

White's Roadhouse
S&W-105

**SURVEY AND EVALUATION OF THE IDITAROD TRAIL
AND CONNECTING TRAILS IN THE CHUGACH NATIONAL FOREST**

DRAFT TECHNICAL REPORT

VOLUME 2: NATIONAL REGISTER EVALUATION FORMS

Prepared for
USDA Forest Service
Chugach National Forest
Anchorage, Alaska

Prepared by
Cultural Research & Management, Inc.
5444 Tanager Lane
Eden Prairie, Minnesota

Kurt P. Schweigert, Principal Investigator

Performed under Contract No. 53-0109-3-0027

March, 1991

PHASE I EVALUATION FORM

Kurt Schweigert

March, 1991

1. Name of Property: White's Roadhouse
AHRS Site #:SEW-105
2. Location: NW/NE/SW and NE/NW/SW Section 9, T7N-R1E.
Seward C7 Quadrangle
3. Classification:
Ownership: Public-federal
Category of Property: Buildings
Number of Resources within Property:
Contributing: 2 Buildings
Non-Contributing: 6 Buildings
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
6. Function or Use:
Historic Functions: Domestic/Inn
Current Functions: Domestic/Mining Camp
7. Description:

White's Roadhouse served travelers on the Johnson Pass Military Road between Sunrise and Mile 34 of the Alaska Central Railroad. The Johnson pass wagon road (site SEW-366) passes through the area of this site designation, and the Granite/Ingram Creek Trail (SEW-383) joins the Johnson Pass wagon road at the eastern edge of the White's Roadhouse site. The site contains two structures which may date from ca. 1904-1920 and seven more recent structures associated with continued mining activities on Lynx Creek. This site has been a center of gold mining activity from at least as early as 1898.

Feature 1 is a gabled wood frame bunkhouse which appears to have been built after 1970. The structure has plywood exterior walls, fixed plate glass windows, a metal door, and a log pier foundation.

Feature 2 is a gabled log structure which has partially collapsed. The building has V-notched and saddle-notched corner joinings, sheet metal on the roof, a log sill foundation, and windows blinded with sheet metal. The earth floor is slightly below outside ground level. The interior contains bed parts, machine parts, and gasoline cans.

Feature 3 is a gabled wood frame structure set on wooden piers. The building has both board-and-batten and horizontal plain board exterior wall coverings, and has corrugated sheet metal roof, hollow core wooden doors, and fixed plate windows.

Feature 4 is a small, shed-roofed wood frame fuel storage building which has plywood walls, corrugated sheet metal roof, and a wood sill foundation.

Feature 5 is a gabled log dwelling which has saddle and V-notched corner joinings, corrugated sheet metal over a board roof, fixed 2-pane windows on east, west, and north elevations, and a screened door at the center of the south end. A frame lean-to on the south end has a sheet metal roof and is a relatively recent addition. Chinking is small poles and moss.

Feature 6 is a gabled wood frame dwelling which has a corrugated metal roof and skirting, a log pier foundation, and 6-pane fixed windows. Walls are horizontal rabbetted board. A sign on a wall under a frame and metal lean-to reads "Frances E. Watkins -- Owner; Bruce W. Smith 337-2822; Robert W. Smith 333-4243."

Feature 7 is a shed-roofed wood frame shower which has corrugated metal roof and plywood walls and floor.

Feature 8 is a gabled wood frame privy which has horizontal board walls, sheet metal roof, and a wood sill foundation. Feature 9 is a heavy frame and plank rock sorting grate, which is probably used in placer mining. The site contains a bulldozer, large amount of large water pipe, and other mining equipment.

8. Statement of Significance:

Significance Level: N/A

Applicable Criteria: N/A

Areas of Significance: N/A

Period of Significance: N/A

Significant Dates:

Significant Person:

Architect/Builder:

State significance of property:

This property is associated with gold and copper mining on Lynx Creek in the period 1895 to 1990 and with overland transportation on the Johnson Pass Military Road and the Granite/Ingram Creek Trail in the period 1895 to 1920. The site was the terminus of a forest highway from 1920 to 1951, when the Seward Highway was

completed through the area.

Placer gold deposits were found on Lynx Creek in 1895, and by May 1896 William P. Powers and Fred Smith and perhaps others had established claims on the creek (Brooks et al. 1912:141; Barry 1973:62). Many placer gold claims were staked on Lynx Creek, but most of the gold found on the creek was taken from the Powers and Smith claims. Lynx Creek placer claims are reported to have yielded about \$87,000 in gold by 1904 (Barry 1973:118). Most mining was done by constructing wing dams to divert the stream from part of the streambed, which was then sluiced, but hydraulic mining by means of "giants" was also practiced. Gold placer mining has continued on a limited scale to present. In May, 1937 a snowslide swept six miners off a bench and 250 feet into the Lynx Creek canyon, killing all of them (Morgan n.d.:90).

Placer mining had dwindled on Lynx Creek by 1910, but discoveries of gold-bearing quartz seems on Groundhog Creek in that year renewed interest in the general vicinity of Lynx Creek (Barry 1973:130; Seward Weekly Gateway 9/17/1910, 9/24/1910, 10/15/1910).

Nathan White came to Lynx Creek in the spring of 1900 and established a claim above the older principal gold producing claims. Most of the claims on the creek had been worked out by that time, and most of the miners had left. White later relocated several of the older claims and installed a large hydraulic mining system (Morgan n.d.:64, 89). White also discovered copper nuggets in Lynx Creek gravels, and he traced the ore to an exposure of low-grade copper ore about two feet wide which had a core of solid copper from three to four inches wide. In 1904 the Ready Bullion Copper Company was established to developing the mine. In 1907 a compressor and other large equipment were hauled from Sunrise to the mine site, and a pipeline was built at an unknown date, probably to supply power for mining machinery. The copper ore proved to be insufficient to return the cost of equipment and improvements, and the mine was abandoned (Barry 1973:119, 124; Seward Gateway 10/28/1904).

A miners' trail had been established from Trail Lake, over Johnson Pass, to Sixmile Creek possibly as early as 1895, and by the summer of 1897 a pack train served the miners on Lynx Creek (Morgan n.d.:24). A second trail extended from Lynx Creek northeastward up Granite Creek and eventually to Turnagain Arm; this trail was used by prospectors and others for many years when

navigation of Turnagain Arm was unfeasible (Mendenhall 1898). In 1907 the Alaska Road Commission constructed the Johnson Pass Military Road from Mile 34 of the Alaska Central Railway to Sunrise, and the road followed the old miners' trail through the lower Lynx Creek area. By 1911 the miners' trail up Lynx Creek had been upgraded to wagon road status (Barry 1973:135).

The development of mining on Lynx Creek and Groundhog Creek and the traffic over the Johnson Pass and Granite/Ingram Creek trails brought considerable pedestrian and dogsled traffic through the area near the mouth of Lynx Creek. Barry (1973:62) implies that a roadhouse was operated at this location in the mid-1890s by "Mother White" (Barry 1973:62). However, A.W. Morgan's detailed reminiscences of mining on Lynx Creek from 1897 to 1901 do not contain mention of a roadhouse at the site during that time, but Morgan does mention that miner Kate (sic, Nathan) White came to Lynx Creek in 1900 (Morgan n.d.). White is reported to have established a roadhouse here in 1904, and "N. White's" buildings are shown at this location on a 1910 map (Sleem 1910; Bureau of Land Management 1981).

The length of operation of the roadhouse is unknown. A prospector was reported to have lost a poke of gold dust between the roadhouse on Lynx Creek and Mile 34 of the railroad in September of 1909 (Seward Weekly Gateway 9/25/1909). "S. Gates and Young" were reported to be erecting a log house at Lynx Creek in connection with their roadhouse there in July, 1910, which may imply that more than one roadhouse operated at this location as a result of the minor rush to Groundhog Creek (Seward Weekly Gateway 7/9/1910). Sam Gates and his wife also operated a roadhouse at Mile 34, at the southern end of the Johnson Pass Military Road, in the fall of 1908 (Seward Weekly Gateway 10/10/1908, 11/7/1908).

The closing date for the roadhouse(s) is unknown, and it is probable that the structures were gradually converted to use by Lynx Creek miners. The level of traffic on the Johnson Pass Military Road had fallen substantially by 1912, primarily because the Moose Pass Military Road had been completed through the principal active mining areas of the region. White is reported to have remained at the site at least until 1915; after surviving one shipwreck in 1914 he died in an accident on Iliamna Bay (Clark 1981; Barry 1973:145, 172). The primary roadhouse structure is reported to have burned in the late 1930s or 1940s, when Ted Boyd occupied the

property (Clark 1981; Estes 1981).

This property is recommended to be not eligible for nomination to the National Register under any of the criteria for eligibility. The general site is associated with two important themes in local and state history, gold placer mining and transportation (especially the Iditarod Trail), but the property does not retain sufficient integrity from the period(s) of significance to adequately or substantially represent those contexts. Two remaining structures may represent the ca. 1904-1912 White's/Center Roadhouse, but one structure is in poor condition and the association of these structures with the roadhouse has not been verified. The integrity of setting, feeling, and association of the ca. 1904-1912 site as a whole has been virtually destroyed through loss of the primary roadhouse buildings and construction of other buildings.

9. Major Bibliographic References:

Barry, Mary J.

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

Clark, Carl

- 1981 Interview of Carl Clark conducted by Robert Spude and Steven Pederson, Hope, Alaska, June 18, 1981. Transcript on file at Bureau of Land Management, Anchorage District Office.

Estes, Ed

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

Bureau of Land Management

- 1981 White's Roadhouse Iditarod Trail siteform.
On file at Bureau of Land Management,
Anchorage District.

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.

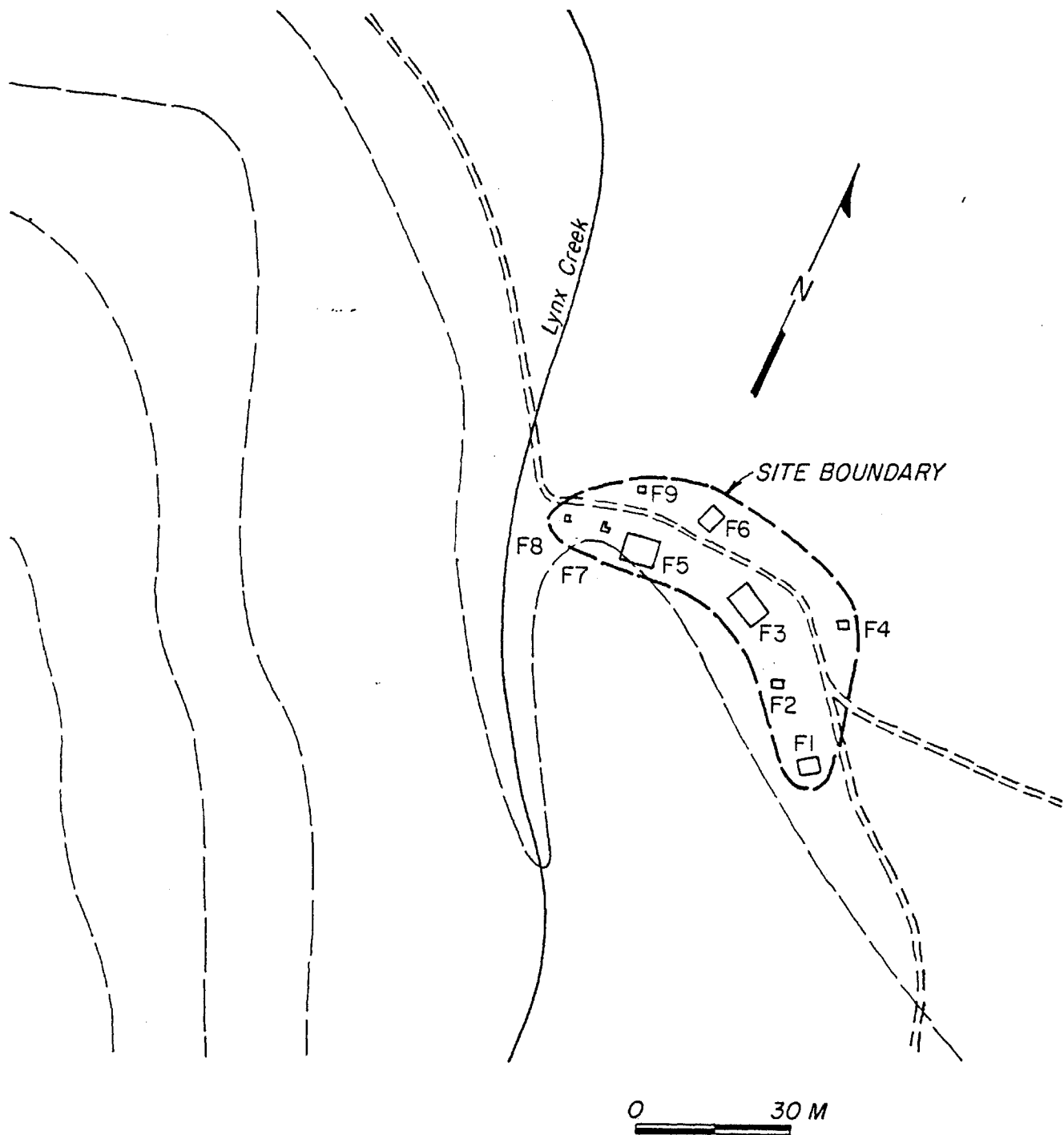
Morgan, Albert Weldon "Jack"

- 1991 Memories of Old Sunrise. Edited by Rolfe G. Buzzell. Unpublished manuscript on file at

Chugach National Forest, Anchorage, Alaska.

Sleem, D.H.

1910 Map of Kenai Mining District and Moose Pass
Regions, Kenai Precinct, Alaska. Rand,
McNally & Co., Engravers, Chicago.

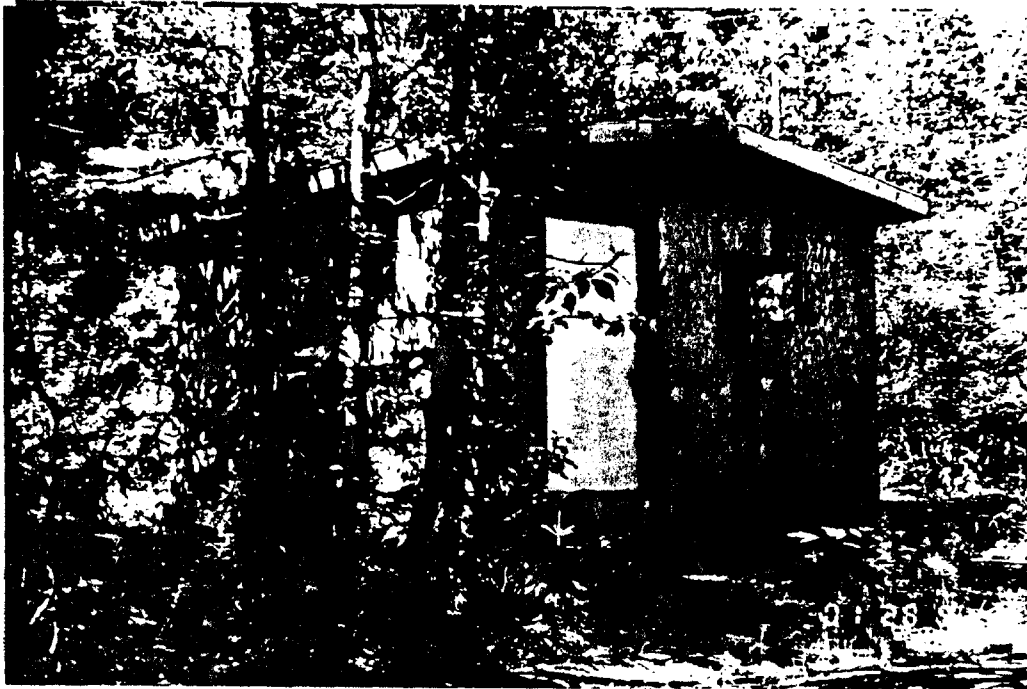


CRM 327-5
WHITE'S ROADHOUSE SITE

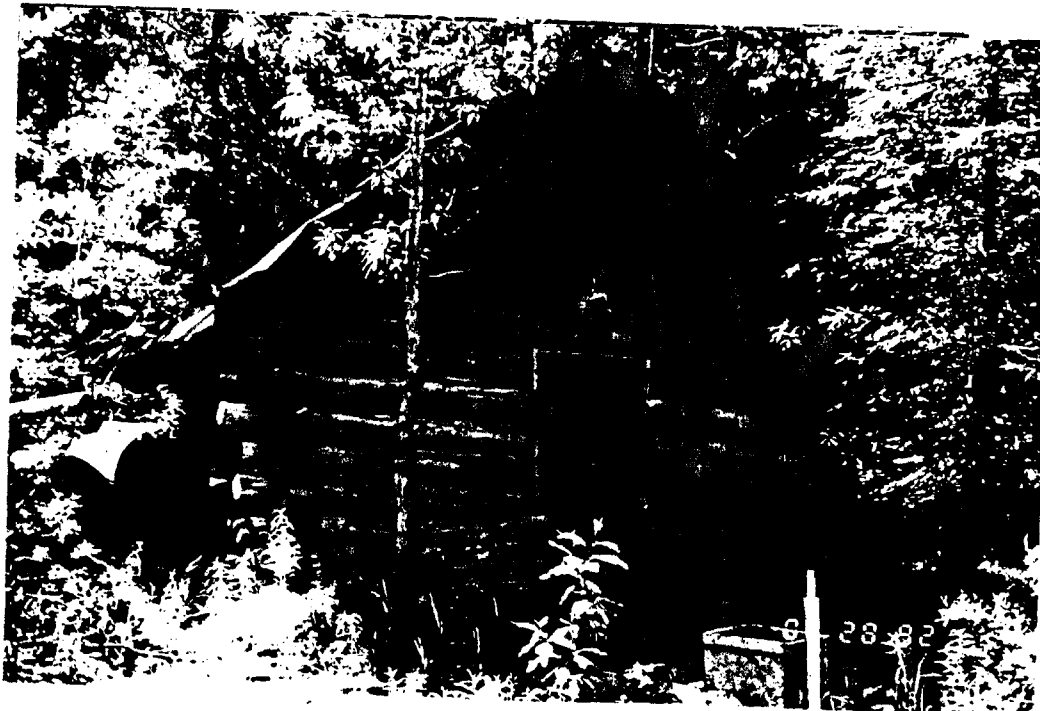
ISEWARD

Topographic map of the White's Roadhouse area in Alaska. The map shows the Seward Highway running horizontally across the upper portion. Granite Creek flows from the upper right towards the center. The proposed roadhouse site is marked with a circle and an arrow pointing to it from the label "White's Roadhouse Site". The map features contour lines indicating elevation, with markers such as 1000, 1500, 2000, 2500, 3000, and 3500 feet. A grid system is overlaid on the map, with letters A through J along the top and numbers 1 through 34 along the right side. The map is titled "WHITE'S ROADHOUSE" at the bottom center.

WHITE'S ROADHOUSE



Feature 1, Recent Bunkhouse, View to SW



Feature 2, Old Log Structure, View to South

WHITE'S ROADHOUSE



Feature 2, Old Log Structure, View to North



Feature 3, Gabled Cabin, View to South

WHITE'S ROADHOUSE



Feature 3, Gabled Cabin, View to North



Feature 4, Fuel Storage Shed, View to East

WHITE'S ROADHOUSE

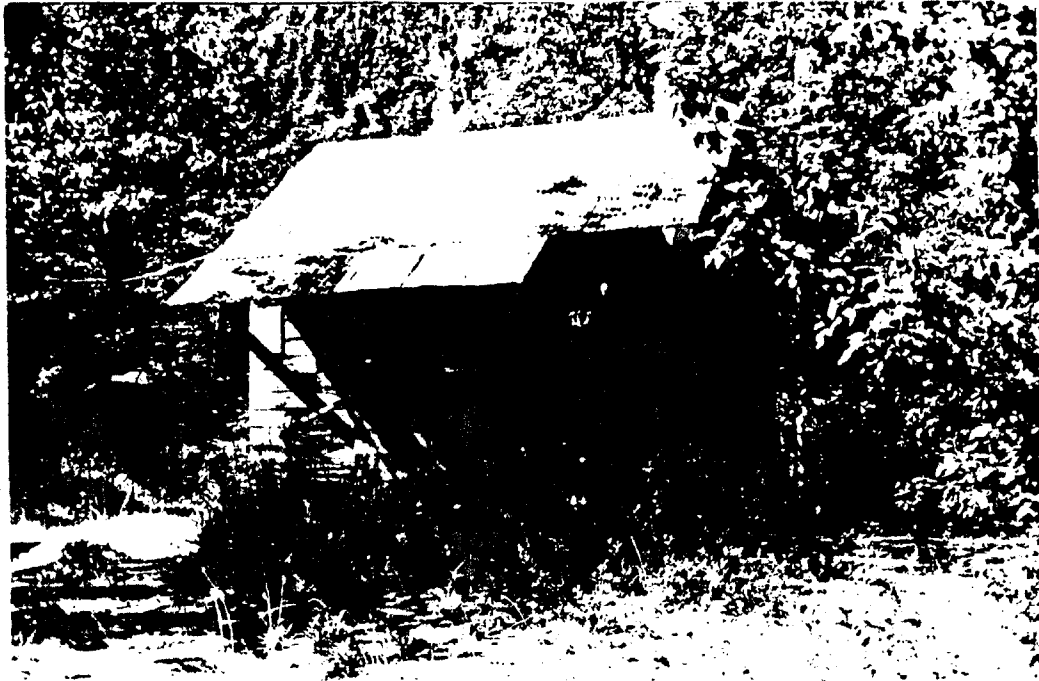


Feature 5, Log Cabin, View to South



Feature 5, Log Cabin, View to West

WHITE'S ROADHOUSE

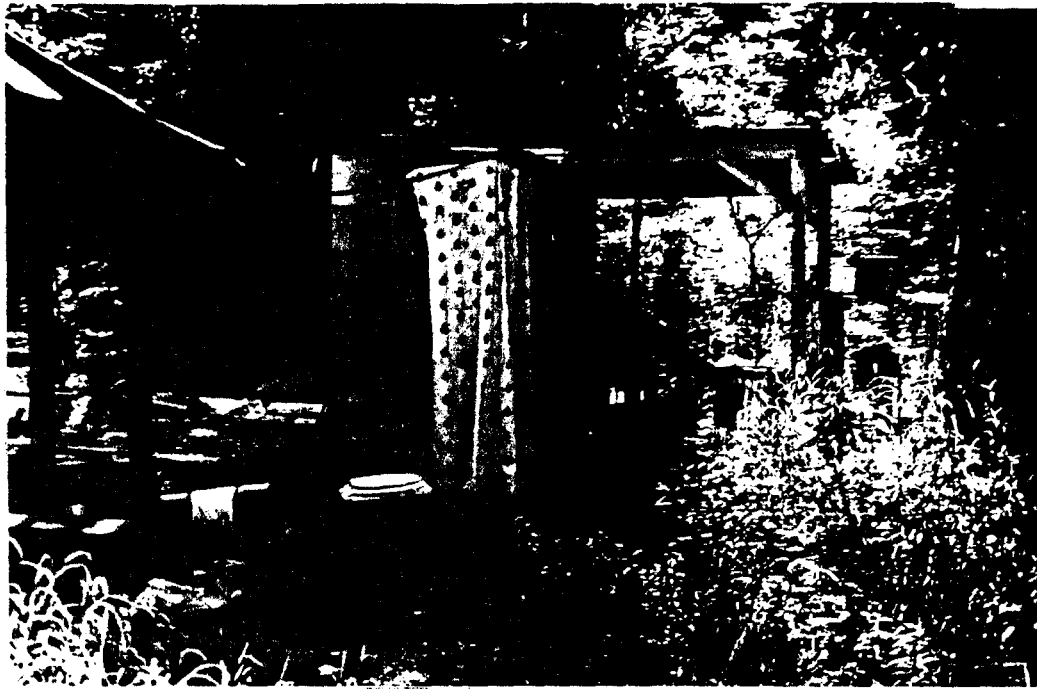


Feature 6, Frame Cabin, View to SW



Feature 6, Frame Cabin, View to NE

WHITE'S ROADHOUSE

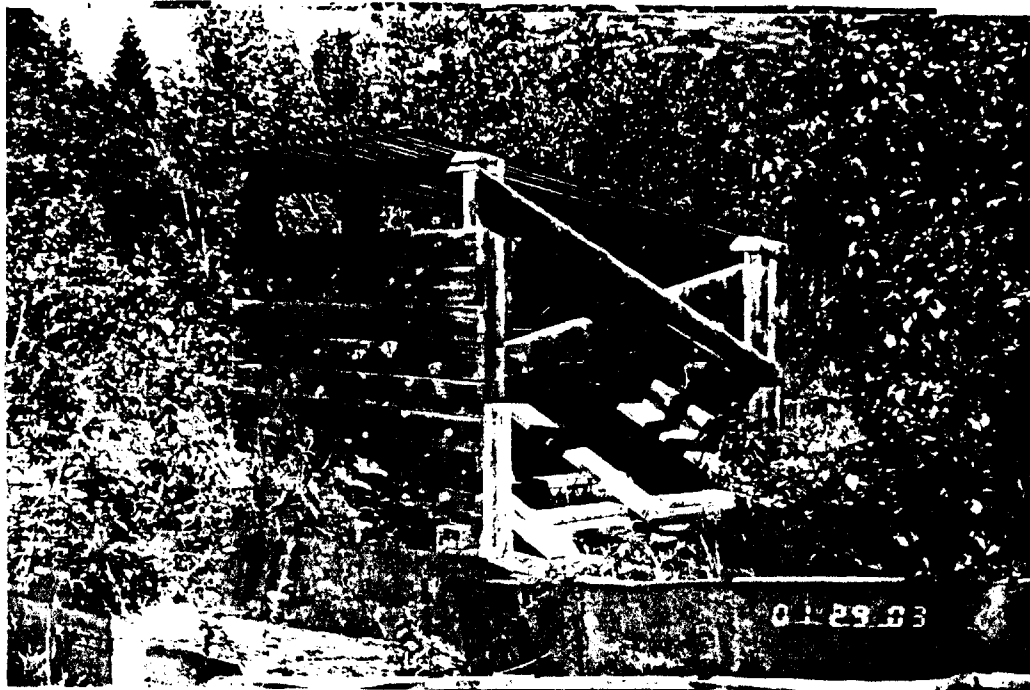


Feature 7, Shower, View to SE



Feature 8, Privy, View to South

WHITE'S ROADHOUSE



Feature 9, Rock Grate, View to NW