Archeological Inventory of Ghyllbank, an 1890s Copper Mining Settlement, Isle Royale National Park

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By

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Abstract

A pedestrian inventory was undertaken in the area occupied by the 1890s copper mining settlement of Ghyllbank, located on the western end of Isle Royale National Park near the Windigo Ranger Station. Five features from this period were identified: the foundation of the Wendigo Copper Company headquarters; the company dock; a road remnant; part of the existing store; and one structural depression. A pre-1941 stone-lined well that may date to the mining period was also located and mapped.
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Introduction

During May and June of 1999, an inventory was undertaken by the Midwest Archeological Center (MWAC) in the Washington Harbor region at the western end of Isle Royale National Park (ISRO).

Isle Royale is located in the northwestern corner of Lake Superior near the U.S.-Canadian border (Figure 1). It consists of one large main island with nearly 200 smaller islands surrounding it. The main island is approximately 45 miles long and 9 miles wide, and has an area of approximately 210 square miles.

The area of interest for this project was the site of the former 1890s copper mining community of Ghyllbank, which was located at the head of Washington Harbor near what is today the (new) Windigo visitor center/ranger station and Windigo campground (Figures 1 and 2). This paper presents the results of the inventory.

The historic name Wendigo is today sometimes spelled Windigo. This paper will use the spelling Wendigo to denote the Wendigo Copper Company and its mines, as well as the small settlement located near the mines. It will use the current form, Windigo, to denote the broad area that encompasses the visitor center/ranger station, docks, campground and the former settlement of Ghyllbank.

Archeologist Scott Stadler of MWAC directed the fieldwork, and the other member of the crew from MWAC was Archeological Technician Jerry Androy. Liz Valencia, of the Cultural Resources division at ISRO helped in the field and also provided excellent background information. She diligently searched the archives and provided many helpful resources. Karen Archey and Carrol Moxham prepared the graphics.

The objective of the project was to locate any possible surface remains of the Ghyllbank settlement as well as evidence of previous or subsequent occupations of the area. The results will serve as an aid for future interpretation and planning by Isle Royale National Park managers.

All notes, photographs, records and other documentation pertaining to this project are curated at the Midwest Archeological Center, Lincoln, Nebraska, under ISRO Accession No. 578 and MWAC Accession No. 829.

Environmental Setting

The geology of Isle Royale is dominated by volcanic and glacial activities. Ancient lava flows were tilted and later scoured by glacial activity. The result is a series of steep parallel rock ridges running the length of the island. This glacial history, combined with the fluctuations of the lake levels, resulted in a thin, poorly developed soil layer on much of the island. The southwestern portion of the island has somewhat better developed soils as a result of that portion of the island being exposed earlier than the rest of the island (Huber 1975; Hunt 1994; Clark 1995).

Two major forest types interface on Isle Royale. They are the southern boreal forest (spruce, fir, and birch) and the temperate deciduous forest (sugar maple, yellow birch, and red oak). Cedar and spruce dominate lowland areas.

Isle Royale has a climate characterized by cool summers and cold winters. Temperatures in summer rarely exceed 80 degrees Fahrenheit. Winter temperatures can reach extreme low temperatures of minus 35 degrees Fahrenheit, although near zero temperatures are closer to the normal lows. Day-to-day
temperatures are strongly affected by the waters of Lake Superior. Normal precipitation is from one to three inches per month, with the higher amounts occurring in the summer. Refer to Clark’s 1995 report on archeological survey and testing at Isle Royale (Clark 1995) for a thorough review of the environmental setting.

The major faunal resources on the island include the woodland caribou, beaver, muskrat otter, mink, hare, coyote, fox, and lynx. Moose and wolf populations are the currently the largest fauna on the island. It is not clear if the two species existed on the island before their early-twentieth-century introduction (Clark 1995).
The earliest evidence of human visits to Isle Royale dates to around 4,500 years ago during the Archaic period (Clark 1995). Copper was the main attraction during this time. Isle Royale is one of the few places in the region where native copper can be mined and fashioned into implements with little or no refining. Prehistoric peoples visited the island to mine copper until historic contact. In historic times, native peoples began to have access to new, more durable metals and materials, and the desire for copper declined as the new metals became more available.

French traders, missionaries, and explorers began visiting the area around 1622 (Clark 1995), but commercial interest in the copper resources did not begin until 1843, when the Chippewa relinquished claim to the island (Rakestraw 1965). Over the following 50 years, several waves of attempts to mine the native copper took place. There were three periods of intense commercial mining interest in Isle Royale: the first was from 1843 to 1855; the second boom occurred from 1873 to 1881; and the final major attempt at copper mining occurred from 1889 to 1892 (Starr 1998).

Wendigo Copper Company (1890–1892)

During the last years of mineral exploration on the island, the Isle Royale Land Corporation bought 84,000 acres of land at the western end of the island. Realizing their charter only gave them the right to search for minerals, not to mine them, they set up a subsidiary firm, the Wendigo Copper Company. In 1890, this new company was given 5,000 acres of land on the western end of Isle Royale (Figure 3). Their purpose was to search for and mine copper.

The base for the Wendigo Copper Company was the community of Ghyllbank, located at the head of Washington Harbor, which consisted of approximately 15 structures (Figure 4). The settlement consisted of sheds, storehouses, and double log cabins, each of which housed two families (Rakestraw n.d: 49). The structures provided housing for some of the miners and their families as well as the officers of the Wendigo Copper Company.

The most imposing structure was the company’s 2½-story headquarters building, discussed below. A dock facility was constructed to provide access and supplies to the western end of the island. A large area, approximately 1,300 ft by 700 ft was cleared (Appendix A) of timber in order to construct the settlement as well as make room for a vegetable garden and a hay pasture (Rakestraw n.d.:49).

The Wendigo Copper Company explorations focused on diamond drilling of exploratory bore holes. Over a two-year period they bored 16 holes ranging in depth from 401 ft to 1,038 ft deep (USDI, NPS 1987). They were designed to give engineers a better look at a cross section of the island’s geology. This information was used as a guide to possible copper locations in the area. Short exploratory trenches, or costeans, were also dug into the hillsides in search of copper deposits.

In addition to the community of Ghyllbank, a secondary settlement, Wendigo, was established about a mile and a half inland, closer to the mines. Wendigo consisted of two large boarding houses for the single men and a number of smaller log cabins for the married men and their families (Rakestraw n.d.: 49). The 1999 archeological field project did not encompass the Wendigo settlement or the mines themselves, but only examined the Ghyllbank settlement and immediate vicinity (Figure 2).

The work force for the Wendigo Copper Company consisted of 65 men and their families, and about 135 people lived year-round in the settlements of Ghyllbank and Wendigo. The Wendigo Copper Company was in operation until 1892, when it ceased all operations. The diamond drilling and
exploratory trenches provided less than desirable results. In addition, bank failures tied up funds (Rakestraw n.d.). Except for a few minor exploratory attempts, this was the last concerted effort to commercially exploit copper on Isle Royale.

Washington Club (1902–1938)

In 1902, Col. Charles H. Graves and a group of wealthy Duluth, Minnesota, businessmen bought the Wendigo Copper Company buildings at Ghyllbank and 70 acres of surrounding land, which they then developed into an exclusive club called the Washington Club. They remodeled the former mining headquarters into a lodge that could accommodate up to 10 people, and the private quarters and other modern amenities made a stay at the Washington Club a unique experience. An adjacent structure housed the kitchen, dining room, and servants’ quarters.

The Washington Club was an elite sportsman’s retreat offering a full range of services to its members and their guests and did not offer any public accommodations. Members could fish for trout in Washington Creek, hike the trails of the island, or hunt the island’s sparse game (Karamanski and Zeitlin 1988). The nearest public accommodation at this time was the Singer Resort on Washington Island, some five miles distant.

In 1938, the Club’s buildings and land were purchased by the federal government during the establishment of Isle Royale National Park. Most of the structures were either razed or remodeled by the Civilian Conservation Corps in preparation for use by the National Park Service.

Civilian Conservation Corps (1939–1941)

In 1939, one of three base camps for the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) on Isle Royale was established in the Windigo area, near the former settlement of Ghyllbank and the Washington Club. Designated Camp Windigo, the camp was in operation from 1939 to 1941 (Figure 2).

The CCC mission on Isle Royale was to:

construct Park Service administrative buildings, employee housing, recreation facilities, and also [work] on trail development, the construction of docks, campgrounds, fire towers, and day markers that were used as navigational aids. Additionally, the recruits conducted wildlife surveys, caught island moose for mainland repopulation projects, and fought forest fires (Starr 1998:165).

In the Windigo area, the CCC constructed several buildings in addition to the CCC base camp structures. The Washington Club lodge was remodeled and renamed the Windigo Inn. CCC workers also constructed the (old) visitor center/ranger station; built a new, and larger, dock; and improved trails throughout the western end of the island. Several CCC base camp structures are still standing. At the end of this project, most of the existing buildings in the former CCC area were mapped (Figure 5) and photographed.

All but one of the CCC structures outside of the base camp have been removed. The last structure removed was the visitor center/ranger station in 1998. The only remaining structure is a portion of the concessionnaire’s store. As noted below, part of this building was originally constructed in the 1890s for the Wendigo Copper Company. The building was later modified by the Washington Club, further modified by the CCC, and finally by the Park Service.

Owing to the temporary function and non-permanent construction at CCC camps, few such camps have survived until today (Starr 1998). Since the Windigo CCC camp still has several structures that
date from the CCC era, further historical research could be conducted to more fully document the nature of CCC buildings and activities on this part of Isle Royale. Historical investigations of the CCC on Isle Royale are beyond the scope of this project. Consequently, this report provides only a brief summary of CCC activities in the Windigo area. For additional information and photos on CCC structures at Isle Royale, see Starr’s report on historic structures at Isle Royale National Park (Starr 1998).
Previous Research

The first serious inquiries into the prehistory of Isle Royale were begun in 1910 by the Smithsonian Institution. Following this, the 1920s and 1930s brought several individuals who conducted investigations on the island: Fred Dustin spent much time on the island examining and testing many prehistoric sites throughout the island; Carl Guthe, of the University of Michigan, also conducted testing at several prehistoric sites; and in 1928, the McDonald-Massee Expedition examined prehistoric occupation and burial sites on the island (West 1929).

Tyler Bastian (University of Michigan Museum of Anthropology) conducted a survey of the island from 1960 to 1962 (Bastian 1963). He spent a total of 35 weeks in the field conducting surveys and limited excavations of both historic and prehistoric sites. He visited several sites in the Windigo area, mainly the Wendigo mines and settlement. His report makes no mention of the Ghyllbank settlement.

From 1987 to 1990, Caven Clark, an archeologist from the Midwest Archeological Center (MWAC), conducted a shoreline survey of the entire island (Clark 1995). He recorded numerous new prehistoric and historic sites. Clark also conducted visits to, and made site updates of, many previously recorded sites. During the 1989 field season, Clark visited the Windigo area and informally visited the Wendigo mines (20IR86) and the Wendigo Townsite (20IR19). He located an isolated prehistoric artifact, a single chert flake. The site was designated 20IR171. It was located on a trail south of the Windigo Ranger Station. Due to its location on a possible Nipissing beach, Clark estimates the site to be from the Archaic period (Clark 1995). This find is approximately 1,000 m beyond the boundaries of the Ghyllbank study. No investigations were conducted by Clark in the immediate Ghyllbank area.

Clark’s 1995 report provides a more comprehensive summary of previous archeological research conducted on Isle Royale in general. Until 1983, the townsite of Ghyllbank received little attention from archeologists. The Wendigo mines and Wendigo settlement have been the subject of limited investigations. These lie near Ghyllbank but are outside the area of the 1999 study. To date, only a few limited-scope projects have been undertaken in the Ghyllbank area. Most of these have occurred within the last 20 years.

In 1983, divers from the National Park Service’s Submerged Cultural Resources Unit examined the waters around the Ghyllbank dock. They noted artifacts and evidence of log cribbing, remains of the 1890s Ghyllbank wharf (Lenihan et al. 1987). The dock is discussed in further detail below.

In 1984, Patrick Martin, through a cooperative agreement with MWAC, undertook an examination of the remains of two Washington Club lodge structures. The park had burned the structures in 1983. He shovel tested the area around both structures with negative results (Martin 1984:3).

In May 1994, Caven Clark conducted archeological testing at a proposed fuel enclosure site (Figure 6). This location was tested because historic materials dating from the 1890s to the early twentieth century had been found there during his visit the previous year. A depression, most likely representing a structure, was also located (Clark 1994). The depression is visible east of the enclosure, since construction was modified to avoid this feature (Figure 6).

In October 1994, William Hunt (MWAC) conducted a shovel test survey for a proposed housing project at Windigo. The proposed construction site is located east of the former town of Ghyllbank. The results were negative (Hunt 1994).

In 1995, Jeffrey Richner (MWAC) conducted an inventory of three alternative locations for a solid waste storage facility, all three of which lie within the confines of the Ghyllbank settlement. He deter-
mined that one of the locations had been disturbed by previous construction; so it was not tested. Forty shovel tests placed in the two remaining areas produced negative results (Figure 7; Richner 1995).

In 1996, Forest Frost (MWAC) conducted an inventory of an area proposed for construction of a new visitor center/ranger station. Forty shovel tests were excavated and only one historic artifact was located (Frost 1996). The location lies at the extreme southern portion of the town site of Ghyllbank. He noted a single depression, possibly a structure remnant or the result of the uprooting of a large tree. The new visitor center/ranger station has since been completed (Figure 7) and no evidence of the depression remains.

In 1998, William Hunt (MWAC) again visited the area to conduct testing at four proposed housing locations. These locations, though close to the Ghyllbank site, appear to lie outside the immediate area of the town. They are, however, located in the area of the former CCC camp. No significant cultural resources were noted (Hunt 1998). Three of the areas investigated are shown in Figure 5; the fourth is located to the northwest of the area shown.

In 1998, Starr prepared a draft Historic Structures Report that provides an informative review of the history of Isle Royale (Starr 1998). The report contains numerous photos and several maps of the Ghyllbank area and CCC camp, as well as a listing of structures that have been determined to be of CCC construction. CCC structures still in existence include two employee housing units, the trail crew bunkhouse, laundry building, carpenter shop, three tent frames, and a foundation.

In addition to information from previous archeological investigations, historic maps provide further information about the CCC camp. A 1941 “Utilities Layout” map of the Washington Harbor area (USDI, NPS 1941) lists existing structures, proposed structures, and structures to be obliterated, and it shows the existing CCC Camp structures by name (Figure 8). A 1961 map of proposed construction (USDI, NPS 1961) shows only four structures still in existence in the area of the CCC camp (Figure 9), and they are identified on the 1941 map as the Mess Hall, Hospital, Officers’ Quarters, and Foremen’s Quarters (Figure 8). Since the CCC area is slightly beyond the boundaries of the Ghyllbank settlement, the area received only a cursory examination at the end of the project described in this report.

The projects conducted to date in the area of the Ghyllbank town site have been small in scope and scattered, as dictated by the exigencies of construction projects. The current inventory reviews all of the past project results and provides a more comprehensive documentation of cultural resources in the Ghyllbank area.
Methods

The team conducted a pedestrian inventory over the entire settlement area. The area covered begins on a line from the lake to the root cellar. It then goes north to a line that runs from the point where the land curves west towards Washington Creek to the former CCC area (Figure 2). Three people walking at 2-m intervals examined the area and flagged all artifacts and potential features. The close interval was necessary due to the dense vegetation. Approximately two days were required to complete the inventory.

Once the team had inventoried the area and all pertinent surface evidence was flagged, a Sokkia Total Station with SDR-33 data recorder was set up and mapping was begun. Twelve mapping stations were required to completely map the area. The Sokkia Mapping Program version 5.0 was used to download the collected data. This produced a rough map. Subsequent maps (Figures 2, 5, 6, and 7) were created using AutoCAD (Release 13).

The only excavations that took place were small shovel probes to locate the boundaries of the foundation of the Wendigo Copper Company headquarters building. Photographs, sketches, and field notes were made for each feature and many of the existing buildings. No artifacts were collected.
Results

Many of the structures erected during the 1890s continued to be used through the Washington Club era, and in some cases the buildings were used through the CCC period and well into the National Park era. There is surface evidence of several structures and features throughout the former Ghyllbank area, but only one possible Wendigo Copper Company structure is still in use today: the concessionaire’s store may have portions of original 1890s construction. The main structures of the area, both modern and historic, are discussed below.

Headquarters/Lodge/Store

The Wendigo Copper Company headquarters building was located on a leveled area near the current concessionaire’s store, east of the new visitor center/ranger station (Figures 2 and 7). Constructed in 1890, the building was a 2½-story log structure that housed company officers and served as the headquarters for the company (Figure 10).

The mining company used the building until 1892, when operations on the island ceased. The Washington Club then obtained the structure and converted it into a sportsman’s lodge. The lodge continued to be used until 1931, when it burned down, leaving intact most of the smaller attached structures to the south.

Portions of the east (back) foundation are still visible on the surface in a north-northeast to south-southwest orientation (Figures 2 and 7). For ease of reporting, this will be termed the east wall and will be described as trending north-south. Small shovel probes were used to locate each end of the foundation (Figure 11). The east wall foundation is 64' 8" (19.7 m) long and 10" (25.5 cm) wide. The foundation is concrete reinforced with rebar. It is unclear whether the foundation extended to the north end of the north porch, which is a Washington Club–period addition (Figure 12).

The rest of the foundation was not visible on the surface, and shovel probes to locate additional foundation remnants were unsuccessful. The approximate location of the west foundation is the west edge of the rectangular flat area formed during the construction, and the south foundation and part of the west are estimated to lie in an area that is partially covered by the concessionaire’s store, making them difficult to locate (Figures 2 and 7). It is likely that remnants do indeed exist and could be located using standard archeological excavation techniques, but it is possible the foundation for the store has damaged the headquarters foundation in these locations.

The shovel probes revealed much burned soil and construction materials both inside and outside of the foundation, with the majority appearing to be inside. This is evidence of the 1931 fire that destroyed the building. Cut and wire nails were present, as well as flat and curved glass and ferrous fragments.

Rakestraw (n.d.) describes the headquarters building as follows:

The inside was lath and plastered. Living and dining rooms and kitchen were on the first floor; the second floor had eight bedrooms. On the third floor, there were two bedrooms at each end. The open space between was used for storage, to keep mining books, and as an office for the bookkeeper.

Photos from 1892 show a series of smaller structures connected to the south end of the main headquarters building (Figure 12). During the Washington Club era, the smaller structures served as a dining hall and caretaker’s cabin. A “Dining Room” is present in this location on the 1941 utilities map.
(USDI, NPS 1941). Today, the concessionaire’s store is situated in the location of these smaller structures.

Portions of the concessionaire’s store date at least to the Washington Club era and may even be of 1890s construction. After 1940, the store building was separated into two sections and an addition was placed between the sections. An addition was then built on the south end of the building. Evidence of this can be found in the south addition, which currently serves as living quarters for store personnel. The foundation for this section is a recent concrete slab. The north end of the store appears to be resting on cinder block piers on the downhill (west) side.

In 1936, the Park Service undertook an assessment of the Washington Club buildings. The purpose of the study was to help estimate the value of the property to be obtained during the establishment of Isle Royale National Park. A 1936 drawing of the current store building referred to this as the caretaker’s cottage and dining hall for the club (Appendix A). At that time, the foundation was composed of 15 posts, each 8" wide and 2' long.

The existing store is 116' 6" (35.5 m) north–south and 24' 2" (7.35 m) east–west. The northeast corner of the store is 12' west of the east wall of the surviving headquarters building foundation.

**Root Cellar**

Excavated into the hillside to the east of the store are two small buildings (Figures 2 and 7). The first is a root cellar (Figure 13). The earliest evidence of such a structure is the 1920s photo of the Washington Club (Figure 12). A description of the root cellar appears in the 1936 inventory of buildings (Appendix A). It describes a root cellar with the walls and floor constructed of concrete. It was 13 ft wide and 7 ft tall with a log roof covered with earth.

The root cellar is located 31' 5" (9.6 m) east of the center portion of the east wall of the store. It is 5' 11" (1.8 m) in a rough north–south orientation. The root cellar was excavated into the hillside in a U-shaped trench 21' 7" (6.55 m) long (east to west). All space surrounding the building is filled with rocks and covered with earth. This has the result of blending the root cellar in with the slope of the land on all but the front side. There is one door and it opens to the west.

The root cellar has concrete walls, floor, and ceiling. Large rocks and boulders are piled outside of the walls in random fashion with no mortar. Soil and vegetation cover the concrete roof. The park currently uses the structure for storage.

**Shed**

A small shed is located north of the root cellar (Figures 2 and 7). It is the same distance from the store as the root cellar, but it is east of the north end of the store. Currently, the park uses the shed for storage (Figure 14). It is a small, wood frame building. A large U-shape trench, cut into the hillside, allows for several feet of space between the building and the surrounding hill.

The shed is 8' 2" (2.5 m) north to south and 5' 3" east to west. It has one door, which opens to the west. The shed does not appear on any of the historic maps or photos and appears to be of modern construction.

Two other small sheds are present near the shoreline (Figures 2 and 6). Their current function and the exact date of construction are unclear, but they are of recent Park Service construction and use.
Guest House/Windigo Inn

In 1912, the Washington Club constructed a guest house. It was located northeast of the main lodge (Figures 2 and 7). This was a 2-story wood frame structure (Figure 15). After fire destroyed the main lodge, the guest house became the new lodge. Between 1934 and 1936 the guest house averaged between 16 and 19 guests per year (Appendix A). In the winter of 1939/1940, the CCC renovated the old guest house and renamed it the Windigo Inn. Until 1973, visitors could stay at the inn (Karamanski and Zeitlin 1988). The park removed the structure in 1983.

Little surface evidence of the guest house remains. A small level area that may have been the structure’s location is present near the current hiking path, but it would require archeological excavations to determine what remains below the surface. After removal of the building, the park wanted to bury bricks and small debris from the structure (Martin 1984), but it is unknown whether this actually took place. The area around the structure was shovel tested by Martin in 1984 to determine if the burial would disturb any cultural resources. He determined that only small-sized debris would be appropriate to bury in this location.

Brule

Northeast of the store stood a large building that was used for visitor lodging as part of the Windigo Inn (Figures 2 and 7). The CCC constructed this large building, called the Brule, in 1939 to 1940. The last year visitors to the island could stay in the accommodations was 1973 (Liz Valencia, personal communication). After that, the structure functioned as park housing. In 1983, the park demolished the Brule (Martin 1984).

The Brule was approximately 120' long (roughly north–south) and 30' wide. It was located on a leveled area cut into the hillside above the location of the guest house and northeast of the store. Concrete fragments, whiteware, porcelain, and ferrous metal are scattered about the area.

Wooden 2"-x-2" trail markers, each approximately 4' tall, run in a line in front of where the Brule once stood. The top few inches of each post is yellow. The trail wound its way to the northeast along the hillside, roughly parallel to the trail that is in use today. The trail markers most likely date either from the Brule period or shortly after the removal of the building.

The park constructed another visitor lodging building in 1955. This one was named the Radisson. Its exact location is undetermined, but it was probably located to the south of the store. Sometime after 1973, the Radisson was removed (Liz Valencia, personal communication).

Dock

In order to transport personnel and supplies to the island and move copper and ore from the island, the Wendigo Copper Company constructed a dock (Figures 2 and 7). The dock was T-shaped and measured approximately 113' 10" on the lower part of the “T” and 101' 10" on the crosspiece (Appendix A). Its construction was planks over log cribbing. It is unclear whether or not the cribbing was filled with stones. The 1936 inventory states that the cribbing was not stone filled, and no signs of cribbing stones were seen from the shore during the current inventory.

National Park Service divers from the Submerged Cultural Resources Unit in 1987 inventoried the area surrounding the Ghyllbank dock. The crew examined an area 100' wide from the shoreline out to a
depth of 20'. They noted evidence of the log cribbing as well as a scatter of bottles, ceramics, ferrous metals, and leather shoes (Lenihan et al. 1987).

Remnants of the dock still exist along the shoreline and in the water south of the NPS fuel dock. Five logs from the dock are visible in the shallow water and three more are on the shore eroding from the bank (Figure 16). The water near the logs contains ceramics, glass, and metal.

The dock was used at least until 1941. The dock and a Washington Club-era boathouse were in very poor condition in 1936 (Appendix A). The 1941 map of proposed construction places the dock and boathouse in the “to be removed” category. The dock was still visible as late as 1952 (Lenihan et al. 1987:422). At that time, it was a badly deteriorated structure. By 1961, the dock no longer appeared on park maps. In 1983, the area encompassing the dock was partially damaged by the construction of the Park Service fuel dock (Lenihan et al. 1987).

A small structure appears on the north side of the dock in the 1892 photo (Figure 4). The function of the building is unclear; possibly it served as a warehouse. Between 1902 and 1936 the Washington Club constructed a boathouse (Figure 15) in this location. It attached to the north side of the dock and measured 20' 9" wide by 36' 5" (Appendix A). There is a small level area in this location today with a few decaying red bricks (Figure 7).

Attached to the north side of the boathouse was a smaller lean-to boathouse (Figure 15). The lean-to measured 9' 3" wide and 22' 6" long (Appendix A).

The dock area is listed in the Isle Royale interim Cultural Sites Inventory as site U-49. It does not have a Michigan state site number (Lenihan et al. 1987:421).

**Mining Road**

The Wendigo Copper Company constructed a road in 1890 to serve the mining community. The road led from the dock east to the headquarters building. Just east of the dock, it branched towards the north. (Figures 2 and 7). The north branch wound its way parallel to the shore. A short distance along this road was a fork. One branch continued along the shore to the north and led to the Wendigo mines. The other wound uphill to the northeast and the Greenstone ridge. Later this fork would also lead to the CCC camp.

Portions of the road are still visible today (Figure 17). The north branch that led to the mines now functions as a hiking trail to the Windigo campground. The hiking trail now leaves the old mining road past the campground and heads towards Washington Creek. The remainder of the old road that led to the settlement of Wendigo and the Wendigo mines is still visible as a linear path cleared of trees. An unmarked footpath leads down the center of the road which eventually ends up at Washington Creek near the mines.

**Old Visitor Center**

The CCC constructed a ranger station for the Park Service (Figures 2 and 7). This structure was located near the current dock and was used as both a ranger station and a visitor center by the Park Service until 1998. The new visitor center/ranger station is located slightly uphill to the east. The last remnants, the rear and side foundations were being removed in 1999 as this project was completed. A comprehensive photo record of the old visitor center under construction in the 1940s is on file at ISRO.
**Well**

An open well was located during the pedestrian inventory of the area (Figures 2 and 6). The well is roughly circular and is approximately a meter in diameter. Unshaped angular stones with no apparent mortar line the well. Currently the well is filled with water. A tape lowered to the bottom indicates a current depth of at least 8.2 ft (2.6 m). A 1"-diameter ferrous pipe rises from the bottom of the well and leads downhill towards the northwest.

The 1941 utilities map indicates an “old well” in this location but gives no further details. A well is on the 1936 appraisal of the Washington Club structures (Appendix A). No exact location is given for the well, only a description. It had a vitreous tile casing (18 ft) and a depth of 16 ft. It is unclear whether this is the same well as that described on the 1941 map. The discrepancy in the diameter and casing indicates it is probably not the same well.

The well is located northeast of a structural depression that was also located during the inventory (Figure 6). It is unclear whether the well was associated with mining-era operations or was a later Washington Club feature. The well is downhill and approximately 100 m (330 ft) northeast of the club lodge/mining headquarters area. Its location and distance from the main building suggests it may have functioned to supply the other settlement structures with water.

The well is a relatively large, open, water-filled feature whose lip is level with the ground surface (Figure 18). Consequently, it is very difficult to see in the thick undergrowth. The well should be considered a potential hazard to visitors as well as park personnel. A lid, barrier, or warning signs should be placed to prevent possible accidents.

**Structural Depression**

Photos of the settlement of Ghyllbank in 1892 show two similar structures near the center of the settlement (Figure 4). They are two-story white-painted structures. A depression representing one of these structures was located during the inventory (Figures 2 and 6). The depression is roughly rectangular with a raised flat area in the center (Figure 19). The dimensions of the depression are roughly 27½ ft by 22 ft. The location suggests that this may be the remains of the rear structure in the photo. An inventory of the surrounding area revealed no evidence of the second structure.

Several pieces of whiteware and clay pipe were located in the immediate vicinity of the depression described above. One fragment of whiteware had a partial maker’s mark. An incomplete shield symbol with the words “—RED MEAKIN/ENGLAND” was noted. This is the mark of Alfred Meakin, a pottery in England which began operations in 1875. This particular mark was in use from 1891 until 1897 (Godden 1964; Cushion 1976).

A clay drainpipe fragment was located on the surface west of the depression. It is marked “Robinson Clay Product Company, Mogadore, Ohio.” This writing is inside of a large badge or shield shape. Below this badge shape are the letters “CPTA.” This is the mark of the Robinson Clay Products company of Akron, Ohio (Mogadore is now part of Akron). The company operated under that name from 1902 until 1920 (Lehner 1978, 1988).

**Historic Dump**

The pedestrian inventory revealed a historic dump at the water’s edge (Figure 2). The dump is located just off the path that leads from the dock to the Windigo campground. It is at the point where the water is closest to the road. The dump extends along the shoreline for approximately 30 meters. Historic
material is in the water, on the shoreline, and eroding from the bank (Figure 20). No artifacts were collected during this investigation.

The dump is a large scatter of historic materials. Artifacts noted here are glass, whiteware, bricks, ferrous metal, and stoneware. Markings on the materials suggest an early 1900s time frame. A plain whiteware sherd has the markings “O.P. Co./Syracuse/China.” This is from the Onondaga Pottery Co. of Syracuse, New York. This particular mark was used from 1897 to around 1935 (DeBolt 1994:106). Another fragment of whiteware is marked “Buffalo—/1911.” This is the mark of the Buffalo Pottery, of Buffalo, New York. The company began in 1903 and continues today. Early in its life, this company marked the date of manufacture on their wares. Thus, this piece can be dated to 1911 (Lehner 1988; DeBolt 1994).

A fragment of amber bottle glass is marked on the base with “M.B.& G. Co./19.” This is the mark of the Massillon Bottle and Glass Company of Massillon, Ohio. This was a short-lived company that was in production under this name from 1900 to 1904, when it merged with another concern and assumed a new name (Toulouse 1971:348). One fragment of light-purple-tinted “solarized” bottle glass is marked with “PAT. APR. 10 1900.” Since this type of glass was only used until World War I, we can date this piece from 1900 to roughly 1915 (Munsey 1970). A small “milk glass” jar with a screw type lid has markings on the side “ELCAYA” and on the base “The Elcaya Co New York/33.” This is probably a small makeup or ointment jar.

Artifacts from the historic dump indicate that the Washington Club likely used this location in its early days. The dump is close to the road that serves the main trail from the campground to the new visitor center/ranger station and the boat dock. Thus, traffic/maintenance activities along this road could lead to a loss of information as items are inadvertently disturbed or removed from the area. Water and ice activity could also lead to scattering or burying of items. Future archeological excavation of the dump may provide additional information concerning the early Washington Club use of the area.

*Apple Trees/Depression*

Two apple trees are located near the current fuel enclosure (Figure 6). The trees are possibly remnants of mining-era attempts to obtain fresh fruit. They are located northwest of the foundation depression discussed earlier. A scatter of artifacts (ceramic, brick, glass, ferrous) in the same area indicates a possible former structure nearby. The 1892 Ghyllbank photo shows two structures near the apple trees. One is the twin to the structure referred to above that is represented by a “structural depression,” and the other is a long structure of unknown function (Figure 4).

Clark (1994) conducted a survey of this area in advance of the construction of a fuel storage enclosure (Figure 6). He located artifacts that indicate a date range of the scatter from the 1890s to the early 1900s. This could encompass both the mining era and a very early part of the Washington Club era.

Clark also located a depression in the location where the fuel storage enclosure was to be built. As a result of his excavations, the fuel enclosure plans were altered to avoid impacting the possible 1890s feature. The depression is visible approximately 5 m east of the fuel enclosure fence.

*Flat Areas*

There are several conspicuously level locations on an otherwise sloping terrain (Figures 2, 6, and 7). It is probable that these locations were once sites for structures. Since the function, number, and location of buildings changed through time, it can not be stated with any degree of certainty which building once
stood at which level area. Although no surface remains were located, it is possible that subsurface materials are present.

Wendigo Mines and Townsite

The crew paid an informal visit to the Wendigo mines and settlement area (Figure 3). As stated previously, the road that led from Ghyllbank to the mines is still visible as a broad avenue cleared of trees. A hiking path leads down the center of the road to Washington Creek near the mines. On a flat hilltop above the mines, approximately ten structural depressions are visible. Most of the depressions are rectangular and three are over 1.5 m deep (Figure 21). Fragments of stovepipe and ferrous metal are scattered throughout the area.
Conclusions

The objective of the inventory was to locate and document any surficial cultural remains in the area that was formerly the site of the settlement of Ghyllbank. Now known as Windigo, the National Park Service actively uses the area for visitor activities such as camping and hiking (Figures 2 and 7).

The inventory located several archeological features of the 1890s copper mining settlement of Ghyllbank: the foundation of the building that was the headquarters for the Wendigo Copper Company, the company wharf, a structural depression, a road remnant, and part of one existing structure. Several features of the Washington Club occupation (1902–1938) are also present. A pre-1941 well was located, as well as a root cellar, a historic dump, and several flat areas that are likely sites of Washington Club or Ghyllbank structures.

After the Washington Club era, the CCC used and modified the area (1939–1941). New buildings were constructed and older ones were modified. The CCC was responsible for the construction of the first ranger station at Windigo, a new dock, visitor accommodations, new trails, and roads. The only CCC structures still in existence today are those that are located just beyond the edges of the study area, in the location of the CCC base camp (Figure 5).

Modern structures in the study area include a new visitor center/ranger station, restrooms, sheds, docks, and a fuel enclosure. Some employee housing is located in the former CCC camp structures (Figure 5). Additional employee housing is located beyond the ranges of this study (southwest or uphill from the store).

Difficulty in locating additional remains from the 1890s may be because many of the buildings constructed by the miners had log footings (Appendix A). They seemed designed to be short-lived structures. Consequently, many of the structures left very little surviving “footprint.”

The current state site numbers assigned to cultural resources in the area are somewhat confusing. The area of the Wendigo mining activities has been previously placed under one site number, 20IR86. This includes all of the mines and mining activity related to the Wendigo Copper Company’s explorations over a relatively broad area. It also includes the settlement of Wendigo. Clark states:

The complex of cultural sites is a combination of isolated finds, prospects, mines, settlements, connecting roads, and dock facilities. In the future this number should be replaced by several which pinpoint each definable aspect of the complex (Clark 1995:99).

Clark began breaking the large grouping into smaller, more easily definable parts. The Wendigo townsite has been assigned a separate site number, 20IR19. Two sites recorded by Bastian in 1963 were determined to represent discreet sites rather than broad groupings and the original site numbers were retained. Site 20IR67 is an area of historic features and artifacts. Clark attempted to locate the site but could find no evidence of it. Bastian also visited a collapsed log structure on the west side of Washington Creek, site 20IR77. Clark revisited the site but reported no trace of the structure.

The settlement of Ghyllbank should be assigned a separate site number. The formation of the settlement and subsequent use of the area since 1890 played a significant role in the history of the development of the island. MWAC will submit a site form for the settlement of Ghyllbank.

It may also be advisable to consider designating the CCC base camp area as a separate site number. The CCC played a significant role in the development of the island as a National Park. CCC workers erected or remodeled many structures as well as built new roads and trails. They built the infrastructure
for the early Isle Royale National Park. The CCC contributions to ISRO deserve further historical research and assessment.

The Windigo area has been significant in the development of the western portion of Isle Royale. Its long history of use resulted in a developed network of trails and facilities. The copper that brought the first Native Americans to the island continues to draw interest as hikers visit the many historic and prehistoric mines along the old mining roads. The early copper miners, fishermen, and later the sportsmen, vacationers, and Civilian Conservation Corps workers all helped to develop the western end of the island through successive episodes of differing land uses.

This project documented several features from the mining company use of the Windigo area. It also noted features resulting from the subsequent use of the mining facilities and documented archeological evidence of existing structures in the Windigo area. The results of this inventory will aid future planners and researchers in better understanding the history of Isle Royale.
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Figure 1. Map of Isle Royale National Park, showing location of Windigo.
Figure 2. Map of entire inventory area.
Figure 3. Annotated map of Wendigo Copper Company holdings, 1897. Map provided through the courtesy of Isle Royale National Park.
Figure 4. Annotated photograph of Ghyllbank ca. 1892, showing the structures referred to in the text. The “twin structure” to the rear is represented by the structural depression (Figures 2 and 6) that was discovered during this survey. View is to the east. Photograph provided through the courtesy of the Fisher Collection, Isle Royale National Park.
Figure 5. Existing structures and previously inventoried areas in the CCC camp.
Figure 6. Close-up of north portion of inventory area.
Figure 7. Close-up of south portion of inventory area.
Figure 8. Annotated portion of a 1941 utilities map, showing the CCC camp. Shaded structures correspond to the structures indicated as "extant" on Figure 9. From "Washington Harbor Area Utilities Layout" map, 1941, US DOI NPS. Original on file at Isle Royale National Park.
Figure 9. Annotated portion of a 1961 proposed construction map, showing the four extant CCC structures. From "Washington Harbor Development," Drawing NP-IR 3049, 12/28/61, US DOI NPS. Original on file at Isle Royale National Park.
Figure 10. Wendigo Copper Company Headquarters, Ghyllbank, ca. 1892. View to the east (top). View to the southeast (bottom). Photographs provided through the courtesy of the Fisher Collection, Isle Royale National Park.
Figure 11. Remains of the foundation of the east wall of the Wendigo Copper Company Headquarters, Ghyllbank, 1999.
Figure 12. Annotated photographs of the Washington Club lodge, 1924. View to the east (top). View to the west (bottom). Photographs provided through the courtesy of Isle Royale National Park.
Figure 13. Root cellar near store.
Figure 14. Shed near store.
Figure 15. Annotated photograph of the Washington Club, showing guest house, boathouse, and dining hall. Photograph provided through the courtesy of Isle Royale National Park.
Figure 16. Ghyllbank dock remnants, 1999.

Figure 17. Remnant of 1890 road from the dock to the headquarters.
Figure 18. Open well located northeast of structural depression in Ghyllbank area.
Figure 19. Structural depression in Ghyllbank area.
Figure 20. Early 1900s (Washington Club) dump site.

Figure 21. Structural depressions near Wendigo mines.
Appendix A

Sheet 1 of 4 pages

Aug. 21, 1932

Washington Club - Washington Harbor

1. Cottage for caretaker & dining hall at club.
   - Story frame: Gp. Rec. & Hall - pain white trim green
   - Length: 40' 2" Width: 24' 4" Height: 10' 3"
   - Rise: 7' 3"
   - Joist: 2 x 8
   - Sill: 2 lines G x 8 - 120 lin ft
   - Joint: 2 x 8, 2 stories, 2 lines of bridging.
   - Glazing: 1/8" 1/2 drop - paint white
   - Roof: 1" more covered asphalt shingles green
   - Floor: 1 1/2 subfloor - 1 1/2 Fir 7/8
   - Stud walls: 2 x 4 at 16" on-center.
   - Plate: 2 x 6 - single
   - Rafters: 2 x 4 at 16" on-center, Ridge: 1" x 5"
   - Rake: 1 1/2" @ 16" on-center, 2 down spouts.
   - Ceiling: Joists: 2 x 4 at 16"

Ground Floor Plan:

- Front, floor to ceiling 21'
- Built-in cabinet: upper 12" x 5/8 x 16, lower 16 1/2 x 6
- Windows: 2 sash: 2 1/2 x 2 1/2 x 2 1/2 each, 6 ft: 10" x 12" - window catch lock

7 Doors: 2 1/2 x 6 1/2 x 1 1/2 panel. Bronze colored hinges, door locks, 2 knobs.
- Baseboard: 1" x 6" with batten board on topside 1 1/2" at floor
- Sheathing: Walls & ceiling - 7/8" Masonite
- Batten: 1 1/2 x 1/2 battens over jib.
- Fibre board tarred mottled

Inside trim varnish

- Sash screens - fitted to each window
- Screen doors - two
- Porch: Floor: 5 1/2 x 6 1/2 from ground to floor, height = 2 1/2 side
- Toilet: Cape Pottery - Vitreous - Vit bowl & tank
- Lavatory: Humphreys - oval bowl

Concrete steps: base: 4 1/2 x 5 1/2 x 6" thick
- Chimney: 5 bricks per course - approx. 24 courses

Equipment - Coolerwater - enamel 6 door - 2 1/2 x 4 1/2 x 5 1/2 high legs added
Aug 24, 1932

Log House - used for store house - (used during mining days) 
(at least 30 years old)
1 story - with loft underneath; 3 Rm 3 Lean to; paint - none
Length - 22' 6" sections & top log; evidently two log cabins originally & fitted bet
Width - 16'-4"
Height - 10'-3" Rise - 7'-6"
Sill - log on ground
Joists - 2 x 4's
Bailing - logs chinked with moss
Roof - 1 story, covered, lean to - 0'1/2
Floor - 1 story, poor condition
Stud wall - none
Plate - 2 x 4's
Rafter - 2 x 4's at 3' 0" at 3' 0"

Log Barn - at least 30 years old; 1-story
Length - 25' 6"
Width - 16' 4"
Height to plate - 10' 0"
Rise 9'-0"
Sill - log on ground
Joist - log at 16'
Ceiling 
Roof - 1 x 3; mat-covered for paper; poor condition
Floor - 2 x 2
Plate - none
doors - Rafter roof on top
Rafter - 2 x 4 @ 2'-4" on center

Ice House - 1 story frame
Length - 15' 8"
Width - 15' 8"
Height to plate - 10' 0"
Rise 7'-0"

Tool House - 1 story frame
Length - 2 7/4"
Width - 16' 5" to 10' 0"
Height to plate - 10' 6"
Rise 7'-0"

Pump House - 1 story brick
Length - 16'-3"
Width - 11'-3"
Height to plate - 10' 0"

Roof - 6'-0"
Moss - white wash - """"

Steel - concrete - 2'-0" cracked - wall 1'-0"

Flag Pole - tamarack - 4'-0"

Water Tank - Elevated - 2 x 6" vertical - 2 bands clamped
Tower - lower 2'-0" upper 2'-0" stilts - 3 1/2 - 2 3/4 x 3 1/2
Height - 20' from base to top of stilts - 20' from base to plate - 13'-0". Floor - 2 1/4 x 2 1/4 cm. plywood 1" thick
Frame - 4 pieces 3 x 3 1/4 long
Bracing - 4 x 6 - lower 9" 3 x 3 1/4- 7 1/4 x 7 1/4


45
Aug 24-

Dock & Boat house - Dock in very poor condition

Poles extend out some more in this direction - no cribs.

Decking 2" plank, 6" each side.

Cribs not stone filled.

Boat house 36'5" x 20'4". Hull to plate 8'6". Rise 5'6". Paint white, trim green.

Siding 1" x 6". Top, 2x6. Bottom, Plate 2x4. Roof 2x4. 2x6.

Pipe - 3/4" inside diam Olympia pipe. Guest house to chy coop 50'.

Cleared Area - 1300' long x 700' wide - 91,500 + 19,000 = 92,000 sq. ft. cleared.

Slopes from top at rear to water edge - 100', terrace area - about 30' wide.