

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 (Plate C-2). 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 monitor 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. (Plate C-1). 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 (Plate C-3).

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. 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 rebuilt 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.