

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

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Inventory

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14

INVENTORY

NAME: Ed Biederman Fish Camp

LOCATION: Left bank of the Yukon approximately 1/2 mile downriver across from the Kandik River.

UTMs: 07.725005.393025

QUADRANGLE: Charley River B-4 SCALE: 6:63 360

ACREAGE AND BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION: One and a quarter acres, boundary drawn in a square: 250' along the river bank; 250' back from the river to include all identified cultural resources. Two resources are excluded, a meat cache and upriver cabin, because their location was not verified in the field.

OWNERSHIP: The Biederman site was selected under the Native Allotment Act for tentative conveyance to a private party.

DESCRIPTION

The Ed Biederman Fish Camp was a highly evolved camp located almost opposite the Kandik River. The landscape had all the elements of the fish camp: good cliffs for eddys in which to place fish nets; a high birch terrace for the camp above water and ice; on a fresh water creek, as the Yukon itself is very silty; and plenty of wood. The landing was on a fifteen-to twenty-foot sloping gravel beach with a rather steep path thirty to forty feet leading up to the main cabin. There was an outdoor cookspot with benches and table in the shade of the willows looking out over the river. The site was comprised of the main cabin, bunkhouse, an upriver cabin, cache, greenhouse, meat cellar, doghouses, and the accouterments of a fish camp: fishwheels, boats, and drying racks. (P29,34,35; I13)

Frank and Al Fish, Pete Sommerville, and Ed Biederman, ca. 1916, built the 17'6"X31' main cabin out of logs hewn on the inside, which extend the full 31' length of the building.

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They divided the interior into two rooms, kitchen and bedroom, with logs notched into the exterior log wall. The lower portion of the kitchen wall was covered with oilcloth. By 1926, the original open porch was enclosed with a variety of materials: south side and a portion of the front, 3" (average diameter) poles; the remainder of the front, rough sawn planks; northside, a large sliding door, probably salvaged from Fort Egbert. Three windows were placed into the north (river) side wall, and one each on the south and west walls. The floor in the kitchen and bedroom was built of random width planking over stringers. The entry floor was built with constant sized planking set on grade. The roof deck was constructed of 4"-8" (average diameter) split poles supporting a layer of sod, eventually covered with corrugated metal. (P39,40; I14,15)

In 1918, the one room bunkhouse was built directly south of the main cabin. Ed Biederman used two dogs to haul the 7" (average diameter) logs, hewn on the inside, which were salvaged from Tom King's roadhouse on the other side of the river (Biederman). The flooring was built with planking set on grade. The door was placed in the east gable, and a window was placed in each of the other walls. The roof deck was constructed of 4"-6" (average diameter) split poles supporting sod, later covered with corrugated metal, which extended 8'3" in the front to create a porch over a dirt floor. (P41; I16)

Both constructed after 1926, the cache was located southeast and the greenhouse to the west of the main cabin. The cache, constructed of wood frame covered with irregular width planks laid diagonally, was raised on posts. (P42,43; I17) The greenhouse was constructed out of horizontal beaded siding, probably from Fort Egbert. It may also have been used as a tent frame. Another cabin, much the same as the bunkhouse, was built about 1/4 of a mile upriver. A meat cellar was carved into the hillside about 1/4 mile southeast of the campsite. (P47) Various A-frame doghouses, wooden boats, fishwheels, and drying racks were used at the camp.

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CONDITION

The Ed Biederman Fish Camp retains a high degree of historical integrity. It is used seasonally. Over time, there have been very few changes to the main cabin. The upriver cabin no longer has a roof. Doghouses, wooden boats, fishwheels, and drying racks are extant at the site. The site is clear, the cabin habitable with a new roof and sills. (P44,45,46)

HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

Max Adolphus "Ed" Biederman ran the mail by dogsled from Circle to Eagle for over twenty years. Biederman used the site, whose buildings date from about 1916, as a summer fish camp, where he boarded dogs and caught fish for dog food. In the winter, he used the camp as a shelter on his mail route.

The Biederman family was representative of many families that settled into the river community. Ed Biederman was born September 19, 1861, in Bohemia. When he was 13 he immigrated to the U.S. In 1899 he joined the gold rush to Nome. He found all the land staked and turned to alternative forms of income on the lower Yukon. In 1910 Biederman carried mail by dogsled for the Northern Commercial Company around Rampart and Tanana. In 1912 Biederman assumed the Circle to Eagle route which he ran until 1925, when he lost his toes to frostbite from a trail accident. His son, Horace, finished the year. A member of the Biederman family held the mail contract from 1912 until 1938, except for four years lost to Johnny Palm and four years to Pacific airlines. In 1938 the airplane permanently replaced the dog sled for mail deliveries (Biederman; Scott, "Adolph Biederman"; Grauman, "Yukon Frontiers," 161-164; Springer).

Ed Biederman made the round trip between Eagle and Circle thirteen times in the winter. It was a six-day trip, one way on the trail, with a one day layover at Eagle and Circle. The first night out from Eagle Biederman spent at Frank "Heine" Miller's wood camp at the Tatonduk River. The second night was spent at Nation Roadhouse, and the third at his

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fish camp. There he would switch dog teams. The fourth night out he spent at Woodchpper Roadhouse, then 26-Mile camp, and finally into Circle. Biederman stocked the roadhouses and shelter cabins for his own use. He generally carried over five hundred pounds of mail on a sled pulled by six to nine dogs (Biederman; Scott; Springer). The frequent mail trips over the winter trail kept it open, providing a transportation route for miners, trappers, and other winter travelers. The trail was never more than a winter trail because most of it was on the frozen river.

Biederman kept twenty-four dogs of his own and often boarded up to sixty. Because dogs were virtually useless in the summer, miners and trappers boarded their dogs with Biederman. (P32) Dogs had to be fed, so for Ed Biederman that meant a summer of fishing. The Biederman fish operation was impressive in its scale. He had two fishwheels, with 12' baskets that reached 8' into the water. (P36) They were pulled from the water by an enormous windlass built by Alfred Johnson. Biederman cleaned the fish at the river, then sent them to the drying racks on an overhead trolley. The drying racks were tiered, and could smoke 3600 fish at a time over three fires. (P30) On July 24, 1920, he wrote, "The fish [salmon] have been running heavy for six days but are slacking off now. I have got 900 up to date" (A. Biederman to C. Ott). A few years later he wrote, "The Dog Salmon being coming so fast I had to stop the wheel for two days. The last day's run she caught 900 in 12 hours. That was a little too much for me and Horace to handle..." (A. Biederman to C. Ott, August 25, 1924). Biederman sold the dried fish as far away as Eagle and Circle. He baled them in 65-pound bundles (C. Biederman; Scott; Knutson).

The Biederman operation was a family operation. He married Bella Roderick in 1916 and they had five children. In the winters, they lived in Eagle, where the children attended school. They left Eagle for the fish camp on the first of June and returned on the last boat before freeze-up at the end of September. (P37) When his sons took over the mail route, Biederman continued working for the N.C. Company,

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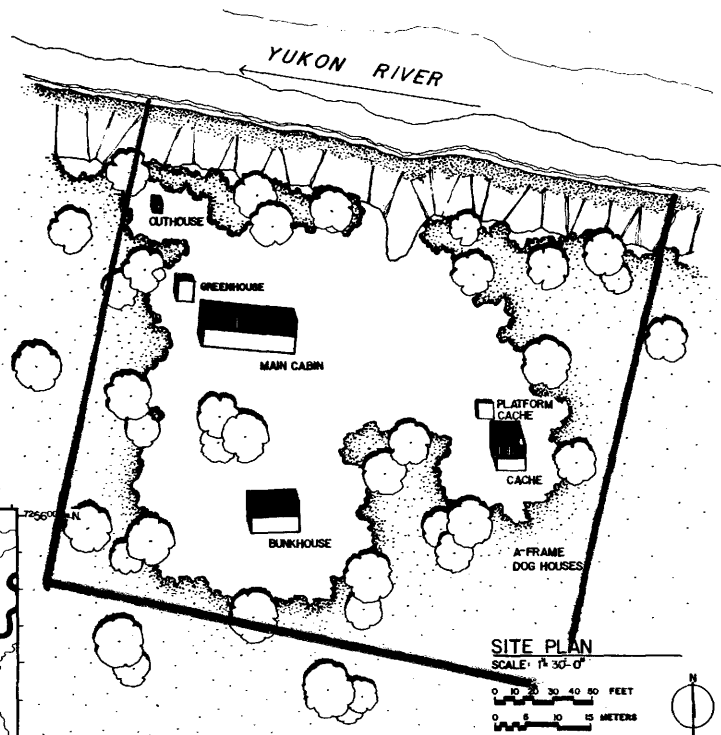
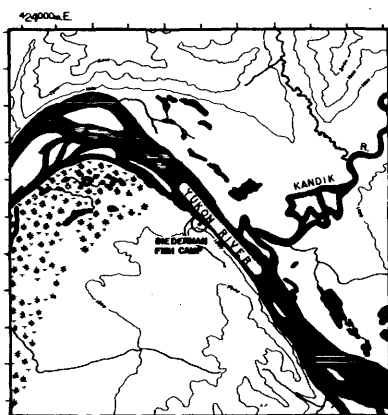
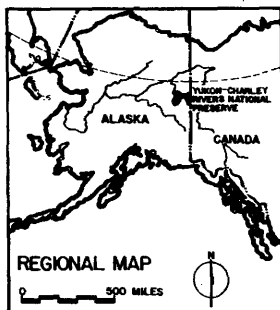
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serving as a trouble shooter. The fish camp was active annually until Ed Biederman's death on March 4, 1945.

ED BIEDERMAN FISH CAMP



MAX ADOLPHUS "ED" BIEDERMAN RAN THE MAIL BY DOBBLED FROM CIRCLE TO EAGLE FOR OVER TWENTY YEARS. THE BUILDINGS AT THIS SITE, WHICH DATE FROM ABOUT 1916, WERE USED BY BIEDERMAN AS A FISH CAMP IN SUMMER, WHERE HE BOARDED AS MANY AS SIXTY DOGS AND CAUGHT FISH FOR DOG FOOD. IN THE WINTER, BIEDERMAN TOOK SIX DAYS TO TRAVEL THE 160 MILES FROM CIRCLE TO EAGLE. HE USED THIS CAMP AS HIS OVERNIGHT STOP ON THE THIRD NIGHT OUT AND CHANGED DOG TEAMS HERE. THE WINTER TRAIL BROKEN BY BIEDERMAN WAS ALSO USED BY TRAVELERS BETWEEN EAGLE AND CIRCLE AS WELL AS THE MINERS AND TRAPPERS WHO LIVED ALONG THE YUKON.

THIS BUILDING WAS DOCUMENTED AS PART OF AN HISTORIC STRUCTURES REPORT PREPARED BY THE ALASKA REGIONAL OFFICE OF THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE UNDER THE DIRECTION OF REGIONAL HISTORIAN ROBERT SPUDE AND REGIONAL HISTORICAL ARCHITECT DAVID SNOW. THE BUILDING WAS MEASURED BY STEVEN PETERSON IN 1982, DAVID ANDERSON IN 1984, AND RANDALL SKEIRIK AND WILLIAM VANDEVENTER IN 1986. IT WAS DRAWN BY RANDALL SKEIRIK IN 1986. ALISON K. HOAGLAND WAS PROJECT HISTORIAN.

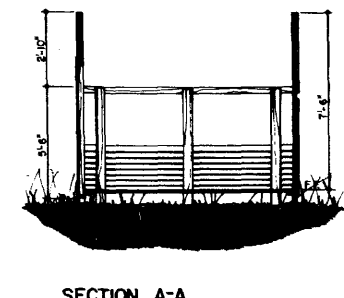
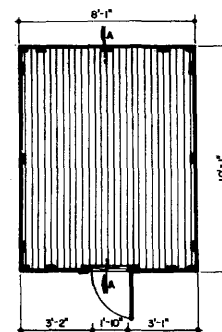
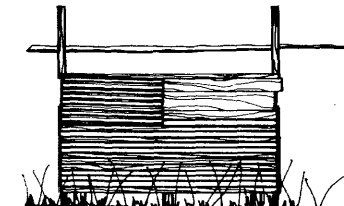
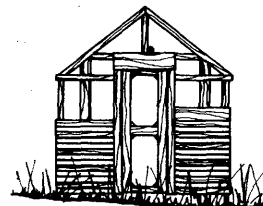
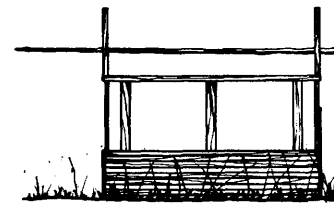
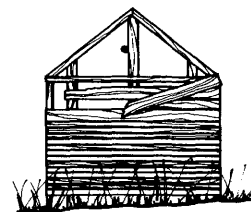


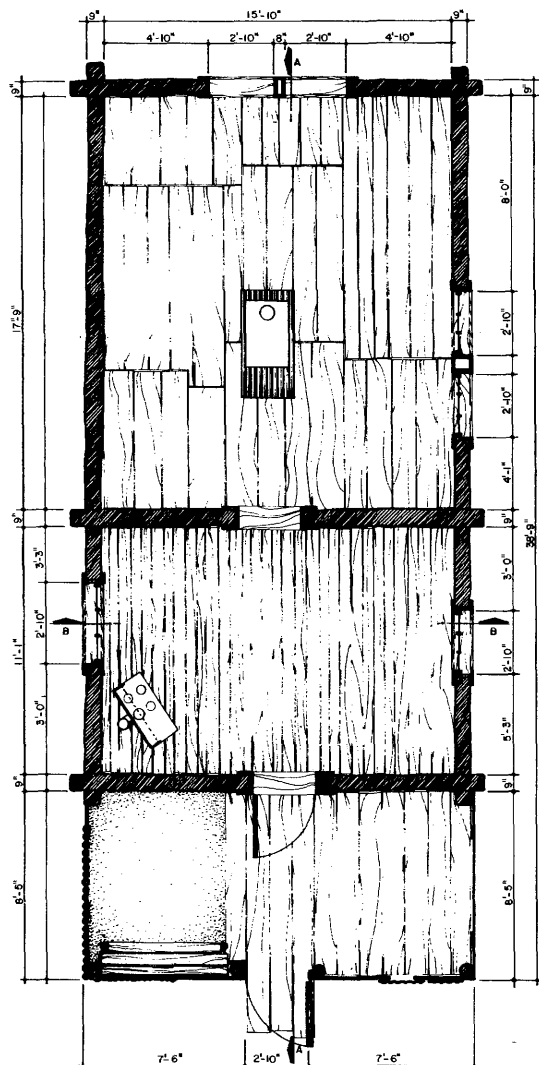
ILLUSTRATION 13

Ed Biederman Fish Camp, site plan, with
boundary.

Yukon River Lifeways

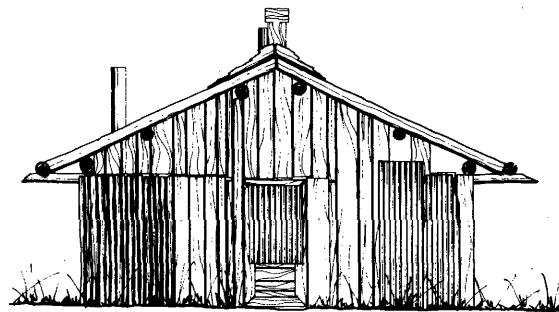
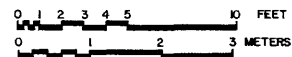
Randall Skeirik

National Park Service, 1985



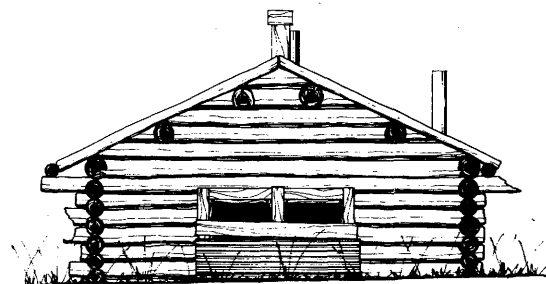
FLOOR PLAN

SCALE: 3/8" = 1'-0"



EAST ELEVATION

SCALE: 3/8" = 1'-0"



WEST ELEVATION

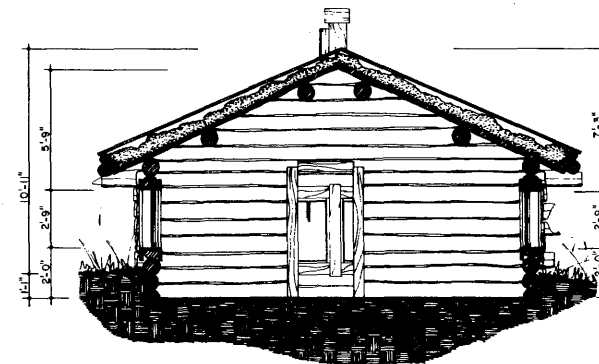
SCALE: 3/8" = 1'-0"

MATERIALS NOTES:

WALLS: ENTRY - ORIGINALLY AN OPEN PORCH, THE ENTRY HAS BEEN ENCLOSED USING A VARIETY OF MATERIALS. THE SOUTH SIDE AND A PORTION OF THE FRONT ARE ENCLOSED WITH 3" AVG. DIAMETER POLES. THE REMAINDER OF THE FRONT IS COVERED WITH 1" RANDOM WIDTH ROUGH SAWN PLANKS. THE NORTH SIDE REUSES A LARGE SLIDING DOOR POSSIBLY FROM FT. EGBERT. KITCHEN AND BEDROOM - BOTH ROOMS ARE ENCLOSED BY CONTINUOUS 9" AVG. DIA-METER LOGS HEWN ON THE INSIDE. THE LOWER PORTION OF THE KITCHEN WALL HAS BEEN COVERED WITH OILCLOTH.

FLOOR: ENTRY - THE FLOORING IS 3"x12" PLANKING SET ON GRADE. KITCHEN - THE FLOORING IS 1 1/2" RANDOM WIDTH PLANKING NAILED TO STRINGERS SET ON GRADE AT 1'-8" O.C. BEDROOM - THE BEDROOM FLOOR IS COMPOSED OF PLANKING VARYING IN BOTH WIDTH AND LENGTH. STRINGERS ARE UNKNOWN.

ROOF: THE ROOF DECK IS OF 4"-8" AVG. DIAMETER SPLIT POLES SUPPORTING A LAYER OF SOD SUBSEQUENTLY COVERED WITH CORRUGATED METAL.



SECTION A-A

SCALE: 3/8" = 1'-0"

ILLUSTRATION 14

Ed Biederman Fish Camp, main cabin

Yukon River Lifeways

Randall Skeirik

National Park Service, 1985

ILLUSTRATION 15

Ed Biederman Fish Camp, main camp

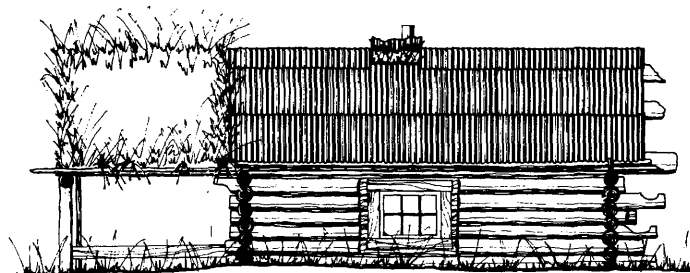
Yukon River Lifeways

Randall Skeirik

National Park Service, 1985



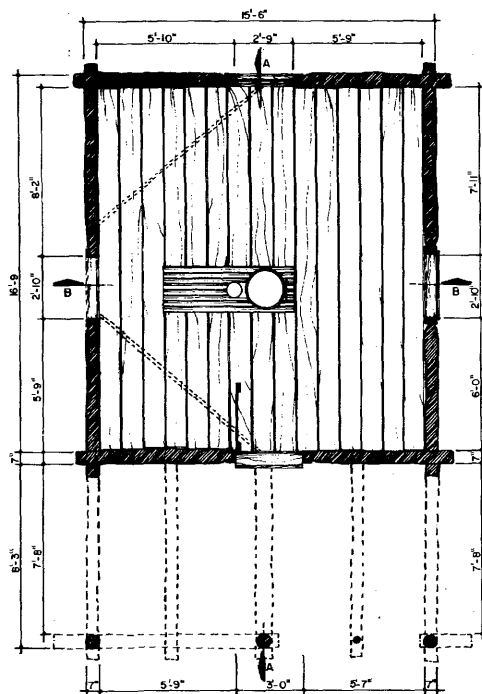
EAST ELEVATION
SCALE: 3/8" = 1'-0"



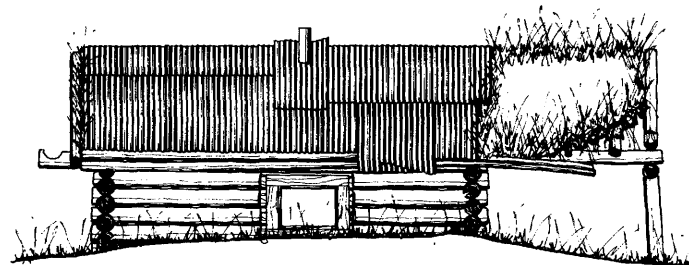
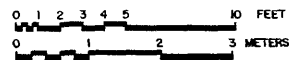
NORTH ELEVATION
SCALE: 3/8" = 1'-0"



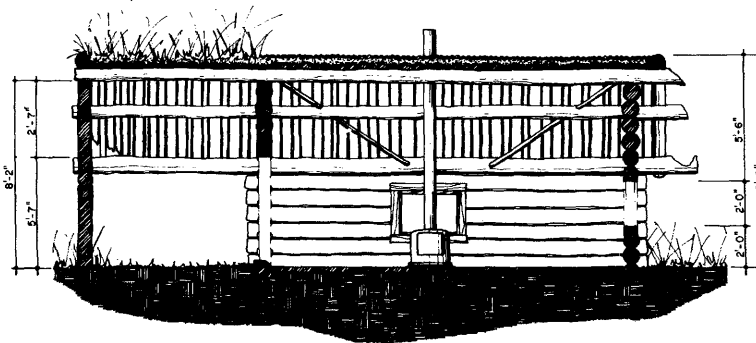
WEST ELEVATION
SCALE: 3/8" = 1'-0"



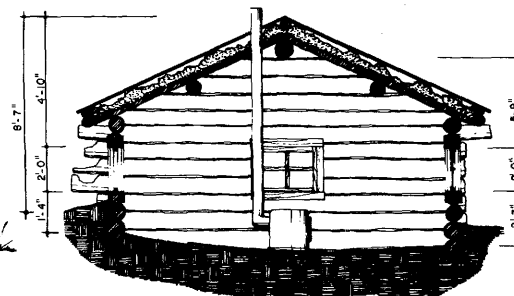
FLOOR PLAN
SCALE: 3/8" = 1'-0"



SOUTH ELEVATION
SCALE: 3/8" = 1'-0"



SECTION B-B
SCALE: 3/8" = 1'-0"



SECTION A-A
SCALE: 3/8" = 1'-0"

MATERIALS NOTES:

- WALLS:** THE WALLS ARE OF 7" AVG. DIAMETER LOGS HEWN ON THE INSIDE THAT WERE SALVAGED FROM AN EARLIER CABIN. THEY ARE JOINED WITH SADDLE NOTCHES.
- FLOOR:** THE FLOORING IS 3"x12" PLANKING SET ON GRADE. THE PORCH HAS A DIRT FLOOR.
- ROOF:** THE ROOF DECK IS OF 4"-6" AVG. DIAMETER SPLIT POLES SUPPORTING A LAYER OF SOD SUBSEQUENTLY COVERED WITH CORRUGATED METAL.

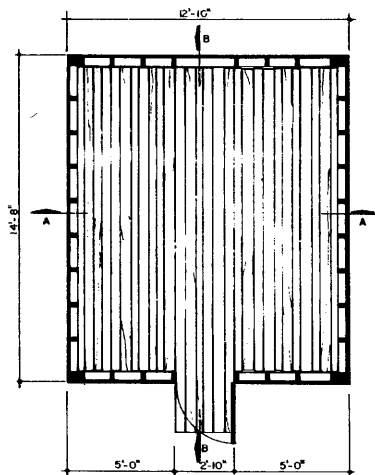
ILLUSTRATION 16

Ed Biederman Fish Camp, bunkhouse

Yukon River Lifeways

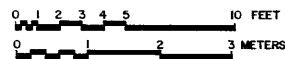
Randall Skeirik

National Park Service, 1985



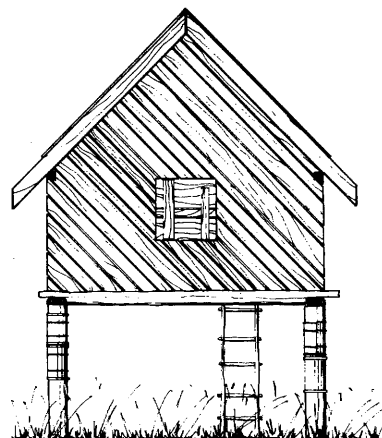
FLOOR PLAN

SCALE: 3/8"=1'-0"



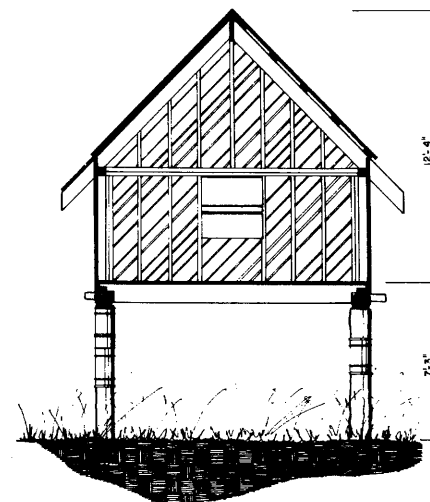
WEST ELEVATION

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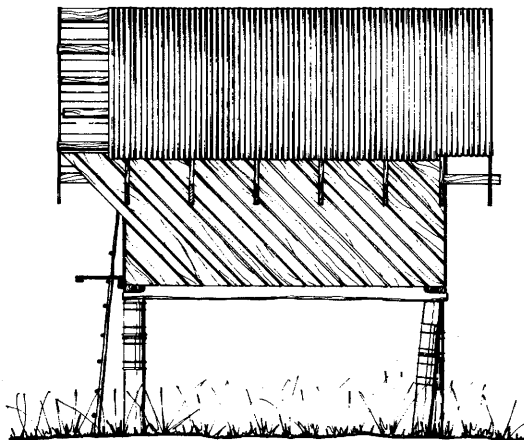
EAST ELEVATION

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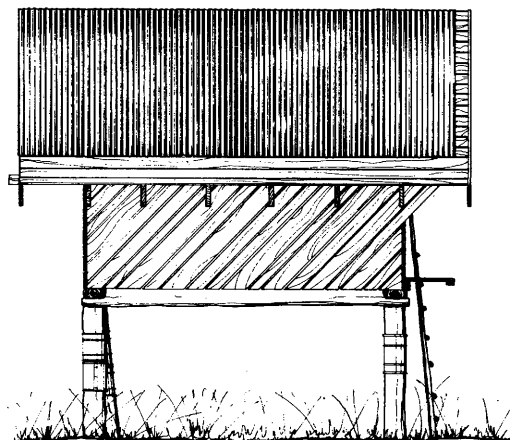
SECTION A-A

SCALE: 3/8"=1'-0"



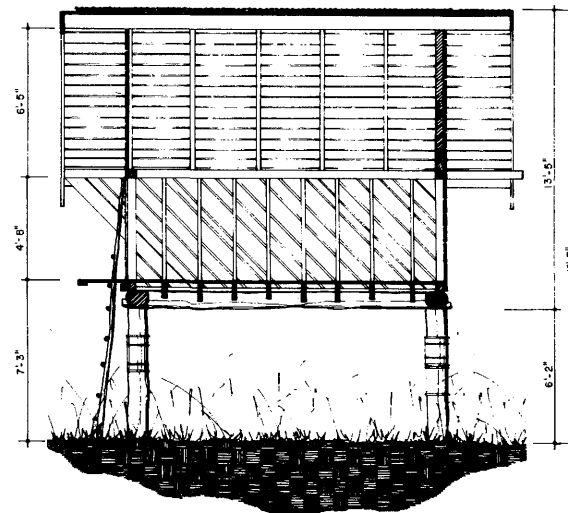
SOUTH ELEVATION

SCALE: 3/8"=1'-0"



NORTH ELEVATION

SCALE: 3/8"=1'-0"



SECTION B-B

SCALE: 3/8"=1'-0"

ILLUSTRATION 17

Ed Biederman Fish Camp, cache

Yukon River Lifeways

Randall Skeirik

National Park Service, 1985



1. BIEDERMAN CAMP; YUKON RIVER LIFEWAYS
2. Eagle vicinity, Alaska
3. J.B. Mertie, Jr. 4. 1926
5. USGS, Denver, #1263
6. looking west 7. P29; I13



1. BIEDERMAN FAMILY FLOATING THE YUKON;
YUKON RIVER LIFEWAYS
2. Eagle vicinity, Alaska
3. 4.
5. NPS-ARO, courtesy George Beck
6. 7. P37



1. TRAPPING CATCH, IN FRONT OF BIEDERMAN
HOUSE; YUKON RIVER LIFEWAYS
2. Eagle vicinity, Alaska
3. 4. ca. 1936-45
5. NPS-ARO, courtesy George Beck
6. 7. P36



1. SMOKING FISH AT BIEDERMAN CAMP; YUKON
RIVER LIFEWAYS
2. Eagle vicinity, Alaska
3. 4. ca 1935-45
5. NPS-ARO, courtesy George Beck
6. looking southeast 7. P35; I13



1. BIEDERMAN CAMP, VIEWED FROM RIVER;
YUKON RIVER LIFEWAYS
2. Eagle vicinity, Alaska
3. 4. 1940
5. NPS-ARO, courtesy George Beck
6. looking south 7. P34; I13



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EAGLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY
EAGLE, ALASKA

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Proof Sheet H-1.156
Negative # 33

1. BIEDERMAN FISH CAMP, BUNKHOUSE AND MAIN
CABIN; YUKON RIVER LIFEWAYS
2. Eagle vicinity, Alaska
3. 4. ca 1930-45
5. Eagle Historical Society, H-1.156#33
6. looking north 7. P33; I13,14,15,16



PLEASE CREDIT
Beck Collection
EAGLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY
EAGLE, ALASKA

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Proof Sheet H- 1.143
Negative # 17

1. SLED DOGS ON THE BANK OF THE YUKON,
BIEDERMAN FISH CAMP; YUKON RIVER LIFEWAYS
2. Eagle vicinity, Alaska
3. 4. ca 1930-45
5. Eagle Historical Society, H-1.143, #17
6. looking east 7. P32; I13



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EAGLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY
EAGLE, ALASKA

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Negative # 30

1. DRYING RACKS FROM RIVER, BIEDERMAN FISH
CAMP; YUKON RIVER LIFEWAYS.
2. Eagle vicinity, Alaska
3. 4. ca. 1930-45
5. Eagle Historical Society, H-1.156#30
6. looking south 7. P30;I13



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EAGLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY
EAGLE, ALASKA

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Proof Sheet H- 1.156
Negative # 36

1. FISHWHEELS, BIEDERMAN FISH CAMP; YUKON
RIVER LIFEWAYS
2. Eagle vicinity, Alaska
3. 4. ca, 1930-45
5. Eagle Historical Society, H-1.156#36
6. looking east 7. P31; I13



1. BIEDERMAN CAMP, WOODEN BOAT ON SHORE;
YUKON RIVER LIFEWAYS
2. Eagle vicinity, Alaska
3. Steven Peterson
4. 1982
5. NPS-ARO
6. looking at river
7. P44;



1. BIEDERMAN FISH CAMP, DISMANTLED
FISHWHEEL; YUKON RIVER LIFEWAYS
2. Eagle vicinity, Alaska
3. Steven Peterson
4. 1982
5. NPS-ARO
- 6.
7. P45



1. BIEDERMAN, MAIN CABIN: YUKON RIVER
LIFEWAYS
2. Eagle vicinity, Alaska
3. Steven Peterson
4. 1982
5. NPS-ARO
6. looking west
7. P39; I14,15,



1. BIEDERMAN FISH CAMP, SLED RUNNER FORM;
YUKON RIVER LIFEWAYS
2. Eagle vicinity, Alaska
3. Bill Vandeventer
4. June 1985
5. NPS-ARO
6. looking south
7. P46



1. BIEDERMAN FISH CAMP, MEAT CACHE;
YUKON RIVER LIFEWAYS
2. Eagle vicinity, Alaska
3. Steven Peterson
4. 1982
5. NPS-ARO
- 6.
7. P47



1. BIEDERMAN CACHE ON LEGS; YUKON RIVER
LIFEWAYS
2. Eagle vicinity, Alaska
3. Steven Peterson
4. 1982
5. NPS-ARO
6. looking east
7. P42; I17



1. BIEDERMAN CAMP, BUNKHOUSE; YUKON
RIVER LIFEWAYS
2. Eagle vicinity, Alaska
3. Steven Peterson 4. 1982
5. NPS-ARO
6. looking northwest 7. P41; I16



1. BIEDERMAN, MAIN CABIN; YUKON RIVER
LIFEWAYS
2. Eagle vicinity, Alaska
3. Steven Peterson
4. 1982
5. NPS-ARO
6. south elevation
7. P40; I14,15



1. BIEDERMAN CAMP; YUKON RIVER LIFEWAYS
2. Eagle vicinity
3. Steven Peterson
4. 1982
5. NPS-ARO
6. looking south
7. P38; I13