

*DRAFT Survey and Evaluation of the Iditarod Trail
and Connecting Trails in the Chugach
National Forest*

PHASE I EVALUATION FORM

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MOOSE PASS - Postage

1. Name of Property: Johnson Roadhouse/Sunrise Station
AHRS Site #: SEW-118
2. Location: NW/SW Section 8, T.5N-R.1E, Seward Meridian
Seward C-7 Quadrangle
3. Classification:
Ownership: Public-federal
Category of Property: Buildings
Number of Resources within Property:
Contributing: 5 buildings
Non-Contributing: 0
Number of Contributing Resources previously listed: 0
Name of related multiple property listing: Iditarod
Trail, Connecting Trails, and Associated
Properties Within the Chugach National Forest,
Alaska.
6. Function or Use:
Historic Functions: Domestic/Hotel/Inn
Current Functions: Camp/Seasonal Residence
7. Description:
This site is assumed to be Johnson Roadhouse, which served travellers at the southern end of the Johnson Pass Military Road. The property is within the Chugach National Forest, and evidence of private patent of the property has not been found (1990). The property is seasonally occupied, well maintained, and marked against trespassing.

The site contains a 1-1/2 story gabled log dwelling, a wood frame dog barn, a gabled wood frame storage building, a shed roofed frame storage building, and a privy. Feature 1 is a flat-roofed wood frame apparent dog barn, which has a wood sill foundation, plain horizontal butted board walls, and asphalt roll material on the roof. The structure had a plank floor, much of which had disintegrated at the time of survey. A small opening is at the west side of the north end wall, and a hinged door is at the north end of the west wall.

Feature 2 is a gabled log dwelling which has half-square corner joining, no visible foundation, commercial concrete daub between logs, and a roof of sheet metal over asphalt roll material and boards. A pole lean-to is attached to the south end wall, and a

pole lean-to is shelters the main entry at the south end of the east side wall. The structure has a vertical plank door, a single-light plate window on the east side, a blinded window at the center of the north end wall, a 4-pane fixed window at center of the west wall, and a 4-pane fixed window in the loft level of the north end. Squared log joists exit about 2 meters above ground level, indicating an interior loft. Electrical wiring and insulators were observed on exterior walls, and an electrical line runs to Feature 4.

Feature 3 is a gabled wood frame storage building or workshop which has asphalt composition siding, a corrugated metal roof, and no visible foundation. Double doors and a 6-pane fixed window are on the east end. The building contains tools and other items indicating it is or was a tool shed/workshop.

Feature 4 is a shed roofed wood frame storage building which has rabbetted horizontal board siding, asphalt roll material on the roof, and a wood sill foundation. A vertical plank door is on the west side of the south end wall, and a window has been blinded on the west side wall.

Feature 5 is a shed roofed wood frame privy which has black asphalt roll material over rabbetted horizontal board walls, asphalt roll material over roof, and no visible foundation.

The site also contains fuel drums and other refuse to the west of Features 2 and 3, but otherwise contains very little historic cultural materials. Previous recording of this site indicated that the Johnson Pass Military Road departed immediately behind this site, but evidence of the road was not found near the site during the current survey in 1990.

8. Statement of Significance:

Significance Level: National/State/Local

Applicable Criteria: A, C.

Areas of Significance: Transportation

Period of Significance: 1906-1909

Significant Dates:

Significant Person:

Architect/Builder:

State significance of property:

The Johnson Pass Military Road was constructed in 1907 to connect Mile 34 of the Alaska Central Railroad with the mining towns of Sunrise and Hope. The wagon road

was constructed over the general route of an earlier miners' trail, which was in existence at least as early as 1898 (Mendenhall 1898:302-303). The Johnson Pass Military Road was the main artery for summer wagon traffic and winter dogsled transportation between Seward and Sunrise/Hope until 1912, when a dogsled road was completed through Moose Pass and down Canyon Creek. Thereafter traffic was light on the Johnson Pass Military Road (Alaska Road Commission 1912:15). The location was known as Sunrise Station until about 1915, when it became known as Johnson.

A roadhouse appears to have been established at this location even before the Johnson Pass Military Road was built. A May, 1906 map of the Alaska Central Railway shows both a roadhouse and a projected station very near this site (Alaska Central Railway 1906). Sam Gates and his wife operated the roadhouse in the fall of 1908, and a roadhouse was operated here by unknown entrepreneurs in September, 1909 (Seward Weekly Gateway 10/10/1908, 11/7/1908, 9/25/1909; Grant and Higgins 1909). The closing date for operation of a roadhouse here is unknown, but no accounts after 1909 of such an establishment have been found.

The railroad apparently did not establish a depot or other buildings here, but other businesses operated from Sunrise Station. A pack train operated between Mile 34 and Sunrise at least as early as June, 1909, and was reported to be doing a "rushing business" in July, 1910 (Seward Weekly Gateway 6/26/1909, 7/9/1910). Also in June, 1909, the Seward Weekly Gateway announced plans for a warehouse at Sunrise Station, but evidence has not been found of actual erection of the building.

In a few days the enterprising firm of Brown & Hawkins will build two warehouses on the line of the Alaska Central, one at Mile 29 and the other at Mile 34. These structures well be used for the storage of merchandise destined for the Sunrise and Moose Pass Mining regions. At a later date the firm may open branch stores at these points, for the accommodations of the miners operating in the vicinity (Seward Weekly Gateway 6/26/1909).

The identity of the recorded structures as the Johnson Roadhouse is disputable. A Bureau of Land Management team concluded in 1980 that the buildings recorded herein were constructed after 1940 (Peterson 1980). However, long-time Moose Pass resident and former

dogsled mail carrier Ed Estes stated that the cabin has been on this site since before he came to the area in 1921 (Estes 1981). Estes reported that a miner named Ethan Brewster lived at the site, and that it was occupied seasonally in 1981 by Fred Delaney; Brewster's residence is also reported by Barry (1973:162). However, Estes did not view the site in 1981 to verify that the existing buildings were the same structures on the site in 1921.

National Register eligibility is unknown; the significance of the site largely depends on whether the existing structures were constructed as the Sunrise/Johnson Roadhouse. If so, this property is clearly eligible under National Register Criterion A for its representation of the pattern/event of transportation during post-gold rush period. It would also be eligible as an element of the Johnson Pass Military Road, and by extension as part of the Iditarod Trail and Connecting Trails multiple property group.

The property may also be eligible under National Register Criterion C. The site seems to contain the elements of a small roadhouse site: main cabin with sleeping quarters in loft, a dog barn, storage buildings, and privy. If the buildings are authentic to the roadhouse period/function, this site is an especially well preserved example of the site type, and the individual buildings are similarly significant. Evidence has not been found that the property may be eligible under National Register Criteria B or D.

9. Major Bibliographic References:

Alaska Central Railway

- 1906 Map of Amended Definite Location of the Center Line of the Alaska Central RY. from Mile 20.42 to Mile 41.00. Office of the Chief Engineer, Seward, Alaska, May 10. 1906.

Alaska Road Commission

- 1912 Annual Report. In Secretary of War annual report for 1912, under title of Board of Road Commissioners for Alaska.

Barry, Mary J.

- 1973 A History of Mining on the Kenai Peninsula. Alaska Northwest Publishing Company, Anchorage.

Estes, Ed

- 1981 Interview at Moose Pass, Alaska, June 15, 1981. On file at Bureau of Land Management Anchorage District office, Anchorage, Alaska.

Grant, U.S. and D.F. Higgins

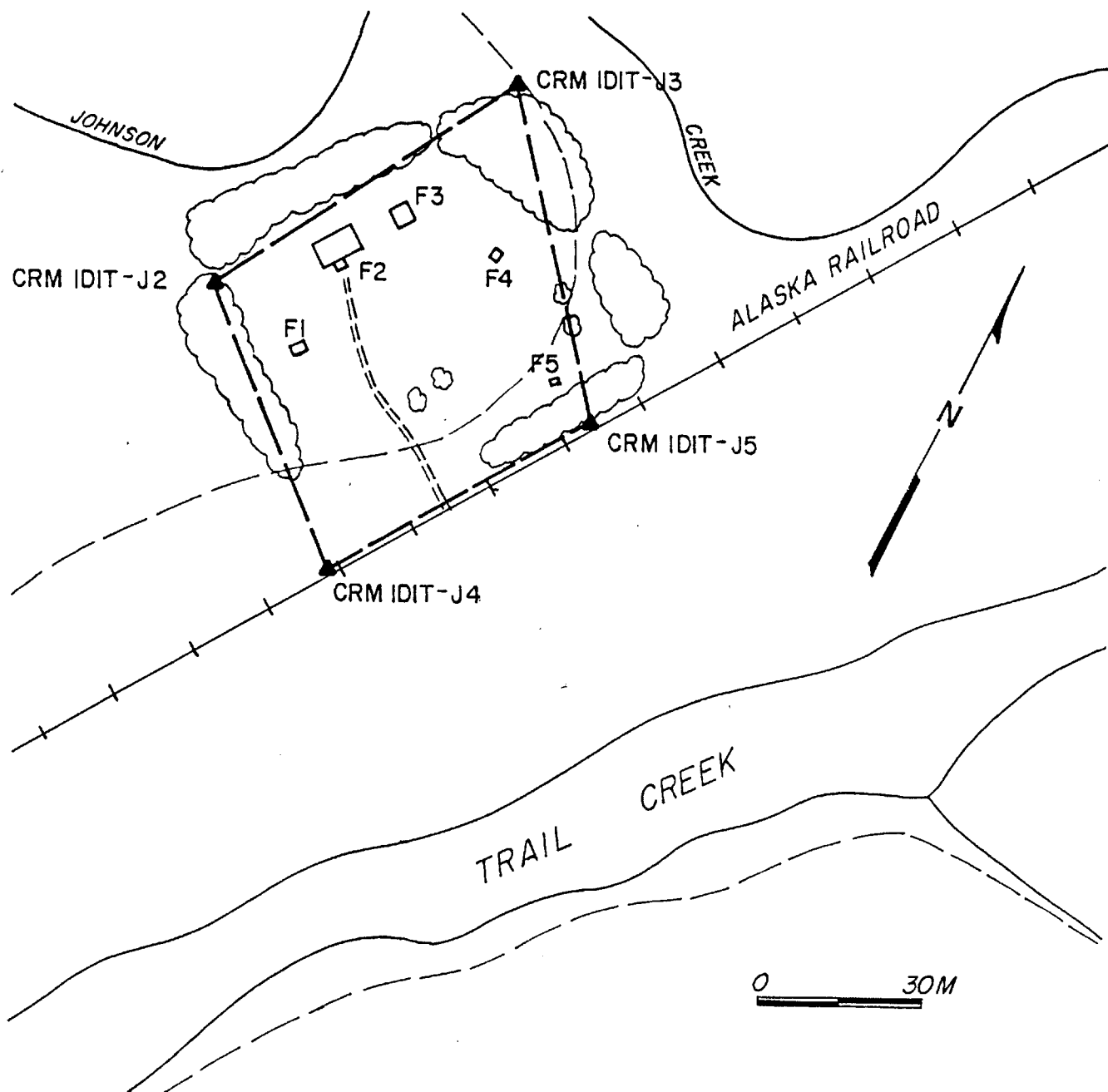
- 1904 Preliminary Report on the Mineral Resources of the Southern Part of Kenai Peninsula. In Alfred H. Brooks and others, Mineral Resources of Alaska: Report on Progress of Investigations in 1909. U.S. Geological Bulletin 442. U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C.

Mendenhall, Walter C.

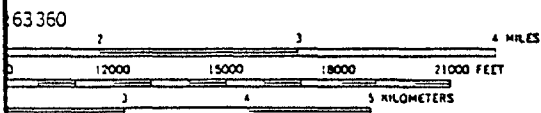
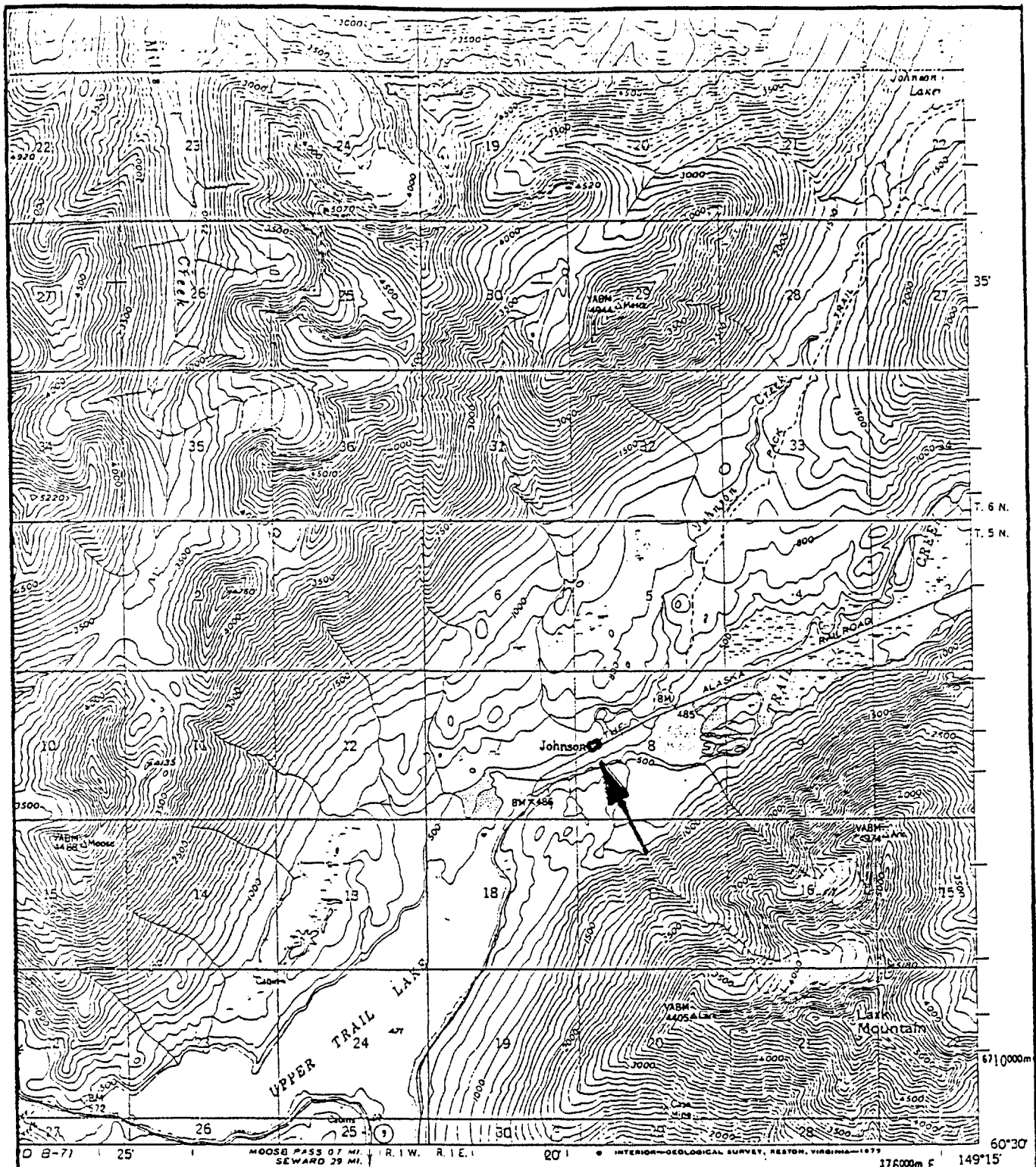
- 1898 A Reconnaissance from the Resurrection Bay to the Tanana River, Alaska, in 1898. U.S. Geological Survey Annual Report 1898-99, Part VII, Exploration in Alaska in 1898. U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C.

Peterson, Steve

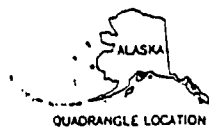
- 1980 Iditarod Trail Notes, Peterson Tape 7. On file at Bureau of Land Management, Anchorage District.



CRM 327-3
JOHNSON RAILROAD STOP



VAL 100 FEET
TICAL DATUM OF 1929



QUADRANGLE LOCATION

JOHNSON ROADHOUSE

ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Medium-duty ——— Light-duty ———

Unimproved dirt

○ State Route

SEWARD (C-7), ALASKA
N6030—W14915/15X22.5

1951
LIMITED REVISIONS 1976

JOHNSON/SUNRISE ROADHOUSE

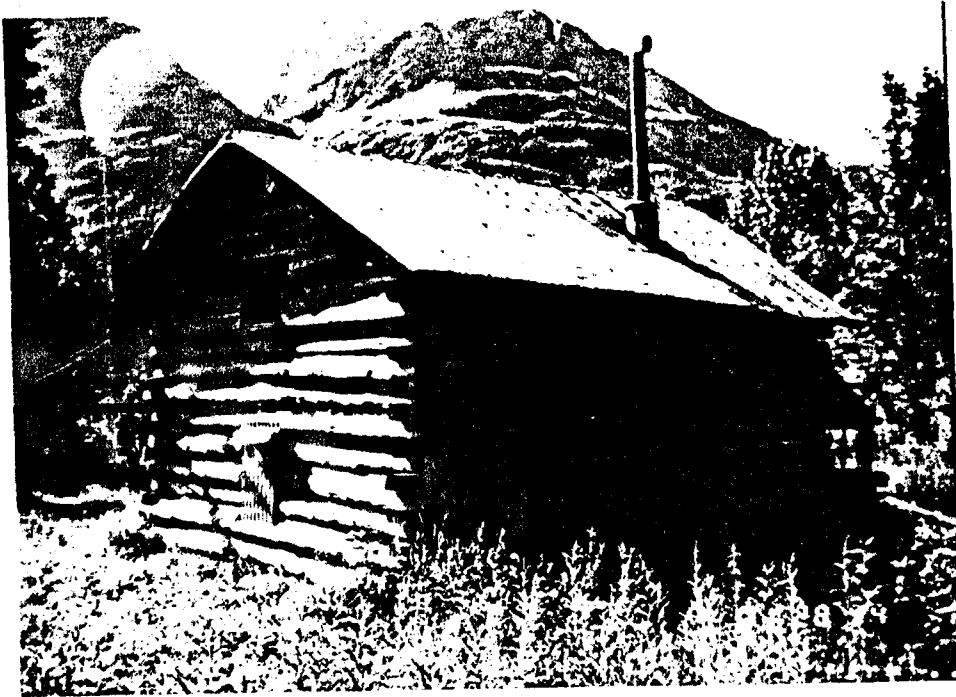


Feature 1, Dog Barn (?), View to SE



Feature 2, Dwelling, View to NW

JOHNSON/SUNRISE ROADHOUSE

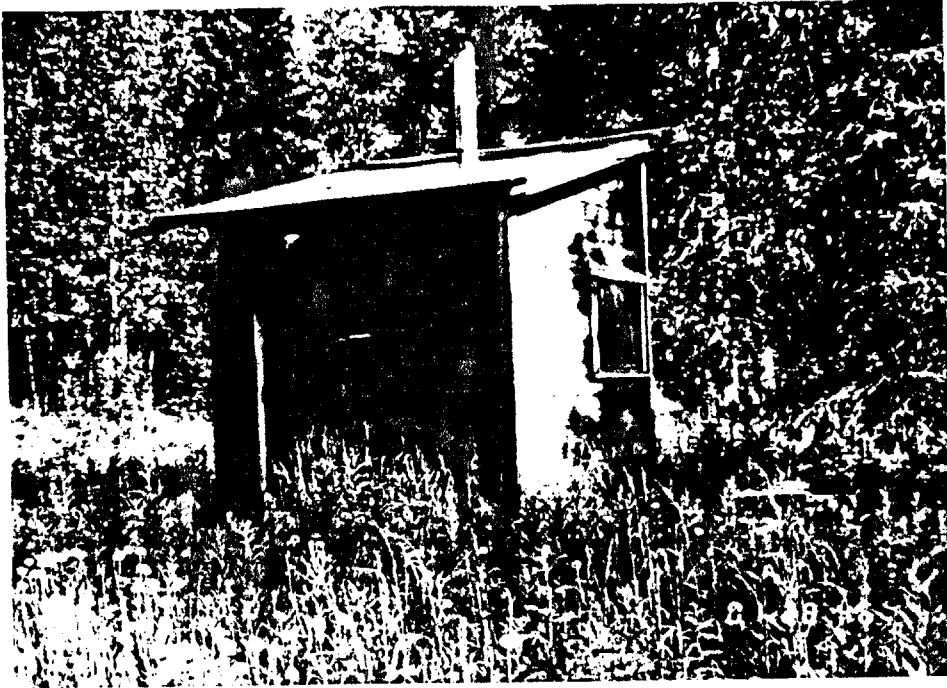


Feature 2, Dwelling, View to SE



Feature 3, Workshop, View to NW

JOHNSON/SUNRISE ROADHOUSE



Feature 4, Storage Shed, View to NW



Feature 5, Outhouse, View to SE

JOHNSON/SUNRISE ROADHOUSE



Site Overview, View to West