the race route diverges slightly from year to year. One principal route proceeds north from Ophir to Poorman and Ruby and then west along the Yukon River to Kaltag. This route travels through a number of Native villages where dog mushing has been a way of life for generations. In other years, racers have been routed along Hunter Trail from Ophir to Iditarod, then west over the Winter Trail to Shageluk and Anvik, then north to Kaltag, a route also used during the historic mining period.

INVENTORY

At the outset of this investigation little information was available concerning the present condition of historic structures and other features associated with the Iditarod Trail. Field investigations were undertaken to provide a firm data base from which stabilization and protection needs for significant historic resources could be determined. A search of pertinent literature and contact with knowledgeable individuals served to supplement the field examinations by verifying the identity and historic significance of each site. Historic photographs aided in the identification of certain sites and provided information concerning their original condition.

The BLM undertook low level aerial reconnaissance along the trail during the 1976 and 1978 field seasons. All of the sites located from the air were plotted on USGS topographic maps (1:63,360 scale) and photographed with 35 mm. color film.

Many of the historic sites identified in the aerial reconnaissance that are on land administered by BLM were examined on the ground, mapped, and photographed. Alaska Historic Resource Survey (AHRS) numbers were given to all structures along the trail for which exact locations and historical significance could be documented. Those structures whose historical significance could not be determined were given temporary BLM inventory numbers. Access to sites examined on the ground was by heli-

copter to the nearest safe landing place, then overland on foot. Site sketches and plans of accessible structures were made at each site.

Some of the sites that are mentioned in historic references have not yet been located on the ground. These as yet unlocated sites are discussed in order of their probable occurrence along the trail.

A total of 47 sites were identified during the survey. Twelve of these received detailed, on-the-ground examination. The other 35 sites were observed from the air. Eight additional sites were noted in the literature, but not located.

Only part of the Iditarod Trail is covered in this report, that portion from Rainy Pass in the Alaska Mountain Range to Unalakleet on Norton Sound, which is slightly less than three-fourths of the original trail. For convenience this segment of the trail is divided here into six sub-sections, starting at Pass Creek just south of Rainy Pass and progressing northwestward to Unalakleet, giving a total trail length of about 700 miles. Sites along the trail are discussed in the general order that they occur within each sub-section.

RAINY PASS TO TAKOTNA

At Rainy Pass the Iditarod Trail crosses the Alaska Mountain Range and begins its descent into the Kuskokwim Lowlands. The trail transects the alpine tundra of Rainy Pass then drops down to the forested foothills

along the northern flank of the Alaska Range, generally following the valley of the South Fork of the Kuskokwim. As the trail crosses the Kuskokwim Lowlands it passes through areas of spruce forests and muskeg. West of McGrath the trail begins to climb into the low hills of the Kuskokwim Mountains (Map 2).

A number of tripod trailmarkers, now collapsed, are still visible in the Pass Creek vicinity. Since the first ARC survey, the use of tripods has proved especially effective in areas above tree line, where it is otherwise difficult to mark the trail. Tripods were used because of their stability and ease of construction, and because they could be easily erected in areas of permafrost or rocky ground.

Much of the original surveyed trail route is visible between Rainy Pass and Takotna. Some portions of the trail route in the canyon of the south fork are obscure, possibly traversing the frozen river surface or paralleling it near the edge of the floodplain. From Pioneer Roadhouse to Salmon River the trail is nearly straight and has been rendered highly visible by tractor and ATV traffic over the years. Part of the trail near Sullivan Roadhouse has not been impacted however, and retains the old narrow dogsled trail appearance. Between Salmon River and McGrath the route is obscure. Apparently traffic travelled the frozen surface of the Kuskokwim River. A well defined trail cuts across Stewart's bend at its narrowest point. West of McGrath the trail is again visible to Takotna. Snow machines and dogsled traffic have kept to the original surveyed route, though the trail does not appear to have been utilized by tractors.

Pass Creek Roadhouse

The ruins of a small structure were located during low-level aerial reconnaissance on Pass Creek approximately 2/3 mile south of Rainy Pass Lake. This is approximately at the location of Pass Creek Roadhouse site described by Reed (1965:10), but neither the size of the structure nor the apparent building materials correspond to Reed's account. Reed states that, "the roadhouse was a long ramshackle log building facing south with a log cache on pilings behind" (Reed 1965:10). The ruin observed appears to have been a small, one-room frame building that has completely collapsed.

The Pass Creek Roadhouse site needs to be determined through historical background research and additional reconnaissance of the area. Further examination of relevant archival and local sources of information may shed some light on the exact nature of the observed ruins.

Rainy Pass Roadhouse

An establishment referred to as Rainy Pass Roadhouse is described in the same vicinity as Pass Creek Roadhouse (Rand-McNally 1922:40; Cadwallader n.d.:7; and Alaska Road Commission 1916 Map). No evidence of this structure was found. Further research is required to identify the exact location of this roadhouse.

Dalzell Cabin MCG - 003

During low-level reconnaissance, the remains of a two-section log structure were observed on the Pass Fork of Dalzell Creek. It lies on the west side of the creek about 1/4 mile above the fork. The roof has collapsed and vegetation has grown up within the walls of one chamber. Five tiers of wall logs remain standing at one end of the structure. The other walls are in various stages of collapse.

In 1919 Cadwallader (n.d.:20) saw an old cabin a short distance from the mouth of Dalzell Creek where the gorge opens into a small basin. At that time there were two or more buildings which he notes were built several years prior to 1917 to serve as a roadhouse. Apparently this establishment did not operate long because of the poor location. Reed (1965:11) also noted a ruined structure on Dalzell Creek about two miles below the summit in 1920.

Margaret Mespelt (pers. comm.) mentions that Einar Carlsen, a well-known trapper in the area during the 1920's and 1930's, also built a log cabin near the mouth of Dalzell Creek. Constructed in the late 1920's, it served as a shelter cabin on his trapline.

Whether the ruin seen is actually a roadhouse or not, it could fit well into an interpretive plan for the trail and needs to be examined on the ground to further document the existing situation and to determine any needs for stabilization or preservation. Additional background research and reconnaissance needs to be undertaken to identify the exact location of the Dalzell Roadhouse and determine what remains.

Rohn River Roadhouse MCG - 007

Rohn River Roadhouse site is located at the confluence of the Tatina River (formerly the Rohn River) and the South Fork of the Kuskokwim River. The log structures at the roadhouse site are located in a characteristic grassy clearing, approximately 50 yards in diameter, on the south side of the Tatina River (Figure 3).

On the northern side of the clearing is a well-preserved log cabin with a prominent wooden tower rising above the cabin roof from the extended ridge pole and purlins (Photo 1). Electrical wires, which extend down the tower to the cabin interior, and what appears to be parts of a wind generator lying near the cabin indicate that the tower may have held a wind generator at one time. (This was verified by Margaret Mespelt). This cabin was also reportedly used as a weather station at one time, probably to moniter flight conditions in Rainy Pass. The cabin itself appears to be of later construction than the other buildings. It is in a good state of preservation, with roof, floor, and walls intact, although in need of repairs. The structural plan is typical of single-story log structures and the cabin displays a moderate amount of attention to detail in its construction. The spruce logs used are cradle-notched and unshaped. The inner surface of the log appear to have been peeled sometime after the structure was built. The gabled plank-and-beam roof incorporates an eave log to retain the sod covering. Shrubs and small trees are beginning to take root in the sod covering the roof.

On the eastern side of the clearing are the remains of an older building. The logs are hewn flat, and notched with half dovetail notches. A sheet metal roof appears to have been a later addition. The building has collapsed, but both gables are intact. A ladderlike structure lying outside the building appears to have been a hay-rack indicating that the building may have been a stable. Rotting wall logs lie in disarray on two sides of the building. The logs measure 22 to 24 feet in length. Other rotting logs about the same length lie overgrown with grass between the cabin and this building. There are also remnants of a large horse-drawn sled in the clearing.

On the southern side of the clearing is a low vaulted pole structure, presumably a dog barn, that contains ten stalls, five along each side wall. Although the roof has collapsed, the walls are partially intact. A chopping block made from a spruce burl is set in the ground near the front of the structure and was probably used for chopping frozen meat or fish for the dogs. (Photo 2). A slab privy was attached to the back of the dog barn but now lies collapsed on the ground.

Other structures at the site include a small doghouse, encroached upon by young spruce trees at the edge of the clearing and the collapsed remains of a cache. According to a personal diary kept by Einar Carlsen when he trapped in this area, a severe earthquake occurred on Good Friday in 1931, causing the cache at Rohn River to collapse. He referred to this structure as the Anderson cache, possibly after the man who

built it. It is likely that the collapsed cache noted at the site is the Anderson cache.

There is no evidence that the cabin has been used for many years. The inscription, "Ernie Mattochei, Anch., AAA, Nov. 2, 1938," written above the doorway inside the cabin indicates that it was probably used as late as 1938. In addition to this, a wooden packing crate on a shelf outside the cabin door is stenciled,"CCC, Titana River." In as much as the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) built and used a log cabin near an airstrip about 1/4 mile south of the roadhouse, it is conceivable that CCC workers also used the cabin at the Rohn River Roadhouse site during this time.

Reed (1965:11) states that the original Rohn River Roadhouse was a two story building. According to Margaret Mespelt (pers. comm.), the original structure burned in 1924 and was rebuilt on the site by Einar Carlsen in 1929. The rotting logs lying about the clearing could represent portions of the original building, although they showed no evidence of charring. Most likely the two outbuildings date from the original roadhouse.

Rohn River Roadhouse was in existence as early as the winter of 1910-11 (Alaska Yukon Magazine, July 1911:55). Cadwallader (n.d.:22) states that it was owned by the Richards brothers in 1917. By 1920 it was owned and operated by "French Joe," according to Reed (1965:11) who passed over the Iditarod Trail at that time. After Einar Carlsen re-

built the cabin in 1929, he used it periodically until the late 1940's (Margaret Mespelt:pers. comm.).

The cabin at the Rohn River Roadhouse site is in need of minor repairs, especially to the roof, to protect the structure from imminent deterioration. Other structures at the site should be stabilized in their present condition. A fire break should be maintained around all of these structures. The historical significance of the buildings should be further evaluated and documented through pertinent archival and local sources of information. Archeological testing of the site is needed to assess its potential to contribute to the historical record.

Pioneer Roadhouse MCG - 009

Pioneer Roadhouse site lies on the west side of the South Fork of the Kuskokwim River about 1 mile southeast of the present Farewell Lake Lodge. The site is about 50 feet west of a small side channel of the South Fork of the Kuskokwim. Four log buildings stand in various degrees of disrepair, and the ruins of two caches lie near the edge of a clearing that measures approximately 100 feet by 75 feet. (Figure 4).

Two log cabins are still standing on the site. Cabin #1, which seems to be the most recent, appears to have been in use in the mid-1930's. A copy of the Saturday Evening Post in the cabin dated December 25, 1937, provides a probable date of occupancy.

Cabin #1 is in the best condition of any of the structures at the site. The sod roof, which had several young trees growing on it until it began to cave in recently, is largely intact. Now there is a hole about 4 feet in diameter on the southwestern side, and dirt and sod have fallen through to the sawed plank floor. Some time ago, several metal sheets made from flattened 5-gallon fuel cans were placed on part of the roof in an attempt to patch it. The roof is supported largely by double ridge logs. Inside, smaller poles extending diagonally from the plate logs to the ridge beam support the roof of close-set poles that rest on the ridge and plate logs and are supported by an eave log.

Logs forming the walls of Cabin #1 are slightly charred, evidence that they probably were cut from a burned-over area. Herron (1901:54) and Reed (1965:13) both mention evidence of recent large fires in the Kuskokwim Basin during the early years of the 20th century or late 19th century. Charred wood is more resistant to deterioration than is uncharred wood, which could account for its relatively good condition. Logs forming the walls vary in diameter from 6 inches to nearly 12 inches. The inside faces of the logs were hewn flat, probably with an ax.

There are two windows, the one on the end opposite the door featuring a shutter that is held in place by two poles and operated by slipping the poles in and out of vertical cleats alongside the window. Other openings in the structure include the other window on the west wall, a

metal-lined hole in the roof for a stovepipe, and a 6 inch air vent at the north end of the cabin, over the door. This air vent consists of a wooden cheese box set in the wall, with an end flap for controlling ventilation.

The main furnishings of Cabin #1 consist of four bunk beds and two tables. The bunk beds, two upper and two lower, are made of poles and are attached to the wall opposite the door. The tables are built in against the walls, and one is surfaced with flattened coffee cans.

Skulls of a moose, an immature Dall sheep, and a small canine lie atop the roof of Cabin #1. Although the skulls are whitened and beginning to deteriorate from weathering, it was not possible to judge how long they had been there. Several skulls of moose and caribou were also found between the dog barn and the shed. Bottles piled on the floor just inside the door appear to date from the 1920's or 1930's.

Cabin #2 is in generally poor condition and is probably older than Cabin #1. The roof has completely collapsed, but the walls are still standing. From the similarity of construction it appears that this cabin, the shed and dog barn may have been constructed by the same individual. A modified saddle notch was used on all three structures, but not in V shape. Rather, flat log seats were prepared without a great deal of attention to detail.

There were two sets of bunks inside the cabin constructed from poles.

Items found in the cabin included enameled metal plates, Oriental type stick matches, a homemade pole clothes drying rack, and fuel cans.

Another small log structure on the west side of the clearing appears to have been a storage shed or stable. It has a low gently sloping shed roof and is without windows. A harness ring nailed low on the south wall suggests that at one time it may have served to shelter dogs.

The fourth structure at this site was identified as the dog barn by the presence of small stalls and by the gnawed wood at the base of each stall. There are two doorways, one on each end of the building, and no windows. Wooden pegs in the walls indicate that there were once partitions for 20 dog stalls. Later the stalls were apparently enlarged to twice the size of the original cubicles. The roof is completely gone. The northern end of the building appears to have had a porch of sorts.

Remains of two caches were found (Fig. 4). The larger, Cache #1, had originally been elevated approximately 8 feet above the ground. Flattened fuel cans that had been wrapped around the tops of the supporting poles are still in place. One pole is still standing but the rest of the cache is in ruins. What appears to have been another cache east of Cabin #2 (cache #2) has totally collapsed.

A trash pile located near the northeastern corner of Cabin #2 shows some signs of disturbance. It is possible that the bottles inside Cabin #1 had been cached there by a collector from this source.

Near the northwestern corner of Cabin #2 a shallow rectangular depression was noted. It was impossible to determine from superficial examination if it was of cultural origin.

The clearing around the site had grown up with poplar saplings from one to 10 feet in height and a few spruce, willows, and other shrubs. The second growth trees and shrubs encroaching on the clearing were removed at the time the site was examined, in part to allow photographing and mapping, and in part to reduce the fire hazard to the structures and to allow unobstructed access to river water in case of fire.

Pioneer Roadhouse has had other names over the years. It was known as "French Joe's" after the French Canadian, Joe Blanchell, who was its proprietor for many years (Irwin 1968:15; Margaret Mespelt, pers. comm. photo 3). It is also identified as Farewell Mountain Roadhouse on the Alaska Road Commission map, 1916, and on the USGS McGrath topographic map, 1949. Rand-McNally (1922:40) identifies it as Pioneer Roadhouse. Pioneer Roadhouse served as headquarters for Einar Carlsen and Jim Davidson while they were trapping in the area during 1928 and 1929 (Margaret Mespelt, pers. comm.).

Cabin #1 at the Pioneer Roadhouse site should be repaired and maintained, and the other structures on the site stablized in their present condition. A firm break should be maintained around existing structures. Further archival and archeological research concerning this site would probably prove fruitful.

Peluk Roadhouse MCG-011

Peluk Roadhouse site was found and examined briefly during the 1976 field season. In August 1977 the Bear Creek fire burned over the area and destroyed what remained of the roadhouse. Some of the data presented here was collected on the ground in 1976 before the fire, and the site was also revisited in 1978 after the fire.

The historic cabin site identified as Peluk Roadhouse was found on the Iditarod Trail approximately 1.5 miles southeast of where it crosses the upper end of Bear Creek. A small grassy clearing surrounded by birch trees marked the site. The remains of two log structures were situated facing each other on the northwest side of the clearing (Figure 5).

The remains of one cabin with unhewn, cradle-notched logs had a galvanized sheet-metal roof, with sawn plank underpinning (Photo 4). The sheet metal roofing may have been more recent than the rest of the structure. The walls were collapsed and decomposing. A loft was evident under at least part of the roof in this cabin.

The other log structure was also built of unhewn, cradle-notched logs and had a sod-covered pole-and-beam roof. Walls and roof were collapsed and in an advanced state of decomposition in 1976. Sod embankments adjoining this structure appeared to outline other foundation features that had almost disappeared (Figure 5).

The remains of a makeshift bridge were found where the trail crosses a small drainage channel just to the west of the site. A log-cribbed excavation, identified by Miska Diaphon (pers. comm.) as a well, was located just below the trail crossing on the east side of the channel (Figure 5). It extended down for 6 feet but appeared to have been partially filled with sediment washed in by the intermittent stream. Tin cans, bottles, and other trash were scattered around the southern side of the clearing opposite the buildings. A few logs showing auger holes and shaping were scattered about the clearing and may represent elements of other earlier structures.

A hand-made clothing rack was nailed to a wall log inside the east cabin (#2 on Figure 5). It was constructed of half a split log approximately 3 feet long and 5 inches in diameter with eight holes augered into it at an angle. Shaped pegs were driven into the auger holes to hang clothing. This rack was burned, along with the cabin, by the Bear Creek fire in 1977.

Examination of Peluk Roadhouse site in 1977 and 1978 revealed that the Bear Creek fire had reduced the organic remains of the structures to ashes. Only the outline of the foundations, discernible by the burned out rectangular depression filled with ash, and the sheet-metal roofing from the west cabin remained. Even the sod embankments were burned away. The dry remains appear to have caught a spark from the fire as it swept through the surrounding spruce vegetation in a northeasterly

direction. Vegetation on three sides remained unscrathed except for the scorched trees adjacent to the structures.

Forest and tundra fires are not new to this part of the Kuskokwim Basin. Reed (1965:12), in describing his journey over the Iditarod Trail in 1920, mentions seeing fire-blackened landscape before he reached Peluk Roadhouse and for three days afterward.

Peluk Roadhouse was in existence in 1914 when it was operated by Frank Creoli (Miska Diaphon, pers. comm.). It is shown by name on the 1916 Alaska Road Commission map of Alaska and Rand-McNally (1922:40). It was reportedly owned and operated by Frank Creoli until some time before he left the area in 1929 (Margaret Mespelt, pers. comm. photo 5).

Although little in the way of structural remains still exist at the Peluk Roadhouse site, the site has a high potential to contribute information on the effects of fire on historical sites. The integrity of this site should be preserved until its archeological potential to contribute to the historic record can be determined.

Sullivan Roadhouse MCG-017

The Sullivan Roadhouse site is located on a marshy area on the north side of Sullivan Creek, approximately five miles east of its junction with Pitka Fork where Goodwins trail crosses Sullivan Creek. The swampy terrain around the site prevented it from burning in the 1977 Bear Creek fire.

Vegetation covering the site made it almost invisible by air. Only the remains of two old bridges crossing Sullivan Creek at the site were visible from above.

Remains of two and possibly three structures were found at the site, as well as the remains of two log bridges (Figure 6). Little was left of the larger log building except foundation logs. Brush and vegetation mat entirely covered the logs.

Remains of a cache were in better condition. The support posts, which had collapsed, were 90 inches long and 8 to 10 inches in diameter. Small metal cans encircled the supports 6 inches below their tops. The tops had V-cuts to support cross posts. Wall logs averaged 6 inches in diameter. Unhewn logs with cradle notches were used in construction of the walls, which are still partially intact. The distinctive cache door was made of 1-by 8-inch boards nailed together with a Z bracing of 1-by 4-inch boards. This unusual design may be of value in identifying or verifying photographs of the old roadhouse.

The doorway of the cache fronted almost onto the Iditarod Trail. The rusted remains of a small stove sits on the ground between the cabin and the cache (Figure 6).

Decaying logs lying under surface vegetation were found on a slightly elevated grassy spot east of the ruins of the cabin and cache. Several

whitened bones at this location suggest that a dog barn may have been located there.

According to Phillip Esai who has a trap line in the vicinity, the old bridge at the stream crossing was replaced in 1951 by a new bridge slightly upstream. The old bridge is in line with the route traversed by the Iditarod Trail, which is still visible in this area and retains much of its original character, unmodified by modern vehicle traffic.

Sullivan Roadhouse is said to have been built in 1914 by Sam Naswalker; the Vanderpools ran it for one year in the 1920's and called it "Salmon River" Roadhouse (Miska Diaphon, pers. comm.). The roadhouse is identified as Sullivan Roadhouse on the 1916 Alaska Road Commission map and Rand-McNally (1920:40). Irwin (1968:15) lists it as one of the roadhouses on the Seward-Iditarod mail trail. He locates it between Peluk and Salmon River Roadhouses.

The cultural remains at the Sullivan Roadhouse site should be maintained and stabilized pending the development of a comprehensive cultural resource management plan that includes this site. Archeological investigations in the vicinity of the supposed dog barn may be necessary to document the historic use of that portion of the site.

Bear Creek Roadhouse

Bear Creek Roadhouse is shown between Sullivan and Salmon River Road-

house on the 1916 Alaska Road Commission Map and Rand-McNally (1922:40). Miska Diaphon (pers. comm.) states that it was active for only two years, from 1914 to 1916, as the distance between roadhouses was too short and business was poor. No sign of the site was visible from the air in 1976 or 1978.

The exact location of the Bear Creek Roadhouse site should be determined through historic documentation and an on-the-ground examination, and its potential for historic archeological research evaluated.

Salmon River Roadhouse MCG-013

Salmon River Roadhouse site was located and examined in 1976. It lies at the confluence of Salmon River and Pitka Fork. The structural remains associated with the roadhouse lay immediately adjacent to more recent log buildings owned and used by Miska Diaphon, a local resident who has a fishing camp there. Photo 6 shows the site as it appeared in 1919.

Log foundations and other features identified at this site in 1976 are shown in Figure 7. The multiwalled structure toward the eastern edge of the site showed no evidence of doorways cut into the logs. The other two structural remains near it had high banks of sod outlining them. Outlines that may have been foundations of buildings were found just east of the existing cache. No doorways or other features were identifiable in the outlines. Eight aligned posts projecting just above the

surface of the ground were found northeast of these features, near the edge of the clearing.

In August 1977, the Bear Creek fire consumed most of the older features remaining at Salmon River Roadhouse as well as the recent log cabin. During the 1978 field season when the site was reexamined, very little remained of the older features at the site. The moldering foundation logs of the structure by the extant cache had burned away, and the ashes were overgrown by grass. Parts of the logs forming a double-walled foundation, as well as the four-chambered structural foundation adjacent to it, were found under the grass. All sign of the sod banks had been obliterated by the fire.

The name, Salmon River Roadhouse, has been applied to both the site at the confluence of Pitka Fork and Salmon River and to the site on Sullivan Creek. Cadwallader (n.d.:27) lists Salmon River Roadhouse as 28 miles from Big River, which is the distance to the site on Sullivan Creek. When the Vanderpools owned the roadhouse on Sullivan Creek in the early 1920's it also went by the name of Salmon River Roadhouse. The 1916 Alaska Road Commission map of Alaska and Rand-McNally Guide to Alaska and Yukon (1922:40) show the roadhouse at that location to be Sullivan Roadhouse, and they label the roadhouse that is located at the junction of Pitka Fork and Salmon River as Salmon Creek Roadhouse. Virgil Knight (pers. comm.) stated that Salmon River was also commonly called Salmon Creek.

foundation was located approximately 250 yards northeast of the extant structures. Vestiges of a trail are still present under the canopy of trees on the approach to the roadhouse site from the extant buildings. The old woodburning stove spotted from the air is half-buried near the feature identified as the roadhouse ruins.

Little in the way of structural remains still exists at the roadhouse site. A deep, generally rectangular depression, oriented along a northwest-southeast axis, is probably the foundation remains of the roadhouse (Figure 8). It appears that the northwest end of the structure may have been the front, though this is a tentative designation. This "front" end was marked by the deepest depression, and may represent the remnants of a cellar under the main structure.

At the opposite or southeast end of the roadhouse foundation there is a partially intact structural feature. This structure may have been a cold storage cache. The walls of the structure are made of 3 inch thick poles. The roof consists of close-set poles covered with a 10 inch thick layer of sod.

Across the trail to the north of the roadhouse location, is a small clearing where there may have been another structure. The general outline of a possible structural foundation for a small building suggests that a dog barn may have been located in this area.

A small cemetery area lies on the southern side of the trail near the

Irwin (1968:15) located Salmon River Roadhouse at 17 miles from Big River and 12 miles from Sullivan Creek, which closely approximates the distance between the sites that have been located and identified as such in this report.

Although little remains of structural features at the Salmon River Roadhouse site, there are enough surface indications to suggest that the site may be valuable for historic archeological excavations. The ground surface should be protected from any disturbing activities that could damage archeological deposits. Further investigation of historic documentation of the site could also provide useful information for the evaluation and management of the site.

Big River Roadhouse MCG-015

A site identified as Big River Roadhouse is shown on the 1958 USGS topographic map. An interview with Phillip Esai of Nicolai Village revealed that this is actually the location of an extant cabin and outbuildings that belonged to his parents years ago and that the site of the roadhouse lies several hundred feet to the northeast. A thick canopy of deciduous forest has impinged on the site, making it difficult to see from the air. Only a slight thinning of the closed forest around the old clearing where the roadhouse once stood can be seen from directly overhead. An old cast-iron stove is visible in this tiny open area.

When on-the-ground examination of the site was made, the old roadhouse

Esai cabin. It contains about a dozen graves, marked by Russian Orthodox style crosses. The site is heavily overgrown.

Big River Roadhouse was in existence by 1910 (Alaska Yukon Magazine XI, 1911:55). It was built by Arthur Berry, a trapper in the area, who subsequently built Berry's Landing at Medfra (Margaret Mespelt, pers. comm.). By 1917, the Big River Roadhouse was operated by Mr. Sherwood (Cadwallader, n.d.:8).

Big River Roadhouse is listed as "Berry's" Roadhouse on the 1916 Alaska Road Commission map of Alaska. Rand-McNally (1922:40) locates and labels it as Big River Roadhouse (Fig. 1). Irwin (1965:16) identifies it as Berry's Big River Roadhouse. Reed (1965:13) mentions that in 1920 Big River Roadhouse and Trading Post was a large establishment.

The Big River Roadhouse site needs to be more fully documented to adaquately evaluate its historic significance. A thorough search of relevant archival and local information sources plus an intensive program of archeological testing and excavation should reveal a great deal more information about this site.

CUT-OFF FROM SALMON RIVER TO MCGRATH

The cutoff on the Iditarod Trail from near Salmon River almost directly west to McGrath existed in 1922 (Rand-McNally 1922:40). Progressing directly overland for about 36 miles, it apparently provided a short cut

of a few miles between the two points. Two sites were found near this cutoff: a well-preserved cabin on Pitka Fork and remains of Smiths' Roadhouse on Blackwater Creek/ (Map 2). This alternate trail passes through less densely forested terrain than the main trail, and probably was the preferred route once it became established.

Pitka Fork Cabin MCG-018

A log cabin on Pitka Fork was observed just above the mouth of Sullivan Creek. Because of its location near the trail and because it is an extant cabin, it was examined on the ground.

The lone cabin is in a small clearing that has begun to fill in with second growth spruce (Photo 7; Figure 9). The floor is constructed from sawn 1 by 8 inch floorboards, overlying pole joists 4 inches in diameter. The roof is composed of close-set 6 to 8 inch poles under an insulating layer of moss overlain by sod. The poles forming the roof are partially supported from beneath by another pole placed diagonally from the plate log to the ridge log. A table, bunks, cupboard, and cabinet were observed inside the cabin. There is no longer a stove or stovepipe in the cabin, though a hole in the roof for the stovepipe indicates that the stove once stood in the front of the cabin behind the door. There is an old barrel stove not far from the cabin that may once have been inside.

Some of the planking has been torn from the bunks, table and cupboards.

A fallen spruce tree has broken through part of the roof, allowing moisture in which has rotted part of the flooring and joists beneath the hole. The window glass and shutters are missing so moisture is also beginning to come in from that source.

Magazines dated from the late 1930's and the 1940's are still lying on the bunks. Names with accompanying dates ranging from 1943 to 1966 are inscribed on the walls as testimony of travelers who had used the cabin.

Inquiries made in McGrath about the cabin's identity indicate that it was built in the late 1930's or early 1940's. According to Ray Collins, a resident of McGrath (pers. comm.), the cabin was used as a stop-over point for Civil Aeronautics Administration (CAA) tractor-train crews who were freighting fuel overland from Salmon River to the CAA station at Farewell. Subsequent interviews with officials of the Federal Aviation Administration (formerly CAA) in McGrath and Anchorage confirmed this. The cabin was abandoned by CAA in the 1940's after a wannigan was constructed, which could be hauled on the tractor train and used as emergency shelter (Virgil Knight, pers. comm.; CAA film reels, 1948 and 1954). Since that time area trappers have occasionally used the cabin for shelter.

The Pitka Fork FAA cabin needs stabilization and minor repair work to preserve its integrity. The hole in the roof should be patched, the window glass and shutters replaced, and the floor repaired. A simple stove should be installed so that an occasional occupant would not be

tempted to light a fire in an unsafe manner, endangering the entire structure.

Smith's Roadhouse MCG-016

Rand-McNally (1922:40) locates Smith's Roadhouse on the cutoff trail from Salmon Creek (Salmon River) to McGrath. The thick forest canopy in the vicinity of Blackwater Creek made spotting the site from the air impossible. The site location was obtained from Phillip Esai of Nicolai, who runs a trap line through the vicinity.

The roadhouse site lies on the western bank of Blackwater Creek in a closed deciduous forest. A faintly visible trail can be seen approaching the forested stream course from the east and the west, and it was possible to walk almost directly to the site from the west trail. Although the buildings are in ruins, it was possible to identify and measure each structure.

The building complex consisted of a two-room log cabin and a small doghouse adjacent to it, a cache, and three low dog barns (Figure 10).

The cabin is composed of two log cabins that share a common wall. The roof and floors are gone, and the walls have partially collapsed. The wall logs and window frames lie toppled outward on the ground outside of the structure.

The logs used in the cabin's construction varied in diameter from 9 to 12 inches, with the largest logs at the base and others graduated in size to the eaves. The logs had been planed off with a broadax on one side to form flat interior walls. The corners were formed with modified saddle notches. Walls were chinked with moss. The double common wall between the two cabins is 20 inches thick and has a doorway near the center (Figure 10). A gable-shaped wooden feature, sheathed in sheet iron, lies on the ground outside the cabin. It appears to have been an air vent.

The cache to the south of the cabin was built directly on the ground. The roof has collapsed, but the wall logs are still intact. The walls were constructed of unbarked spruce logs, 6 to 9 inches in diameter, with sawn ends, and moss chinking. There is no evidence of a floor. A birch tree 6 inches in diameter has grown up inside the cache. A collapsed keg with galvanized iron hoops lies inside the cache on the eastern side near the wall.

A small doghouse constructed of unbarked spruce slabs lies between the cache and the cabin. It has two small compartments. A shallow speckled enamel pan was found on the ground just outside the structure.

Three long, low dog barns and foundations of a fourth are located approximately 60 feet north of the cabin (Figure 10). There is no evidence that the fourth structure was ever completed. Although the logs

from which the barns were constructed have badly deteriorated, the size and form of each building can still be determined. Each structure was composed of 14 stalls. Separate entries into each stall were 18 inches wide. The height of the barns at the top center was 48 inches. Wall log supports were stakes 37 inches high, suggesting that height of the side walls was 37 inches.

Some information on the history of Smith's Roadhouse was obtained from residents of McGrath and Nicolai. The roadhouse was built by Paul Mellick in 1914 (Miska Diaphon, pers. comm.). It was operated for Charlie "White Dog" Smith for a while in 1921 by the late Pete Snow Sr. (Evelyn Snow, pers. comm.). The site was sometimes called Blackwater Roadhouse because of its location on Blackwater Creek.

The ruins at Smith's Roadhouse site should be stabilized to prevent further deterioration of the site. Further evaluation of the historic significance and archeological potential of the site can be made through more intensive study.

Old McGrath MCG-001

Old McGrath, established in 1907 as a small trading post, lies along both sides of a slough that once formed the mouth of the Takotna River. It lies on the route of the Old Iditarod Trail where it passes on the northern side of the Kuskokwim River, directly across from the present town of McGrath. A number of roadhouses were operated over the years in

Old McGrath. (Photo 8). Dave Clough had two log roadhouses at different times in Old McGrath. He operated another at Nixon's Fork (Timothy Twitchell,pers. comm.). Crumm's Roadhouse in Old McGrath flourished in the 1920's and early 1930's (Margaret Mespelt, pers. comm). Mitchell's Roadhouse catered to trappers who came to town to trade their furs for provisions (Margaret Mespelt, pers. comm.).

People began moving to the present McGrath townsite in the late 1930's when the Takotna River changed its course. In 1951, the last residents of Old McGrath abandoned their house (Evelyn Snow, pers. comm.).

Time did not allow a thorough on-the-ground inspection of the old townsite. Superficial examination of the site reveals that a number of old log buildings are present as well as the remains of at least three riverboats, the Lavelle Young, the Tana and the burned remains of the Quickstep.

Old McGrath is on land that is currently Federal property, but will probably be patented to the village of McGrath as part of their village selection under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA). Until management responsiblity passes from government hands, the historic resources at Old McGrath should be maintained. Further study and documentation of the site is required to determine if it qualifies as a National Register site or district, and to determine needs for stabilization/protection.

TAKOTNA TO KALTAG

The Iditarod Trail extends northwest from Takotna for 145 miles to Kaltag on the Yukon (Map 3). From Takotna to Tolstoi the trail traverses the Kuskokwim Mountain Range, following along the valleys of Gaines Creek and the headwaters of the Innoko River and crossing low mountain passes. In the vicinity of Tolstoi the trail drops down into the Innoko lowlands, a large flat plain dotted with lakes. From there the trail winds through the low hills of the Kaiyuh Mountains and into Kaltag on the Yukon River.

Some sections of the trail between Takotna and Kaltag retain the characteristic appearance of the old trail, while other sections have been heavily modified in recent years, and other sections have disappeared because of disuse. The trail from Takotna to Ophir is almost completely overlain by a modern State-owned road. The 26-mile long wagon road connecting Takotna and Ophir was constructed between 1917 and 1923 (ARC Annual Report, 1923:86,88). This is readily visible and appears to be well maintained as an access road between Takotna, Ophir, and the mining operations on the creeks between the two towns. Also visible today is a 24-mile long sled road following Independence Creek to the Innoko River. It was built between Takotna and Ophir in the early 1920's and was superimposed on the old trail except for the portion between Yankee Creek and Ophir. This part had been washed away by the Innoko River, so the sled trail was built some distance away from the river on the Innoko Flats (ARC Annual Report, 1923:81).

Intermittant remnants of the old trail between Ophir and Dishkakat can still be seen. The old trail is impossible to follow northwest of Boxcar Roadhouse. Maddren (1910:38) describes the winter route followed by the Iditarod Trail as going between the Dishna and Upper Innoko Rivers, then crossing a low mountain range at an elevation of about 1,300 feet above sea level by way of a low, wide pass with easy grades approaching it from either side. The pass by way of American Creek over to Hurst Creek satisfies this description perfectly. Trail sections are quite evident between Boob Creek and Tolstoi although this could possibly be accounted for by latter day mining activities.

An aerial reconnaissance of the trail was made from Dishkakat to Kaltag, following the west bank of the Little Mud River, also known as the Kluklaklatna (Orth, 1971:586), up to the headwaters of Magitchlie Creek and over a low pass to the Yukon drainage. This route is shown on the map of the Kuskokwim district in the ARC Annual Report for 1924 (Figure 11). No sign of the trail was seen between Dishkakat and the Yukon River. The vegetation obscuring the segments of the trail crossing overland could account in part for the trail's lack of visibility, as this segment of the trail up to the Yukon River has had only minimal use since 1924. Trails were seen from the Yukon crossing to Kaltag, but these are probably of a more recent date.

Takotna

Takotna, a riverboat landing and supply point for the Innoko Placer

Mining District, was in existence in 1910 (Maddren 1911:243). According to Timothy Twitchell (pers. comm.), several Takotna roadhouses were operated in the 1920's. John Reek ran the Takotna Roadhouse and post office. Cap McLane ran a thriving operation at his roadhouse in Takotna during Prohibition. Gullickson's Roadhouse also was operated there at that time. Photo 9 shows Takotna as it appeared about 1918.

Takotna was not examined during the course of this project. Further documentation and an evaluation of the current situation are required before any recommendations can be made.

Yankee Creek Roadhouse OPH-015

Yankee Creek Roadhouse was found along the winter sled road approximately 9 miles northwest of Takotna. It lies within 1/4 mile of the junction of Yankee Creek and the Innoko River. The log building stands in a grassy clearing approximately 1/8 mile south of the Innoko River. It is still standing, and the sheet metal roof is still intact.

Billy Goss operated Yankee Creek Roadhouse during the early 1920's (Timothy Twitchell, pers. comm.). Casmir Knotts appropriated it some time later and is said to have been its last proprietor (Bob Magnuson, pers. comm.). According to Timothy Twitchell, this roadhouse was operated until regular air service was established to the Takotna area around 1929.

The Yankee Creek Roadhouse Site was only observed from the air so an on-the-ground examination is required before specific recommendations can be made. Superficial observation suggests that the structure is in fairly good condition and may benefit from stabilization efforts.

Yankee Creek Shelter Cabin OPH-017

A standing frame building with sheet-metal roof was sighted at the mouth of Yankee Creek, approximately 1/4 mile west of Yankee Creek Roadhouse. It was identified by Bob Magnuson (pers. comm.), a local pilot who grew up in Ophir and now lives in McGrath, as the Yankee Creek shelter cabin which was constructed by the ARC in the 1920's. The ARC Annual Report for 1926 (p.83) notes that a barn was built and repairs were made to the shelter cabin at Yankee Creek during the 1925-26 season. Remains of the barn were not seen during aerial reconnaissance. Timothy Twitchell, however, states that the shelter cabin noted was built by the ARC around 1947 to accommodate ARC workers stationed there.

The Yankee Creek Shelter Cabin seems to be in good condition, but, as noted above, this site was only observed from the air. An on-the-ground examination is required before specific recommendations can be made. Surface examination and evaluation may also help determine when the existing structure was built.

Greenberg Cabins

Two cabins are shown in the 1954 edition of the USGS quad sheet, Ophir (A-1), past Ganes Creek on the Ophir-Takotna road and approximately 5 miles northwest of Yankee Creek. Aerial reconnaissance at this location failed to locate any structural remains. According to Bob Magnuson (pers. comm.) the two old cabins belonged to Al Greenberg and were removed some time ago. The site where they had been was used as a gravel pit.

Ganes Creek

The locality of Ganes Creek was settled soon after the first gold strike in the Kuskokwim region was made in 1906 on Ganes Creek near the headwaters of the Innoko River. Although aerial reconnaissance revealed the foundations of a number of old structures there (Plate C-91), the site was not examined because of ongoing mining activities in the immediate area.

No specific recommendations can be made for stabilization, protection or excavation at Ganes Creek until an on-the-ground examination and evaluation is made.

Ophir

Ophir sits on a half-mile long tract of land adjacent to the Innoko

River above the mouth of Ophir Creek. (Photo 10). Ophir was a mining town of considerable significance after the 1908 gold strike on Ophir Creek. Its strategic location in the midst of the Innoko District and its location on the winter trail to the Iditarod District established it as an important hub for commerce and communication. Roadhouses were operated in Ophir during the 1920's by Sid Paulson and Pearl Jones (Timothy Twitchell, pers. comm.). Photo 11 shows the main street of Ophir, sometimes referred to as the "trapline", as it appeared about 1918.

Ophir has been virtually abandoned since 1957, when the post office closed for lack of patrons (Balcom 1965:26). Numerous buildings have apparently been torn down for building materials to be used in other areas. In May 1978, a bonfire at an FAA picnic held at Ophir went out of control, burning the northern section of town by the river (Plate C-91). It is not known exactly how many of the town's buildings were affected by the fire, but comparison of photographs taken in 1976 and 1978 indicates that several standing buildings burned to the ground.

An on-the-ground survey and evaluation of the remains at Ophir are required before specific recommendations can be made. Special consideration should be given to evaluation of the effects of the 1978 fire on this site, to help determine what measures can be taken to avoid future fire damage to this and other sites.

McCarthy's "Roadhouse"

A small cabin is said to have existed on the north side of the Innoko River opposite the mouth of Beaver Creek some 5 miles west of Ophir (Timothy Twitchell, pers. comm.). Known as McCarthy's Roadhouse, it was actually not a roadhouse but a private dwelling where travelers sometimes took shelter when approaching Ophir from Iditarod or Tolstoi (Timothy Twitchell, personal communication). It was not seen during reconnaissance.

Del Thompson's Beaver Creek Cabin

A cabin is shown on the 1956 edition of USGS topographic map of Ophir (1:63,360 scale), approximately one mile northwest of the mouth of Beaver Creek. This cabin reportedly belonged years ago to Del Thompson, a long-time resident of the area (Warren Magnuson, pers. comm.). No sign of this cabin was found during reconnaissance.

Boxcar Roadhouse OPH-006

Boxcar Roadhouse was reported to be located on the Innoko River approximately 8 miles northwest of Ophir (Polk's Gazetteer, 1922:109). Remains of two log structures were found at a site which corresponds to this location. A small but prominent grassy clearing on the old trail marks the site from the air.

The site was examined on the ground in 1976. The larger cabin appears to have been built in two stages of construction, with a 14-foot square room on the east and an adjoining 18-by 21-foot room added later on the west side. (Figure 12). The wall logs of the west part of the structure are fairly well preserved. The roofs on both parts of the structure appear to have been gone for some time. The modified saddle notch used was skillfully executed on carefully selected logs. The east portion of this structure is largely obscured by trees that have grown up since the place was abandoned, and it is considerably less well preserved than the west part. Few wall logs remain standing, and the roof logs are barely evident in the vegetation mat covering the floor area. Details of the roof structure could not be ascertained.

The small log building 25 feet to the north is in a state of deterioration similar to that of the east part of the larger cabin. It is possible that this cabin and the smaller chamber of the other cabin were built first and the larger room added at some later date.

The structural remains at the Boxcar Roadhouse site should be preserved as they stand. Further research into archival and local sources of information may provide further details on the site. There is also potential for archeological investigation of the site through excavation and recordation of material remains.

Oregon City

According to Joe Degnan (pers. comm.), who first came to the McGrath area in 1935, Del Thompson (nicknamed "The Oregon Kid") carried mail over the trail at one time and constructed a place near the mouth of American Creek which he called "Oregon City." The area was examined for remains of structures, but none were found.

Del Thompson's Mount Hurst Cabin OPH-013

The remains of a log cabin and outbuilding that reportedly once belonged to Del Thompson (Warren Magnuson, pers. comm.), were seen northeast of Mount Hurst. The buildings are located on an alluvial fan which extends from a side drainage north of Hurst Creek. The roof is gone from the cabin, although some structural members are still visible. The walls appear to be standing. The log walls of a smaller structure are visible approximately 30 feet west of the cabin.

Del Thompson's Mount Hurst Cabin was not examined on the ground, so specific recommendations must await further study. In the meantime, the site should be protected from disturbance until it can be fully evaluated.

Mount Hurst Summit Roadhouse OPH-007

A site was found on Hurst Creek approximately 2 miles northwest of the

site of Del Thompson's cabin. It is marked by a distinct grassy clearing in a mixed forest. Foundation outlines of at least two and possibly three structures can be seen in the clearing.

The outlines of the square structure indicate a relatively large building, larger than the average trapper's cabin. The large prominent clearing also suggests the site was used for something more than a shelter cabin. The distance of the site from Ophir by this route as measured on USGS topographic maps is approximately 20 miles. By these criteria, the site appears to represent Summit Roadhouse.

The Mount Hurst Summit Roadhouse Site was not examined on the ground. Little in the way of structural remains appear to be present, but the site may yield useful information through archeological excavation. A more thorough documentation of the site's history might be gleaned from archival and local information sources.

Del Thompson's Boob Creek Cabin OPH-016

A cabin located on the 1975 edition of the USGS topographic map of Ophir quadrangle is shown on Boob Creek approximately 7 miles north of the Summit Roadhouse site and 2.5 miles southeast of Tolstoi. This site consists of a standing cabin apparently in good condition. It is in an open spruce woodland beside Boob Creek. There is a collapsed cache next to the cabin. Water gates and logs, probably used for placer mining activities, are piled beside the creek. Two large iron boilers are

lying on the tundra a short distance from the creek, each at a distance of several hundred feet from the cabin in opposite directions. Remnants of a trail can be seen between Boob Creek and Tolstoi.

Joe Degnan and Bob Magnuson (pers. comm.) both identify these structures as having belonged to Del Thompson when he operated a placer mine on Boob Creek in the 1930's. A mining claim was registered at this location in 1927 (BLM District Minerals Resource Inventory; unpublished folio).

Del Thompson's Boob Creek Cabin was observed from the air and appears to be in fairly good condition. The site needs to be examined on the ground to evaluate its condition and significance.

Tolstoi OPH-008

Tolstoi sits on the east bank of Tolstoi Creek at its junction with Mastodon Creek. It was established around 1916 as a boat landing and supply camp for the placer activities on Mastodon Creek (Orth 1967:974). It was also apparently on the trail from Dishkaket, the limit of navigation for large riverboats. There was a roadhouse at Tolstoi at this time known as Olsons Roadhouse (Orth 1971:974).

Tolstoi has been abandoned for many years. Today the site includes the remains of several structures, varying from mere foundation outlines to a sod-roofed cabin in fairly good condition. The ruins of a large

structure immediately adjacent to the river appear to be the remains of a warehouse at the boat landing. According to Bob Magnuson (pers. comm.) the standing sod-roofed log cabin approximately 200 yards south of the old town was constructed from building materials salvaged from the old structures in Tolstoi. A new log cache was recently built alongside the cabin with logs sawn from walls of the old cabins. The location of Olsons Roadhouse in Tolstoi was not determined.

Tolstoi was only observed from the air. An on-the-ground survey is required to record and evaluate existing structures there. This site needs immediate attention to prevent further destruction of historic resources.

Dishkakat OPH-004

The site of the settlement of Dishkakat was found on the south bank of the Innoko River between the river and an oxbow lake. Dishkakat had been an Ingalik Indian settlement long before the first rush of prospectors to the area in 1907 to 1915 (Orth 1971:274). Some variations on the name of the town include Deekakat, Dischkatat, Dishkaket, and Innoko (Orth, 1971:274).

Several structures, in varying states of disrepair, are still extant in Dishkakat. Time did not allow a thorough examination of the site, but a brief reconnaissance indicated that most of the existing structures are among the trees at the edge of a clearing near the river.

Dishkakat needs to be carefully examined and evaluated for its historical significance. Archival and local sources of information should be consulted, and an intensive on-the-ground survey done. Existing structures of historic significance should be stabilized or restored and possible archeological deposits preserved or excavated.

Slough Roadhouse

A roadhouse called Slough Roadhouse is said to have been located on a slough near where the trail crosses Khotol River 15 miles southeast of Kaltag (Edgar Kallands, pers. comm.). No sign of it could be seen from the air probably due to the canopy of vegetation along the watercourse.

THE IDITAROD LOOP

The Iditarod Loop extends southwest from Takotna along Fourth of July Creek and Bonanza Creek, through Flat and Iditarod, then northeast back to Ophir where it rejoins the main trail (Map 4). This route was established soon after the discovery of gold in the area around Iditarod.

The loop follows streambeds for the most part, winding through valleys and crossing low passes through the Kuskokwim Mountains. Between Flat and Iditarod the trail was supplemented as early as 1911-12 by a wagon road. One mile of the 8-mile wagon road was constructed and maintained

by private individuals, while the Alaska Road Commission was responsible for the rest (ARC Annual Report, 1912:20). A wagon road also extended up to the head of Flat Creek for transportation of heavy dredge machinery (Eakin 1912:301).

The towns of Flat and Iditarod were also connected by a tramway which is still easily visible from the air. The tramway traverses the low hills between the two towns in a nearly straight line. It was in use by 1911-12 (ARC Annual Report, 1912;20), and operated during the summer months for carrying freight to Flat from the river terminus at Iditarod (Brooks, 1914:255). Many other trails are visible between the two towns, indicating that various alternative routes were used over the years.

From Iditarod the trail extends northward along the Iditarod River for approximately 20 miles to Shermeier's Halfway Roadhouse site. Traces of the old trail that are visible between Iditarod and Shermeier's follow the river much closer than the more visible later trail which keeps to higher ground as much as 2 miles eastward. The higher trail probably dates from the introduction of tracked machinery into the area, since it keeps to higher, more solid ground, rather than crossing the frozen river ice and low wetlands.

At Shermeier's Halfway Roadhouse the trail forks. One route, the Dikeman Cutoff, heads almost due north through Dikeman and on to Diskakat where it rejoins the main trail. This was part of the winter sled road

between Dikeman and Iditarod in 1923, though by that time the trail between Dikeman and Dishkakat was little used (ARC, 1923:85). As the trail extends north from Dikeman it crosses lakes and swampy areas that obscured much of the trail even during the height of its activitiy. Faint remnants of the trail are reportedly still visible along the route, though time did not allow for an examination of the trial between Shermeier's Halfway Roadhouse and Dishkakat.

The second route, known as Hunter Trail, heads northeast from Shermeier's to rejoin the main trail just west of Ophir. This trail is most evident where is crosses the uplands east of the Dishna River. The Hunter Trail and known sites along its length have been included here as part of the Iditarod Loop.

Big Creek Roadhouse IDT-007

Big Creek Roadhouse site lies on the west side of the Takotna River just below the mouth of Fourth of July Creek at the confluence of Big Creek. It is shown on the 1916 ARC map of Alaska and on maps in the Rand-McNally Guide to Alaska and Yukon (1922:40). It was established by the Kuskokwim Commercial Company of Joaquin, Twitchell & Fowler as a dispersal point for supplies sent up the Kuskokwim and Takotna Rivers to the Innoko Gold Mining District in 1908 (Maddren, 1911:34). It consisted of a log store and roadhouse. The name "Joaquin" was also employed for the Big Creek establishment (Timothy Twitchell, pers. comm.).

All that remained of the structures when the site was inspected in 1976 were outlines in the grassy clearing. Apparently the last standing structures at the site burned down in 1974 (Pete Shepherd, pers. comm.).

Historic accounts of the Iditarod area refer to "Joaquin" as an early embarkation point for supplies to Moore City, just over the hill to the west. It is not entirely clear, however, if the name was being applied to Big Creek Roadhouse, Joaquin Mountain across the river, or the nearby Indian village for which no name has been recorded.

Although no structural remains are extant at the Big Creek Roadhouse Site, there may be subsurface remains of archeological value. Since this site is gradually being eroded away by the river it should receive archeological testing sometime in the near future to determine its potential. Further research of archival and local information sources may help clarify the part this site played in the region's history.

Indian Village Site IDT-017

Faint outlines of three or more structures were observed in the clearing on the west side of Takotna River near the mouth of Fourth of July Creek. This was identified as an abandoned Indian village site on the 1951 USGS topographic map of Iditarod.

The ARC mentioned the existence of this village on the winter trail from Takotna to Flat in its 1924 Annual Report (1924:125). Alaska Sportsman

(January 1966:28) listed it as a point on the winter mail trail running from Takotna to Flat in 1914.

Although there are no standing structures at this site it probably contains subsurface archeological deposits. Archeological testing is needed to fully evaluate the potential of this site. Further research in archival and ethno-historic sources may also provide further information about it.

Lincoln Creek Roadhouse Site IDT-011

The remains of a log building were seen from the air on the south side of Fourth of July Creek opposite the mouth of Lincoln Creek. A few wall logs are in place but the structure is in an advanced state of deterioration.

This site is identified on the 1916 ARC map and by Maddren (1910, Pl.I), as Lincoln Creek Roadhouse. Alaska Yukon Magazine (July 1911:55) refered to a roadhouse at this location as Sanford's Roadhouse in its report on Goodwin's survey for the ARC on the winter trail between Flat and Takotna. Being so far from the visible trail, this site location appears to suggest that early traffic may have been on the frozen surface of Fourth of July Creek.

The remains at the Lincoln Creek Roadhouse site should be stabilized and the surrounding property protected from surface disturbing activities

until the site can be tested for archeological values. This site is on land patented to the State of Alaska.

Moore Creek

Several structures were noted in the vicinity of Moore Creek. A cabin and shed with metal roofs are located on the east side of Willow Creek about a mile northeast of the present Moore Creek mining activity. These were identified by Tony Gularte, who grew up in Iditarod and Flat, as the mess hall and bunkhouse for the mining operation. In the mining area itself are two more structures with metal roofs.

The ARC map of 1916 shows Moore Creek Roadhouse at this location. Moore Creek Inn is also mentioned as one of Goodwin's stops when his party surveyed the winter trail in 1910-11 (Alaska Yukon Magazine XI, 55). It is possible that one of the remaining structures in this area is the roadhouse, though all the buildings noted appear to be too well preserved to be of much age. No examination was made on the ground, where an active mining operation is still maintained.

The site of Moore Creek needs to be examined on the ground to determine its present condition. Further documentation from archival and local sources is needed to determine the sites historical significance, and archeological testing is required to evaluate the sites potential to contribute significant information. The site is on State-owned land.

Summit Roadhouse IDT-021

The remains of a structure are located on the winter trail between Flat and Takotna just over the summit on a tributary of Bonanza Creek. Although the structure is almost completely collapsed, the metal roof is relatively intact. The building was identified as Summit Roadhouse by Tony Gularte (pers. comm.), who camped in it in 1938 when it was still intact and in good condition.

Summit Roadhouse was mentioned as an important stop on Goodwin's 1910-11 survey of the winter trail between Flat and Takotna (Alaska Yukon Magazine XI:55). In 1931 Summit Roadhouse was used by one ARC crew as a shelter cabin. The ARC Annual Report that year noted that a new roof was installed on Summit Roadhouse (1931:56).

Several stacks of rotting cordwood were seen along Bonanza Creek in the vicinity of Montana and Little Montana Creeks about 3 miles below the Summit Roadhouse site. According to Tony Gularte, the wood was cut and stacked back in the 1930's by John Snyder, a local woodsman. Snyder cut wood along Bonanza Creek to sell to the miners for their placer operations between 1913 and the 1930's.

The Summit Roadhouse site needs to be examined on the ground to evaluate its potential significance. It is on State-owned land.

Halfway Cabin

This log cabin is located on the south side of Bonanza Creek approximately 8 miles southwest of Summit Roadhouse. It was briefly examined on the ground in 1976, before the land was patented to the State.

The small grassy clearing around the cabin also contains the rotting foundation logs of an older structure about 30 feet southeast of the standing cabin. The existing cabin has a hand-carved sign posted above the door with the name "Halfway Cabin." The following inscription is inside the cabin above the doorway:

"Constructed by and for Moose Creek
Charles Salmi
Lars Indegaard
Contractors
March, 1939"

This dates the construction of the building, and other dates left on the cabin walls by visitors follow in time.

Salmi, Hunter, Stuver, Gularte, Rosander - Dec. 22, 1939
Aline Emory Toner - March 31, 1940
Lillian Uotilla - Jan. 16, 1942
John C. Anderson (undated)

The 15-by 17-foot cabin is well preserved but in need of repairs. (Photo 12). The split log roof is rotting, and the door is loose. The upper wall logs are fairly sound, and the plank flooring is in fair condition. The handmade table and chair located inside the cabin are good examples of bush type furniture and are excellently preserved. The bunk has many initials carved in the side poles. Cooking utensils and other materials are strewn about the inside of the cabin. Rusty spring traps hanging outside on the front of the cabin suggest that a trapper stayed in it some years ago.

Tony Gularte, whose name appears on the cabin wall, states that the Halfway Cabin was built as a stopping place for travelers between Moore Creek and the Flat area during the late 1930's and early 1940's. After air service became generally available to this locale, the trail and cabin were little used except by area trappers.

Halfway Cabin is in very good condition, and could be preserved with only minor repairs. Since the site is on State land, any stabilization or restoration efforts would be the responsibility of the State of Alaska.

Ruby Creek Roadhouse IDT-022

Remains of two log structures are located in a large grassy clearing just below the mouth of Ruby Creek (Figure B).Only the wall foundations

are in place. A few rotting logs lie in disarray about the smaller structure. The investigators cut out shrubs and small trees that had grown up on and within the foundations. A pile of bottles and tin cans was found under the grass between the two buildings. The dual tracks of the present winter trail are 150 feet east of the site.

The smaller structure measured 16 by 18 feet at the foundations. The larger structure, measuring 18 by 34 feet, probably was the roadhouse.

Ruby Creek Roadhouse is mentioned by the Goodwin party who surveyed the Iditarod loop of the Iditarod Trail in 1910-11 (Alaska Yukon Magazine XI, 1911:55). The ARC map of 1916 and Rand-McNally (1922:40) both identify the roadhouse at this location as Ruby Roadhouse.

There is little in the way of structural remains left at the Ruby Creek Roadhouse site. It should receive archeological testing to determine the potential of the historic remains there. Further research into archival and local information sources may provide further details about the historic use of the site.

Frame Cabin on Bonanza Creek

A relatively recent frame cabin is located on Bonanza Creek approximately 3 miles southwest of Ruby Creek Roadhouse site near the fork in the trail. This site does not correspond with any known historic site location, but the cabin does closely resemble the one on the Hunter Trail that was apparently built by the Road Commission.

Flat IDT-005

The town of Flat was observed during aerial reconnaissance. Time did not allow detailed examination of the existing buildings however.

Flat, also known as Flat Camp, Flat City, and Flat Creek, is located on Otter Creek 8 miles southeast of Iditarod. The mining camp became active in 1910, grew into a town by 1912 and by 1917 surpassed Iditarod as the regional population center (Polk's Gazetteer 1917-18:323). Photo 13 shows Flat as it appeared during its heyday.

A number of hotels and roadhouses were operated in Flat over the years. Mr. and Mrs. George Mutchler ran a hotel there in 1917 (Cadwallader, n.d.:10). In 1923, Polk's Gazetteer (1923:298) listed three hotels and their owners: Grand Hotel - Mrs. George Mutchler; Flat City Hotel- Mrs. Gunning; and Snyder House - Maud Earl.

According to Fred Gularte, who lived in Flat and Iditarod from 1910 until the early 1920's, there were also a number of "flop houses" where a bed could be rented for a stated number of hours, with meals obtained elsewhere.

Flat's last roadhouse proprietor was Henry Durant (Timothy Twitchell, pers. comm.). The town was abandoned in 1942 when the Federal Government shut down all gold mining at the beginning of World War II (Lyman 1972).

There are currently active mining claims in the Flat area, and a number of residents live there during the summer. The concern of these individuals has been responsible for preservation of much of the town as it stands today.

Because a large number of structures of various ages are still standing in Flat, an extensive program of recordation is required to document the existing situation. Archival sources, current and former residents could supply a great deal of information about the site. Archeological investigations may be necessary to evaluate subsurface features. Until such an extensive study can be made to determine stabilization and restoration needs, the site should be protected from disturbance.

Iditarod IDT-014

The historic town of Iditarod is on an old channel of the Iditarod River seven miles northwest of Flat. A large number of buildings still stand. Time only allowed for a superficial examination of the site.

Several of the structures on the east side of the river were examined in 1976. The buildings are in various states of disrepair, although most are still fairly sound. All the buildings examined are of frame construction, and most have metal roofs. One building on the west side of the river is occupied and another building adjacent to it is used for storage.

Many items of historic value are still contained in the buildings and scattered around the town outside the buildings. An old steam-driven tractor is sitting within the town site. A steel and concrete bank vault still contains many records and receipts. The cemetery, with markers and fences in various states of disrepair, is located north of town. Outlines of old foundations and similar features can be seen on low-level aerial photos of the town.

Iditarod became the supply and commercial center of the Iditarod Gold District shortly after the town was founded in June 1910 (Orth 1967:-443). By July, 1910 at least four roadhouses were in business: Iditarod Lodging House, Adolph Rippa, manager; McDonald's Roadhouse; Riverside Hotel, A. F. Morgan, proprietor; and Beattie House, George Adams, owner (Iditarod Pioneer July 10, 1910:4 and July 17, 1910:1). As many as 2,000 to 3,000 people came to Iditarod in that first year (Morrell 1968: 407).

The population of Iditarod diminished to 125 inhabitants by 1917 (Polk's Gazateer 1917-18:322). Polk's Gazateer (1917-18:1044-45) lists three roadhouses still active in Iditarod in 1917: Grand Hotel, Mrs. George Mutchler, owner; Beattie House, George Adams, proprietor; and McDonald's Hotel, Manuel Gularte. Photo 14 shows Iditarod's appearance during this time. Beattie House, which was operated by George Adams until 1920, was the last functioning roadhouse in the community (Tony Gularte, pers. comm.).

By 1921, Iditarod had become a ghost town. Most of the people who remained in the area moved to Flat to be closer to the placer mining operations. The Iditarod tramway, a wagon road, and a winter sled road connected the two towns by 1921 (Rivers 1975:211), facilitating the transport of supplies from the river terminus at Iditarod.

Iditarod is a fine example of an Alaskan mining town, and could be easily preserved as an historic site. Some of the buildings are in need of minor repair and others could be stabilized as ruins. The large variety of historic artifacts at the site should be preserved. In spite of the relatively remote location of the town, bottle collectors and scavengers have already begun to remove historic artifacts and are causing damage to some of the structures. Since the townsite of Iditarod has been tentatively approved for transfer to the State, the State of Alaska has primary responsiblity for any further work at the site, and any effort they make should be fully supported. Iditarod would undoubtedly qualify for the National Register of Historic Places.

Shermeier's Halfway Roadhouse IDT-010

Shermeier's Halfway Roadhouse site was found on the west bank of the Iditarod River, approximately 20 miles north of Iditarod. The site lies in a grassy clearing, about 150 by 200 feet, that is partially regrown with young birch trees.

Remains of four structures were found: the roadhouse, dogbarn, an unidentifiable outbuilding, and a below-ground cold storage cache (Figure 14). The organic remains of the roadhouse and outbuilding have thoroughly deteriorated, releasing nutrients to the overgrowing vegetation. This is evident by the small grove of trees growing along and inside of the foundations, showing the general outline of the structures.

The remains of the roadhouse foundation logs were uncovered and measurements taken. Although no structural evidence remains to delineate the functional areas of the roadhouse, the remnants of a cast-iron kitchen range in the northeast corner of the house indicate that this area was probably the kitchen. An opening to a cellar was found in the northeastern corner of the structure. The cellar opening is 4.5 feet square on the surface, and the cellar walls are partially collapsed. A large barrel stove constructed from a 55-gallon fuel drum is in the center of the building. Small pieces of old planking are scattered over the ground surface within the foundations.

Investigators removed shrubs and small trees from the foundations of the outbuilding northeast of the roadhouse ruins and measured the foundations. Posts, foundations, and a few roof poles are all that remains of this structure.

A small 36-inch deep subterranean structure was found 30 feet east of the roadhouse. The dirt walls are cribbed with poles 2 inches in dia-

meter laid over the 40-inch square excavation and partially covered with poles cut in 42-inch lengths. This may represent an icehouse mentioned by Rivers (1975:213) in his article relating to Shermeier's Halfway Roadhouse.

The dog barn is the best preserved structure on this site. Although the pole roof and walls are collapsed, a considerable amount of detail remains. The pole members are essentially in place on the ground and are preserved well enough so that dependable measurements of the structure could be taken. An interesting feature was noted adjacent to the dog barn. On two sides, northeast and southeast of the dog barn, there are embankments which appeared to have been constructed of logs and sod. These embankments are oriented parallel to the dog barn at a height of 18 to 24 inches, and may have served as windbreaks.

A number of articles are strewn in the grass outside the structures. An old copper wash boiler was found just west of the roadhouse ruins. Other items--rusty cans, a few glass bottles, and pieces of wood, both hewn logs and boards--were found lying at random in the clearing. In the birch thicket west of the clearing there is another 55-gallon fuel drum with a door cut out to make a heating stove similar to the one in the roadhouse ruins.

Shermeier's Halfway Roadhouse is approximately halfway between Iditarod and Dikeman. It is known to have been in existence in October 1910, when it was known as Murray's Halfway Roadhouse (Rogers 1964:57).

Shermeier was proprietor by 1917 when Cadwallader passed through on his way to Iditarod (Cadwallader, n.d.:9). Rivers (1975:211-16) spells this name Shermeyer when relating the notoriety gained at this roadhouse in 1922 when Shermeyer (or Shermeier) was involved in a $30,000 mail robbery. According to Timothy Twitchell (pers. comm.), Julien DeSade was the last proprietor at Halfway Roadhouse before it was abandoned as a roadhouse in the late 1920's.

No major structures remain intact at Shermeier's Halfway Roadhouse site, but the ruins and artifacts at the site should be maintained and preserved. Further study and archeological investigations into the site may provide useful information.

Whitacker Cabin

Remains of another building were noted in a small clearing on the opposite side of the river slightly upstream from Shermeier's Roadhouse site. The structure is completely collapsed, and the roof is gone. Low vegetation is growing within the foundations. Timothy Twitchell (pers. comm.), identified this structure as the Whitacker cabin, dating from approximately the same time as Shermeier's Halfway Roadhouse. The site was not examined on the ground.

The site of Whitacker's Cabin needs to be examined on the ground to determine its current condition. Further investigation into archival

and local sources of information may help to determine the historical significance of the site.

"First Chance" Shelter Cabin IDT-019

Ruins of a log cabin were found along Hunter Trail near the divide between First Chance Creek and Dishna River. It lies in a small clearing in the upland spruce woodland just to the north of the drainage channel of an intermittent stream. The structure is roughly square and divided into two chambers of equal size. The building is partially standing, but the superstructure has collapsed on the walls, and much of the roof is gone.

This structure is shown on the map of the Kuskokwim Mining District, accompanying the 1927 and 1929 ARC Annual Reports for 1927 (p.74) as First Chance shelter cabin. The 1929 ARC Annual Reports (p.121) gives the location of First Chance cabin as 46 miles from Ophir on Hunter Trail. This description correlates well with the location of the observed cabin.

The First Chance shelter cabin was sometimes called Summit Roadhouse because of its location near the summit between the Iditarod and Dishna River drainages (Timothy Twitchell, pers. comm.). There is no evidence that it was ever a commercial enterprise, however, and was apparently only used as a free shelter cabin.

The ruins at the First Chance shelter cabin site should be maintained in their present condition, or restored. The site is on State-owned land.

Fritz's Roadhouse IDT-009

A frame cabin in excellent condition was sighted in a clearing in open spruce woodland on the trail approximately 33 miles west of Ophir. What appears to be foundations in the clearing east of the cabin suggests that another older structure once stood there next to the trail.

This was the only commercially operated roadhouse known to have been built on the Hunter Trail and was constructed by Fritz Walter (Timothy Twitchell, pers. comm.; ARC Annual Report, 1931:56). Fritz's Roadhouse was constructed around 1916 when a mail route was established along the Hunter Trail. The roadhouse was purchased by Adam Twitchell shortly before the end of World War I (Timothy Twitchell, pers. comm.) and was operated by Jerry Wynne until it burned down on October 18, 1924 (Alaska Sportsman, October 1966:42). In 1931, a shelter cabin was rebuilt on the site by the ARC (ARC Annual Report, 1931:56).

The standing cabin at Fritz's Roadhouse site appears to be in good condition and probably only needs minor repairs to keep it intact. The area showing evidence of old foundations should be tested for archeological deposits. This site is on State-owned land.

Reindeer Cabin on Hunter Trail IDT-015

An old log cabin was found 5 miles northwest of Hunter Trail approximately 30 miles southwest of Ophir. The site is in a small clearing north of the stream known locally as Roadhouse Creek at the base of Hunter Mountain (Plate C-85). Remains of two dog barns, laid end to end, were visibile to the northeast of the cabin (Plate C-85). The site appears to have other structural remnants, and the cabin itself is in fair condition.

The cabin appears to have had at least two rooms. The sheet-metal roof has partially collapsed on one side and appears to be loose on the other side. The log walls and roof supports all appear to be standing, although in a state of disrepair. The dog barns are badly dilapidated. The roofs are gone, and the walls partially collapsed. The individual stalls are still evident, however, even from a distance.

Timothy Twitchell (pers. comm.) states that this cabin was built in the late 1920's by his father, Adam Twitchell, to shelter the herdsmen when they brought the reindeer to winter pasture along Roadhouse Creek.

The Reindeer Cabin on Hunter Trail should be restored for use as a shelter/recreation cabin. Its association with reindeer herding activity would make it a good canidate for interpretation if recreation activity in that area is ever great enough to warrant such an effort. This site is on State-owned land.

Cabin Ruins on Hunter Trail

Remains of a log cabin are located in a small clearing approximately 11 miles northeast of the reindeer cabin. They are by the trail near the summit between the reindeer cabin and Ophir. The cabin is square and appears to have had a sod roof, though the roof has collapsed leaving the ridge pole still in place. The walls are still standing, and logs and other building materials can be seen strewn about the site.

Since these cabin ruins were not examined on the ground, and no references to the site were noted, the site needs further study before any firm recommendations can be made.

Brown Creek Shelter Cabin OPH-014

Another structure was noted near the trail aproximately 1.5 miles northeast of the unidentified cabin on a branch of Steel Creek. Apparently an old cabin, the structure sits in a small clearing in the open spruce woodland. It is of log construction and square in shape. The roof is gone, and the wall logs have almost completely collapsed.

A map of the Kuskokwim Mining District in the ARC Annual Reports for 1929 and 1932 show an ARC shelter cabin in this approximate location. The 1929 ARC Annual Report (p.21) identifies it as the Brown Creek ARC shelter, 18 miles from Ophir on the Hunter Trail. This corresponds to the distance of this cabin from Ophir as measured on a USGS topographic

map of the area. It was also identified by Timothy Twitchell as the Brown Creek shelter cabin (pers. comm.). The cabin is shown with the U. S. mail sled in the foreground on a mail run to Iditarod in a photo taken in the 1920's during spring break-up by Timothy Twitchell (Photo 15).

The Brown Creek Shelter Cabin site was not examined on the ground. The ruins of the old cabin should be stabilized until further investigations can be conducted at the site to determine its historical significance and archeological potential.

SUMMER PACK TRAIL TAKOTNA TO FLAT

A summer pack trail just to the northwest and roughly parallel to the winter trail extends 95 miles from Takotna to Flat by way of Ganes Creek/ (Map 4). This route, passing through high, dry country was more easily traversed in summer than the river valleys. Traces of the trail, where it passes along the ridges and side hills, are readily visible from the air. A green line of herbaceous shrubs growing in the catch basin formed by the trail where it traverses a hillside, often indicates its presence.

The shelter cabins described below were sighted or reported to have once been on the summer pack trail. Two of these have been identified as cabins built by the ARC to provide shelter to travelers. Two other cabins mentioned here were identified in ARC reports, but could not be

found during aerial reconnaissance. Another cabin is described though it is situated some distance from the visible traces of trail. There is no record that a commercial roadhouse was ever operated on the summer pack trail.

Lincoln Creek Shelter Cabin IDT-023

Lincoln Creek shelter cabin was sighted on the north side of the summer pack trail on the east side of Lincoln Creek near its headwaters. It lies approximately 2 miles southwest of Crater Mountain, near its base.

The cabin, situated in an open woodland, has almost completely collapsed. The sheet metal roof appears to be intact, overlying the flattened structure beneath. No sign of other structures were noted at the site.

Lincoln Creek shelter cabin is first mentioned in the ARC Annual Report for 1922 (p.68), which states that a contract was let to build the cabin that year. Timothy Twitchell states that his father, Adam Twitchell, was the contractor who built the Lincoln Creek cabin during the summer of 1922, along with Brush Creek and Fourth of July cabins. In its 1927 Annual Report, the ARC mentions a cabin on Crater Mountain, presumably the Lincoln Creek cabin since its proximity to Crater Mountain would make this a logical alternative name.

The Lincoln Creek shelter cabin was not examined on the ground. The site is on state land.

Fourth of July Creek Shelter Cabin IDT-027

The ARC Annual Report of 1922 (p.68) notes that a contract was also let to build a shelter cabin and horse barn on Fourth of July Creek where the summer pack trail crosses it. The 1923 Annual Report of ARC reports that this was accomplished during the summers of 1921 and 1922. Timothy Twitchell (pers. comm.) states that his father, Adam Twitchell, constructed them out of logs. In its Annual Report for 1927, ARC lists repairs made on the cabin. Aerial reconnaissance over the location given for Fourth of July Creek Shelter Cabin did not reveal any sign of a structure.

Duffy-Riley Cabin

A log cabin and out-building were seen on Fourth of July Creek, halfway between the visible summer pack trail and Moore Creek. This was identified by Tony Gularte (pers. comm.) as the cabin belonging to Bill Duffy and Felix Riley.

The cabin's condition appears to be good. The sheet-metal roof on the cabin is intact. The outbuilding roof has collapsed, although the log walls are still partially in place. The buildings are in an open spruce woodland, interspersed with low herbaceous tundra which shows no indication of clearing except perhaps to accommodate the structures.

The similar construction of these buildings and the ARC Brush Creek shelter cabin suggests that this could be the Fourth of July shelter cabin put up by ARC. It is possible that at one time the trail followed a different route, crossing Fourth of July Creek where this cabin sits rather than further upstream where the visible trail now crosses.

Further research is needed to determine if the Duffy-Riley cabin was indeed at one time the Fourth of July Creek shelter cabin. The structures should be stabilized to prevent further deterioration. This site is on state land.

Reindeer Cabin on Willow Creek

A log cabin was seen in a small grassy clearing on the summer pack trail between Fourth of July Creek and the ARC Brush Creek shelter cabin. It is in a mixed woodland of spruce and herbaceous tundra, beside the summer pack trail, approximately 100 feet southwest of where the trail crosses Willow Creek. The cabin is still standing although the roof has partially collapsed. The walls are intact but in poor condition.

Timothy Twitchell (pers. comm.) identified the cabin as one his father, Adam Twitchell, built in 1923-24 as the main summer quarters for his reindeer herdsmen when they brought the herd to forage on the summer range between Fourth of July Creek and Camelback Mountain.

The Reindeer Cabin on Willow Creek needs to be examined on the ground to determine stabilization-protection needs. The site is on State-owned land.

Brush Creek Shelter Cabin IDT-025

A log cabin and outbuilding are located on the west side of the summer pack trail, approximately 150 feet north of where the trail crosses Guggenheim Creek. The buildings are in an open spruce woodland among low to medium herbaceous shrubs. A small grassy area extends approximately 15 feet on one side of the outbuilding. No other sign of a man-made clearing is visible except for the clearing that accommodates the structures themselves.

The cabin appears to be about 1 1/2 times as long as it is wide, and from the air appears to be in good condition. The sheet metal roof on the cabin is intact. The outbuilding roof has collapsed, but the wall logs are still in place.

As mentioned earlier this was one of the three shelter cabins constructed by Adam Twitchell along the summer pack trail for ARC during the summers of 1921-22 (ARC Annual Report, 1922:68). The outbuilding was reportedly a horsebarn built at this location (ARC Annual Report 1923:82).

The Brush Creek shelter cabin needs to be examined on the ground to determine stablization-protection needs for the site. This site is on state land.

McGee Shelter Cabin

A fourth ARC shelter cabin, identified as McGee cabin, is mentioned in the 1927 ARC Annual Report (p.73) as lying along the summer pack trail approximately 14 miles east of Flat. This cabin is shown on the maps of the region published with the ARC Annual Reports (1929: 114-15;1932: 38-39).

The cabin was not sighted during aerial reconnaissance. Timothy Twitchell (pers. comm.) has since indicated the location of this cabin, which he occasionally used for shelter when herding reindeer for his father, Adam Twitchell. It no doubt can be located in a later aerial reconnaissance of the area.

KALTAG TO UNALAKLEET

The 95-mile route from Kaltag to Unalakleet(Map 5), also known as the Kaltag Portage, is readily visible its entire length. Used as an aboriginal trade route between Eskimo and Indian groups for at least 150 years, it was also used as an avenue for the military telegraph system and a U. S. mail route during the early part of the 20th century (Andrews and Koutsky 1976:1).

Five shelter cabins are shown along the Kaltag Portage in the ARC Annual Report for 1932 (pp.40,41). Remains of four of these shelter cabins were observed from the air. Edgar Kallands (pers. comm.) aided in locating them and indicated that all were utilized by the U. S. mail runners and by the men maintaining the section of the Washington Alaska Military Cable and Telegraph System (WAMCATS) from Kaltag to Unalakleet. The other shelter cabin, which was located 10 miles west of Kaltag on the portage, burned years ago. No trace of the former site was seen from the air.

Twenty-two-mile Cabin NOB-003

Twenty-two-mile Cabin is shown on the 1954 edition of the USGS topographic map of Norton Bay. Remnants of the log cabin are located south of the trail on the tussock tundra in open shrubland 22 miles west of Kaltag. The walls have partially collapsed, and the roof is gone.

Twenty-two-mile cabin was built by WAMCATS as a shelter cabin for the men maintaining the telegraph lines between Old Woman Cabin and Kaltag (Stuck 1914:139;ARC Annual Report 1927:78). It was also used for shelter by U. S. mail carriers and travelers (Stuck 1914;Kallands, pers. comm.). Photo 16 shows the site as it appeared in 1930.

The Twenty-two-mile cabin needs to be examined on the ground for proper documentation and evaluation. Ruins at the site appear to be in need of stabilization to prevent further degradation.

Ten-mile Cabin NOB-033

Work at Tenmile Creek, 10 miles northeast of Old Woman Cabin, is mentioned in the ARC Annual Report for 1922 (p.78). According to Edgar Kallands (pers. comm.) a WAMCATS shelter cabin was built on the trail at Tenmile Creek to house maintenance men when doing repairs on the telegraph line. Photo 17 shows the site as it appeared in 1930.

The remains of a log cabin and a log outbuilding were seen at this location in a small shrub-covered clearing surrounded by an open mixed forest. The walls of the cabin are half collapsed, and the roof is gone. Only foundations remain of the outbuilding.

The Tenmile Cabin site needs to be examined on the ground for further evaluation. The cabin appears to be in need stabilization to prevent further deterioration, and the outbuilding foundations can be tested to determine their archeological potential.

Old Woman Cabin NOB-034

Old Woman Cabin is located on the Kaltag Portage 45 miles west of Kaltag and 50 miles east of Unalakleet. It is identified on the 1953 edition of the USGS topographic map of Norton Bay. A telegraph station was established at Old Woman Mountain in 1903 by the U. S. Army Signal Corps

(Orth 1967:721-22). Old Woman Cabin was built at the base of the mountain to house men maintaining the line between Kaltag and Unalakleet (Stuck, 1914:135).

The remains of Old Woman Cabin were found in a shrubby clearing on the east side of Old Woman River approximately a mile above its junction with Unalakleet River. The log cabin has partially collapsed, and the roof is gone. The path up to the top of Old Woman Mountain is clearly visible, but no traces were seen of telegraph equipment there.

The site of Old Woman Cabin should be examined on the ground to determine stabilization-preservation needs. The cabin remains appear to need stabilization.

Whaleback Cabin UKT-026

Whaleback Cabin sits in a grassy clearing along the south bank of the Unalakleet River approximately 22 miles east of Unalakleet. The Kaltag Portage passes just to the southeast of the cabin. A native fishing camp lies just to the west of the old cabin. The log cabin is still standing, although the river is severely undercutting one corner (Photo 18).

Whaleback Cabin was one of the maintenance stations for the telegraph line (Edgar Kallands, pers. comm.). U.S. Mail carriers and travelers also used it for shelter while making the 95-mile trip between Kaltag

and Unalakleet. (Photo 19). At the beginning of the century, a small Native settlement was located at Whaleback. There were both Eskimo and Indian residents (Stuck 1914:134). Stuck (p.134) also notes that when traveling along the Kaltag portage toward the east, this was the last place that Eskimos were regularly encountered. Whaleback Cabin is the only historic structure evident from the air at this site.

The site of Whaleback Cabin needs further evaluation to determine its historic significance. Because the cabin itself is in immediate danger of destruction from the encroaching river, the structure should receive photogrammetric recordation. The feasibility of moving the cabin or stabilizing the bank should be examined. The site should also receive archeological testing to determine the nature and extent of subsurface deposits.

Summary Conclusions and Recommendations

This brief survey of historic sites along the Iditarod Trail establishes beyond any doubt the fact that there are valuable and significant historic resources along the trail. A wide variety of sites, structures and artifacts were encountered and recorded during the brief time span allotted for this preliminary investigation. Much more work is required before we can fully comprehend the role of the Iditarod Trail and its associated structures and features in the growth of modern Alaska. This study demonstrates that even a modest effort can yield a great deal of information pertinent to our understanding of the trail.

The condition and integrity of cultural resources identified in this report runs the gamut from essentially intact cabins to utterly destroyed or unidentifiable sites. In most cases, some evidence remains of the historic use of a site, though in many cases this evidence is rapidly deteriorating through the effects of time and man.

Sites for which scant surficial evidence remains may still yield usefull data through archeological investigation. The size, shape and relationships between structures may be ascertainable through excavation of foundation features. Artifacts scattered about a site or concentrated in decayed caches or trash pits may help identify how and for what purpose a site was occupied, and during what time span it was used. The interrelationships between artifacts can provide further clues about the use of a site. Even the absence of cultural materials can be significant if that lack can provide evidence of sparse, intermittant or temporary use of a site.

Many of the cultural items that can be found on sites along the Iditarod Trail are of a fragile or perishable nature. This factor, plus the importance of positional interrelationships for interpreting cultural evidence, makes it imperative that sites be protected from surface disturbing activities until they can be fully evaluated for their archeological potential. Archeological evaluation usually requires extensive "testing", that is, excavation of samples or test pits to determine the nature and extent of subsurface deposits.

Numerous structures encountered during this investigation are well on their way to disintigration, but still maintain enough integrity to be recognizeable. These partially collapsed buildings or half-rotted caches represent a valuable resource. In most cases, the archeological values discussed above are still intact, but these sites have the additional benefit of obvious, visible structural remains.

The enigmatic attraction of ruins give certain sites a kind of popular appeal that make them highly amenable to interpretive and recreational purposes. Thus the partially intact historic site offers opportunities for public interpretation or restoration in addition to its potential to yield valuable information on such factors as historic construction methods, preferences, and uses of a site.

In order to serve any or all of the potential future uses to which these sites can be put, they must be preserved now. Structures on these sites are ruins now because of neglect in the past. Continued neglect will relegate them to eventual destruction. This report recommends that ruins be stabilized to prevent further deterioration until more extensive studies determine the full historic significance and archeological and recreational potential of each site.

Some of the structures encountered in the course of this survey were essentially intact. Often these are cabins in need of only minor repairs to make them habitable and to protect them from further deteriora-

tion. Usually these structures are suitable for use as recreational or emergency shelters, after appropriate measures for protection and recordation of cultural values at the site. Most of these sites are in need of immediate attention to preserve their integrity.

At almost all of the sites investigated, there were numerous historical artifacts. Many of these items, such as bottles, tools, traps, etc., are easily portable. These smaller items are gradually being removed by collectors and scavengers, or being destroyed through environmental or man-made factors. Significant or representative artifacts should be collected and preserved at appropriate depositories where they will be available for study, interpretation or display purposes. Larger items, such as machinery and structures, need to be preserved in place through stabilization, protective signing and similar efforts.

Since this is just a preliminary study, it undoubtably fails to include all of the sites within the study area. Further research into historic documentation of the trail and sites associated with it is needed to identify other sites, and clarify and enhance our knowledge of sites identified so far. Knowledgeable individuals familiar with sections of the trail or features along it should be identified and consulted for the information they are able to supply. Finally, more extensive and detailed on-the-ground studies are needed to identify, record and evaluate cultural features along the trail, and to identify the exact condition and location of the trail itself.

In summary then, cultural features along the Iditarod Trail need to be preserved until further evaluation can be conducted to determine their significance and value. Further study of sites and features along the trail, and of the trail itself is required in order to provide sufficient information on which to base management decisions.

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