REMOTE WILDERNESS CABINS ON THE AVALON PENINSULA: MALE SPACES AND CULTURE

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Remote Wilderness Cabins on the Avalon Peninsula: Male Spaces and Culture

by

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Abstract

This study is of three remote cabins deep in Newfoundland's rugged Avalon wilderness. The structure and situation of the cabins are examined in detail, including interviews conducted with their owners, builders and users. The cabins are rough like the Taiga environment; they look deceptively unfinished, and are regarded only as "cabins." Provincial regulations define such remote cabins as being at least one kilometer from road access. They are built on public land and their owners pay a yearly fee to occupy. Being public spaces, the cabins are always unlocked for anyone to use for short stays or emergencies. This is one reason owners keep their locations as secret as possible. Another reason stems from tensions arising from the licensing system instituted in the 1980s, requiring registration and fees for what was previously a free domain. I examine the evolution of attitudes toward the regulation and use of wilderness in the context of Newfoundland folklife, and the evolution of the cabin from a base for subsistence hunting and trapping to its current role as recreational space.

Although permits are now required for such cabins, few regulations or codes apply to how they can be built. Thus, cabins are one of the last bastions of vernacular architecture, with skills and methods once used in traditional building now employed for the cabins. Plans are not drawn in physical form. Hand tools are used as there is no electricity, and materials are limited to what can be carried, brought in by small recreation vehicles, or harvested on site. The construction of cabins depends on a social network of sharing and reciprocity. Building is done as cheaply as possible, with most material recycled from home renovations, or other building sites. Friends often contribute used items, and help with construction. Builders take pride in putting old materials to new use, and improvising solutions to problems of construction, repairs and everyday use.

A number of considerations must go into these seemingly simple one-room shelters. I examine their construction (such as size, framing, roofing), methods, site selection and building orientation on site, form (usage of space, style), interior arrangement and furnishings, and safety considerations. I consider the tacit rules as to use of the cabins, and problems that arise when the traditional ethic of shared space is misunderstood.

As these cabins are largely built and used by men, I also examine the male world of cabin culture and its protocols. The male identities of these men are rooted in generations of patriarchal knowledge and skills, linked to the use of these buildings and the related activities of hunting and outdoor sport. These spaces foster a particular sense of male place linked to ideas of hardiness, leisure, escape from the pressures of modern living, and the preservation of traditions. I explore the experiential aspects of these places as particularly meaningful for male socialization, bonding, and camaraderie. The expressive activities that take place in these cabins define the space as male, as do the foods prepared and eaten there, and the kinds of social interactions that take place in and around the cabins.

Acknowledgements

I have experienced the contrast of modern living in both rural and urban perspectives. In Newfoundland, I resided in a rural area, Gambo, up to 1971, and in an urban area, St. John's since 1978; in between I lived in Toronto, Ontario. My life experience, having lived in times of both subsistence and market economies in Newfoundland, was a tremendous aid in understanding this thesis topic. My keen interest in cabins and outbuildings was fuelled by other factors. I did a third year undergrad course at Memorial University of Newfoundland with Dr. Gerald Pocius in vernacular architecture. The course led to a vernacular architecture presentation in 2000 at a Folklore Studies Association of Canada conference in Edmonton Alberta, and in 2003 I attended a Vernacular Architecture Forum conference at St. Pierre et Miquelon. I wish to thank Dr. Pocius, my adviser in graduate studies, for his guidance and world-class expertise in the specialized area of Vernacular Architecture. I am grateful for Dr. Diane Tye and her valuable influence, and Dr. Philip Hiscock, the Folklore department staff, Dr. Barbara Reiti and three special graduate friends. I am so fortunate that my long-time friend and fellow artist Helen Houston kindly polished my hand drawings for print, and my daughter-in-law Sara provided her technical expertise without which I would be lost. A special thanks to Frank my husband, family and friends, who were so understanding, for I could count on their support through thick and thin.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

This is a study of remote wilderness cabins, "remote" meaning without services such as water and electricity, and as defined by the provincial government as being one or more kilometers from a road. These buildings are on inland areas of the Avalon Peninsula, eastern Newfoundland Canada. Three examples are presented using primary information from interviews with the owners, users and builders. I examine climate and the site's landscape; physical elements of the cabins, such as scale, framework and materials; and building methods employed. I also investigate the cultural dimensions of the buildings with emphasis on the male social worlds they contain. I examine the wider context of attitudes toward wilderness, land, and cabin usage in Newfoundland, and how changing technologies, such as motorized recreational vehicles, can influence attitudes. The cabins, once bases for harvesting wildlife within a subsistence lifestyle, are now primarily used for leisure and recreation. They and the lands around them are subject to increasing government regulation, and I explore attitudes of cabin owners toward private and common lands and their development for various uses.

Physically, there is not much to these one room cabins: they typically consist of one room containing built-in bunk beds handmade from rough board; a stove for heating and cooking; a line or rack for drying wet clothes; a stack of firewood or a firewood box; an eating area with a table and chairs; a sink for preparing food and washing dishes; and a few open shelves or cupboards for storage. These furnishings are oriented around the perimeter of the cabin with an open space left in the centre. For their owners, however,

the worth of the cabin is more than the sum of its materials, content, or land. They are an escape from pressures of work and everyday life, and allow the practice of wilderness and building traditions not prescribed by a formal plan. They connect people to the part of the island's history, as people have long trekked inland during winter to escape the coastal weather, hunt, and cut wood (Smith 1987).[1] Today, many people find that inland spaces provide more recreational opportunities than the sea does.

1.1 Fieldwork and Methodology

My first visit to the cabin sites in the Avalon wilderness was like nothing I had ever done before: it was my first snowmobile ride, and my husband and I, in our helmets and insulated suits, crossed barrens and negotiated narrow winding trails. I enjoyed the raw February beauty of the landscape, but soon came to appreciate – in a visceral way—that it is no place to be careless or unprepared. Our snowmobile got stuck in deep snow, and it took more than an hour, with only a rope and a pair of snowshoes for a shovel, to get the six-hundred pound machine moving again. This traumatic experience proved to inform my research in many ways, for I could readily see how pragmatism trumps any romantic ideas about the wilderness, and how it dominates the thinking of cabin owners and users. But my first sight of the simple cabins in their stands of trees simply made me wonder about their story.

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[1] The transhumance practice of escape to the interior for the winter, in the earlier years of the island, was done to be closer to natural food sources, to access fire wood, and for protection from winter weather.

My interest in cabins is also rooted in my childhood. I was born in the 1950s and grew up in a rural community on the northeast coast listening to my father's and uncle's stories. My father was a traditional hunter as well as a game warden. He and his younger brother would travel thirty miles into the backcountry by snowshoe, in heavy snow and frigid weather, to tend their trap lines. It was a time and place when men built their own houses, and having experienced radical changes since that time, I feel that I can appreciate the equally changing nuances of land ownership and local attitudes toward commons land and wilderness.

But in order to grasp the full meaning of the remote wilderness cabin spaces I also had to consider attitudes toward such spaces in other parts of Canada and in Western societies. Little has been written about the humble cabin; and writing about wilderness in general often lacks rural perspectives and the viewpoints of ordinary people who use such spaces. Most studies are pictorial or non-academic, and rarely consider social context. The bulk of research focuses on high style cottages designed by architects. Yet one-room cabins are an important part of life in many parts of North America (Comstock and Schermerhorn [1915] 1990). Speaking from a vernacular architecture perspective, Henry Glassie says that, "unimportant buildings display values that we have not yet learned to appreciate," (1999: 230; 2000: 20).

1.2 Problems in Fieldwork

This study presented a number of challenges. For one thing, this type of cabin has no blueprints and little formal documentation; historical sources are almost non-existent. (Even the Department of Crown Lands has only generalized information designed for permit holders.) I relied instead on ethnographic sources such as participant observation, taped interviews, personal conversations, and photographs. Another problem was finding the interviewees, and then gaining their trust. Many cabin owners are secretive about the location of their cabins, because they feel there are too many people in the woods now. Then too, many were perplexed as to why anyone had an interest in such buildings, let alone a female researcher. Some found it cumbersome to articulate the building methods they have always taken for granted. Finally, trips to the cabins required careful planning. As they were best reached by snowmobile, for instance, there had to be adequate snow cover and frozen ponds.

1.3 Size of Study

I first visited the research sites in February 2005 to assess the viability of a study. The fieldwork in the wilderness and photos of the cabins were done in February 2006 and 2007. While collecting the data at the cabins I did not want other visitors who happened on the site to know what I was doing, as I wanted to protect the privacy of the owners. There were a few awkward moments when I hid my measuring tape and waited for visitors to leave. Initially estimated to be ten cabins, the selection narrowed to three, namely those whose owners were most willing to participate in the study.

The interview process was protracted for several reasons. It was time consuming to locate the cabin owners when I only had a name and no other contact information, but I had to find the owners by word of mouth rather than through a formal search via a government department. Because I was female and an academic it took time to build rapport with some of the interviewees, and I had to prove I was not a representative of government.

My interviewees are anonymous in this study by their preference; Blue Wilds is also a pseudonym because of privacy concerns. My principal interviewees were Cliff , a building framer and nurse (interviewed in March 2006); he referred me to Abe, a master carpenter (interviewed October 22, 2006 and November 22, 2006); and to Bob, a retired plumber, whom I eventually met January 2008. Bob gave me a wealth of material and introduced me to his wife Edith, a housewife, and to Ed, a dump truck operator. Other interviewees included Garland, a master carpenter, and Willis, a millwright who built three houses according to local building traditions. What all the male interviewees have in common is that their fathers and their fathers' fathers were proficient in building. They are all familiar with traditional building and with the wilderness where they regularly go.

This study's interviewees were all born and raised in East coast Newfoundland and are blue collar workers or began their work lives that way. They are skilled tradesmen or professionals working in the service or construction industry, and like to hunt both small and big game, and enjoy time spent in the wilderness. At the time of the research, the approximate ages of the interviewees ranged from Cliff in his mid twenties, Abe mid fifties, Bob mid sixties (Edith early sixties), Ed early fifties, Garland mid fifties and to

Willis in his late sixties. Cliff worked for his father in the housing industry before attaining a nursing degree. He and his friends lend a hand to each other for doing home repairs. For example, in 2005 his friends helped him shingle the roof of his mother's house. Abe learned to build the traditional way after which he pursued formal training in carpentry and upon graduation became a carpentry instructor for the community college where he trained. He also is a registered wilderness guide. Bob learned to build informally and built the house he currently lives in. He literally cut the timbers for every piece of board in his house. Ed lives in the house that he inherited from his father, which his father self-built. Like the others, Ed is submerged in a culture of self-building, especially for cabins. Garland as a carpentry instructor learned his skills the traditional way and formally, and is a contractor. He indicated that a basis in traditional self-building makes better builders in formal training. Willis explained how he cut logs for the houses he built, and as a young boy, he helped his father, who was a sawyer, cut logs for building. That was life lived.

1.4 Structure of Study

In order to understand the meaning of the remote cabins in a modern context, it is important to view them from as many angles as possible (figures 1, 2 and 3).

Chapter Two provides a foundation of contextual materials about the wilderness. The goal is to clarify the utilitarian approach of cabin owners toward the wilderness and to show how this mindset differs from place to place. Section one of chapter two describes

the terrain and climate of the Blue Wilds cabins area. Section two examines historic and economic developments that influenced romantic ideologies about wilderness in Western Europe, America and Canada; and how little these ideologies resemble those of Newfoundlanders with whom I spoke. A pragmatic orientation has dominated the use of land in Newfoundland, and is exemplified by the cabins. Section three looks at land usage in Newfoundland communities and how older ways of thinking about land are relevant for commons lands and for cabin building. Ideas about squatters' rights and free use of lands are intertwined with the effects of newer regulations and modernization. The value of lands is a web of old, new, urban and rural ideas, and the sense of belonging and attachment to land. The final section of Chapter Two addresses the origins of the rustic aesthetic and National Park Services rustic architecture styles (so-called "parkitecture") that are often associated with natural environments and structures. Style is often the focus of studies of rustic structures, but neither style nor beauty are at the forefront of the Blue Wilds cabin owners' minds. Their concern is for function above all.

Chapter Three looks at nomenclature for cabin-type structures in different parts of the world as well as in the province (Oliver 2003; Craig Gilborn 2000; Marie-France Boyer 1993; Story, Kirwin and Widdowson 1982). The terms "cottage" and "camp" are widely used for leisure abodes throughout North America (Hailey 2009), but have not displaced "cabin" in Newfoundland and Labrador, where the word is linked to an enduring concept of the informal use of land. In this chapter, a local typology is provided by which cabins are defined by how they are used, where they are located, how they are built, and how their owners think of them. The four types specified are the modern forms of remote

cabin and recreational cabin, and the older forms of bush shelter and tilt. All are considered as inherent cultural objects of meaning linked to use of space (Pocius 1991).

Chapter Four discusses common architectural features of these simple twelve-by-sixteen foot timber frame cabins as explained by the owners/builder and users, such as gable end rooflines, and open or floating foundations, all reflecting impermanence or amenability to change. Building plans are conceptual, building codes optional, and measurements often "eyeballed." Finding solutions to building and functional problems is a creative and individual process. The cabin builders' methods do not involve formal plans or contractors, and public records have scant details. The buildings are literally cognitive schema, so the pertinent data and meaning is conveyed by the interviewees. This chapter shows how the sites for the cabins are selected, and the logistics involved in getting building materials to the sites. Location, environment, climate and seasons all figure into construction methods, as does the use of simple hand tools and modern, but used and scrapped, building materials. Builders use whatever materials they can find. Discourse includes the relationship and orientation of the inner space to the outside and the artefacts of the inner space to each other and usage. The cabins reflect both past and modern building practices, the integrity of informal building skills, and informal systems rooted in self-reliance.

Chapter Five discusses the sources and sorts of materials used in cabin construction, which are sometimes new but more often used and recycled or re-imagined for another purpose. Saving and reusing building materials for different purposes is a longstanding

tradition in Newfoundland. The propensity to make these buildings as inexpensively as possible is not just for thrift because without full time occupation the structures are vulnerable to nature, decay and vandalism. Re-use and building inexpensively is also about using the modern to maintain and experience the traditional.

Chapter Six shifts from material matters to consideration of the cabins as gendered architecture in that they are primarily used by males and therefore reflect a male sense of space. They are connected to an informal, generational and patriarchal body of knowledge in building and wilderness skills, a network of male identity, bonding and camaraderie.

The wilderness continues to be a place of deep meaning, where past traditions and modern life come together in a cohesive whole, as the following chapter will show.

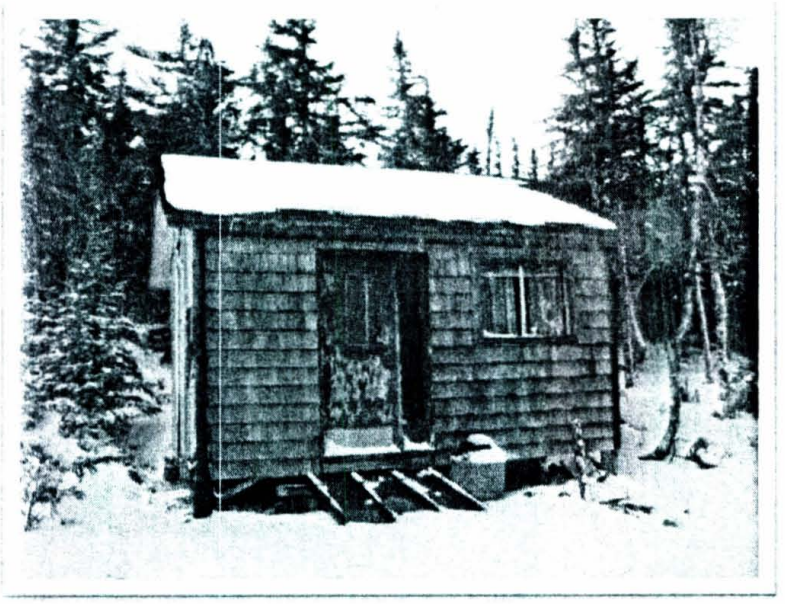

Figure 1 Built in 1983, Abe took possession Fall 1997

Figure 2 Cliff's Cabin built in 1980 became Cliff's in 2005

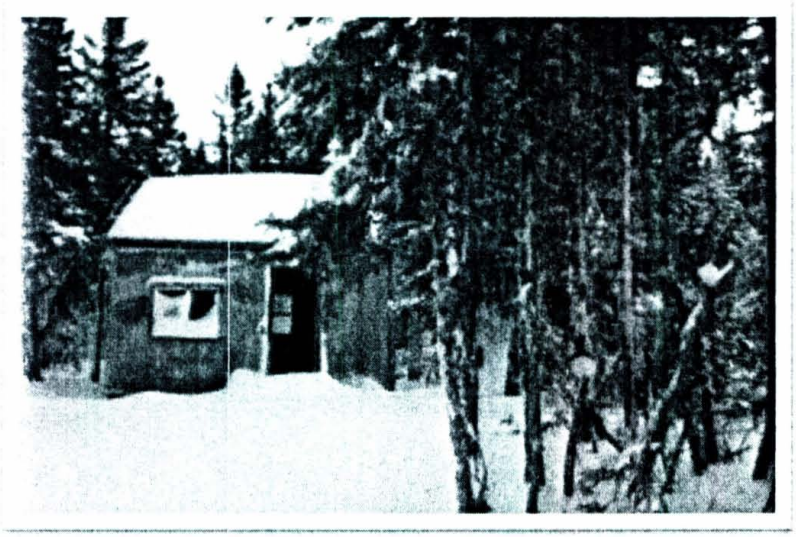

Figure 3 Ed's Cabin built circa 1984

Chapter 2: The Wilderness

2.1 Introduction

Newfoundlanders' attitudes regarding the wilderness as space for leisure and recreation were shaped by the pattern of development, circumstances, environments and histories of the island. As explored in this chapter, local ideas about the wilderness are not likely to be influenced by romantic ideals; rather, local people's wilderness experiences and their approach toward the wilderness are pragmatic. For this reason, local people are often misunderstood by outsiders. The research findings presented here show that a less than romantic stance toward the wilderness is also reflected in cabin culture.

The cabin owners of the Blue Wilds wilderness on the Avalon Peninsula in Newfoundland use their cabins as an escape from the clamour and complexity of their everyday lives and for rejuvenation. The cabins' origins are in a history of dependence on the wilderness for subsistence that was based in a rural way of life, but today people build and use cabins in this wilderness commons mainly for leisure purposes. Their attitude toward the wilderness differs from the culturally-shaped attitudes of other North Americans. These roughly-constructed wilderness cabins have an inconspicuousness that relates to their wilderness environment and reflects the identity of their owners and users.

2.2 The Terrain and Climate of The Blue Wilds Wilderness

To grasp what these cabins are about, it is important to consider the interconnections between wilderness, the cabins and the owners, or simply wilderness and architecture

with the assumption that the existence of cabins means a human presence. The complexity of the Blue Wilds wilderness landscape sites is influenced by the natural physical forms of the terrain and the climate.

This rugged-looking land was shaped by glacial activity (figure 4). Thousands of years ago, glaciers scored, scraped, and scourged this coastal area. Deep depressions were gouged in the land; sharp outcroppings of rocks were exposed; large boulders and isolated deposits of glacial till were left in the landscape. These topographic elements present challenges to those who traverse, use, and build in this wilderness landscape.

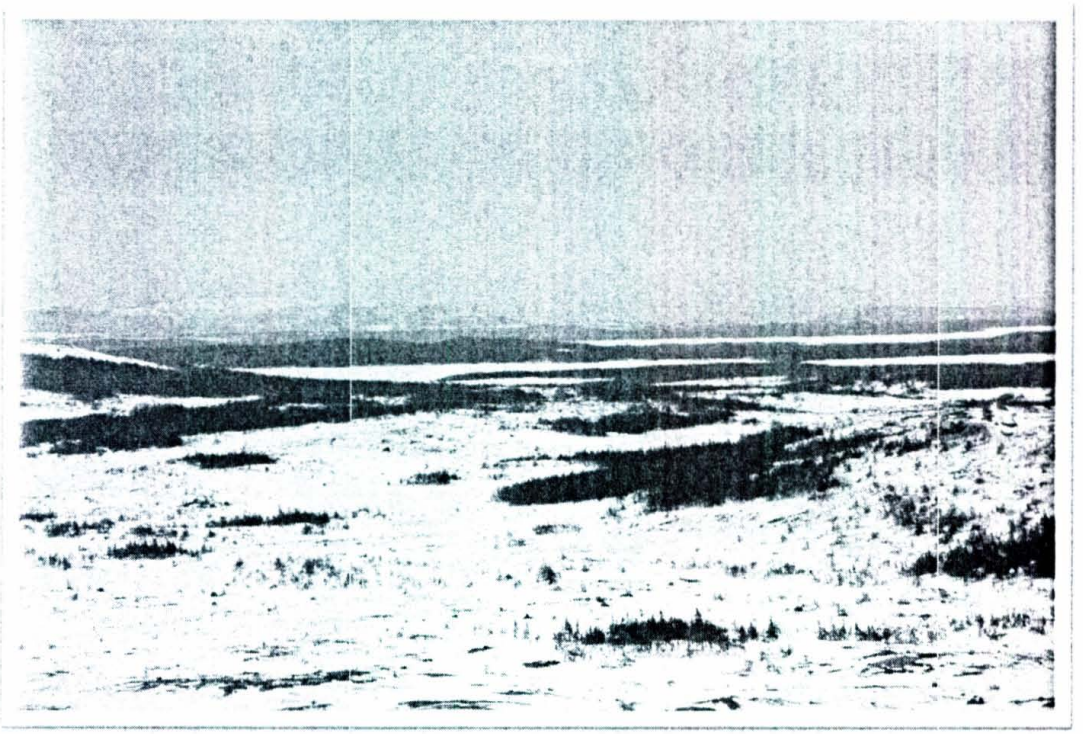

Figure 4 An example of typical Avalon Wilderness Taiga barrens

Some may think of Blue Wilds as unfit or undesirable land or property, even for cabin habitation. This area is inland oceanic and is classified as part of the taiga and a global belt of boreal forest. This rugged wilderness terrain consists of hills, deep muddy bogs and marshes, tree stands, ponds, and rivers. It is dotted with areas of soft, spongy mosses, scrub brush, dense underbrush, and higher open sections of rock and crag. The soils are thin, but, in select areas trees grow where there are significant deposits of glacial till. The tree stands are made up mainly of spruce, fir, larch and birch, which is characteristic of taiga plant populations. This scattered mix of elements--soil, rock, water and vegetation--makes travel difficult, and adds to the challenges encountered by those who move across this terrain. Such factors also affect the transport of building materials and tools, and the size of each cabin's footprint.

Added to the physical features of the Avalon wilderness is the effect of the climate. The maritime climate affects cabin owners' response to the land and how the cabins are built. Abe spoke of the risk and safety issues that climatic conditions can present in this type of terrain; during winter, this area can have snow with blinding ground winds, or dense fogs. The Blue Wilds region has rain, high winds, and harsh weather in any season, and freezing rain and snow in winter with severe wind chill and blizzard conditions. The vast expanse and ground cover of snow continually shifts and changes form during winter, distorting visual references and obscuring the shape of the landscape, thereby making it at times difficult to find one's way. Travelling across this terrain requires practical skills to reduce the risk of injury or death. This scenario in literary works and media is often romanticised, but when it comes to survival a romantic ideal or vision is no substitute for

wilderness skills. This may come as a shock to uninitiated but well-meaning adventurers or writers. For the cabin owners of Blue Wilds, engaging with this landscape is not a romantic adventure but one requiring common sense.

Experience of this wilderness landscape also includes encountering seasonal conditions characteristic of a maritime or a hyper-oceanic climate. The maritime climate of Newfoundland in general, and specifically at Blue Wilds wilderness area, is influenced by the ocean and the area receives year-round precipitation. Hyper-oceanic activity due to the confluence of the warm Gulf Stream and the cold Labrador Current is responsible for the conditions, winter storms and the late arrival of spring.[2] The climate is typically humid, moderate, and changeable; summers are cool and short with overcast conditions. Fog and dampness occurs year round, and the island is known for foul gales, driving rain, and rapid changes in weather (Crump et al, 1982: 22-44). These conditions and the taiga terrain present challenges to those who frequent these areas.

In a sense, the vernacular abodes of Blue Wilds are a reflection of the terrain and climate--both are rough and unrefined. The dwellings are marked by imperfections and rough construction, like the wilderness terrain, and are suited to the tough unpredictable climate. Exposed, bare, basic, and raw are apt descriptors for these buildings. The owners are unconcerned that these shelters do not exhibit refinement--their prime role is protection and a match with the owners' pragmatic attitude toward the wilderness.

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[2] www.env.gov.nl.ca/parks/library/pdf/ecoregions/island_7_eastern_hyper-oceanic-barrens Last accessed May 4, 2008.

2.3 Context of Attitudes Toward Wilderness

Nash identified the development of industrialization, urbanization, and underlying and evolving ideologies as important in shaping attitudes toward the wilderness for North America and Western Europe (1982). Current attitudes toward the wilderness, in the context of North America and the insular context of Newfoundland, have been different in both locales despite connections to the British Isles and Western Europe.[3] Newfoundland's pattern of development was unlike other places, with a subsistence lifestyle persisting well into the twentieth century, and a pragmatic attitude toward the wilderness also remaining somewhat unchanged. This is not well understood in general, and is often overshadowed by the attitudes generated out of the greater North American urban experience.

North America was settled by Western Europeans and the roots of attitudes toward the wilderness in the New World go back to those beginnings. In Europe, prior to the Enlightenment in the 1700s, wilderness was feared and avoided (Marx 2000); in the later Romantic period, it was revered (Nash 1982: 4). Victorians were known to love nature, but this did not necessarily include the wilderness. A negative association with the wilderness was expressed in a number of popular fairytales, for instance, which taught children to fear forests.

In the vastness of the New World frontier of North America, there was no romantic appreciation of the wilderness as it is today (Tuan 1990: 111). The wilderness was an

[3] Despite a focus in this text on ideas evolving from settlement based in European transatlantic migration to North America, it must be remembered that the first inhabitants were First Nations people.

obstacle to conquer and control; there was no thought of protecting it. This was in sharp contrast to the motherland. Cultural geographer Yi-Fu Tuan considered the transatlantic migration from Europe to North America to be one of the largest urban to rural or back-to-nature movements, with Europe as the City and the New World as Nature (1998: 18-19). For settlers in America, in their struggles to build a nation, and to attain independence from Britain, the process of conquering the wilderness became part of national values (Carter 2004: 71-89). The one-room log cabin was linked to this process and became a quintessential symbol of American cultural values.

Through development and industrialization, American society became increasingly urbanized and wild lands became endangered. By the late 1800s ideas about wilderness preservation began to emerge. Tuan refers to romantic views of the wilderness as an urban ideal tied to privilege and wealth (1990: 103). The ideology of the Transcendental Movement in America during 1830-60 and the writings of Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau increased awareness and positive valuation of natural environments, and a fusion of cultural ideas about rugged individualism, self-reliance, and a spiritual belief in nature and wilderness evolved (Loewer 1996:9). A marked shift in cultural attitudes in favour of preserving the wilderness in America was evident with the designation of Yosemite in 1864, and Yellowstone in 1872, the first national parks in the world (Nash 1982:108).

Canada's settlement pattern was patchwork in comparison to the continuous wave of geographical development as it was in America; both were initially vast tracts of

wilderness land, but Canada's smaller population did not threaten wilderness lands on the same scale. Still, in 1890 Canada followed the American model and Banff became Canada's first National Park (Nash 1982: 106-7). Like Yellowstone, it was part of a capitalistic business venture by a railroad company. As Nash notes, "money is the most important reason for preserving nature in most cultures" (1982:344). Ironically, the wilderness was commodified in order to "save" it. With urbanization, a growing middle class, and the labour movement, the idea of "vacations" gained acceptance (Aaron 1999). Parks and camps were marketed to urbanites who had no access to wilderness experiences; they were claimed to quell undesirable effects of urbanization to society, and to fulfill the perceived human need of "getting back to nature." Parks were often mediated or contrived versions of nature.

In Newfoundland, annual visits by Europeans began with the seasonal fisheries in the late 15th and 16th centuries. The island was a colony of Britain and permanent settlement was discouraged. The ships came to harvest fish from spring to fall; typically, only a few people were left behind to overwinter. Those left on the island for the winter cut wood and timbers to build the structures they needed for the fishery, and to live in. Settlement occurred mostly along coastal areas because fishing was the main livelihood, and it was not until after 1811 that land ownership was granted (Hutchings 1967: 372). The residents lived a subsistence lifestyle and demographics show that this was mostly a rural society up until the mid-1970s.

In 1885, tourists were actively sought for the first time in Newfoundland, when the Reid Railroad began to offer hunting trips by train to the newly accessible and unpopulated wilderness interior. The goal was to attract outside interests such as Americans to hunt caribou (Pocius 1994:51). It was felt that this was feasible because there were few remaining wilderness lands for people to enjoy in the U.S. The majority of Newfoundlanders at that time did not understand killing animals for trophies, sport or leisure—for they only killed wild game for food. From the outset of settlement, the residents of the island subsisted on the meagre food sources taken from the land, water and air. Survival was based on availability, which was regulated by seasonal change. The life-giving necessities were shared in common in order to survive—legal ownership, sport, or leisure pursuits were distant considerations.

The land shaped the people of Newfoundland and Labrador, and their way of living and thinking. A common phrase—"the Hungry month of March"-- reflects the scarcity that could occur when it was still winter, too early to grow food and with supplies running out. Killing wild animals for reasons other than subsistence did not make sense in this cultural context. There is so much wilderness land, it is not at risk of disappearing; it is taken for granted, and through a history of necessity, many Newfoundlanders see nature more as a provider than a locus of beauty or leisure.

The preservation of wilderness lands was not a concern in Newfoundland until the mid-twentieth century. Newfoundland joined Canada in 1949; in 1957, Terra Nova National Park became the first national park in Canada's newest province (and the most easterly

national park in Canada). Setting aside land for the preservation of wilderness was part of an initiative to boost the underdeveloped tourist industry (Chafe 1967:583-5). The idea, in other words, was largely due to exoteric influence and ideas of how Newfoundland was to be modernized and improved by federal and provincial governments. In 1958, joint efforts between the provincial and federal governments to create provincial parks had begun, but it was not until 1965, with the completion of the TransCanada Highway across Newfoundland, that these parks were of any interest to locals.[4] Parklands thus were preserved not because wilderness lands were at risk of being lost due to development and industrialization; the island still has an abundance of wilderness lands that are mostly open and accessible to anyone. Designating a national park or provincial park as a preserve did not impress on the psyche of residents the importance of preserving wilderness environments, nor did it represent a shift in attitudes toward the wilderness (as was the case in America). Failure to think of the wilderness as endangered is hard to understand from a modern urban point of view.

There was also no concern in Newfoundland about urbanization causing an "imbalance" whereby people were out of touch with nature or lacking the perceived benefit of that contact. The people of Newfoundland live in close proximity to an abundance of wilderness, and have a cultural foundation steeped in "ruralness." Even the modernization process of resettlement, which took place in 1956 and 1965, did not result in a shift toward an urban mindset. Although people were moved from remote communities to larger rural towns, most of those towns still had populations under 5,000,

[4] In 1995, the provincial government privatized or closed a majority of provincial parks.

and in reality all areas were surrounded by large expanses of unpeopled wilderness. The standard of living changed but it did not mean a reorientation of the rural way of living or thinking. A common proverb testifies to the reality of the rural life in Newfoundland: *"You can take the people out of the bay, but you cannot take the bay out of the people."*

Even Newfoundland urban areas are small by comparison to larger North American cities. And even for those Newfoundlanders who migrate to St. John's, the urban and rural are intertwined. Many still consider themselves, their origins, and their people as "belonging" to a bay or a community rather than the city. Jeff Webb confirms that this identification is a tendency for Newfoundlanders wherever they are in the world.[5]

2.4 Concepts of "Vacation" and Hunting as a Sport

Because of the subsistence lifestyle of rural Newfoundlanders who depended on the seasonal availability of foods and resources, the practice of "taking a vacation" was neither firmly entrenched nor part of the norm, as in the cultures of industrialized nations. The concept of vacations and paid vacations is a more recent development that came about due to industrialization, modernization, urbanization, and improvements in transportation, education and the development of skilled labour (Aaron 1999). In my experience growing up in rural Newfoundland, a vacation was an anomaly. A number of respondents ranging in age from 50 to 90 years old from Trinity Bay, Bonavista Bay,

[5] Jeff Webb covers this idea in both topic areas of "Community" and "Bays" on the Memorial University of Newfoundland website. Last accessed May 13, 2008. www.heritage.nf.ca/society/community.htm

Torbay and the Burin Peninsula confirmed that it was the same in their areas. Some people said that the concept of "vacation" as it is today did not exist because families of the past were too large, there was no expendable time or money for it, and transportation was limited. It was the same for those of modest means and even the few who were well off. People worked hard to make a living from seasonal work; vacations were viewed as frivolous, and leisure activities were minimal. Rather than take a week or two of "vacation" time, people took occasional day trips as a break from their work routines. Picnics, boil-ups, or scoffs: such outings were to places within walking distance of their communities, or a short boat ride away. This was usually a summertime activity, and favourite places were in the woods or at sheltered beaches.

The idea of "sportsmen" is another foreign or imported concept. People of the island did not hunt or fish for sport; sporting activities were introduced to create jobs for residents and to develop the tourism industry. At first, sport hunting and fishing opportunities were designed to attract "wealthy foreigners, and, later, middle class residents" as clients (Pocius 1994: 47-77). This was an indication of the gradual introduction of a market economy into a subsistence way of life, which often creates an imbalance and is met with some resistance. Locals might work for sportsmen (albeit not on a large scale) but they did not participate in such activities themselves until quite recently.

Big game hunting as a sport is an abstract concept for Newfoundland hunters, and relates to how local people think about the wilderness, leisure and recreation. Trophy hunting is a central theme in American outdoor television shows, but Newfoundlanders "are a

different breed of hunter," according to Herman Whalen, a retired local wildlife conservation officer. He says, "Newfoundlanders are meat hunters – not trophy hunters. Trophy hunters are usually American or British tourists." An experienced hunter and guide, Whalen noted, "I have not seen many trophy racks...on the island, more so for moose." In his estimation, for locals the rack is a default; an animal is taken for meat and not if its rack has a prized form. Racks that are seen around are mounted on the exteriors of outbuildings or cabins, on or above doors, and never carefully protected and kept inside. Like the idea of the vacation, trophy hunting for sport was uncommon and associated with visitors.[6] The wilderness, indeed, was a familiar place.

2.5 Land Usage

Sites for cabins have existed in the hinterlands of this island in some form ever since the first settlers arrived. Retreating to cabins in the hinterland was a means of survival; one went either hunting for food, or for shelter from harsh coastal winters (Smith 1987:1-36). The island residents were, for hundreds of years, tied to the land as part of their subsistence lifestyle and were accustomed to free use of "common lands" (crown lands). The modernization process that began in the 1960s has not eradicated the expression and perception of a deep-seated connection between people and the land.

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[6] There were other introduced sports. For example, trophy tuna taking was initiated for wealthy tourists, and rabbit hunting with beagles was a tradition brought to the Avalon area from Britain in the 1930s (Vardy 1967: 364-371; McGrath 2007:7-8). Shooting a rabbit is primarily an activity introduced by the St. John's elite; elsewhere on the island, snaring is used and the sport of shooting rabbits is generally frowned on.

2.6 Attachment to the Land

Researchers of First Nations societies wherein the people make a living from the land often note people's attachment to land. The case is made that it is not so much that the land belongs to the people, but that the people belong to the land. The cabin owners in this study also expressed a strong bond with the land. Cliff–speaking of the out-migration of young people to other provinces to find jobs–said it would be very difficult for him to leave. He can never duplicate this wilderness and his cabin elsewhere. Bob also spoke of his connection to the land and how he harvested trees from this wilderness land to build a house for his family, and his cabin.

In Newfoundland, the identification with a rural home despite living in an urban setting (perhaps hundreds of kilometres away) can be explained by a phenomenon locally referred to as "belonging" (Pocius 1991). People are who they are because of the foods and the resources the land yields to them—they literally owe their existence to the land. There is a feeling that they "belong" to the land, not necessarily that they own it. This sense of belonging is deeply ingrained in the culture; even though most no longer depend solely on the land for living, it is still quite strong and is expressed in language. The word "belong" has a specific use unique to Newfoundland, and it is the most common phrase used to determine a person's place of origin (Story, Kirwin, Widdowson 1982:38-39). In reference to childhood, or ancestral settlement, or region, it is indicated by the phrase "he/she belongs to (a place)"—for example, "Dulcie belongs to St. Jones Within, Trinity Bay." In reality, Dulcie at the age of 26 moved to St. John's to live and has not resided in St. Jones Within since 1944, but the identification persists (in 2012) because her kin are

from St. Jone's Within. Newfoundlanders are more likely to ask someone, "Where do you belong?" than "Where are you from?" (Story, Kirwin, and Widdowson 1982: 38-9). This concept was also prominent in Pocius's research of Calvert, Newfoundland, where the sense of belonging is often synonymous with rural geography (1991).

Settled land in Newfoundland is primarily in coastal regions (Hutchings 1967: 375), and the few inland communities also are within easy reach of the coast. It helps to think of the island as a "hollow island" with a core that is almost all wilderness with populations only along the coastal fringes. In 1954 and 1965, the Newfoundland government started resettlement programs as part of a modernization process (Lane 1967: 564) whereby people living in small remote communities on coastal islands or on isolated stretches of shore were relocated to larger rural centres. This centralization process was not urbanization; those people continued a rural lifestyle, working on the water or in the wilderness, and continued to think of themselves as rural. Many of those who moved to several Newfoundland cities to seek employment still consider themselves, their origins and their people as "belonging" to rural areas. A small core of St. John's residents might be considered "old St. John's," but most have rural roots, or come from elsewhere. The Newfoundland cities thus have a rural quality. In reality, the St. John's and Mount Pearl municipalities combined are the only true city of Newfoundland. Corner Brook, the third largest with a population of 25,000, would be a small town in Ontario or New England. Newfoundland cities and towns are surrounded by large expanses of wilderness—it is never far away. People do appreciate the wilderness, but they tend to take it for granted—

they do not rhapsodize about it, they use it. This is in keeping with Tuan's idea that a romantic viewpoint of the wilderness is an urban ideal (1990: 103).

The general development of attitudes toward the wilderness in North America and the radical exception of Newfoundland is a basic perspective from which to consider how the vernacular architecture of Blue Wilds wilderness cabins is created. The wilderness is considered by many people as virtually an extension of their own backyards (Omohundro1994:279). These cabins are not seaside retreats, but tucked away in secluded places in the woods.

2.7 Unrestricted Land Use

The selection of a cabin site is based in common sense, practicality and usage. Historically, wilderness lands were freely used. The cabins in this study came from a long tradition of free use of commons land, with no levies or licenses involved. Several of the Blue Wilds cabins were initially built without a permit, as were all cabins in Newfoundland and Labrador prior to the enforcement of government regulations in the 1980s.

2.8 People's Perceptions Relating to Land Use

2.8.1 The Commons Wilderness

The wilderness commons are public wild lands that are under the jurisdiction of Crown Lands, and are mostly open to use by all residents. Today the wilderness is essentially a

playground for outdoor recreational activities, and people think of it as an innate part of their freedoms. Certainly, the cabin owners and their friends in this study who frequent the wilderness see the area in this way. To reach their cabins, it takes roughly an hour and a half on foot from their backyards. This wilderness area is patterned within their minds; they have what Pocius might call a "cognitive map" of the place (1991:67). Bob, for example, said that he can never become lost in the neck of the woods where he had his cabin (which is now owned by Cliff). "I know that area as well as I know the back of my hand," he said. It is so familiar to him that in the dark of late evenings, rounding up his beagles after a hunt, he has no problem finding his way back to the cabin. He often travelled to the cabin by snowmobile at night, as well.

2.8.2 Squatters' Rights

Squatters' rights were an integral part of the Crown Lands system of Newfoundland Labrador for centuries. Residents used squatters' rights to claim and use land, and this still affects how they think of land and their informal use of it. Despite the curtailment of these historic rights in the 1980s, the idea of informal use of land persists.

This culture of informal land use is based on the premise that land belongs to people if they work it, or if they build a house or other buildings on it (Pocius 1991). It also means that lands were passed to others by oral agreements or with simple handwritten notes. It was not standard practice in the past to formally register land ownership, especially in rural communities, and few formal land surveys or registered deeds were ever made. In

communities, land systems based on family lands were often referred to as "family rooms" (Faris 1972). Family land typically was subdivided among, and inherited by, the sons of a family. Despite modernization and the fairly recent introduction of municipal councils to most areas, many people still think in terms of squatters' rights, which are linked to the common usage of land and wilderness resources.

The mindset of informal free use of land is the legacy of a past that was influenced by the historical precedent set by squatters' rights (McGrath 2001). The "rights" extend to the use of wilderness land, especially for cabin sites. Building cabins in the wilderness, in the past, was essential for survival. The tradition of not registering land in Newfoundland, even for main residence properties, coincides with a parallel tradition of unlicensed cabins.

2.9 Land Use Regulations

Public lands in Newfoundland Labrador are part of a system of Crown Lands but use of the land has changed over time. People seldom formally registered land even when encouraged by authorities to do so. During this research I encountered many recent instances where families decided to build on family land or sell it, and were horrified to discover that the land that had been in their family for generations was not registered and had no clear title. Cabins and cabin sites had even less precedent in terms of ownership. Government regulations on remote wilderness areas are a fairly recent development, their enforcement even more so. In the past thirty years, improvements in motorization and

technology gradually enabled better means of enforcement. This occurred in conjunction with modernization and the shift toward increased recreational use of these lands, away from subsistence purposes. But the custom of freely using common lands is deeply ingrained in the cultural mindset, and when the government introduced sweeping changes as to how these common lands were to be used, it was a big adjustment for the people.

Pat Cowan was the minister for the Department of Environment and Lands in the early 1980s when the new regulations were introduced. She is frequently faulted as the person responsible for the loss of civil liberties as related to free use of wilderness spaces, as well as the cessation of squatters' rights claims to land after 1977. In the licence contracts for cabins (cottages), the legal wording uses "the minister" in reference to the Lands Department. As minister of that portfolio, Cowan's signature appeared on the contracts as signing authority. Cabin owners signed these contracts in order to receive a Permit to Occupy. Because of the wording in the contracts, Cowan was literally considered as solely responsible for the changes, and was also negatively portrayed in the media for the changes. Cabin owners still attribute blame to Cowan.

2.10 Mixed Feelings about Government Control

Cabin owners have mixed feelings about government strategies to control wilderness Crown Lands. Some think that the regulations are excessive, and nothing more than a cash-cow for the government. Cliff gave an example to support this assertion. If you are caught in a wilderness area where there is restricted all terrain vehicle (ATV) use, he

said, "They [officials] never take possession of your bike [ATV]; they just give a ticket and you pay a fine, and you can be ticketed over and over again." To him paying a fine is easy, but if officials take your bike, that is hard. It looks to him as if a fine is just a money grab for the government, for it is not a deterrent.

2.11 Desire to Hang onto the Past

Many cabin owners would like to keep the older (pre-regulation) traditions because they feel that the regulations changed forever the nature of the cabins. Start-up fees and the levy for a permit to occupy have imposed a monetary value on the cabins that did not exist before. The owners were proud of the fact that they made these buildings out of next to nothing (costwise), but the permits and fees introduce an element of worth that did not exist before. The cabins are no longer likely to change ownership for the traditional one dollar fee. Even worse, Cliff fears that with the new restrictions, the wilderness cabins will disappear completely, as would all the traditions associated with them, which harken back to a past way of life. The loss of the cabins would also mean the loss of a survival shelter, which is there for anyone to use. The presence of these cabins can mean the difference between life and death for anyone stranded in the wilderness and in dire straits. The doors of these cabins are unlocked, and firewood and a few food supplies are left there for that reason. Abe spoke of several incidents–documented in the journal kept in the cabin–when his cabin saved lives. The people, he said, had been "bizwacked in the wilderness" during blizzards that lasted several days. Cliff also expressed a concern that

cabins will disappear, even the ones that are already there, because it is harder to get materials in to fix them up due to newer controls.

2.12 A "Natural Part of Modernization"

If some owners resist aspects of newer regulations, on the one hand, they see them as part of the transition process of modernization. They realize that because of the proliferation of snowmobiles and ATVs, the wilderness is open to greater numbers of people. In this sense, modernization and technology have totally changed the nature of these spaces and necessitated regulation. Anyone can enter these areas, whether they know them or not. Some tend to misunderstand the original meaning of sharing of cabins with others and strangers, and do not have the same respect for these buildings that users did in the past. People with no rural living experience, or of a younger generation, may not understand how the sharing ethic works, or the unwritten rules of acceptable cabin conduct.

2.13 Contemporary Regulations and Permits

2.13.1 Permits to Occupy Crown Lands

Permits to occupy for two of the cabins in this study were obtained after receiving warnings, a fine and an option to purchase a permit to occupy from the government ministry. One cabin was built later than the others, and was licensed from the outset. Permissions to use such sites are not permanent land grants but only permits that must be renewed every five years, with a yearly rental fee of one hundred dollars. No land survey

is required but the initial fee for application processing and document preparation is three hundred and fifteen dollars payable to the provincial Department of Environment and Conservation, along with the first yearly rental fee. Approval for lots is given only to permanent residents of the province, and only in the absence of land or environmental issues.

2.13.2 Transferring Permits and Ownership

Pre-existing permits can be signed over by permit holders to other family members, or to individuals as agreed on between both parties, with a payment of one dollar to the original owner to make it legally binding. For example, Cliff acquired his cabin from a close family friend for a dollar as part of an informal agreement to a transfer of ownership; Abe paid a fee to the original owner/builder based on an estimate of value of the building materials used in the structure.

2.13.3 Other Regulations

Regulations, as set out in the Permit to Occupy for a remote cottage or cabin, are indicated in "Schedule B" and "Schedule C" of a Licence for Occupancy of Crown Land agreement.[7] "Schedule C" deals with safety regulations, most of which cabin owners practise regardless of regulations. In other words, for most owners, managing the cabin is

[7] www.env.gov.nl.ca/env/lands/cla/recreational_cottage-licences.html. This website outlines some of the requirements of an agreement, last referenced Sept 16, 2005. A copy of schedule B and C of an agreement are available at the Department of Lands, Environment and Conservation; these schedules have more details regarding requirements.

a matter of everyday know-how, which can vary slightly between individuals. For example, without exception all cabin owners know of the importance of a spark arrestor cap for fire prevention and their cabin chimneys are equipped with some form of spark arrestor; this is also a "Schedule C" safety requirement. It is likely the owners have spark arrestors on their chimneys at home, and it was a given to do the same for their cabin. Regardless of government regulations, the owners know what has to be done to operate a wood burning system for a cabin; they put heat deflectors underneath a stove and on any wall near a stove. Heat deflectors are simple pieces of sheet metal that every cabin seems to have. Abe explained that if you grew up without rural living experience you may not know how a wood stove is used; a guest at his cabin, for instance, was unfamiliar with wood stoves and sustained a life-threatening scald because of it. Abe further explained that the skills needed to live in outport Newfoundland before modernization are the same skills used to live in a cabin, so for him going to the cabin is a chance to relive things as they were years ago.

Government does not specify restrictions for lot sizes or the footprint of remote cabins other than the cabin has to be at least one hundred and fifty feet from other cabins, and the setback has to be more than a kilometre radius from a major roadway and at least one hundred feet from a body of water. A cabin cannot be close to a water reservoir or an ecologically sensitive area. Fire regulations recommend that brush be cut from cabin perimeters for twenty feet. The cabin owners in this study seem vague about exact regulations but they practice practical fire safety as a matter of course (Truni 2002:19).

2.14 Cabin Owners' Knowledge and Respect of Regulations

When asked about required government regulations, cabin owners in this study seemed to focus on a few issues, and were unsure about others. Abe emphasized the fire safety requirements. He created a firebreak by clearing trees and brush from around his cabin. He said the brush requires maintenance because it grows back. Ed had a similar clearing around his cabin. Cliff, however, has cleared brush from around the cabin, but it is surrounded by thirty-foot trees; the lower limbs have been removed, but several trees are literally right next to the cabin. Some of the owners thought a fire extinguisher might be a good thing, but an extinguisher cannot survive corrosion or freezing in damp environments, and is susceptible to theft. Cliff spoke of the garbage issue, saying that they take out whatever they bring in. A handmade sign posted inside his cabin door states, "USE BUT DO NOT ABUSE. DO NOT LEAVE GARBAGE. THANK YOU, OWNERS." It is a message to visitors, and shows that the issue of garbage is one of Cliff's concerns. Large items that are not combustible get placed out around the perimeter of the cabin to be removed at a later date. A burnt-out stove is the most common item of refuse typically seen at cabin sites. Like Cliff, Abe spoke of taking out what you bring in, but at times he will bury certain garbage.

Other than those few items there was some ambiguity about regulations. The owners follow the traditional rule of unlocked cabin doors but are not sure if it is a specified government requirement. They know that if the cabin door is locked, it is an open invitation to break-and-entry, vandalism or torching of the cabin. The previous owner of Abe's cabin, for example, had it all locked up and fortified with steel bars like Fort Knox;

2.15.2 Destruction of Cabins by Government

There is a prominent belief amongst cabin owners, and in the local population in general, that government resorts to arson when they want to terminate certain cabins, or if there are unresolved issues with cabin owners. Abe feels that to destroy an unlicenced cabin is not what the authorities want; he thinks that they would prefer that someone take it over and keep it in good stead. But many state that they know for a fact that the authorities do burn down cabins. Bob was adamant that it happens without a doubt, that rather than dismantle a building it is burnt. Bob received a warning, posted in his cabin, when his cabin was unlicensed. He had to pay a $200 fine and was given a deadline to acquire a permit to occupy. It is difficult to prove or disprove that "authorities" burn cabins for several reasons. Burning leaves no evidence; owners have no recourse because unlicensed cabins are illegal; and most individuals do not have the finances for a legal challenge in any case. The resulting loss of property probably raises bitter resentment, and is a sensitive topic. The fact that government employees are thought to burn unlicensed cabins implies that this is either done on their own accord–which is risky–or that it is authorized by higher officials. These are intriguing questions that remain unanswered, unchallenged and perhaps best to leave alone. But the topic does circulate in the narratives of cabin culture.

2.15.3 Destruction of Cabins by Others (Visitors)

Vandalism or arson are complicated matters, and of course are not limited to cabins but are found throughout the province. Sometimes a cabin is burnt because of unsettled

disputes between individuals. Disputes that cabin owners have with anyone can put their cabins at risk because some resort to revenge. Bob attributes some vandalism to the modern problem of illegal drug use, and its spread even to wilderness areas. Abe believes that most people visiting these spaces are of like mind and well-intentioned, and that only a few are "bad apples." Cliff said that vandalism can actually be traditional in nature. Both in the past and today, for instance, people sometimes mistakenly assume that a cabin is abandoned will take informal ownership and do repairs on another man's cabin and use it. (Gilborn has noted this also happens in Vermont: 2000). Cliff said that in such situations it is best to be neutral or diplomatic. For example, if you go to your cabin and discover that someone has arrived there ahead of you for a weekend, it is best to be tactful and say that you came by to check on "your" cabin. Hopefully, they take the hint and leave without confrontation, for creating conflict can result in putting the building at risk.

2.16 Cabins and Evolving Wilderness Ideals

Wilderness ideals of Blue Wilds cabin owners are a world apart from the romanticization, commodification, and aestheticization that are characteristically linked to wilderness ideologies and leisure abodes in many Western cultures. Romantic concepts include "roughing it" in nature, and are also expressed in styles of leisure architecture (Downing 2002[1850]; Frankeberger and Garrison 2002; Gilborn 2000; Tolles 2000; Throop 1995). The cabins of Blue Wilds have an authentic quality of ruggedness about them—they are not of a formal style. They show that, rather than the popularized forms of what is

considered ideal regarding the wilderness, there exist other diverse viewpoints.[8] For example, Paul Malo noted that elite visitors to the Adirondacks romanticized the area, unlike farmers of the area who never admire the view (foreword Gilborn 2000: xix; Miller 1967: 152-23). Similarly, in the movie, *Local Hero,* set in a rural Scottish fishing village that was pressured by an oil company, Christopher Rozycki's character made the same point when he said, "You can't eat scenery" (1983). The tradition of the Blue Wilds cabins is to be, plain, simple, inexpensive, un-ornate, informal, rough, rugged, sometimes handmade, utilitarian, and designed by their builders, never by architect, or contractor.

North American nations share West European roots and were nations of frontier people.[9] In Newfoundland, however, the log cabin was not as significant as it was for North America or Europe. There are log cabins in St. Georges in western Newfoundland, for instance, but Pocius points out that they were built to appeal to American tourists, and were not part of local vernacular building traditions (1994:61). The first built forms of Newfoundland were primitive one-room structures similar to tilts.[10] The one-room remote wilderness cabins of Blue Wilds are not log structures, and they are extremely rough compared to even the simplest cottages elsewhere, especially with regard to having nothing more than basic amenities, and with their reuse of discarded or scrounged materials. They are about utility, not elegance. They are likely to be made from manufactured building materials that were outmoded and discarded when newer building

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[8] In this sense, rural or wilderness geography has not been romanticized or glorified.
[9] North America was already occupied by First Nations people when the Western Europeans arrived to start settlement.
[10] *Dictionary of Newfoundland English*, 567-8.

materials became available for modern construction. They are built from the waste generated by the building industry, in other words.

The Blue Wilds cabin owners have what can best be described as an unassuming, unselfconscious, utilitarian aesthetic. They never heard of Henry David Thoreau or his philosophies of nature or his woodland cabin retreat or defiance of authorities.[11] Their approach is experience-based. They are not environmentalist nature lovers and they do not have political agendas. This does not mean they do not appreciate nature or wilderness beauty—but it is not something they normally verbalize. They simply like how it feels to be in these places, and feel rooted to these spaces. They know that their forefathers needed the wilderness to live and were self-sufficient in building. They now access the wilderness based on needs of contemporary life, which affects how the cabins look, are used, and built. Thus, these cabins are spaces where local traditions and modern ideas converge.

It is assumed that the first settlers, more than 400 years ago, built temporary structures or living spaces along the coast to pursue a livelihood in fishing. These would have been minimal one-room constructions, which became the basic building unit for this part of the New World (Pocius 1992:77). These units were built to support a subsistence way of life, based in utility. Such cabin-like buildings were often considered as temporary shelters and were referred to as tilts, or livyers' tilts (Prowse 2002: 598-599; Budgell 1995:13-30; O'Dea 1985:55-64). Out of necessity, the first settlers spent most of the year on the coast

[11] Thoreau was known for an act of civil disobedience in which he refused to pay a local tax.

to be close to their fishing areas, and in the winter there was a tradition of transhumance (Smith1987:1-36).[12] This meant that people went inland to live in winter-houses for the winter. These structures were built in wooded areas to provide protection from exposure to the elements; they were also close to firewood and a place to hunt. This pattern suggests that from the beginning of settlement, people were accustomed to freely building and hunting without restriction.

According to Darrin McGrath, there *were* laws regulating the taking of wildlife, but they were not enforced, especially for the poor (2001). Prior to the twentieth century, the population of the island was less than 200,000 (in an area of 43,359 square miles), which meant that it was difficult to enforce game laws or land use in any case. Any attempts to enforce laws and to control the use of remote wilderness commons would have been futile. McGrath suggested that these historical factors have affected the liberal or even anarchic attitudes that some people today have toward the wilderness (2001).

2.17 Conclusion

In the context of the Blue Wilds wilderness, the rough terrain and climate are reflected in the utilitarian cabins and their owners' pragmatic attitude toward the wilderness. Nash suggests that the development of industrialization, urbanization and romantic ideologies were pivotal in changing views of the wilderness (1982). In Newfoundland, a practical view of the wilderness was shaped by a past subsistence lifestyle based on informal use

[12] Smith identified the use of tilts and inland winter retreats as incomplete gaps in the study of local history. He notes many fragmentary references to tilts and transhumance in historical letters.

of land and sharing traditions in communities that extended to free use of commons lands and wilderness. Those deep-seated traditions and connections to the land will not disappear overnight, even though governmental regulations, permits and fees are now a reality for cabin builders and owners. Ironically, these cabins, once used for work and now for leisure, have become unattainable by those of lesser means. Some people are afraid that regulations will result in the disappearance of these remote cabins, along with their role of emergency shelters, and the opportunities they provide to practice traditions, skills and informal knowledge associated with the wilderness and building. For the cabin owners, the wilderness and these cabins are part of who they are as a people.

Chapter 3: Cabin Types and Spaces

3.1 Introduction

Leisure abodes such as cabins or cottages exist in many cultures around the world. In general, the term "cabin" suggests a simple structure with minimal amenities, while "cottage" denotes full services and high style. Elaborate leisure dwellings tend to receive more attention by academe. Cabin structures are likely to be considered too "ordinary" and thus are often overlooked as research topics. For study purposes, these built forms need to be categorized in utilizable forms. Across different cultures, the multiple nomenclatures for these buildings create difficulty in classification. This chapter examines the types of cabins in Newfoundland and the ways they are used and imagined, and it delineates structures typical to the Blue Wilds wilderness on the Avalon Peninsula.

Some challenges in categorizing cabin types are: these structures have no written plans and design; regulations and mandatory building codes are minimal; and the buildings overlap in similarities but have many variables. Their categorization thus demands a multifaceted approach. Development of a typology for these modest structures is needed to broaden our understanding of them. The approach to such ordinary buildings, according to Carter and Cromley, is best served by looking at their common forms in a given place and time (2005:13-14). Inquiry into traditions, relationships, function and utility is also important (Carter and Cromley 2005:16; Solomon 2003; Williams 1991). These considerations move beyond high-style buildings to acknowledge that "all buildings are planned and designed" however rudimentary they may appear (Carter and Cromley 2005). To identify the defining features and to grasp how these buildings are

used, I will explore their origins, form, typical uses, and how they are thought of by their owners and others today.

3.2 Cabins Across Cultures

Marie-France Boyer, in *Cabin Fever: Sheds and Shelters, Huts and Hideaways* (1993), provides a cross-section of examples of cabins in the United Kingdom, France, Holland, Finland, Africa, Haiti, Spain, Brazil, Mexico, Siberia, Canada, and the United States. The architect Charlie Hailey uses the term "camp" to encompass all such buildings and spaces (2009). Indeed, most cultures have their own version of the cabin or camp. In Scotland, they are referred to as bothies or sheilings; in Australia, there are holiday shacks, miners' cottages, huts, humpies, wurlies, and gunyas (Newton 2003). In New Zealand, they have bachs, an older term for bachelor pads; in Africa, the banga, a common building just for males; in Switzerland, the chalet and the trulli; in France, the *cabane* and the *cabanon*; and in anglophone North America, cabins, camps, lodges, cottages, lean-tos, and bivouacs (Gilborn 2000). Although some of these buildings are considered unimportant, their prevalence and the diversity in the nomenclature indicate they are part of the fabric of everyday life for many people, and therefore worthy of study.

One way to comprehend the most basic of such structural forms is by materials. Some of these are temporary shelters made from bush materials occurring naturally in the environment, and have only enough space to accommodate one person. Bush materials for such shelters are boulders, rocks, boughs, bark, trees, mud, moss, grass and snow. There are structures made from or incorporating waste industrial materials (Rhoads 2000;

King 2007). Some cabin creators adapt railway box cars, sea containers, vans, school buses, and Quonset huts. Then there are traditional and contemporary cabins made from common materials like lumber, nails, stone and masonry, often put to use for a second or more time.

3.3 Terms Used to Refer to Cabins

3.3.1 Canada

Although the word "cabin" can be a blanket term to refer to wilderness recreational structures or shelters, the word does suggest a specific type of structure. The usage of the word "cottage" in Newfoundland and Labrador since 1900s is rather limited or an anomaly compared to mainland Canada (Selwood 2006:207-18). In his research on backwoods cabins in Nova Scotia, the journalist Bud Inglis primarily uses the term cabin, but also camp, lodge, shanty, and shack (1990). Other Canadian words for "cabins" include the French "cabane" and "chalet," the latter an un-insulated cottage-like summer home. A "bivouac" is a temporary or an emergency shelter made from evergreens, less structured than a bough lean-to (Bradford Angier 2001:181).

Many of these structures are used as bases from which to pursue recreational activities such as hiking, snowshoeing, snowmobiling, angling, birding, ice fishing, trapping, or hunting. The structure need not be fully finished, or built with the finest of manufactured materials to be a satisfactory place to get out of the weather, get warm, sit, sleep, cook, eat, dry clothes, and hang clothing and sporting gear. These recreational spaces are

labeled not only by usage but by how their users and builders think of them, which influences how they are built.

3.3.2 The Newfoundland and Labrador Provincial Government's Terms for Cabins

"Cottage" is the official wording used by the government of Newfoundland and Labrador to refer to what local residents know as "cabins." The provincial government lists all types of personal-use wilderness buildings as either "remote cottages" or "recreational cottages." The choice of the term "cottage" was part of the restructuring and implementation of new regulatory measures for mandatory licensing introduced in the early 1980s. (If cabins are within the jurisdiction of municipal boundaries, additional building permits must be attained from the municipality, as well.) It is likely that the provincial government implemented the wording to be congruent with the terminology used in other Canadian provinces, and as a means to simplify their system of categorization by having a single term to cover all types of leisure abodes. But the official categories and the designation of "cottage" for "cabin" have not become part of the local lexicon.

The two terminologies—"cottage" versus "cabin"—reflect the tension (discussed in Chapter Two) that often exists between cabin owners and government regulators. Whereas the government saw licensing and enforcement as an opportunity to protect the wilderness, create jobs and economic ventures, local people saw infringement on traditional freedoms and a threat to local culture. As Glassie observed, however, political

and economic forces inevitably come to bear on such cultural spaces and is part of continuity and change (1999: 242-44).

3.3.3 Terms Used by Cabin Owners of the Avalon Peninsula

From interviews and conversations with cabin builders, owners and users in this area of the Avalon, it was clear that they consistently refer to their leisure abodes as "cabins," or sometimes "shacks," but never "cottages." Even if a building is listed as a "recreational cottage" the owner prefers the term "cabin." The occasional exception to this usage is by people from urban areas who own fully-serviced recreational homes in rural areas, and refer to them as "cottages" or "summer homes." These homes are often no different from a regular house. It is perhaps for this reason that the term "cottage" is considered, in cabin culture, as far too elaborate for cabins. Conversely, when owners call their cabins "shacks," it is as a term of endearment in reference to their simplicity. Written on the outside of Ed's cabin, for example, are the words "Da Shack." In Abe's cabin, a welcome sign invites the visitor to "Come in, Sit down and Enjoy our Shack." The designation of "shack" can also mean a rundown cabin or a lesser form of cabin, while "some shack" is an ironic exaggeration meaning an elaborate cottage or summer home.

According to Abe, today's cabins are not as roughly built as yesterday's round stick cabins, and are a bit finer than trappers' camps (a round stick cabin is made from indigenous materials rather than sawn board). These structures continue to provide only basic amenities as in the past but the shift in purpose changes the use of the inner spaces,

and now relates directly to the owners' ideas of leisurely pursuits or pastimes. The sites remain basic and rough because they are not easy to reach, and the owners like to keep it that way.

Names for forms of shelters or cabins on the Avalon Peninsula can include bough wiffens (a type of lean-to), tilts, round stick cabins or camps, or simply cabins, camps or shacks. These names go back to the past but mark a cultural shift from livelihood to recreational use. The Blue Wilds area historically had basic round stick camps and trappers' cabins because trapping was a viable commercial operation pursued by locals, and hunting for food was a necessity. Now the owners of Blue Wilds cabins only occasionally fish and ice-fish, or hunt for rabbits, ducks, geese and moose. The main use of their cabins is for seasonal recreation and as an escape from the pressures of modern living.

3.4 History of Cabins

The history of cabins in Newfoundland goes back to the first accommodations constructed for the colonial settlement. Permanent settlement began around the last quarter of the 1700s, and wood was the primary building material (Ennals and Holdsworth 1998: 80). The local economy was based on a mercantile system--a cashless barter system. People were beholden to the merchants for a living, residents lived a subsistence lifestyle, work was seasonal, and the people relied heavily on the land for their sustenance. Subsistence shelters were one-room structures providing basic amenities. Many people were perpetually poor, and this was reflected by their simple

housing. Livyers' tilts were some of the first built forms; these consist of upright-pole or plank walls, a crude form of piquet (or picket) (O'Dea 1982: 55-64; Ennals and Holdsworth 1998: 61, 80, 127; Tibbet's 1968: 14-17). Temporary bough shelters in the wilderness were also part of hunting and gathering activities. Economic change began with completion of a railroad in 1895; modernization and an improved standard of living slowly evolved and accelerated in the 1950s. The tilts and cabins of the past were affiliated with fishing, trapping, lumber camps, and mining (Kitchen 2005; Ashton 1985; Budgell 1995:13-30). Now they are cultural icons for Newfoundland and Labrador, but they are still important in everyday life where their primary purpose is for recreation.

3.4.1 Why a Cabin is Not Like a Home

A cabin is a living space that is not like a house or home, but one can still feel at home in a cabin. It is not as complex or costly to build as a primary residence, and it is not as demanding, as it does not require as much work or upkeep. A cabin space is less refined than a house. Owners often quote the adage "less is more," for cabins function as an escape to simpler living where they can unburden their minds. A cabin is not treated like a home; people do not remove their footwear when entering their cabins, for instance, as they would do at home or in someone else's home. There is in general less "fuss" at the cabin. Culturally, however, people clearly distinguish "cabins" from "homes" as full-time living spaces. For example, in a small community on the northeast coast, there was a man nicknamed "Monkey Jack," a recluse who lived in a tiny shack on the periphery of the community. Like Paulie Hall in Szwed's research in western Newfoundland, he was

thought of as "odd" because he lived in a cabin instead of having a house like everyone else (Glassie, Ives, Szwed 1970:152-3).[13] Jack's use of the cabin as a permanent home was in sharp contrast to other residents' ideas of what constitutes a home. Abe, Bob, Cliff, and Ed--unlike Jack--see their cabins as temporary places of stay during leisure time. Jack did not have a house to escape from; for him, there was no distinction between a home and cabin. The concept of a cabin versus a home is culturally prescribed, and embedded in a person's psyche.

3.5 Different Secondary Shelters of the Avalon Peninsula

All cabin types of the Avalon Peninsula are simple, small, single or two chambered buildings with one entrance. The foundations and rafters are often exposed, and the spaces and floors are multi-purpose areas providing only basic amenities. They are typically roughly and inexpensively built using scrounged building materials by do-it-yourself (DIY) builders who learned to build through informal generational training and who engage in creative reuse of materials to make what they need.[14] The reuse and reclaiming of building materials is more concerned with being economical than with recycling for the sake of conservation and the environment.

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[13] Paulie Hall lived in the Codroy Valley. Both Jack and Paulie built and lived in small cabin-like shelters that were away from everyone else in their communities.

[14] Do-it-yourself or DIY is a widely used term that refers to those who do repairs, build and modify things themselves rather than pay a tradesperson to do such work. Through these methods individuals learn their skills informally rather than from formalized schools of training. In Newfoundland, DIY skills are learned through generational training from other men, and males traditionally self-built their own homes using DIY.

Remote cabins are unpretentious rustic bowers, and their sense of roughness imparts a feeling of freedom like the wilderness space that surrounds them. They are created from the minds of the builders whose personal choices play into a sense of informality. The hints of individuality in these spaces are different for each category. The more access a building has to luxuries, usually, the further removed it is from the wilderness.

The government lists the two cabin types as "remote cottage" and "recreational cottage," but in keeping with general usage and for the sake of clarity, I will refer to the structures as "remote cabin" and "recreational cabin."

3.5.1 The Remote Cabin: For Leisure, Puttering, Hunting, and Subsistence

The cabins of the Avalon Peninsula are not usually identified by their locale, or by the materials from which they are constructed, or even by their season of usage, as were tilts in the past (Story, Kirwin and Widdowson 1982: 567-8). Each cabin is identified by the first, last, or first and last names of its owner. Abe's cabin, for example, is called "Abe's Cabin," "King's Cabin," or "Abe King's Cabin." The government designation for this type of cabin is a Remote Cottage that has a Permit to Occupy issued to Abe King; there is a number on the permit that must be clearly displayed in a prominent place. Owners cover their permits in plastic jackets to protect them from the damp environment.

Omohundro indicated that changing use of the wilderness from a source of self-sufficiency to a reserve for hunting and recreation was a major cultural shift (1994:279). Certainly, it is a shift observable in Newfoundland, where cabin owners spend their spare

time "tinkering" or "puttering" around their cabins, doing odd jobs, and occasionally hunting and fishing for enjoyment.

These buildings are classed as "remote" because they are not accessible by road. Like the earliest shelters, they maintain the one-room inner compartment (living space) in a frame structure that has remained approximately 12x16 feet. They typically have gabled ends, one of the simplest built forms. There are no indoor conveniences like plumbing, running water, or electrical service. The cabins are heated with firewood, and have outhouses at the back of each lot. To the owners, utility and function take priority over making these spaces aesthetically pleasing. The layout normally includes minimal furniture; a small stove; firewood; and a sink workspace. The objects are all placed around the edges, leaving an open space at the centre of the room (figure 5, 6 and 7 floor plans).

The doors of the remote cabins are never locked, and the owners say this is part of the cultural tradition related to wilderness and survival. This is how it has always been, and is in keeping with a traditional "bush code" of sharing and a courtesy to other campers, and it is a necessary survival tactic. This open-door policy is a logical extension of tilts and bush shelters.

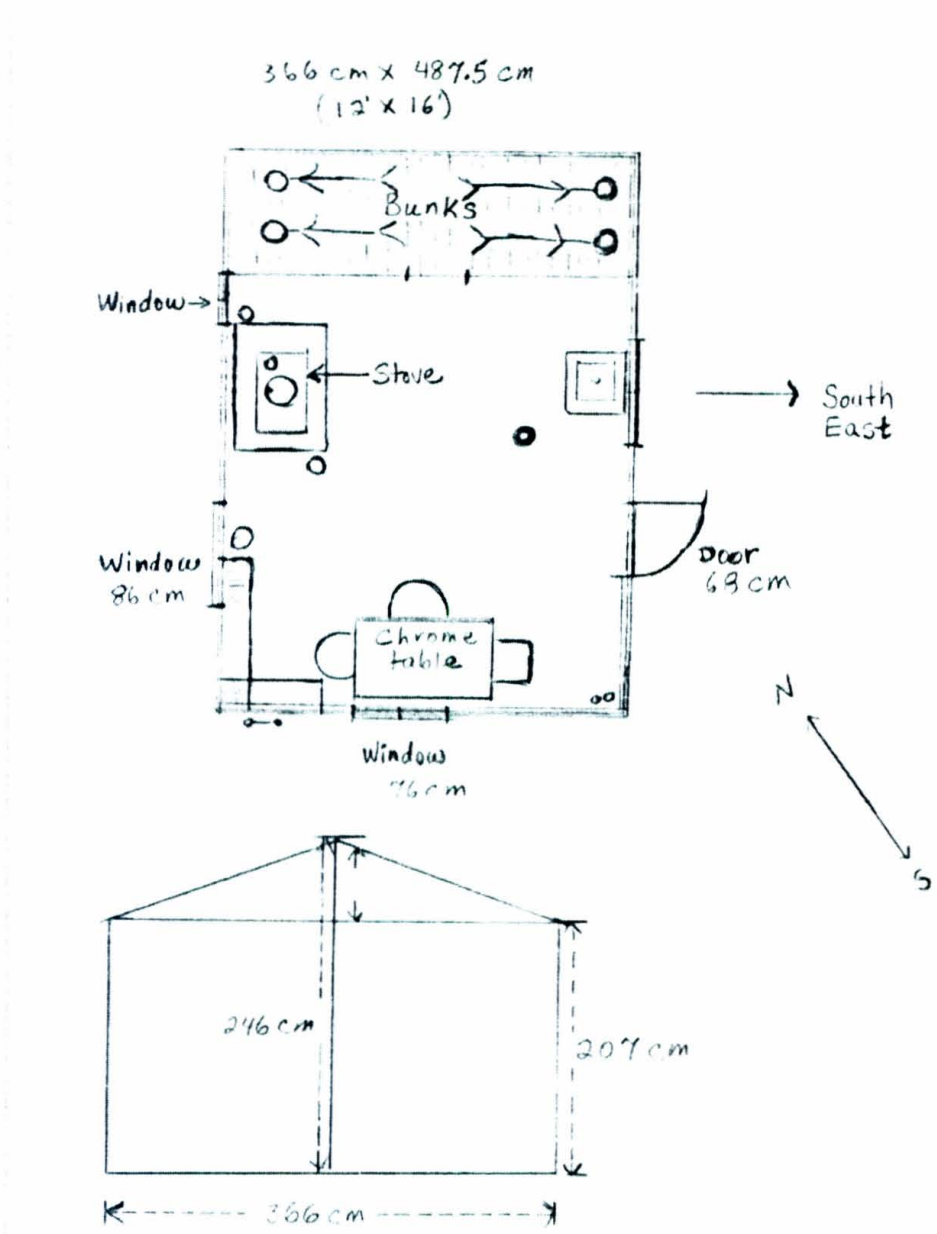

Figure 5 Cliff's Cabin - floor plan

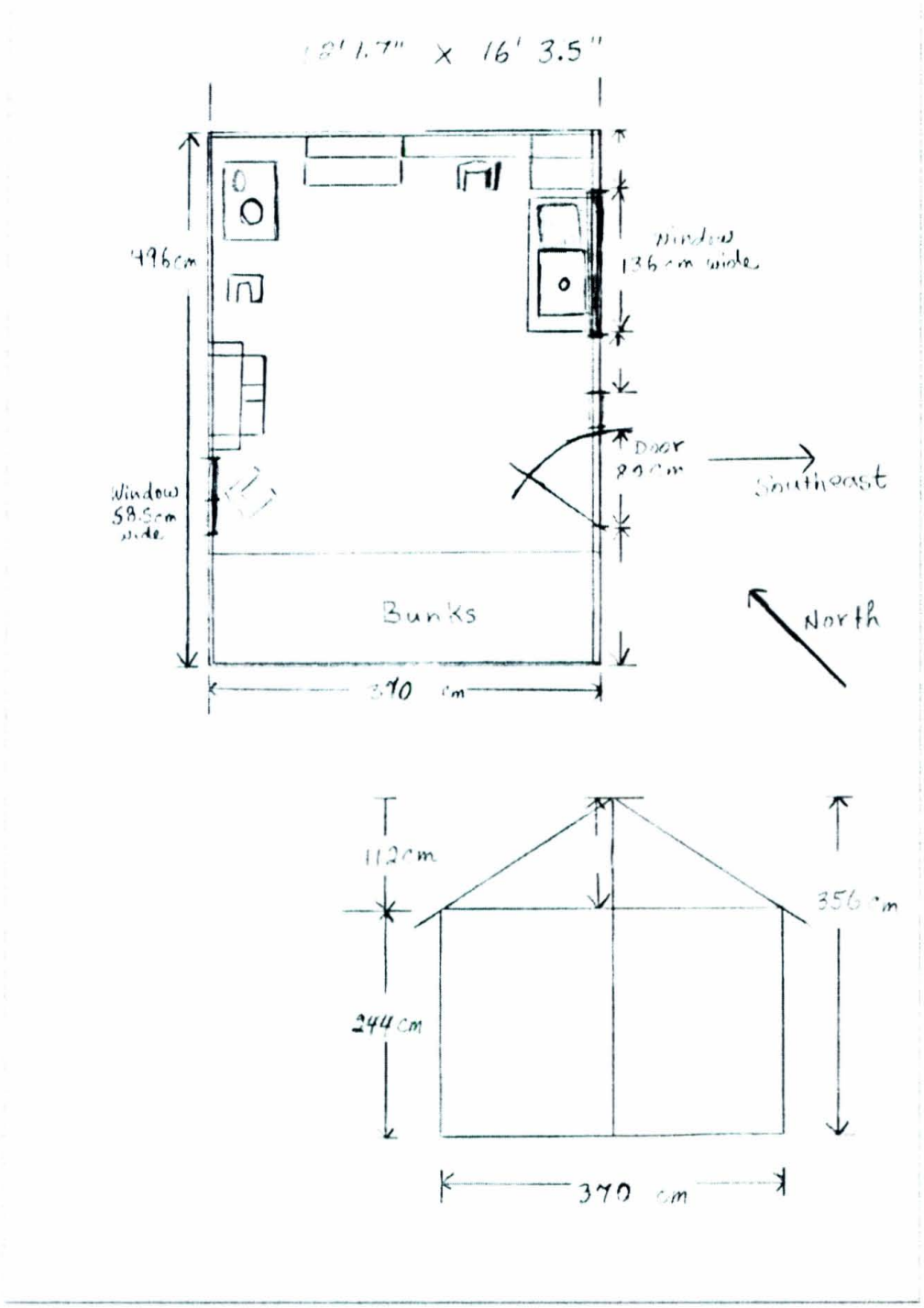

Figure 6 Abe's Cabin - floor plan

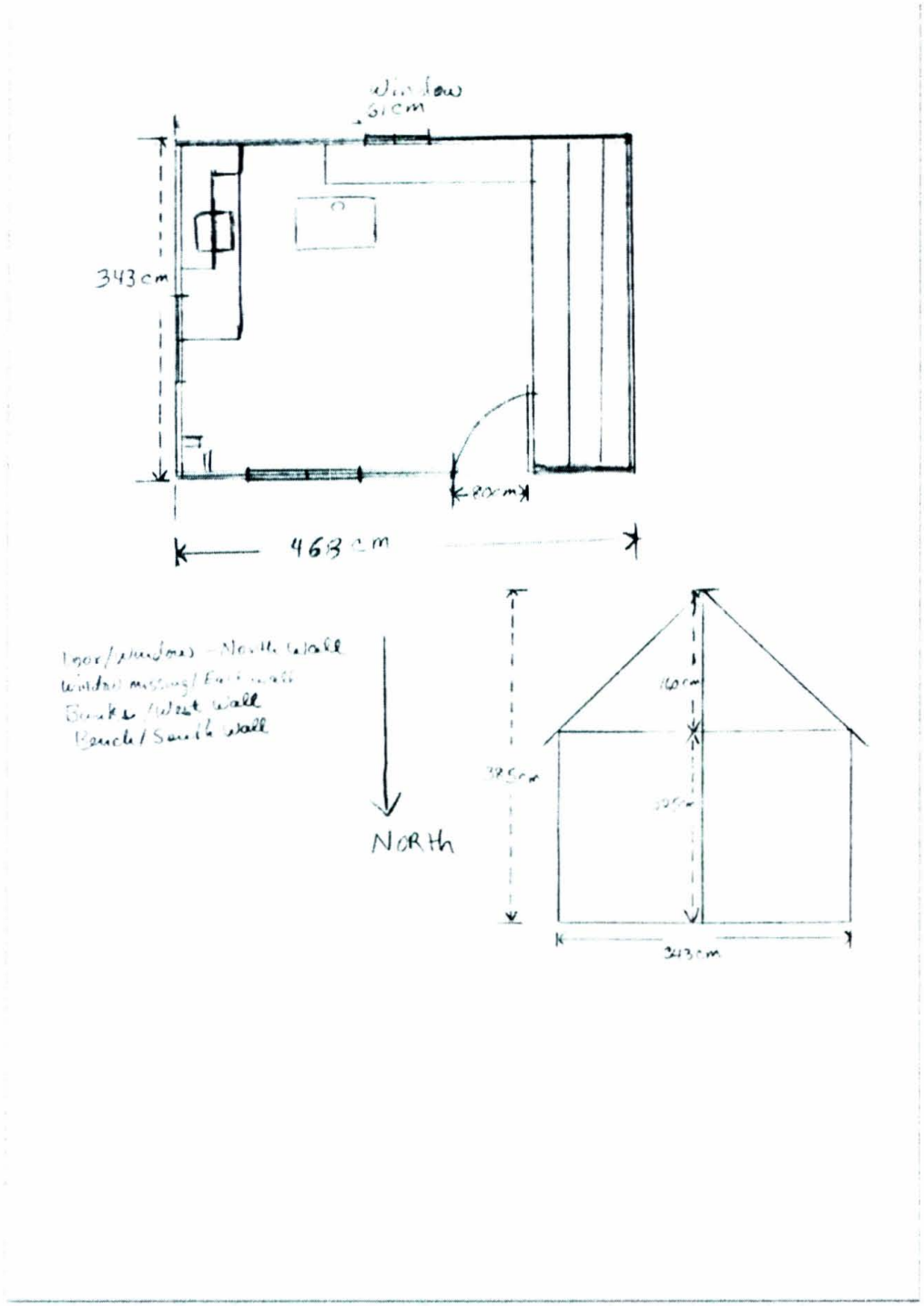

Figure 7 Ed's Cabin - floor plan

The range of forms for cabins depends on availability of materials, the purpose of the structure, and the skills and choices of the builders. Cabin builders are not bound by restrictions normally associated with formal building, materials and techniques. In Ed's cabin, for example, the floor joists run the length of the cabin instead of the width. It was probably built this way because when it was erected they did not have the correct length of timbers on hand for the centre beams or sills to form the foundation. Abe says that the original owner of his cabin took a gamble and did not build the floor as well as it could have been done. Because these buildings are "just cabins," some builders are less particular than they would be about building a house.

There seem to be two streams of remote cabins, according to my observations. Their differences are reflected in their defining features, and the way people order wilderness landscapes. People who live nearby, or use it frequently, engage in the "cognitive mapping" Pocius identified in his research of Calvert (1991:67).[15] Locations in the "woods" are familiar and closer to communities, while those in the "country" are less familiar and deep in wilderness areas. I know these terms from growing up in northeastern Newfoundland. The first designation of "remote cabin" refers to those that are deep in the country, much more than the one-mile from roads, neighbouring cabins and specified in the government definition. The doors of these cabins are never locked and nothing of value is left inside. The second designation refers to remote cabins that are in the woods meaning they are technically in wilderness areas, but still not far from

[15] Gerald Pocius, in his research in Calvert, found that locals made the same distinction between "woods" and "country." The "woods" was closer to a community, but "in the country" was deep into wilderness areas (Pocius 1991: 67).

communities. With the latter type of remote cabin, an access road lies just outside the one mile specification required by government to be classed as a remote cabin. This type is hardly "remote" in the local sense of the word. Unlike cabins in the country, these "remote" cabins in the woods are usually in a group of cabins a stone's throw away from each other; they have more conveniences; their doors tend to be locked to protect valuables inside. This variant, rather than being truly remote, is more akin to recreational cabins.

The Blue Wilds cabin owners are experienced in building timber-framed buildings as well as creative projects (such as converting industrial materials into cabins). The cabins are thought of literally as "buildings" because they have all the basic elements of buildings including floors, walls, roofs, windows and doors. There is little concern with what a cabin "should be," although Ed's idea of a "real cabin" is a larger log cabin[16]–not part of local tradition (Pocius 1994). Ed explained that it is too costly and nearly impossible to build a log cabin in the Blue Wilds area. Heavy equipment is needed to bring in heavy logs, and that can do a lot of damage to the wilderness environment. Considering the austerity of most true remote cabins, respondents allowed that they are not for everyone; some people, they explain, prefer a cabin with more comforts–a recreational cabin, in other words.

[16] Ed's vision of a real log cabin was based on a version he visited elsewhere.

3.5.2 The Recreational Cabin: For Leisure and Puttering

The inspiration for cabins comes from wilderness camps or cabin-like dwellings of the past and present. The idea of basic comforts and a slower pace is appealing to many, but for some, remote cabins are too basic; some prefer the recreational cabin with generator or electrical service and road access. There are two basic variants of recreational cabin in the Avalon area. The first is a "recreational cabin" accessible by road, with just a few more conveniences than a remote cabin. The second variant of recreational cabin has more conveniences than the first type. The recreational cabin is still a modest structure, but slightly larger than a remote cabin and with at least two rooms; and it is more finished. The second type has almost as many amenities as a normal home. Such places have more than two rooms, are accessible by road and by car, have more amenities and services, and are more finished in appearance.

Recreational cabins are subject to more regulations than remote cabins. They must follow stricter building codes, require land surveys, and they are saleable real estate properties like houses. Unlike remote cabins, recreational cabins are often in close proximity to each other, in groupings or clusters like rural communities. The second variant of recreational cabin may justifiably be called a cottage or a leisure home, being much more upscale than a basic recreational cabin. Often they are distinguished from a main residence only in that they are used specifically for leisure or holiday time rather than as a full-time residence.

Even when full service is available, a cabin owner's ideas of what constitutes an "escape" determine whether or not to avail of technology. The owners of remote cabins think that a recreational cabin (or cottage) is not really an escape because it requires upkeep and

expense. Bob's wife Edith noted that a road-accessible recreational cabin means double the workload, which equals less relaxation, and is like having two homes.

Around the recreational cabin the grounds are manicured, requiring regular maintenance and grooming. The exterior elevations are fully finished. Space is partitioned and compartmentalized inside. More than one room goes beyond the bounds of basic amenities, and includes more creature comforts. Jane Wright defines "cottages" in generalized terms, as small gable-end structures found anywhere along the eastern seaboard (1984:142). But, again, it is not a term much used in Newfoundland.

3.5.3 The Tilt: For Hunting and Subsistence

Once integral to the seasonal subsistence livelihood of the province (Story, Kirwin and Widdowson 1982: 567-8), the stick or bough bower form is infrequently used today. One of the earliest descriptions of tilts is from 1612, in an entry in the Willoughby papers; this entry shows that the use of tilts began as early as settlement years in Newfoundland. According to Story, Kirwin and Widdowson, the identifying markers of tilt types were determined by locale, structural materials and season of utilization; the examples cited were bay, bog, bough, sod, studden, summer and winter (1982: 567).[17] "Livyers' tilts" were also used for frontier housing before the establishment of permanent housing structures for year-round dwellers. A "livyer" was a permanent settler on coastal areas of Newfoundland, as opposed to a migratory fisherman from England. The term also refers to a

[17] Story, Kirwin and Widdowson cite the Willoughby Papers 1676 and Prowse 1895:206).

permanent settler on the coast of Labrador, as opposed to a migratory fisherman from Newfoundland (Prowse 2002:598; Story, Kirwin and Widdowson 1982:567-8).

A tilt of upright studs was more substantial, and a step up from a bough tilt in that its form was more structured—it was more like a timber-frame building. It was designed for longer stays, and provided more protection from the weather than a lean-to or wiffen. Tilts were as small as eight by ten feet, up to twelve by fourteen feet. They were typically rectangular or square with four corner posts, and four walls made with upright trees or logs with the butt ends secured in the ground. They normally had a simple gable roof. These one-room structures had dirt floors or floors made of logs laid in contact with the soil. The layout normally included a fire pit with a vent in the roof or a makeshift stove with a stovepipe, and bunks. Such studded tilts were equipped with a door entry in one of the wall elevations on ground level, and usually had no other piercing aside from the smoke hole in the roof. (People remember tilts as very smoky places; "to smoke like a tilt" still refers to heavy cigarette smokers). Materials found in the immediate area were used for construction, such as moss, bark, longers, starrigans, and sticks (Story, Kirwin and Widdowson 1982: 313, 529). (A "stick" refers to a piece of wood that can range in size from a massive log or plank to a slender strap of wood. "Longers" or "starrigans" are long thin spruce trees or saplings of varying sizes typically used for fish flakes, stages and fencing. Abe uses the terms "starrigan" and "round-stick" interchangeably.) Tilts were normally accessed on foot. Trappers' tilts were located deep in the country at strategic points along trapping lines, and the fishermen's tilts were on the coastline.

Today, tilts are much more common in Labrador (Budgell, 1995:13-30) and on the island's Northern Peninsula than elsewhere in the province. They are now used mostly for recreation rather than for occupational purposes–out of choice rather than out of necessity. They are cultural icons of the past, especially for Labrador. Their past ubiquity shows in the number of place names: Tilting on Fogo Island; Tilt Cove in Notre Dame Bay West; Old Tilt in Trinity Bay; and recently, the Tilt Room Bakery on Portugal Cove Road, St. John's. Despite the fact that tilts are now less common, all respondents in this research referred to them in conversation. They suggested that it is instinctive to want to build a cabin in the woods. Small boys seem to have a natural passion for it (Angier 1952:14); Maynard remarked that interest in tilt-building occurs at an early age, especially in rural settings and in imitation of adults. Such cabins are built from scrap materials, and may be referred as a shack or tilt indicating it is rather impermanent and "only a shadow of a real cabin" (Maynard 1997: 8-10). Sometimes inspiration for cabins may come from tilts or wilderness structures a person has used in the past. Abe said that before his present cabin, he built a small round stick camp close to this same area, which he used until 1997 for hunting. It was little more than a shelter to crawl into to get out of the weather, dry off, eat and sleep. As a certified wilderness guide, he knows how to build bush shelters.

3.5.4 The Bush Shelter: For Hunting and Survival

A bush shelter is a small temporary structure that can be quickly assembled. It is often merely a basic floor, walls, roof, bed and hearth. The floor is the bare ground; walls are

typically one-sided enclosures fashioned from boughs; the roof is a canopy of boughs, and a layer of boughs on the ground is the bed. An open fire in front of the shelter functions as the stove. Bush shelters are ephemeral structures erected for short periods of stay for one person, and provide only enough protection for someone to stay alive in the wilderness. They are made from whatever elements are at hand, using simple tools like a bush knife and hatchet. They are seldom connected to established pathways. This type of shelter leaves little human imprint on the landscape.

Bush shelters are variously called "lean-tos," "bough wiffens" or "wiffets", "bough houses," or "bough tilts" (Story, Kirwin and Widdowson 1982:59). In local parlance, a bough tilt is slightly larger and more substantial than a lean-to or wiffen; it takes a little more time to build, and is intended for longer stays. The bough tilt is enclosed on all sides, with entry gained through the roof. Inside is a bough bed on the dirt floor and a fire pit vented through a hole in the roof. It is little more than a hole to crawl into to eat and sleep.[18] Bough shelters were a part of working life in the past. My father told me stories about eating and sleeping in "bough wiffets" along his trapline in northeastern Newfoundland, and his rough tilt like cabin. Today they might be part of a hunting and fishing "adventure" expedition. They are also survival shelters in emergencies for those who become lost or stranded in the wilderness.

A remote wilderness cabin is not a bush shelter, tilt, or recreational cottage; it is somewhere between those extremes, and it also bridges present and past built forms. Like

[18] This information comes from conversations with Jesse and Benjamin Lush, brothers who pursued trapping as part of their living until the mid-1960s in northeastern Newfoundland.

its predecessors, the bough shelters and tilts, the remote cabin is a one-cell structure with only basic amenities (although it does often have an outhouse); but it is made with lightweight timber framing and modern building materials.

3.6 Conclusion

Abe, Bob, Cliff and Ed are aware of the roots of their cabins in the tilts of the past; they prize their simplicity and inaccessibility. Yet they also see the wilderness as an extension of their backyards; their cabins are literally sited in what is for them a playground. They keep the skills and ethos of self-sufficiency of the past alive, however, in building, inhabiting, and sharing their cabins. Simple on the surface, the remote cabins are nevertheless meaningful cultural objects of personal and cultural significance.

Chapter 4: Construction and Form of Blue Wilds Cabin Architecture

4.1 Introduction

The construction and placement of Blue Wilds cabins speak volumes about their creators' minds and the structures themselves. Consideration of these remote cabins as vernacular architecture is based on construction and form, or how they are put together and used. According to Carter and Cromley, no matter how simple buildings may be, they are best understood as particular to a certain place in a certain time, products of culture which are connected to a building community (2005:18, 45). The hallmarks of vernacular architecture studies have long been documentation of buildings and sites by careful measuring and use of government records. Henry Glassie's work has expanded the approach to include "mind and meaning" (Carter and Herman 1991), a consideration of how people "think a building" in order to create "a more human history" of buildings (1975: 8, 17, 21). Thomas Hubka stresses the relationship of indoor and outdoor spaces (1985), an important element in this study. In addition to information from fieldwork, the story of these cabins is taken from conversations and interviews with the builders and users, following the examples set by Nancy Solomon (1992), Gerald Pocius (1991) and Michael Ann Williams (1991). The interviewees' stories, in combination with data collected from the structures, the details of the surroundings and the commons area, leads to a fuller script of their history and culture.

These secluded buildings were built without blueprints and until recently no public record was made of them. Even now, public records require only freehand sketches of the intended sites, not land surveys or blueprints. The decision to build on selected sites

shows that owners know the immediate area and the surrounding wilderness. My research shows that these structures reflect past and modern building practices, and were built using informal systems of sharing, reciprocity and social connections.

Blue Wilds cabin owners are unconcerned about how their cabins look. The primary role of their one-room structures is shelter during recreational pursuits. Individuals vary in their approach to building, but all the structures are built economically using undressed lumber and material left over from other buildings or construction projects. Basic hand tools are used as there is no source of electricity. The lack of a road limits materials to what can be brought in on small recreational vehicles. Construction also depends on favourable seasonal conditions,

Since building codes are not required, there is great freedom as to how a cabin can be built. Its appearance is determined by the builder's skill, decisions, and the materials he has at hand. The cabins nevertheless exhibit common traits in the exterior of the architecture, especially in the foundations, roofline and body. The interiors also share features of an authentic and unselfconscious aesthetic, devoid of intent to create any kind of style. Cabin architecture reflects fiscal restraint in building materials and furnishings, inside and out.

4.2 Construction

Cabins are built in a traditional manner and in the easiest way possible by keeping the design simple. Abe pointed out that this environment is no place for expensive power or

battery tools. Gas generators are bulky, heavy and difficult to transport, and cannot be left on the site lest they be stolen. (Abe said that the previous owner of his cabin had installed extra locks on his cabin and left valuable things there; thieves cut a hole through the corner of a wall and stole everything of value. Abe did not understand why someone would lock the cabin, which is counter to the traditional code of access.) Simple dependable hand tools are used: handsaw, hammer, square, tape measure, plumb line, carpenter's pencil, axe and a bucksaw for rough cutting. Cliff still has a hammer, handsaw, square and level, bucksaw, and axe at his cabin. As John I. Rempel noted, "the only tools needed to build ...are a saw, a carpenter's square, a hammer, and lots of nails" (1967:118).

Bob said that cabin owners use less precise techniques than they do in the construction of a house. "Eyeballing," for instance (visual estimate) is used to level or square things up.[19] Building with rough lumber is easier because a piece of 2x4 is truly two inches by four inches, whereas a piece of dressed 2x4 is actually 1 ½ inches x 3 ½ inches and requires adjustment. Cabin construction is one area where traditional folk building methods remain. The same methods are seldom used for modern homes due to building code standards and newer technology.

Winter is the ideal time to carry bulky building materials to cabin sites, because the build-up of snow and frozen bodies of water create temporarily usable "roads" for snowmobiles. A snowmobile with sled is the main way materials are brought in; in other

[19] Charles E. Martin notes that the eyeballing technique is typical for folk building in the Appalachian region (1984: 21).

seasons, ATVs with trailers are used. Abe says that ATVs use is only permissible on established trails, however, and the trails of this are rough footpaths ill-suited to hauling heavy materials. Before mechanization, the usual way of access was on foot or by horse and slide in the winter. Weather conditions in winter also affect when construction and repairs can occur.

4.3 Planning the Construction of the Sited Cabin

4.3.1 Planning and Blueprints

Cabin or building plans are concepts within the minds of the men, cognitive rather than physical plans. Coming from generations of builders, they do not need a blueprint to build a rough basic shell consisting of a foundation, four walls and a roof.

4.3.2 Informal Guidelines

Cabin builders used methods and forms that have usually been learned informally and practiced in communities where it was the norm to build one's own house. According to master carpenter Garland Elsworth, the principles any Newfoundland builder likely absorbed were to build in the easiest way possible; look at what other people did; use trial and error; use free materials; and let the purpose of the building determine its quality.[20]

The amount and sizes of lumber needed, as well as the nails and their size, depends on the owners' idea of what is adequate. They know the limitations of the materials—for

[20] Interviewed March 30, 2010.

instance, that too many nails in a piece of lumber or too large a nail into slighter boards will weaken the strength of the wood. They know that 3½" nails are used for 2x4 or 2x3 lumber (rough or dressed), and that 1" board takes 2" nails. Bob said that a basic rule of thumb is to space studs 16" on centre. For nailing walls to the floor, 3½" nails are generally used, although some prefer 4" nails to ensure a sturdier hold. Judging how many pounds of nails are needed to build a cabin is also by guess-estimate (usually about fifteen pounds) but builders always bring more than they need. The reliance on personal choice and individual judgement instils a sense that the building is uniquely their own.

When asked how they build cabins, it was sometimes awkward for the men to articulate exactly how the plans originated in their minds. They do not usually talk about it--it is just something they know, and do. (Glassie also noticed that traditional builders do not easily explain their methods: 1975 17, 21). Also, they do not think in metric measurements, which have been used by the building industry in Canada since the early 1970s, but in Imperial measurements of inches and feet.

4.3.3 Footprint of Cabins

Clearing a site is done without the aid of heavy equipment. An axe, bucksaw or chainsaw is used to fell trees and to remove underbrush. Small rocks are moved if necessary, but larger items that cannot be moved are built around. Cliff said, for example, that when clearing for a foundation, small tree stumps or rocks are left in place. Even in traditional

house building, it was common practice to fit foundations around large boulders (Mellin 2003:50-51).

The basic footprint of the cabins in this study is 12 x 16 feet, but one-room cabins like these vary in size from 10 x 12 to 12 x 14.[21] The cabin's footprint and its position and orientation on the site, are based on what the builder thinks is an appropriate size, what is in the landscape, and where the trail enters the site.

4.4 Foundations

In building cabins, the builders freely adjust and play with forms. It is a matter of "making do" with easily available materials and resources in a spirit of self-sufficiency.

One common feature of these cabins is an on-grade or floating foundation. This means that there is an open-air gap between the ground and the building, and the posts or shores are visible. This aboveground foundation is typically used for small outbuildings—it is easy and inexpensive to build, and are considered to be impermanent (Truini 2002: 29-30).

The open or unenclosed foundation is part of the immediate visual presentation of the cabins but it is purely utilitarian; usually odds and ends of building material are stored in the space. Older traditional homes in rural Newfoundland often had open foundations,

[21] A frame building size of 15x16 feet interior space was a pattern used by settlers throughout North America, according to Rempel (1967:13-15). Rempel also notes that it is understood that Swedes introduced the log cabin with a horizontal log form to North America, whereas one-room frame and timber house was a traditionally English plan.

usually enclosed with vertical boards ("cat skirts" or "foundation skirts") to keep animals out. Today home foundations are permanent concrete forms, especially since the 1960s when people began to use the services of the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC).[22] Martin indicated that open foundations were common to folk architecture in the Appalachians, where they provided ventilation in hot summer weather (1984). In the Blue Wilds, the gaps serve to vent and control the dampness of the environment, thereby decreasing rot to the structure.

4.4.1 Posts and Shores

The foundations for Abe's, Cliff's and Ed's cabins do not follow strict standards– modifications and substitutions abound. The wooden posts or shores of Abe's cabin, for instance, are made from utility poles, a plain post and a post with its bark left intact. Abe explained how he felt it was necessary to improve the stability of this structure in several ways. The foundations had two problems: the original builder had put the posts in direct contact with the ground, and he did not stagger the floor joists. So to reduce the risk of rot, Abe dug beneath the posts that were accessible, and for improved drainage put in fieldstones gathered from the area. (Using fieldstones for foundations is a traditional method used for outbuildings: Glassie1975; MacKinnon 2002; Hubka 1984:140). To reinforce the foundation and floor, he nailed braces or spans from the posts to different

[22] Prior to the advent of CMHC, the majority of homes in Newfoundland were built without incurring a mortgage, and homeowners often had no legal title to their land. For a mortgage, CMHC required a legal land deed rather than traditional ways of owning land. The resulting cultural change reflected in the process of home ownership was part of overall modernization.

parts of the foundations where possible. This shoring is visible on some of the exterior posts as well as underneath the building (figures 8, 9 and 10). Abe commented that with his changes, "the cabin should last another thirty years."

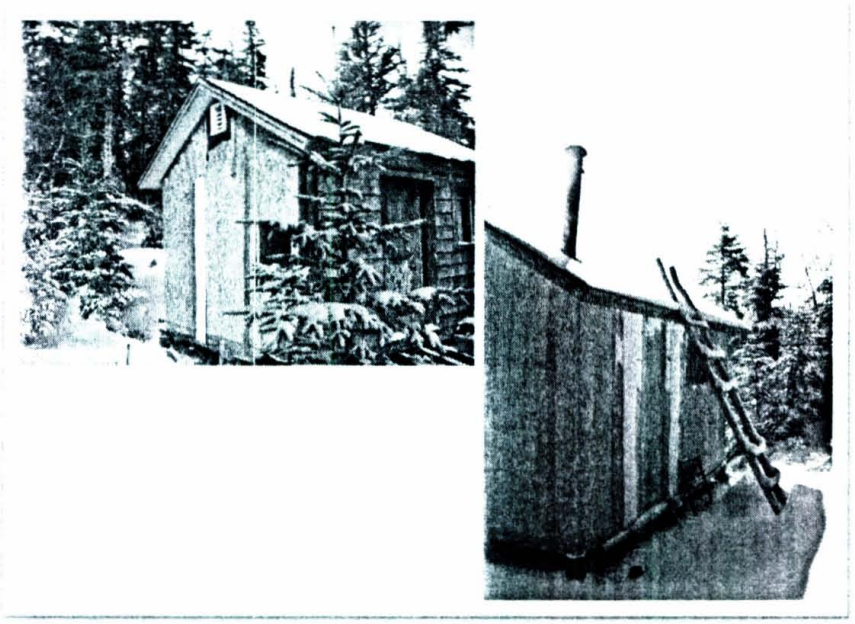

Figure 8 Abe's Cabin Exterior

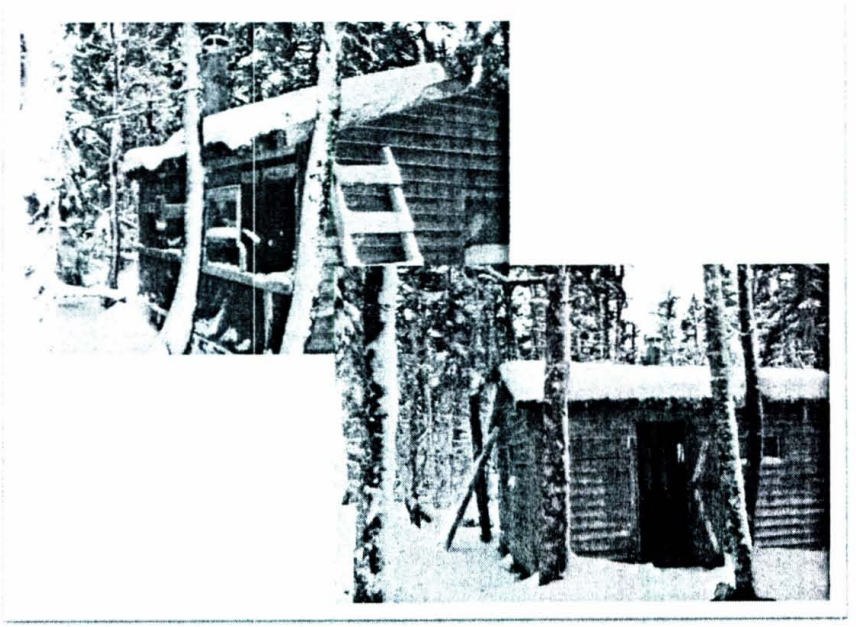

Figure 9 Cliff's Cabin Exterior

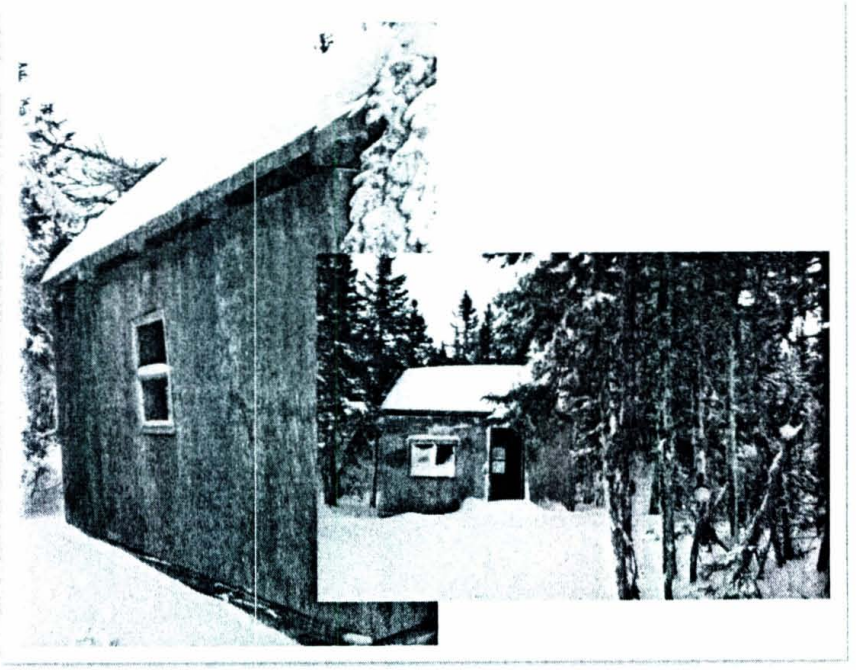

Figure 10 Exterior faces of Ed's Cabin

4.4.2 Cement

It is not a common method, but Cliff's cabin is shored up with cinder blocks (or concrete blocks, as the men call them). Bob said that the blocks had been lying around his shed, and he brought them in by ATV and trailer (before ATV use was restricted in the area). The benefit of the blocks is that they are reasonably level, easy to get, readymade, and portable. In all likelihood, they will outlast the wood in the structure.

4.4.3 Stump-and-Stick

Only part of Cliff's foundation has concrete block supports; the rest has "stump and stick," a more traditional remote cabin application. Stump-and-stick refers to the use of trees that stand on the building footprint. The limbs are removed and the trees are cut at a level so that the remaining stump becomes a foundation post; the tree is then dropped in place for a ground sill. Stumps considered unusable, or not in the right alignment to be used are simply cut as close to the ground as possible. This expedient method recognizes the ephemeral nature of the cabin.

4.5 Floor Joists

Unlike the foundations in the other cabins, in Ed's cabin the floor joists are perpendicular rather than parallel to the gable end, and the main floor beam and stringers are parallel to the gable end (figure 11). In other words, the joists run the length of the building, and the main stringers the width. A close look at the ends of the joists reveals that they are of

varying widths, as are the spaces between them. I discussed the implications of this form with several builders, who said it was unconventional but unlikely to compromise the strength of the structure due to its small size. Garland Elsworth said that true to cabin culture, the material was adapted to fit. Probably the wood was not long enough to do otherwise–in other words, it was built that way due to the constraints of the materials.

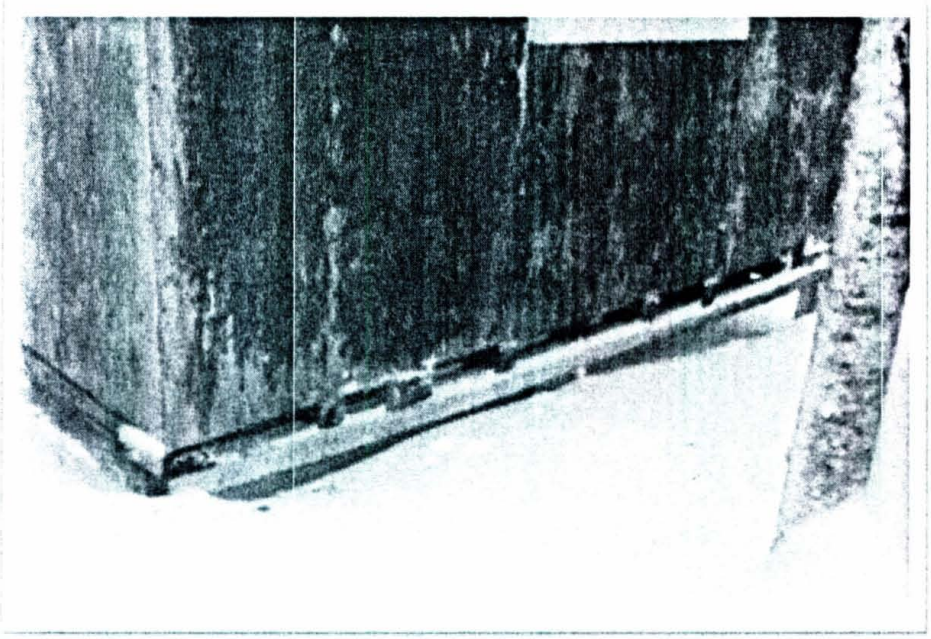

Figure 11 The floor joists of Ed's cabin are in the gable end.

4.6 Roof and Trusses

These cabins all have gable roofs. The pitch, however, reflects individual choice. Builders determine the pitch of the roof visually, as they do the foundations. The main concern is that the roof be steep enough to allow water to run off, bear the weight of snow, and resist wind pressure.

The shed roof and the gable are the simplest roof forms to build, and the ones most often used for cabins. The gable end is common to most of North America, and also in the domestic architecture of Atlantic Canada. Because of its predominance in the region and its simple form, it is not surprising the gable roof is the preferred form for Blue Wilds cabins.

The roof slopes of Abe's, Cliff's, and Ed's cabins vary: Abe's has a medium slope (a pitch of 7.5"/12" or a 32% slope), Cliff's a very shallow slope (3"/12" or a 14% slope), and Ed's a steep slope (10.5"/12" or a 41.2% slope.)[23] A roof pitch depends on the required durability as determined by the builder, and the materials on site. As to appearance, the goal is to *not* attract attention—it is desirable to literally keep a low profile.

Abe is the second owner of his cabin. He discovered it when he was tracking a moose; it was run down and the roof was on the verge of collapse due to weaknesses in the truss construction. In Abe's opinion, it was not solidly built. He took possession through an agreement with the owner and the government department responsible. He reinforced the roof (which has a ridgepole construction) by attaching extra bracing to the trusses. He likes a steep-pitch roof and was pleased with the angle of pitch and the fourteen-inch eaves. He says that significant overhangs protect the upper half of the exposed aspenite exterior walls from rot and water damage. (Aspenite is the trade name, often used as a generic term, for panels made from compressed wood fibres.) Abe was aware that steep

[23] The pitch is calculated by dividing the measurement of the rise in the gable by the run and multiplying that by 12. This information and table of pitch equivalent to degrees is available online. http://roofgenius.com/roof-pitch-degrees, Last accessed June 1, 2008.

roofs have visual appeal, but that was not a factor in this case. His concern was more about the roof's strength. He said that if he were building a cabin, he would pay more attention to the structure. But Bob said that the original builder was an experienced builder, as was all his family. He may have built that way because he was "just" building a cabin, or for unknown reasons or constraints.

Cliff is the second owner of his cabin. His father and his father's best friends originally owned it jointly. According to the permit to occupy, there is only one owner, but unofficially this cabin was built and co-owned by three men. These men were proficient builders who had all built their own homes, and they created this cabin with a very shallow pitch roof. Cliff, however, is a skilled framer and feels that the pitch is inadequate even for a cabin. Due to condensation, and freezing and thawing action, there is rot in the roof where the stovepipe pierces it, and six inches of moss is growing on the entire roof (which normally, he says, grows on the north). In addition, the eaves are rather small, leaving exterior walls unprotected from water damage. Cliff thinks that a steeper pitch would avoid such problems, and plans to replace the old roof. Bob, a previous owner, felt the shallow pitch was acceptable for a cabin, especially a small one. All of these builders and owners have different opinions about what is sufficient for cabins.

Sometimes a pairing of old and new building technology occurs in cabin building. For example, Cliff's cabin has a collar beam that is visible in the open rafters (figure 12). Bob and two friends built the trusses for his cabin in a garage. They were designed by another friend who is considered an expert in building. When assembled, the trusses were

transported to the cabin by ATV and trailer; to install them, they first inverted them to rest on the wall plate and then raised them to an upright position. The roof has no ridgepole in the peak, and no crossbeams or tie beams. This cabin does have side purlins that are attached to and span between the rafters running parallel to the peak. The upper part of each truss was anchored with a triangular three-quarter-inch plywood collar. The plywood was pinned to 2x4 rough lumber butted at the apex to form the trusses. This application works like a collar beam to hold the rafter together at the ridge. This is called a "collar rafter single roof," an older but common form in English vernacular domestic housing according to Brunskill, who describes triangulated rafters with collars applied to the rafters close to the peak without ridgepole and purlins (2000: 78-79). The roof construction of Cliff's cabin uses the same form. The use of collars represents an Old World building technique whereas the plywood used to form the collar represents modern building technology.

Despite the absence of ridgepole and crossbeam in the trusses, this configuration was meant to strengthen and to compensate for the low pitch of the roof and help with load bearing and snow weight. It proved to be inadequate and the roof sagged during the winter. The owners cut sticks (spruce trees) from the surrounding area and wedged them between the rafters and the floor to support the sagging roof. After winter the sticks were removed. The bark was left on the posts. Although these posts looked "rustic," they were installed solely to improve structural stability. The sticks are now kept in place year round due to continuing roof problems (figure 13). "The snow will let you know if you built the roof strong enough," said Bob.

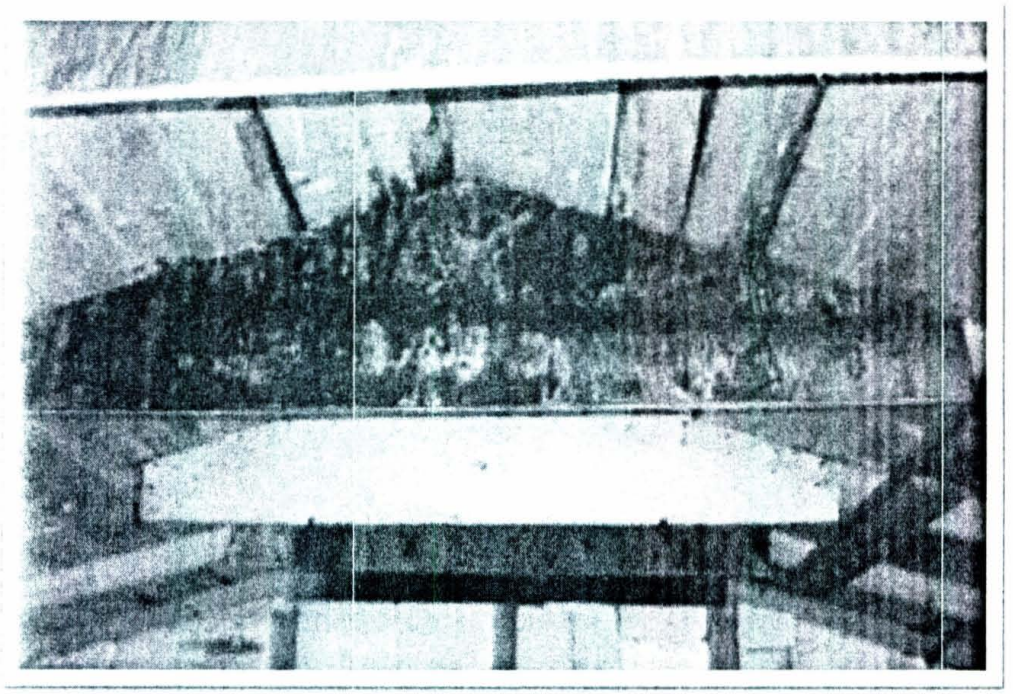

Figure 12 Cliff's Cabin - collar beam in rafter

Ed's roof is so steep, the cabin appears to be larger than it really is; it is actually a little smaller than Abe's or Cliff's. Bob explained that fifteen men built Ed's cabin in one weekend, but the present roof is not the original. The first roof was so shallow everyone remembers it as a single pitch roof, and it sagged badly with the snows. He vividly recalls seeing it bulging down, as if any minute it would cave in. The new roof and trusses were made from modern materials, with lightweight framing held together with gang nails (a gang nail is a manufactured plate of nails used to secure butt joints). The newer roof represents recent building technology, and was installed by two people who first helped build the cabin. This system is a departure from the original roof in that it represents

modern building and more cost, for Ed claims the materials for his cabin did not cost him anything. Unfinished parts of roof framework at the gable ends suggest there were plans to build larger ten-inch eaves. The men who partly installed this new roof wanted to buy the cabin from Ed, but gave up when they determined Ed was not selling.

Figure 13 Support post to reinforce sagging roof

The roofline of Abe's and Cliff's cabins includes a simple stovepipe jutting at least a foot above the roof peak. Having the pipe one foot above the roof ridge is a rule of thumb that is followed to avoid smoke being sucked back into the cabin by downdrafts. The stovepipe funnels are a standard six to seven inches in diameter and are made of sheet metal, but the stoves and pipes are subjected to many modifications. The roof piercings for the funnel have tin flanges. At the roofline where cold and warm air meet condensation creates water damage. This was a problem at Cliff's cabin, solved by a friend who installed a section of prefabricated pipe and rigged it with sheet metal straps and frame, and attached it to the rafters for support.

4.7 Elements of Cabins

4.7.1 Open Rafters

Inside this type of remote wilderness cabin ceilings are rare, and rafters are typically open to view. Abe's cabin has a ceiling and is an exception. When he first took possession of his cabin in 1997, the ceiling was finished with 4x8 sheets of gyproc or drywall. Although this material is the current industry standard for walls and ceilings, Abe says it is not suited to cabins with their restricted space and damp environment. It is also too soft to withstand the activities that occur in cabins. "Drywall can easily be punctured by anything," he says, "especially if you are trying to clean a gun." He replaced the damaged, mouldy and crumbling gyproc with durable 4x8 sheets of aspenite. The industrial standard 4x8 sheets of aspenite are the perfect size for a 12 x16 cabin, says Abe, and builders use those dimensions to their advantage. Aspenite is manufactured as a

rough subsurface material, but in cabin building it has broader applications because a polished finish is not desired, and it allows more freedom in utilizing rough materials.

The rafters in Cliff's and Ed's cabins are open to view. (Open rafters are often used in high style leisure abodes to create an informal atmosphere.) In Cliff's cabin, the open rafters provide extra space to move around in, much needed as it is the smallest of the three cabins. The rough finish of the tongue-and-groove (t-and-g) board of the roof cladding is also visible inside and heightens the rustic atmosphere. Abe's cabin felt smaller because it had a ceiling, and Cliff's felt smaller because the walls were only about six feet high. At Ed's cabin, the trusses are sheathed with aspenite; inside, they are bare and it is easy to see they are pinned together with gang nails. The truss work is rough and unfinished; the manufactured materials have a different look and effect than traditional t-and-g boards, which are materials closer to nature.

4.7.2 Floor Surfaces

The floor in Abe's cabin is finished with aspenite and painted with reddish-brown oil-based paint. The owner said that the floor, like the ceiling, takes six 4x8 sheets of aspenite. It is treated with oil paint for durability because footwear is not removed at cabins, and water, mud and snow are tracked inside.

In Cliff's cabin, the floor is finished with a single surface of board subflooring of different widths. It is not t-and-g board, and light from the outside filters in through some cracks. The board runs perpendicular to the floor joists along the length of the cabin. Bob,

the previous owner, said that they covered the board with a tarpaper barrier and laid carpet over it. Cliff remembers vinyl flooring over the floorboards, a remnant of which is under the bunk. Cliff removed the vinyl as it was damaged from the rough traffic. He says bare boards are easier to care for, needing only an occasional sweep and mop up of water.

Ed's cabin has floorboards that run along the width of the cabin because the joists run the length. The rest was hard to determine when I did my fieldwork because there was a pile of lumber in the middle of the floor and on top of that a thick covering of snow, and the owners had forgotten the details because the cabin was built twenty years ago. This building was in transition from old to new in terms of building technologies.

4.7.3 Exterior Colour Relates to Usage

The colour selections for cabins exteriors are usually dark, if they are painted at all--typically neutral green, gray, black or brown. Cliff and Abe stated that the primary purpose of painting a cabin is purely to prolong the life of the material, not for appearance except to hide the cabins by blending in with the woods. Although these units are now licensed, the impulse to conceal them suggests that traces of the older unlicensed ways persist in the minds of the owners. More importantly, as places open to the public in these remote locations, the cabins are vulnerable. The owners want them to be used responsibly and do not want to see the honour system of courtesy abused. Tension around unauthorized use stems from the past practice of taking possession of apparently

abandoned cabins, and the modern misunderstanding of free use of cabins (the bush code of conduct), especially by the uninitiated. These cabins are to be used in emergencies and as places to take a brief rest from the cold. The unlocked door policy does not mean that anyone at all can stay for a weekend, as some may think. The vulnerability of these cabins emphasizes their ephemerality, and the need to build as inexpensively as possible. Abe and Cliff have put up signs inviting others to use the cabin, and at Ed's place, messages are written on the wall by visitors about who visited and cleaned the cabin. The cabins are a curious mix of public and private space, often communally built, and freely recreated and used by others.

4.7.4 Inner Walls

The treatment of inner walls is usually minimal and until recently most cabins had open stud-work with no insulation. The 2x4 studs are enclosed in Abe's, Cliff's and Ed's cabins because they insulated the walls to reduce heat loss and to keep cold out. Styrofoam and pink fibreglass batting are the types of insulation used. Insulating walls with this manufactured material relates to recent building technology to improve energy efficiency. Prior to the availability of modern insulation, remote cabins were insulated with natural materials from the environment, such as moss. (Traditional homes in

Newfoundland sometimes had black seaweed for wall insulation.)[24] The pieces of insulation in the cabins were discards saved from building projects or home renovations.

In Abe's cabin, the studs are covered with 4'x8' sheets of woodgrain-finish panel board. The panels covering the wall behind the bunks are a mix of dark and light colors, utility and economy once again overriding aesthetic concerns. On other parts of the walls the panel board is coated with reddish paint, which was also applied to the trim, sink cabinet, and wall shelves, and the door—he ran out of it before covering all the surfaces. He said the color was the result of mixing all the paints he had lying around at home.

Other than the paint, there are few decorative elements inside Abe's cabin. Curtains at the back window provide no privacy, but hang limply as a form of window dressing. There are similar curtains in the front, as well as a full vinyl blind that Abe said was necessary due to the southeast exposure. It shuts out the sun's brightness and heat that can disturb sleeping campers in the morning (mostly a problem in the summer).

In Cliff's cabin, the studs are clad with the same kind of panel board used in Abe's cabin. It is not painted, and is cut to fit since the wall is just over six feet high. Because the rafters are open, the insulation between the panel board and the exterior walling can be seen at the top of the wall plate. Pinned to the wall around the sides and top of two windows are 8x11 inch sheets of paper wrapped in plastic that have coloured photo images of moose. Cliff stated that those adornments are not his; a man who started using

[24] The traditional home that I grew up in was built in the 1930s; when it was taken down in the 1980s, black seaweed was found in the exterior walls.

the cabin (thinking it was abandoned) put them there. All the other things that adorn the walls are purely utilitarian.

Inside Ed's cabin, the studs are sheathed with 1x11 inch t-and-g boards applied horizontally to strengthen the walls. In the past, this type of board had multiple uses and was typically used for roofs, interior and exterior walls, floors, and for making concrete forms. It has been superseded by mass produced materials like aspenite or plywood. This kind of board was also used for shipping crates, and the boards from the discarded crates were traditionally free materials for reuse in building (Peddle 2002; 1884). Bob noted that several of the men involved in building his cabin worked for building supply companies, and since t-and-g board became less popular by the 1980s, these men probably got it at minimal cost. (Today, 1x11 t-and-g can only be acquired by expensive special order.) Bob said that all the materials came from multiple sources and people. He said, "All you have to say is, I am going to build a cabin..." and people give you building materials that they have stored in their sheds. How the cabin looks thus depends on whatever materials others provide, and the cabin grows out of this sharing tradition and web of reciprocal obligations.

In Ed's cabin, styrofoam can also be seen at the top of the wall plate between the exposed rafters. Other than fragments of grey paint, all the horizontal t-and-g wallboard sheathing is unfinished; the only adornments are messages written on the walls by people who visited the cabin. Otherwise, the interior looks sparse as if it is being renovated.

4.7.5 Windows and Doors

These buildings usually have one door and two to four windows, which is the maximum they can accommodate. Abe modified the cabin door to improve its function. He installed a screened opening with a wooden shutter inside that opens to improve ventilation and to keep biting insects out. The wooden door, which has a hollow core and a sidelight, is the type produced for the housing industry in the early 1970s. The flaking paint and weathered cedar shingle siding impart a sense of ruggedness, but this is an effect of nature rather than an intention on the part of the owner. Abe's cabin has two windows: a small vinyl slider window at the back, and in front a larger window (a double-hung vinyl slider) facing southeast.

The door of Cliff's cabin was made on site from rough finish t-and-g boards (Figure14); it is called a Z-batten door, as it is made from upright boards, two braces, and three battens that form the shape of a Z. It was found on almost all traditional houses in Newfoundland in the past. Its use on this cabin shows how traditional forms are not forgotten and continue to work well in this type of environment.

Cliff's cabin has four windows. Two are second-hand aluminum, rectangular casement windows from the renovation of a public building. They have a hinge at the base and open to the inside. One is in the southeast front face to the right of the door, the other in the northwest face at the back. A wooden casement window in the southwest gable end works the same way as the aluminum windows; all three are about three feet wide. The fourth window at the back is a small handmade single pane window finished in framing of varying widths. Cliff describes it as being not much more than a simple picture frame

construction--something rigged or "jerry-rigged" from things at hand. Cabin owners also refer to impromptu construction as being "MacGyvered"—the verb "to MacGyver" taken from an adventure television series that ran from 1985 to 1992, in which the protagonist, MacGyver, cleverly transformed ordinary objects into whatever device he needed to fight crime.

Figure 14 Cliff's Cabin - Z-Batten door

Ed's cabin is a special case because it has some new materials from a local hardware store. They were cast-offs because they were defective, had imperfections, or were otherwise unsuitable for use in the home building industry. Several of the men who built this cabin were employees of a hardware store and had access to such materials. The steel door, for instance, was new, but was warped (a common problem with steel doors, according to Bob). It was good enough for a cabin. The rusting (not rustic) door has three applied plastic moulded panels, and remnants of its pale blue paint finish are overpowered by larger areas of exposed grey primer. It is as weathered as the plywood sheathing of the exterior walls.

Ed's cabin did have three aluminum windows, but only two remain. They were probably custom-ordered windows that were discarded by a hardware store because they had no resale value due to measurement errors or major imperfections; or they could have been discontinued due to consumer demand for more energy efficient windows. Ed noted that the window missing from the east gable end was probably stolen, theft being a recurrent problem for this cabin (figure15). The remaining two windows are double-sash windows that open vertically. One window is to the left of the front north face, the other in a central location at the rear south face.

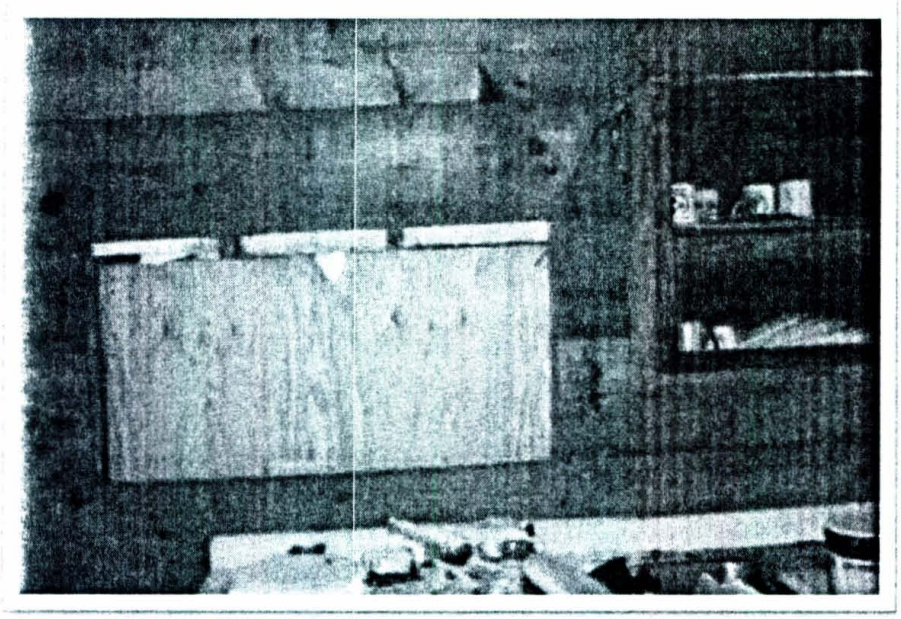

Figure 15 Missing Window - Ed's Cabin

4.8 Site Selection

Selecting a good cabin site, according to Abe, Cliff, and Ed, depends on a number of factors. These cabins are inland in rough taiga-type terrain dotted with patches of tree stands, which are like islands in vast stretches of bog. The thick stands of trees are sometimes referred to as "hats of wood," since they look like hats thrown out on the bog. Cabins are placed on solid ground inside a tree stand that is higher and drier than the surrounding marshland. The trees protect and hide the cabins.

Notably, these sites are not seaside retreats, despite the fact that this province has an abundance of unexploited coastline. Getting away from the ocean seems to be the idea, which might seem an unusual preference in many other places. But here the ocean is an

everyday cultural space, and an inhospitable one, especially in winter. Because Newfoundland has long been a seafaring culture, people's appreciation of the ocean is different from that of people who have never lived life on the sea. The seaside here is not usually associated with leisure. In general campers prefer to be inland; those without cabins even engage in the local phenomenon of "gravel pit camping," that is, they park their vehicles in roadside quarries, sometimes creating small villages which reappear each season—or they did until quite recently, when the government moved to ban the encampments as unwholesome (Guy 1985; Decker 2010).

4.8.1 Thinking of Cabins First: Architectural Notions

Architects and building professionals do not recommend building close to trees because it can damage the structure; according to Truni, putting small buildings among trees and underbrush is not ideal, even if it looks picturesque (2002: 17-18). Not only damage from decay, but poor ventilation and lack of light can cause problems. The cabin owners in this study dismiss these concerns. For them, having the cabin on the open barrens would create many more problems, such as storm or wind damage. The trees offer protection from the elements, and any problems they create can be dealt with. At Cliff's cabin, for instance, past owners used a wire cable to brace one tree to another that was at risk of falling on the cabin. He considers that in this space there is always a struggle with nature anyway. Another drawback to a cabin in the open, Abe notes, is that it frightens wildlife.

4.8.2 Thinking of Occupants First: Cabin Owners' Notions

It is nearly impossible for occupants to stay warm in a cabin on windswept barrens. For cabin builders, the whole point of the cabin is to provide shelter and a measure of comfort in a reasonably safe structure. Setting a cabin among trees immensely improves the comfort levels for occupants. As for rot and damage, the cabin owners fix it as needed. In other words, they make compromises. They have their own standard of what is safe, and they use various means to achieve strength in the framing. Making reinforcements and repairs are part of the fun and challenge that most cabin owners enjoy. They do necessary work and repairs, but nothing more, using common sense and the traditional "know-how" carried from the days when everyone built his own house. They are confident about building a small cabin.

4.8.3 Proximity to Water Supply

It is essential that cabins are close to a supply of water for drinking, cooking and cleaning. None of these buildings have indoor plumbing systems. Abe dug a well but encountered bedrock, so yields were poor. Water is carried from a stream five or ten minutes walk away. Bob, the previous owner of the Cliff's cabin, intended to make a well; he gathered all the pipes, but "never got around to it." Cliff did not bother putting in running water, as he likes the idea of roughing it. He feels that water is safe to use if it is from a fast-moving stream, as long as you know what is upstream. For example, he explained that water is unsafe if it flows from a pond with a beaver house, because of the giardia parasite that causes "beaver fever" in humans. Ed did not have running water in

his cabin either. At all three cabins, buckets were used to bring water from nearby streams. All the cabins have sinks for washing, but the waste water is either discharged underneath the cabin, or caught in a bucket under the sink and discarded in the outhouses, or simply tossed out the front door.

4.8.4 Proximity to a Supply of Firewood

A nearby source of firewood for warmth and cooking is another important feature of a cabin site. Firewood is not only for comfort, but is key to survival in this environment. Having a nearby source ensures that the wood will get to the cabins when it is needed. This requires planning, time, energy and a permit to cut wood. All the owners said they would never cut the trees for firewood in the immediate cabin sites. In Abe's cabin, a cardboard sign advises visitors, "*Come in, Sit Down, and Enjoy our Shack. But whatever you use, Please Put it Back. Especially Dry Wood.*" To emphasize the seriousness of the request, the sign has Abe's signature, and the last three words are underlined. This sign speaks to several things. It is important for wood to be cured and dry for use. If someone uses the wood in the woodbox inside the cabin, he is expected to refill it from the firewood stored outside. This way the wet or snow-covered wood can dry for the next person to use. Wet wood is difficult to burn, and Abe says it really irritates him when people do not put the wood back. At Cliff's cabin there is a substantial row of firewood stacked inside against the rear wall, and a chopping block for cleaving wood when needed. Cliff has also stored in the rafters plastic grocery bags filled with newspapers for starting a fire. If he did not protect the paper, he noted, it would become too damp to

light. Having a nearby source of dried firewood cannot be stressed enough if these cabins are to be usable.

4.8.5 Secrecy: An Escape with No Frills

All the owners like to think of their cabins as being securely tucked away, hidden from others passing through the area, even though the locations are not in fact very secret. In a sense, they are private buildings in a commons area that is a public space. It is a preference of the owners that the cabins cannot be visually detected from the barrens. They do not mind visitors, but prefer the cabins do not attract undue attention. That is one reason the cabins look austere and have only a few amenities and essentials. "My cabin has everything anyone could need," Abe asserts; he does not think being there is "roughing it," especially in comparison to his experience as a registered guide. As always, vandalism is a concern. The cabin is vulnerable to anyone with ill intentions since the owners are not always there, and if it lacks luxuries or valuables, it has a better chance to survive. The owners also like to think of their cabins as secret places they can retreat to on weekends to escape the stress of work and their everyday busy lives.

In homes, there are usually transitional spaces, especially at entrances. These serve as inner buffer zones between the private space of the home and the public space of the outside. This is noted in Pocius' work in Calvert (1991). With one-room cabins, however, there is no inner buffer zone. The steps to the door might be considered an exterior transition zone, segregating the private space of the inner cabin from the public space of

the outdoors, but the cabin owners envision the distinction between public and private in a different way. The tree stands in which cabins are concealed are a natural buffer zone between the open barrens and the cabin sites. Because the tree stands are on higher elevations, there is a slight grade to the trail when moving from the barrens to the cabins. The entry trails to the cabins are never direct, thus, the cabins are hard to detect from the barrens. Penetrating a trail entrance is similar to crossing the threshold of a home. The trail thus represents a transitional zone of movement between the barrens and cabin sites, or from public to private space.

The trails are approximately four feet wide, only wide enough to safely accommodate a snowmobile or an ATV. The trail to Abe's cabin flows in an "S" curve, while Ed's has a sharp angled trail (figure 16, 17). Each serves to hide the cabins. The front of each cabin directly faces the trail, or there is a direct line of sight to the trail from a front window or door. The trail to Cliff's cabin is a loop with a separate entrance and exit (figure18). The cabin is set in dense trees that provide a camouflage of grey tree trunks. Abe explains that the entry trails are designed as they are for several reasons: to keep the cabin secret or hidden; to protect it from winds and storms; and to circumvent natural obstacles in the landscape such as boulders or trees (Figure 19). The direction and shape of the trail means following the path of least resistance, showing how function and appearance can depend on the physical landscape, the environment, and the desires of cabin owners. The width of the trail accommodates motorized access, although it is about the same width as the "slide path" that once accommodated horse and slide. The traditional width is an enduring mark on the cultural landscape (as noted by Pocius in Calvert: 1991:78). In this

sense, the human imprint of the trails on the wilderness has not changed. The changes are in motorized access, and the use of these spaces for leisure instead of subsistence.

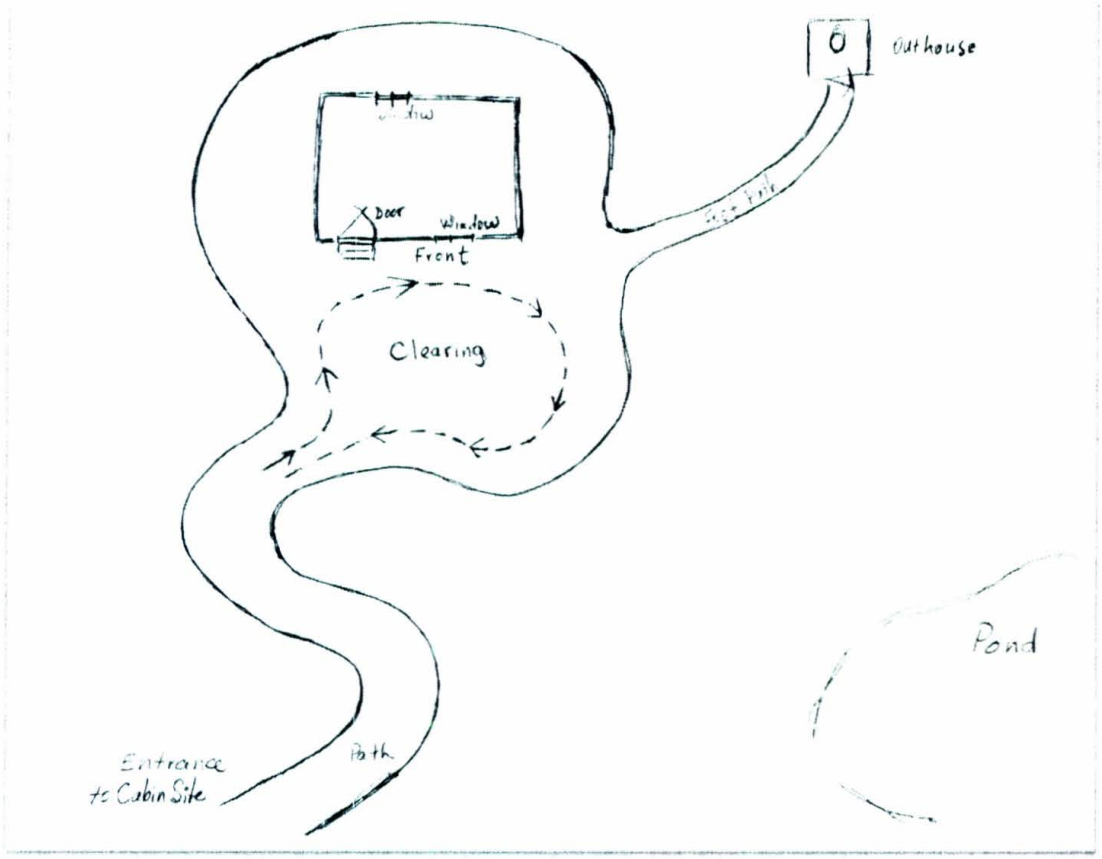

Figure 16 Site of Abe's Cabin

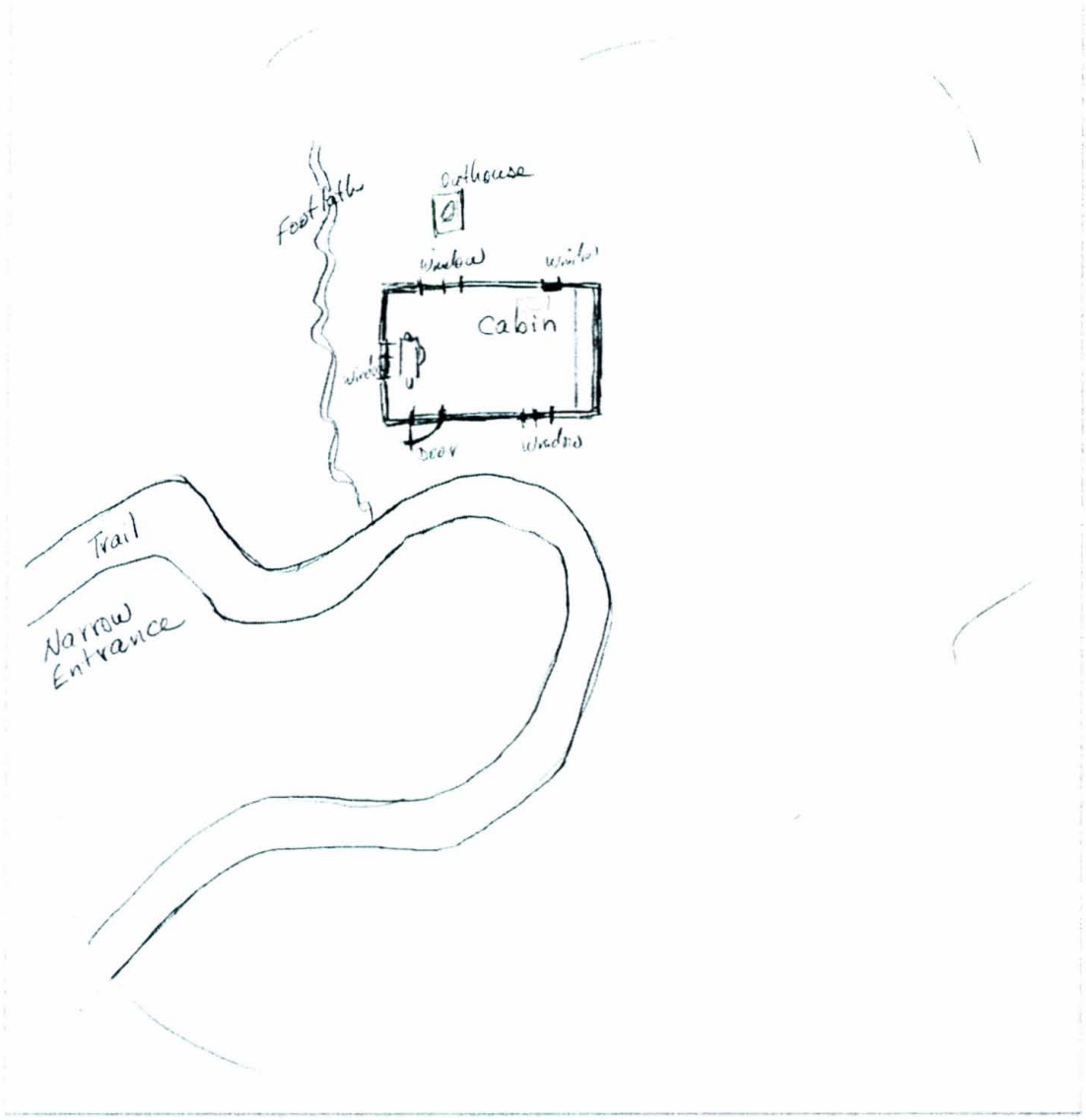

Figure 17 Site of Ed's Cabin

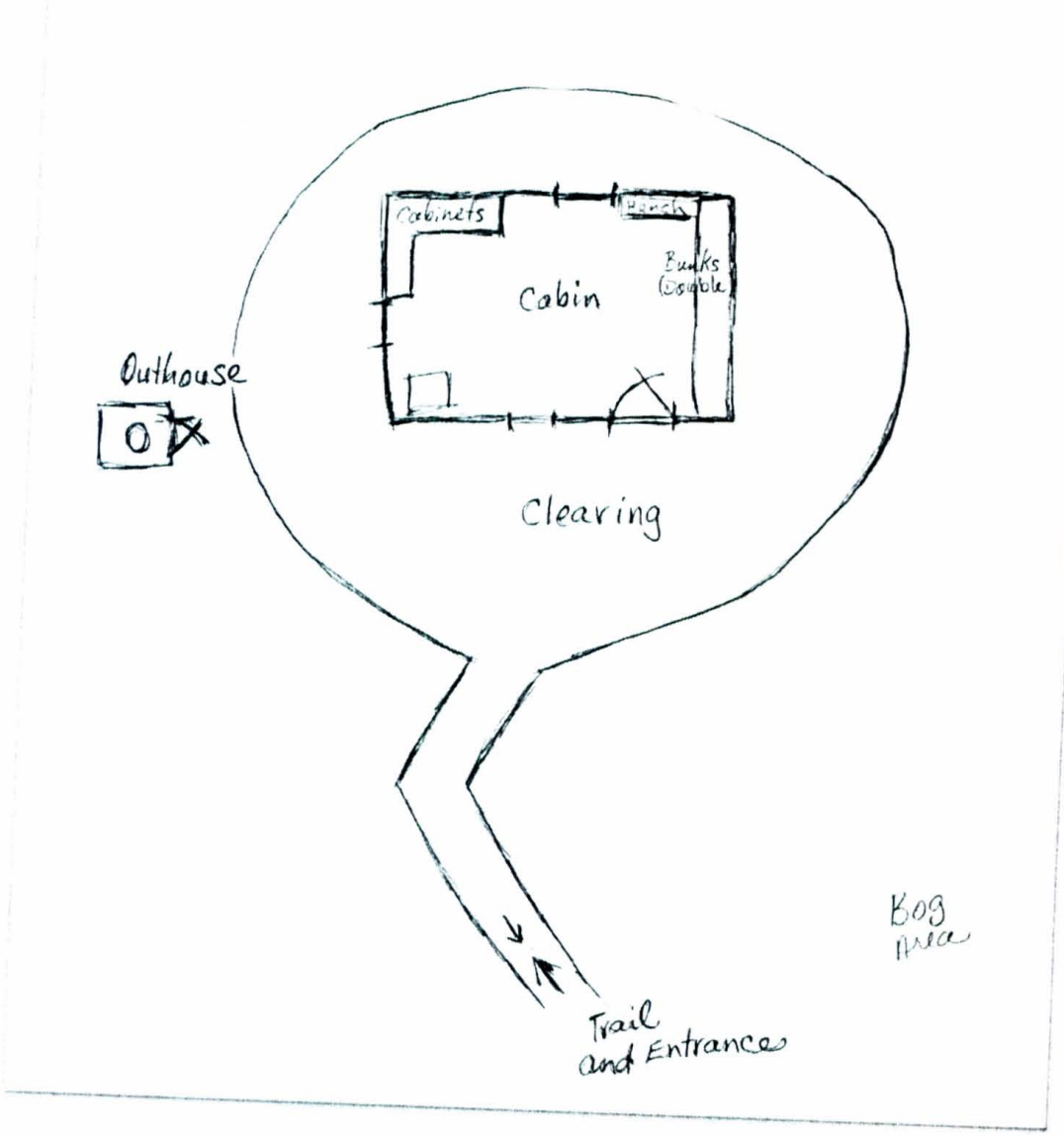

Figure 18 Site of Cliff's Cabin

Abe's, Cliff's or Ed's cabins have unique schemes based on how they are used. Abe's and Ed's have clearings around them, larger in the front than at the back. The front clearings provide parking space for recreational vehicles, and enough space so that they can simply circle in order to exit. This is important for snowmobiles because they are not well designed for reverse manoeuvres. One informant noted that the circle in front of cabins reminds him of the "turn-around" required by horse and slide, as they cannot reverse at all.

The cleared area around the back of a cabin gives access to a ladder, which is needed to get to the roof to clean the stovepipe, do repairs, and remove excess build-up of snow. According to some owners, clearings around foundations are also firebreaks, as required by government regulations. Cliff, whose cabin does not have a well-defined clearing, is not concerned about this rule; he is more concerned about keeping the cabin hidden from view.

Creating a clearing, according to the cabin owners, means removing large trees and brush. These areas are not neatly cleaned to the point of having a grassy lawn or gravel, as is typical for urban or recreational cottage spaces. Only minimal removal is needed for remote cabins, but over time, the regrowth of trees and wild plants requires more clearing. The minimal grooming of cabin upkeep is not a burden for owners.

The looped path to the front of Cliff's cabin means that anyone approaching by vehicle must weave carefully through the trees. The previous owners parked their vehicles on the barrens and walked in. There is walking space to the rear of the building to access the

ladder. This cabin is literally among thirty-foot trees, and it appears as if nature's forces are returning it to an organic form.

Figure 19 Trail to Abe's Cabin groomed by snowmobile use

4.9 Other Details Considered in Siting Cabins

Outhouses are included in the outdoor schemes of all three cabins (figure 20). They are the only auxiliary buildings on the sites. They are simply pits enclosed with walls, and are not visible or hardly noticeable from the front of the cabin. They are placed well behind the cabins at the furthest point from the door. None of the cabins have running

water, so the outhouses are the only disposal system for human waste. They are single-seat forms with room for one person to sit or stand, made from scraps of wood, aspenite or plywood, with a shed roof. They are adequate since cabin visits are usually only for short periods of time.

Abe's outhouse is clad with plywood, and has a reddish-brown painted finish like the cabin trim, weathered to a grey patina. The upper portion of the door is pierced with the a crescent moon design, and the door closure is a handmade wooden button latch. Cliff's outhouse is a patchwork of aspenite, unfinished like the cabin, and there is no door or even well-defined doorway. Ed's outhouse is clad with aspenite and painted like the cabin. Its door is missing too, and along with it, privacy. The degree of privacy in these spaces fluctuates as it does in a public sphere.

I noticed during the winter of 2006 that there was yellow-stained snow all around the front and sides of the cabins, which indicated that the outhouse is not used by casual visitors, especially males. Women use the area behind the cabin, as they require more privacy. Wading through waist-deep snow discouraged visitors from using the outhouse. I suspect that this behaviour annoys the owners, and is another reason owners feel it is best that few people know where the cabins are.

Figure 20 Cabin Outhouses: left to right, Eds, Cliffs and Abes

4.9.1 Orientation of the Cabin

The orientation of a cabin's front face varies. Abe's and Cliff's face southeast, and Ed's faces north. A cabin's spatial position depends on the locale of the trail, and the trail depends on the lay of the land. A cabin's front facade is in a sidewall elevation and has the door facing the trail. This pattern is similar to traditional dwellings in rural communities where kitchens were oriented to face main roadways in part as a way to monitor social networks and events (Pocius 1991: 173). Abe noted that it is important to face the trail to see anything that may be approaching, whether man or beast. It is a strategy for the first line of defence, if need be; a contact point of encounters with friends

or strangers; and a way to see what is unfolding outside. Just as there is always a window and door in front, there are always windows in the rear wall elevations. A view of the back is an important safety consideration, especially if bear or moose are around. For the same reason, windows are installed well above ground level. Typically, there are windows in two or three of the wall elevations of these cabins, but never in the gable end wall where the bunks are. Windows provide ventilation and light, and a greater sense of roominess. Rarely will windows grace only one wall, because windows add to the sensory experience, comfort and enjoyment of the cabins.

4.9.2 Keeping Flaws at the Back

The front facade of Abe's, Cliff's and Ed's cabins is the exterior feature that is consistently given the best treatment, and can be considered a decorative part of the cabin architecture, however minimal. Imperfections in the application of materials are kept at the rear walls. The cultural tendency to put a building's best face forward can be seen in houses and outbuildings alike—I found the same thing in my research on backyard sheds in St. John's (King 2000). In that study, I noted that owners/builders made sure that modifications and unsightly objects were hidden at the back of their sheds. It is not a novel concept that the front facade gets the best treatment and the rear gets the least. It was common practice in the domestic vernacular architecture of eighteenth-century southeast England, for instance, where the front might be clad with wall tile to look like brick, while rougher and cheaper materials were put on the rear (Brunskill 2000: 42, 64).

The principle has been observed in many other cultures by many other researchers (Ward 1999: 134; Mellin 1999: 83, 108), indeed it is ubiquitous in Europe and North America.

Exterior and outdoor realms are often affiliated with male space, activity and work (Mellin 2003; Pocius 1991). One artefact particularly reflective of the maintenance the men do are the ladders that rest against the eaves at the back of the cabins. The ladders are close to the chimney, providing access to the roof to fight chimney fires, clean the chimney, clear off snow, and do repairs. The ladders are about ten feet in length, made on site from materials at hand. Abe's ladder is made from two starrigans harvested from the immediate area; the sticks are not perfectly straight and were roughly shaved with an axe. The rungs are scrap pieces of board nailed to the sticks. Cliff and Ed have the same type of ladder. Despite their rough construction, these ladders are strong and stable enough to hold the weight of a man. Bob said they are like the ladders that used to be made for homes, before manufactured ladders became available in retail stores.

Despite modest efforts to make the front face of a cabin a bit better than the other exterior walls, owners refrain from making it "too" attractive. The other walls of these cabins look unfinished and rough, as if the cabin were still in the process of being built, but that is not the case. The tenets for cabin-building are to keep costs down, make things waterproof, and discourage possible theft, vandalism, or arson. "Extra" materials like cladding or siding might be added if they become available, but they are not a priority. The structures are kept plain and inconspicuous in order to deflect interest.

Abe's cabin has received the most decorative treatment of the cabins, clad with cedar shakes discarded during a home renovation in his community. There were only enough to do the front, and he reversed them when he put them on. He trimmed the ends of the shakes at the two front corners of the cabin with corner caps made from halved spruce posts harvested from the site. The rest of the cabin was wrapped in tarpaper secured to sheets of aspenite cladding with narrow vertical laths. Most of the tarpaper is now missing, probably stripped off by wind, but Abe says that aspenite will last a long time even if exposed, as long as rain can drain away and the aspenite does not touch the ground. He also explained that the top half of the 8' exterior wall is less susceptible to water damage because the eaves of the cabin have a 16" overhang. He was more concerned that the three walls can take the weather rather than looking nice.

The front of Cliff's cabin is similar in that it received the best finish; it has common clapboard, although weather-beaten, applied to the front and to one gable end.[25] The clapboard came from Bob, the previous owner, who removed it from his father's house, where it was replaced with vinyl siding. On close inspection, the clapboard shows traces of white paint, but is mostly weathered to a gray, which blends in with the bark of the trees that surround the cabin. The rest of Cliff's walls are clad in black tarpaper secured to aspenite sheathing with horizontal applied scrap boards of varying lengths, widths and thicknesses. Cliff points out that builders only use what they have on hand, and what they

[25] According to Brunskill, weatherboard or clapboard was used in the North American, as opposed to the wattle and daub panels typically used in Western Europe, because clapboard was more suited to the harsh winter climate. The use of clapboard was limited in lightweight timber-framed buildings in southeastern England at the end of the eighteenth century (2000: 66, 214).

bring in, and they improvise and substitute as necessary; it is not about achieving a polished or balanced look, but maximizing the use of the materials that you have. Each cabin is thus unique to the context in which it is built. It may be imperfect, but it works. Cliff said that he had planned to paint the clapboard black, only to preserve it—not to improve the look—but he never did. He said that he often talks and ponders about the things he would like to fix at the cabin, but that he never seems to follow through. His comment reflects the owners' busy lives and their relaxed attitude toward leisure time.

Like Abe's and Cliff's cabins, the front of Ed's cabin has the best treatment in relation to its other walls, although patchwork pieces of plywood are used around the door. All four walls are clad in plywood rather than aspenite and are open to the weather; the surfaces are treated with paint without tarpaper or siding. The peaks in the gable ends, however, are made from aspenite, which was done when the roof was modified in 2001. The plywood on the front is forest green, and the corner caps, trims and remaining walls are black. The front has the most colourful paint, in keeping with "putting the best face forward" even on rough cabins. You have to paint the front of your cabin just in case some women visited, Ed said facetiously, implying that sprucing up the front was a woman's priority, not a man's. His looks as if it is under reconstruction; new trusses covered with aspenite sheets have been installed but the work is incomplete (see figure 3 and 9). Bob said that a roll of rubberoid was left there to finish the roof but it was stolen. Ed noted that a couple of young men did this in hopes that he would sell--another example of taking over cabin space without consent.

To reiterate (as the owners often do), these buildings are constructed from readily available materials, often free for the taking. It is intentional that they do not contain anything of monetary value or worth. It is a point of pride with the owners that they cost virtually nothing. Cliff said he purchased his cabin for the legal requirement of one dollar, and Ed said all he had to do was mention he was building a cabin and his friends came forward with all kinds of materials they had stored in their sheds. This shows how well connected these men are to male networks in their communities, and although the cabins cost little to build, it would be upsetting to them to lose the cabins or see them damaged through foul play. They have invested time and labour, and the structures hold valuable memories and associations for them.

4.10 The Orientation of the Interior Space

4.10.1 Interior Layout and Spaces

Space is at a premium in these single-room interiors where multiple tasks are performed. The space accommodates sleeping, cooking, eating, and relaxing, all in warmth and basic comfort. Bunks, stove, woodbox, sink, table and chairs are all arranged around the periphery, with the centre of the room left open for movement between them. When the builders framed out the cabin they had a rough idea of how to organize the inner space. The inner area is arranged according to the door's position, and the door is located in relation to the entry trail. Cliff explained that at the framing stage, the door and window openings or pierces are roughed-in. Doors are set to the right or the left of the front face of the cabin, not the center. The largest windows go in the front; Cliff's cabin is an

exception, with the largest window in the southwest gable, opposite the gable end with the bunks; but it is still close to the door and faces the entry trail that tracks in from the NNW direction past the southwest elevation to the southeast elevation and exits in a southerly direction (figure 21). This window provides a better vantage point of the trail than the smaller window in front. Windows in the rear and front give sight of anyone approaching or danger lurking outside. Windows allow natural light to flow into the dark interiors, and aid ventilation. They make the buildings liveable spaces.

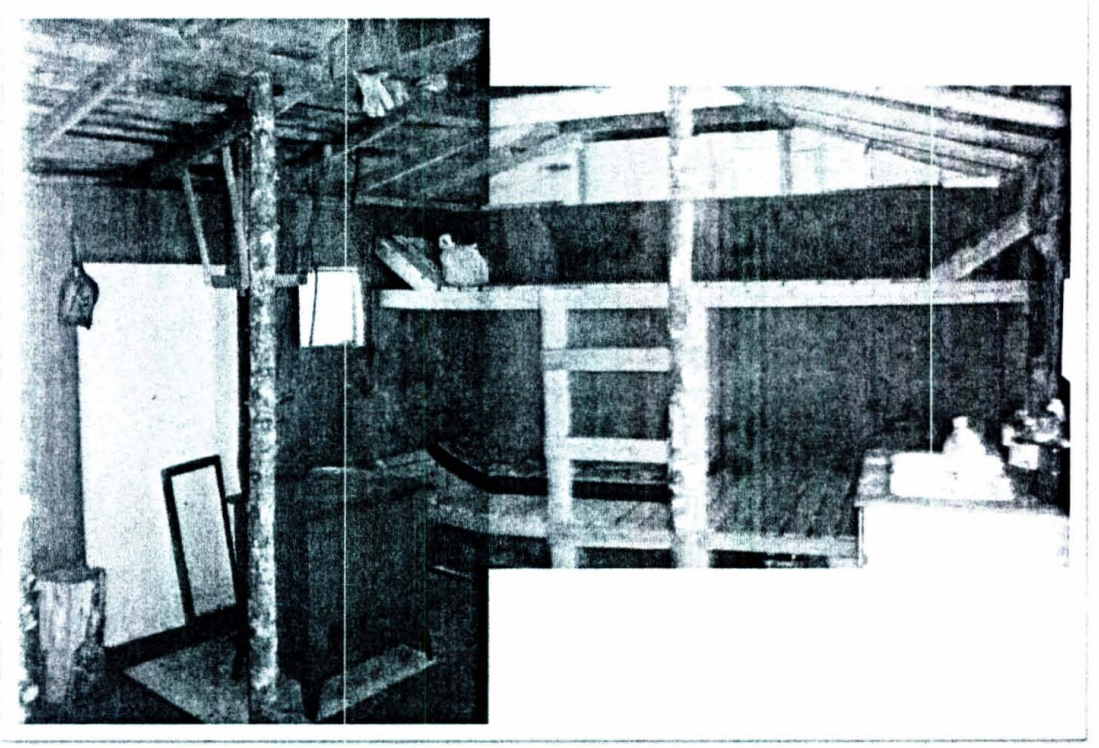

Figure 21 Cliff's Cabin - bunk and stove

Besides exercising economy of space and having a view of the trail, the owners discussed issues of placement for sleeping, eating, ventilation, heat control, fire safety and keeping wild animals out. Many said that when a fire is lit in the stove, the top bunk is usually too warm for a comfortable sleep; the bottom bunk, according to Bob, is the best. The door and windows are opened for ventilation, or closed when it is too cold or when mosquitoes are bothersome. At each cabin, the stove is as far as possible from the door, possibly to minimize heat loss through the door. To improve airflow, Abe cut and framed a rectangular hole in the upper half of his door, and installed a metal grate on the outside and a shutter on the inside. The shutter can be opened without having to open the whole door. He also built a half-moon shelf at the base of the door's sidelight to hold a mosquito coil (a chemical repellent device). The other two cabins use windows for ventilation when opening the door is not an option. Each cabin has a small window close to the bunk, which provides a view to the back.

The proximity of the stove to the bunks varies (Figure 22 and 23). The stoves in Ed's and Abe's cabins were the furthest from the bunks, which is the safest distance in the event of a fire, but in Cliff's cabin the stove is near the bunks. No one has the stove near the door because if a fire occurs that would prevent escape. In Cliff's cabin, a small chopping block sits to the left of the stove, an item usually kept outside. Abe's cabin has a woodbox for firewood to the right of the stove against the gable end wall opposite the bunks. The repetitive task of moving wood to the stove is done in a direct line, but the wood is kept a reasonably safe distance from the stove.

At both Abe's and Cliff's cabins, the sink for preparing food and cleaning dishes is set underneath the window in the wall facing the trail. Activity between the sink, stove and table is done in a triangular pattern. Space is optimized in these small quarters.

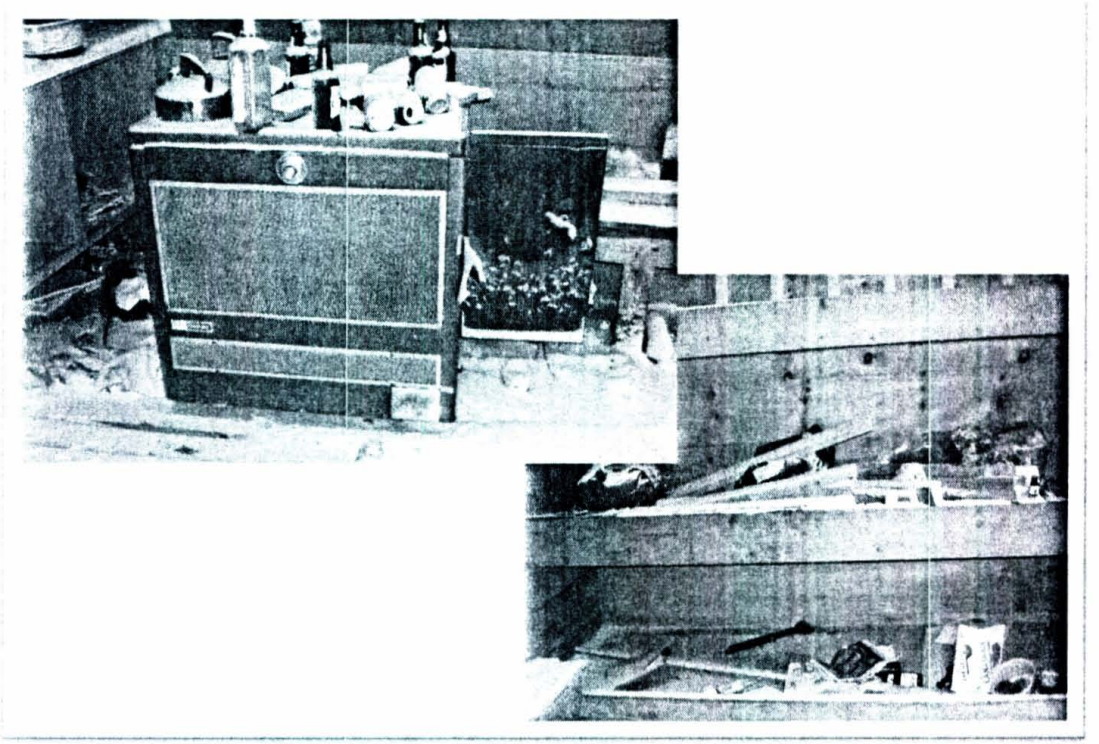

Figure 22 Ed's Cabin not in active use

Figure 23 Abe's Cabin - firewood indicates active use

4.10.2 Bunks, Stoves, and Other Elements

Without exception, the bunks in the cabins occupy a gable end elevation and span the width of the structure. They are permanent built-in features, placed to economize on space and to maximize sleeping space. The surfaces are made from rough boards placed laterally with small gaps to maximize comfort. Ed's bunks are surfaced with aspenite; Cliff's are bare board, but have raised headboards to mimic pillows; Abe's bunk boards have some foam padding. Visitors bring their own bedding. The bunks are about the width of a twin bed (forty-two inches wide) and are double-stacked, except for Ed's, which has three levels (but the top bunk is very narrow and used for storage). A bunk can

comfortably hold two large persons in a feet-to-feet configuration, meaning that the bunks combined have the capacity for four large persons, or up to eight smaller persons. The planning for the bunks is based on the expectation that there will be more than one or two people there at a time. As the bunks are intended for sleep, there is never fenestration in the walls they are set against.

A stove is an essential item in any cabin. Typically, they are old castoff stoves or small makeshift creations made from tin or iron plate. These are similar to the "bogie" stoves traditionally used for fishing stages, boats, or small houses (Story et al 1982: 55; Goodyear 2001:79-80). Besides a basic shell, all that is required for a functioning stove is a raised grate, a drafter at the bottom (a device to control the flow of air to the fire) and a piece of tin inserted into the stovepipe for a damper. All cabins are equipped with lifters for the stove covers and pokers for stoking the fire. Cliff's cabin has a space heater stove. Abe's cabin has a small bogie style stove with a firebrick lining that was made at a local trade school according to his specifications (and also to fit the standard manufactured 4.5 x 9 inch firebrick). Abe says that a stove lasts longer when it has firebricks. The shop also designed a pattern for his stove door reminiscent of cabin culture – an image of an evergreen tree and the profile of the gable end of a cabin.

Where the stove is placed in relation to other items in the cabin determines where to cut the piercing for the funnel or chimney. A chimney generally pierces the roof, but at Ed's cabin it exits through the top of the front wall.

Near the stoves is a clothesline, and nails in the walls and bunks are used for hanging larger items of clothing such as snowsuits. Clotheslines are crucial in these damp environments: the ability to dry wet clothing (and boots) can mean the difference between life and death by hypothermia. In Abe's cabin, two sticks at right angles are suspended from the ceiling with chains, forming a wide square around the chimney of the stove; from these sticks clothing can safely hang on wire hangers to dry. Cliff's cabin has a small clothesline in the rafter space, and a number of nails for clothes.

In all the cabins, storage space can best be described as "open" because all objects are in clear view and are part of the decor. Equipment for the stove and cooking is hung from nails on the wall. Items are placed on open bracket-and-board shelving. The cupboards or sink cabinets are made from scratch or from used cabinetry. Small items are tucked about in places not typically considered as storage, like the top of the wall plates, the rafters, bunks, and windowsills.

4.10.3 Hinging, and Swing of Door

Doors are usually in an elevation other than a gable end, usually in the left or right corner of the front. In two of the cabins, the door is next to the bunks, allowing a hasty exit if needed. A stove is never aligned directly with a door because that interferes with burning efficiency and the rate of combustion, and results in heat loss.

Ed's cabin has a foam insulated steel door, and Abe's a hollow core wooden door; both doors swing inward, while at Cliff's cabin, the door swings out. Inward-swinging doors

use inner space, whereas outward-swinging doors use the outside space. Doors are also designed for fire safety. The inward-swinging doors were designed for homes and meant to deter break-ins, an irrelevant feature for the cabins since they are always unlocked anyway. Cliff noted that an inswinging door is never blocked by snow, but it is a problem if a bear tries to force entry. His door (as already mentioned) is a handmade Z-batten door; when open, it rests against the clapboard siding of the cabin. (I remember that when I grew up, every home had Z-batten storm doors on the main entrances at the back of the house.) To compensate for snow blockage, he has windows that swing inward and are big enough for a man to crawl through. Bob says that the Z-batten door is not the original door for Cliff's cabin; the first one was a "half-door" built in two sections, such as would be used in a horse stable. In this case it was used to keep hunting beagles inside, and wild animals out, while still getting ventilation.

The hinges of the doors of Abe's and Ed's cabins came with the doors because the doors were originally sold as complete units, encased in a door box. They are inside hinges, which means they cannot be accessed from the outside when the doors are closed, and are protected from the elements. The hinges of the Z-batten door are attached to the outside of the door and facing, and were badly rusted but Cliff was not worried about it. Cabin owners accept that things are going to break down and decay over time, and need replacing.

The door clasps and handles are usually makeshift, again reflecting the DIY (do-it-yourself) mindset of the owners. The subsistence ethos of the past may no longer be, but

cabin owners still embrace it as far as their cabins are concerned. Abe's cabin has a regular doorknob, but he has also fashioned a sheet metal pull-handle that is anchored above the doorknob. Cliff's door is held closed with two handmade buttons or clasps cut from scraps of wood, secured to the doorframe through the centre with a common nail just tight enough to allow the button to be turned to fasten the door at the top and bottom of the frame. Inside, a D-shaped pull-handle is attached to the door, which is held shut with two hook-and-eye closures. These are the kind of fittings typically found on outbuildings. Cabin bush code requires that doors be unlocked, but also that users close them when they leave (Keith 1999).

4.11 Conclusion

These wilderness cabins of simple architectural construction are meant to be inconspicuous. Based in utility, the form originated in necessity, as part of subsistence way of life, but has evolved to a form now used for leisure. The cabins are still, however, built economically in keeping with the spirit of tradition, simplicity, sharing, survival and freedom. A utilitarian attitude toward the wilderness is reflected in the cabin architecture and the organization and use of space.

The cabin owners build without using formal plans, but with a visual plan in mind. They draw on informally learned generational knowledge of building and a resourceful do-it-yourself approach. The footprint of the cabin depends on the lay of the land and the direction of the trail; the direction of the trail depends on the natural objects in the

environment. The interior is oriented toward the trail and provides for occupants' basic needs.

The practice of repurposing used materials is such a crucial part of construction as to warrant further discussion in the following chapter.

Chapter 5: Materials and Repurposing

5.1 Introduction

Building a remote wilderness cabin involves using materials the builders have at hand, and materials to which they have free access. These are often used materials. The sources of materials and their repurposing reflect the building traditions of the past; present building practices; and changing forms and technological improvements in modern manufactured building materials. A self-reliant attitude comes from a past when people built their own homes, boats, and almost everything else they needed. As in the past, building materials and objects that have potential reuse value are not thrown away but saved for later use. Anything salvageable can go into a cabin. The habit of "saving everything" runs counter to the throwaway attitude toward objects in a consumer-centred society. Builders today have easy access to building materials. Labour costs more than materials, thus time is valued over materials—and this results in discards. Cabin builders thus avail of spinoffs, spoils, and excesses generated by modern building practices. Technological improvements in building materials and the home improvements also create reusable castoffs. The three main categories of materials used in cabins are: new things; used and re-imagined material; and items acquired at little or no cost via social networks.

Cabin owners are frugal for a number of reasons. One is that it is simply customary. Another is that the owner cannot be there all the time to make sure the cabins are secure, and it would be senseless to build something of monetary value.

One of the main influences on cabin design is that manufactured building materials come in standard sheet sizes of 4' x 8'. Abe explains that a 12' x 16' structure will take approximately six sheets for sub-flooring and fourteen sheets for the walls. Most builders use these sizes and the manufactured forms to their advantage; they make as few cuts as possible, reducing the labour time. The measurements of the cabins in this study differ depending on the method that was used to construct them. Abe's cabin measures 12'3" by 16'3½" (373.5 by 496cm); Cliff's is 12'⅛" by 15'11⅞" (366cm by 487.5cm); and Ed's is 11'3□" by 14'3⅓" (344cm by 435cm).

The process of change and improvement in building materials is linked to changes in industry building methods over time. Lightweight balloon framing, for instance, became popular for houses in the 1850s; it developed with the growth of sawmills and nail factories in the early 1800s. Balloon framing used slighter wood at closer spacing than earlier methods, and joints secured with nails; it required less skill and fewer tools, thus saving time and labour (Rempel 1967:114-118; Kniffen and Glassie 1966:42). The objective of technological development in the building industry is to build efficiently, which is also the cabin builders' goal. They too like to build as easily and cheaply as possible.

To build "something from nothing" is a matter of great satisfaction for the owners, who have inherited the principle from the subsistence living of the past. It also depends on present community contacts. Details of an established system of reciprocity are woven through accounts of acquiring used materials. Assistance is often given freely as well.

Not only did men give Ed building materials from their sheds, for instance, but fifteen of them helped build the cabin in one weekend. There exists a web of debt and obligations to help one another in the future (see Faris 1972: 124 for a discussion of the Newfoundland concept of "debt in obligations"). Abe's friend helped install the cedar shakes on his cabin, and he says that if someone refuses to help out, then he is not a friend. Bob says, "if you haven't got friends, you got nothing." For him, friends are equivalent to wealth. These cabins were built through manual labour based in sweat equity and emotional capital between friends (see Nowotny 1981).

No objects at the cabins have been repurposed to create any form of folk art that is typical of similar cabins in other places (Greenfield 1986). Items are used purely for practical purposes only, not for the sake of recycling or art (Correll and Polk 1999). Walter Peddle has shown that reuse of materials has a long history in local building culture (2002, 1984); a good example is the use of shipping crates for sheathing in the walls of summer houses in St. Pierre and Miquelon (Rodrigue Girardin and Pocius 2003:169).

5.2 New Items

Few new building materials are ever used in cabins, a fact of which the owners are very proud—they make the point repeatedly. To make do with very little gives them a strong sense of personal satisfaction, empowerment, and connection to the past. They do not think of the cabins in terms of permanence, or as property investments, and this gives them great latitude in building.

The few new materials that are used are self-harvested, freely given, or acquired at minimal cost. New materials include wire nails, gang nails, self-harvested lumber, and roofing. Some cabin builders collect fallen nails at building sites, where contractors leave them because they are cheap and it is not cost effective for their own workers to collect them; thus, the nails are free to anyone willing to pick them up.

Bob, who built Cliff's cabin, cut the logs that make up much of the structure. He got the lumber for the home he built in 1974 the same way: he cut and hauled the logs out by horse and sleigh, and had them sawn at a local sawmill. This was how most men built houses in this province until very recently. Cabin builders use mostly rough lumber, which was also common in house building as a cost-saving measure (Omohundro 1994: 250). Bob explains that one of the main beams in his house is a slab, which he defines as a piece of timber sawn on two sides with bark left on the other sides; he says it does not matter if it is rough because it is used in a place where it is not visible. In cabins, use of rough grade stock is the norm, and owners do not care if it is visible. Abe notes that some cabins are built with round starrigans (spruce saplings), which are even rougher than rough lumber.

New items in cabins are seldom purchased products. Abe's cabin, for instance, has front corner caps that are new, but made by himself from black spruce which he limbed, debarked, split in half, painted black, and applied to corners. (Abe refers to these both as "black spruce sticks" and "starrigans.") Another example, at Cliff's cabin, are the spruce posts with bark intact, erected inside to support the deteriorating roof.

At Ed's cabin there are more signs of modern building technology. Stamps on the aspenite sheeting date it to 2002, and new gang nails were used for the trusses. The new 1"x11" t-and-g boards that cover the studwork and inner walls were inexpensively obtained in the early 1980s, when aspenite sheets replaced them for general utility work. Retailers now carry only 1x6, 1x7, and 1x8 t-and-g for interior walls and floors, where they are usually for decorative purposes. In the other cabins, the t-and-g board similarly represents an older building technology.

Abe's stove is new, as mentioned in the previous chapter, built specially for him by a metal shop. Still, the metal pipes welded to the it for legs show it is not a high style mass produced factory product.

5.3 Used Materials

5.3.1 Home Renovations

Home renovations and repairs are a major source of used materials for cabin builders. At one time, building materials from any torn-down home or building were saved for later reuse. Sometimes entire old houses were reused as outbuildings. Examples of the reuse of materials abound in the research on building in Newfoundland (Mellin 2002; Peddle 2003). Today, most materials come from renovations undertaken to update styles, improve energy efficiency, implement newer building codes, or use products that lessen upkeep. The technological improvements in building materials indirectly create a source of excess or outmoded materials that work perfectly well for a cabin.

The windows in the cabins, for instance, are almost all from home renovations; they were not energy efficient models. During renovations, such castoff items are often just laid out on lawns for the taking, given away, or sold at little cost. Sometimes they are stored in sheds for possible future use. The larger front window and the smaller back window at Abe's cabin are vinyl sliders that were popular in the 1970s but replaced in the1980s by double-glazed, wooden casement windows, which improved energy efficiency. Energy conservation was driven by the oil crisis of the 1980s and the subsequent increase in heating costs and economic recession. The aluminum-awning windows at Cliff's cabin likely came from an institution that replaced them around the same time. Aluminum windows are draughty due to the contraction of aluminum in low temperatures, but this is not a problem at the cabins where free firewood is used. Doors are the same, and also end up in cabins as a result of home improvement strategies (figure 24). Bob explains that he and his friends work in trades and contracting, and have direct access to these kinds of older and obsolete building materials from their job sites.

Cabin owners in this study acquire materials through their community social networks and by word of mouth, but there is a newer popular source for used materials: classified advertisements on the internet and in print. Used inexpensive (and sometimes free) materials can be found at www.kijiji.ca, www.nlclassifieds.com, www.nlbuysell.com, and in the "Buy and Sell Magazine" (a weekly Newfoundland-based classified ad publication). The commonest items are windows and doors, and the ads consistently describe the items as "Great for the Cabin (or Shed)." Clearly, the target market is DIY

building, especially of cabins. The continued demand for these materials suggests that cabin culture is thriving.

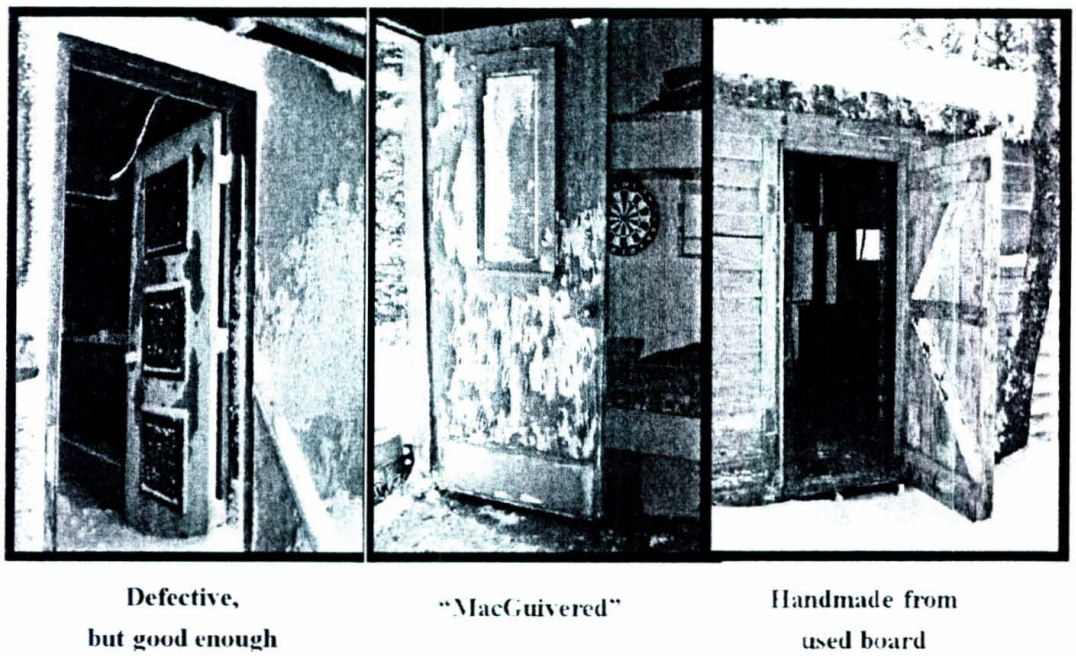

Figure 24 Different types of doors but useful for cabins

As mentioned in Chapter Four, nails are among the few new items used in cabin construction. But even they can be previously used, as they once were in housing—they used to be drawn from old buildings that were torn down, and straightened for reuse. Men saved nails in buckets, tubs, or boxes in their sheds. A number of my informants have nail collections, and I have heard many stories about their continued existence. Paul, a carpenter, told me that his father straightens and reuses used nails, and has several large

buckets of them in his shed.[26] I remember my own father's nail collection; he often gave me the task of straightening the nails, which for me was a form of play. Rempel notes that nails and hardware were in short supply during settlement years, and were thus precious items since they came from England only twice a year (1967:251). The reliance on imports was a fact of life in Newfoundland. People being far from rich, the habit of saving things became ingrained in the culture, where it remains not as a matter of necessity but by choice. Still, most builders today use new nails.

One popular material for cabins is the lightweight faux-wood manufactured panel board that came in 4'x8' sheets and was used for interior wall finishes in houses in the 1960s. By the 1980s it was no longer stylish, and people were stripping it from their homes. Most of the cabins in this study have some of it; Bob says it is ideal for cabins, since it is free, easy to transport, resilient, and not damaged by moisture-laden damp environments. Drywall from more recent renovations is never used. As previously mentioned, it is too weak, and it cannot be removed from walls intact in any case; it is a non-reusable throw-away material.

Styrofoam or pink or yellow fibreglass insulation is used to insulate the walls of all three cabins in this study, but this is unusual because cabins in this area normally have open stud work and rafters. Typically, the only barrier to the outside to reduce drafts is the tarpaper in which the buildings are wrapped.

[26] August 4, 2009.

The plywood in the trusses at Cliff's cabin was taken from a cellar, stable, shed or some other outbuilding, rather than from a renovation.

All the cabins have a sink sitting in either a used cabinet, or a roughly made cabinet. Bob explains that because he is a plumber, he had easy access to second-hand sinks that were destined for disposal, but ideal for cabin use. One camper explained that if there is no sink, dishes are washed in a bucket, usually a salt beef bucket.

Stoves are frequently replaced, as they have a tendency to "burn out" or develop holes in their walls. Burnt-out stoves are usually just set outside the cabin. Stoves are difficult to bring to or take from the sites due to their weight and volume. If a lightweight model cannot be made at a sheet metal shop from galvanized sheet metal, or fashioned from a metal oil drum,[27] most cabin owners use stoves no longer wanted in homes (Bob once got one in exchange for painting a house). Ed and Cliff use energy-efficient space heater stoves produced in the 1980s.

5.3.2 Re-imagined Materials

I use the phrase "re-imagined materials" to refer to items that are used for a purpose other than what they were originally intended for. For example, Abe used a fire alarm bell to make a chimney cap (also known as a spark arrestor) for his cabin's stove funnel. He explained that at an institution where he was teaching, the fire alarm system was being

[27] Images of sheet metal camp stoves are available in Cyril Goodyear (2001: 77-81). *Against the Elements: Surviving in Newfoundland and Labrador Great Outdoors*. Canada Council for the Arts. St. John's: Creative Book Publishing.

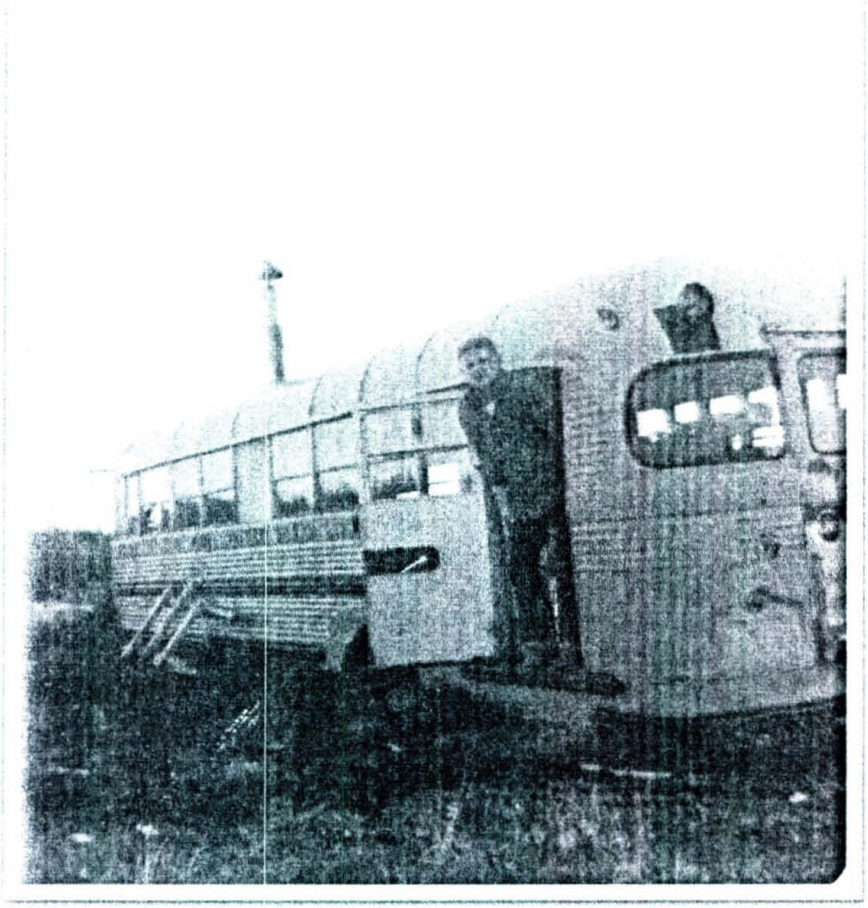

Figure 25 The bus cabin circa 1978

The foundation posts of Abe's cabin are re-adapted materials, as they come from a discarded creosote-coated utility pole (likely acquired from a linesman friend), sawn and fitted for use in the foundation. These utility poles are rot-resistant (some are even made of cedar, which is more rot-resistant than other wood) and they are often reused when discarded by utility companies doing pole line repairs.

A woven lock-crimp metal grate is used for the doorstep to Abe's cabin. It rests on a piece of 4x4 at the door sill, and is laid on an angle to the ground. This grate was previously used for some commercial purpose. Abe extolled its benefits: debris falls from footwear through the mesh before entering the cabin; he can set his small Hibachi barbeque on it. For his front step, Cliff has a wooden shipping pallet; if it breaks, he uses it for firewood and replaces it with another pallet.[28]

Using one of the builders' favourite expressions, Abe says, "you have to be able to 'MacGyver' to survive in this kind of place." His cabin contains some good examples of improvisational re-imagining. In one corner of the doorframe, a heavy-duty metal door hinge meant for an outbuilding is mounted as a bracket for a gas lantern. He also made two round wall brackets for holding lamps and mounted them on inside walls at a safe distance from the stove and ceiling. He notes that they are similar to, "but not fancy like," the lamp wall brackets used in rural Newfoundland homes before electricity.

At Abe's cabin, two azure blue steel cabinets hang on the walls, one above the table and chairs, the other on the gable end wall by the stove, above the woodbox. Foodstuff is kept in these cabinets because they close tightly and keep out mice, rats, and squirrels. Abe says they are the type of cabinets used in mechanics' shops for storing tools. He found them on the floor of the cabin when he took possession of it, and they looked as if they were never used.

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[28]These pallets are adapted to multiple uses. Paul, a carpenter, said his father built a fence around his house entirely from pallet boards (Keller, Rusty. 2009 "Building Something from Pallet Boards, The Backwoodsman 32 (3): 64-5.

Inside all the cabins are signs posted for visitors. At Abe's and Cliff's, they are pieces of corrugated cardboard torn from a box and wrapped in clear plastic cellophane to protect them from moisture. In Abe's cabin the sign is duct-taped to one of the blue cabinets, and in Cliff's cabin it is nailed to the inside of the door. Abe's cabin also has a glossy wooden plaque warning visitors of bears, with a wordplay on "beer" and "bear."

5.3.3 Discarded and Unsalable Items

Cabin builders are not bound by building codes as homeowners are. They are able to avail of materials discarded as homeowners renovate in order to meet stricter building code standards, or improve the energy efficiency of their homes.

Sometimes reusable items become available for free or at deep discounts because they have manufacturing defects, damage from transport, or were incorrectly measured for custom orders. They are discards of industry, but fine for cabin use.

A good example of discards are the 1x11 t-and-g boards at Ed's cabin. They are largely discontinued in favor of aspenite, which saves installation time, since it can be applied in sheets, is strong, and does not warp like wood boards do. Also, t-and-g in roofs can make it impossible to find the source of a leak, because water tracks in the grooves, far from the actual leak. Although it can seem extravagant, by modern standards, to see t-and-g gracing the inner walls of a cabin (t-and-g being expensive today), it was acquired cheaply at the time the changeover from t-and-g to aspenite occurred. (T-and-g technique has been around for centuries; it was used by joiners in Britain, for instance, to deal with

the problem of wood expansion in damp environments, where the expansion and contraction of the wood avoided gaps and stressing of wood: Peddle 2002).

In my experience with this type of building, I have seen no cases of reuse of materials to create art, either inside or outside the premises. The cabin owners create only that which is useful.

5.4 Conclusion

The cabin owner-builders of Blue Wilds build their cabins utilizing inexpensive, sometimes repurposed materials obtained through work and social networks, where principles of reciprocity prevail. This is a place where traditional and modern ideas converge. The owners practice economic restraint, like their forefathers, by saving materials. They take advantage of spinoff materials from modern building practices, and excesses generated by technological improvement in building materials. Materials are considered to be good for a cabin if they are free or inexpensive, suited to the environment, tough, easy to transport, easily modified—in short, if they can do the job. The builders are good at modifying and adapting materials to their needs. Cabins are emblematic of how Newfoundland as a nation was built from scratch from the ground up, with simple structures---for building is never just about nails and boards. Saving useful things that have potential secondary usage recalls the past and overlaps with the present, and is still important in wilderness cabin construction.

Chapter 6: The Gendered Architecture of Cabins

6.1 Introduction

Blue Wilds wilderness cabins are spaces that are predominantly built, used and defined by males. Built for leisure and recreation, they differ greatly from domestic architecture. Homes in Newfoundland are generally viewed as female domains, especially the interior; the male sphere of influence resides more in the construction and upkeep of the home. At the remote cabins, male involvement and control of interior space is more prominent than in their homes. The expressions of a male sense of space or of power in the cabins are culture specific.

There is unanimous agreement among the interviewees who use the cabins that they are male domains. For example, Abe said that a woman's tolerance for the roughness of the space and of the wilderness is much lower than that of a man. He said that in all his years of experience as a wilderness guide, it still is the exception to see a woman hunter in the wilderness. His ex-wife was an avid hunter and spent time at the cabin with him. Still, he does not feel that women in general have the same affinity for the wilderness or the tolerance for its discomforts as men do.

Cliff said that his cabin is mostly used as a place for "the guys" (or "the b'ys") to get together. They bring women there only on rare occasions, somewhat like special guests. He adds that his wife has only been there once or twice—she does not have the same interest in being there, nor the emotional connection to the place. She like the outdoors, he says, but has no desire to go to the cabin even for one night. In an interview with Bob and his wife Edith, Edith said that Bob is "tough as nails" but has a big heart—in other

words, she endorsed a tough male image. She stayed at the cabin overnight occasionally, but found the roadless journey there too difficult. They had another other cabin, rated as a "cottage" because it had more amenities and was accessible by road, but they gave it up because spending time there was not relaxing. They had a lot more visitors at this cabin, and for Edith, the extra entertaining meant more housework and less leisure time. She said it was like having two houses to keep clean. Bob and Edith's experiences at the cabin were dramatically different, and are representative of the norm at these sites.

Ed's stories about the cabin are almost exclusively about spending time there with other men. When I visited the sites to do fieldwork, I saw the same pattern: the majority of people involved in wilderness outdoor activities were males. Daytime visitors I spoke with said that "the wife" only occasionally comes with them to do a bit of ice fishing. In my own experience, when I made the slightest comment regarding discomfort during a snowmobile trip, I was labelled a "whiny complainer." The label suggests that females are outsiders to this realm, and that any sign of weakness is unacceptable to a male ideal of hardiness.

6.2 Becoming a Man and Cultural Ideas of Manhood

For men, the cabins are places to get away from the pressures of everyday life, to relax and enjoy themselves. It is a space where a man can define his own masculinity. A common thread in many cultures is that a male is not born a man; he has to "become" a man through his actions or through rites of passage. Furthermore, they must continually

renew this status, especially if challenged. Andalusian men, for example, do this through aggression, according to Brandes (1980:9-10). In other places, extreme environments like wilderness areas can be proving grounds that physically and mentally challenge a man. It is doubtful that males build or visit cabins for the sole purpose of proving manliness, or demonstrating masculinity—but these are things traditionally done by men. At the cabin, they engage in mundane activities such as cooking, eating, drinking, playing cards, fishing, hunting, tinkering, and riding on motorized recreational vehicles. There is no overt intent to assert masculinity; rather, the men are escaping to nature, and their unassuming approach to their cabins expresses a simple desire for freedom. They negotiate the spaces on their own terms, and engage in recreational activities based on personal preferences and common interests. In this way, spending time at the cabin is more about male identity, commonality and connections.

Far removed from the thoughts of the cabin owners are cultural mores about males that originated in the greater context of North America, where ideas of modernization stand in conflict with the impulse to preserve or recapture "natural" masculinity. Some English Victorians, for instance, proposed that the wilderness caused males to return to a wild state, and the role of the more docile and refined female was to control that side of males. In late nineteenth century America, there were concerns that industrialism and urbanism had a negative "softening" effect on males, and boys' summer camps and social programs were initiated to deal with the perceived feminising effect of urbanization (Barksdale Maynard 2005:108-109; 1999: Abigail Van Slyck: 2006). Outdoor activities were supposed to make them masculine. Links were made between loss of wilderness, camps,

national parks, urbanization, a romantic view of wilderness, and the maintenance of masculinity. Wealthy Americans sent their sons to extreme locales to "build character" and be shaped into "real" men. Some Americans sent their sons on sailing expeditions to the Arctic with Captain Bob Bartlett of Brigus (Newfoundland) to endure the hardships of the voyage. Bartlett represented the essence of masculinity, because he knew the ways of the wilderness and extreme climates, and his voyages were seen by some as an initiation into manhood.

Newfoundland culture, unlike that of most of North America and Western Europe, was not exposed to large scale industrialism and urbanism, and was not significantly affected by modernization until the 1960s. Opportunities for males to "become men" were built into the way of living so that for generations, the ways of the wilderness were commonplace, and male societal roles were clear-cut.

A man's knowledge of how to live and survive in the wilderness, today as in the past, is learned informally from other men. John Warren identified the dissemination of hunting knowledge in Newfoundland as passed through patrilineal, vertical and horizontal transmission (2009). Despite the modernization of Newfoundland, these practices continue. In contrast, the opportunity to learn about the wilderness rarely occurs in a natural social setting for women.[29] Recent efforts by government to develop women's wilderness training programs has not immediately translated into greater participation by

[29] Governments and tourism businesses in Newfoundland offer some courses in wilderness training. The Provincial Government's Department of Environment and Conservation arranges weekend workshops called "Becoming an Outdoors Woman" (BOW). BOW programs started in Newfoundland in 1998. They began in the United States in 1991, and their popularity spread to Canada. Outdoor retail stores like L. L. Bean in the U.S. offer "clinics" in wilderness training for American women.

women in wilderness recreation. Cabin owners say they have not seen an increase in female visitors to the Blue Wilds.

Some feminist architecture and gender researchers, such as Daphne Spain, see withholding from females knowledge that is traditionally the "property" of males as a way men can maintain social status and power, and keep women subordinate (1992: 67-79). I found that men do not wilfully withhold knowledge of the wilderness or building skills, nor is the generational transmission of knowledge from male to male an intentional striving to preserve manliness or social status. It simply rather that the women are not interested in knowing about building and the wilderness. Bob said that if he stayed at home he would be underfoot or in his wife's way. Edith confirmed several times that when her husband was at the cabin or in the woods he was "out of her hair" and she could carry on with her own plans. Abe acknowledged that women can be capable as men in the wilderness, but in his experience they do not have the same level of commitment to wilderness activity, especially if the going gets tough. Ed claimed that all Newfoundland men know how to build, and implied it was a natural part of being a man. These comments suggest that men do not derive special social status from having wilderness knowledge and building skill; women do not often participate due to their own preferences and agency, not because knowledge is deliberately withheld. Women who do

have hunting and carpentry skills, however, are more notable than men with the same skills, because it is still unusual for them.[30]

The cultural issues of manliness and its supposed loss in America, says Tom Carter, were driven by "urban angst" (2004: 74). There was tension between the values of male virility and refinement. Victorian sensibilities held that man was to be tamed by the genteel "angel in the house" (an expression popularized by a 1854 poem of the same name).[31] In the late nineteenth century, women were brought into men's work camps to create civility, as moral guardians of the men. Even though the stereotype projects a negative view of men, the loss of manliness through urbanization was still seen as something that needed fixing. A related notion was that the nation was in danger of losing touch with its pioneering spirit, which had shaped the national character of America; a return to the wilderness was meant to foster a "civilized manliness" (Carter 2004: 74-5). During this time, camping and summer camps became popular activities that persist today. Summer camps, in particular, were designed for males only, with the goal of teaching the boys how to be tough through the experience of "roughing it." Masculinity, camping and the outdoor experience thus have deep historical roots.

Masculinity and camping in the nineteenth century were also linked to beliefs that hard physical toil is how males make the transition into manhood. Mechanized and urbanized corporate America required little physical work. Nineteenth century camps were

[30] Long-time hunter Cecilia Smith of Hawkes Bay, Newfoundland and furniture maker Elizabeth Gale of Pomely Cove, White Bay, Newfoundland are examples who demonstrate that these skills are available to women if they so choose.
[31] By one Coventry Patmore.

architecturally designed to promote masculinity among boys by providing enough roughness to counter the effeminizing effect of urbanization (Maynard 1999, 2005: 108; Van Slyck 2006). The summer camp was not introduced into Newfoundland, which at that time was rough enough.[32] Boys and men camped in the wilderness any time they wished. It was a part of their everyday lives, for the wilderness commons was on their doorsteps — merely an extension of their back yards.

6.3 The Male-Built and Male-Maintained Cabin

The Blue Wilds cabin owners all have "generational building skills" informally learned and passed down through generations of men.[33] They share an interest in gathering at the cabins to spend time with friends. This is far from the cabins' original working use as hunting bases.

Abe learned carpentry from his grandfather and father, who learned from their fathers and grandfathers. Abe's father was illiterate, but knew enough about numbers for carpentry.[34] Abe was taught hunting and wilderness skills by his grandfather, and Abe in turn passed the knowledge to his son, who also works in the building industry. His hunting, building, and wilderness skills are deeply connected to his male identity.

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[32] Boys' camps or the Boy Scout movement were slow to develop in Newfoundland. Boy Scouts began in 1913, but, it was not until 1921 that the organization was established in the urban area of St. John's (The Book of Newfoundland, vol. 1: 295). Some thought that having Boy Scouts or Girl Guides was a measure of progress. By the 1960s, Scouts and Guides were more widespread in rural Newfoundland.
[33] Garland Elsworth, master carpenter, personal conversation with author, March 30, 2010.
[34] Abe noted proudly that his father was also a good union man who protected the rights of workers.

Cliff, the son of a carpenter, considers his friends and himself as skilled and capable handymen. Unlike his deceased father, who was one of the previous owners of the cabin and used it for hunting, Cliff does not go there to hunt, but only to spend time with friends. Because this cabin belonged to his father, Cliff has a strong attachment to it; it holds memories of his father and thus incorporates Cliff's identity as a male.

Cliff explained that even though his name is on the permit to occupy and he pays the yearly fee for the permit, the cabin also belongs to his buddies; it was the same for his father and friends. If anything needs repairs, one of the friends will probably do it, and cover any expense as well. One of them, for instance, put in a new chimney and braced it. There is an understanding that this is a shared space, and the friends are free to use the cabin and do repairs, with or without Cliff. For him, male friends are an important part of his identity.

Bob is one of the other previous co-owners of Cliff's cabin. As his own father did, Bob built his house by harvesting and hauling logs from the forest with horse and slide, using his bare hands and physical strength. He did the same for some of the timbers at the cabin. Bob's young adult son also built his own house. All the original builders of Cliff's cabin were adept builders and handymen who contributed materials, time, skill and labour to the cabin. The cabin was used for fishing or rabbit-hunting with beagles. For Bob, the cabin embodies the close ties to his friends.

Ed is a dump truck operator. His father was a carpenter, and built their family home. Ed does not build, but he is surrounded by a community of friends who do, and fifteen of

them built the cabin in one weekend. Ed relies on his friends for building expertise, and he simply follows their instructions.

Ed shared an anecdote about one unconventional building technique. He and a friend were at the cabin for a few days to do repairs. They were installing a propane stove but forgot their hand drill. They wanted to run a copper pipe through the back wall close to the floor and attach it to an external tank. His friend used a shotgun to blast a hole through the base of the wall. Ed did not hear the gunshot as he was asleep in the bunk. He was amazed the man used the gun for that purpose—but it got the job done. Males are proud of their improvisational solutions. The ability to adapt things is highly valued in Newfoundland culture, a skill that is sometimes referred to as like being able "to put an ass in a cat" (Decker 2010).

The almost exclusively male use of the Blue Wilds cabins resonates with a study done in western Newfoundland in 2001 by Melanie Osmond regarding patterns of participation rates by adults in outdoor recreational activities such as walking, hiking, camping, fishing and hunting. The study revealed that there is considerable difference in gender behaviour in relation to the outdoors. Osmond concluded that gender is the single most important factor in rates of participation in outdoor recreational activities, but the choice and motivation for taking part in outdoor sports and recreation differs by gender (25-7). Male-oriented outdoor recreational events usually relate to hunting, birding, and salmon fishing, and include a sense of adventure and risk-taking (Osmond 2001, 21-6; Manning 1999). According to Osmond, women prefer ice fishing, but even in that their

participation rate is low. Her study indicated that women participated less in outdoor activities due to family commitments, and for other reasons,[35] and that the strongest predictor of participation in outdoor recreation is gender (a finding supported in the example of Blue Wilds cabin culture).

Holdsworth found that built environments are unlikely to reflect straightforward "monolithic" or single gender involvement (1995: 21). The Blue Wilds cabins are used mostly by males, but are not exclusive to them. It is not that men do not allow women into these spaces, but that women prefer not to go there. Females choose to accompany a male rather than visit the wilderness alone. It is unusual to see an all-female group in a wilderness cabin.

In addition to cabins, outbuildings and outdoor spaces are similar male-specific spaces linked to work, and also associated with male identity, socializing and relaxation (Mellin 2003:149-153; Pocius 1991). Sheds, for example, are outbuildings used for storage, tools, and as work areas. Sheds and cabins are utilitarian structures, similar in scale and construction (King 2000). They can also be social spaces where men can share a drink, talk, and do things they enjoy, such as tinkering and doing repairs. Newfoundland performer and songwriter Wayne Chaulk of the group Buddy Wasisname and the Other Fellers highlights this behaviour in his humorous "The Shed Song" (2001), in which men converse about "the beauty of a piston" or "the marvels of a trike." On snowmobile trips

[35] It was also indicated in Osmond's research that men have more expendable time and money for outdoor recreational activities than women. The choices and frequency of women's participation in outdoor recreation are influenced by women's sense of obligations to the demands of their home life. In other words, women have less time and money for outdoor recreation than men do.

to my research sites, I have observed such "man talk" about the attributes of machinery, snowmobiles and ATVs being a favourite topic.

From boyhood to adulthood, a male may not consider a home a "male space" because he has to share it with a mother, sisters, wife, or daughters. These spaces are often defined and controlled by females and have what is perceived to be "a feminine touch." They are more "refined" and "decorative" than a male might have them. Wilderness cabins, on the other hand, are more like sheds, garages, fish stages and other types of outbuildings, in that men are in control of them. They are typically rough and imperfect, environments where males can "be men," the stereotypical "escape from the wife." In Britain, "escape from the wife" is mentioned by men as a motivation to go to their allotment gardens (King 2005). The motive has also been noted in *Men and Sheds* by Gordon Thorburn (2002: 9). Primmer found that Fogo Island fishing stages are places men go to be "away from women" (1983:26).

Mellin describes remote cabins today as traditionally male spaces, used since the 1970s by both genders for leisure and recreation (2003:153). He was probably referring to recreational cottages, which are often only a short distance from communities, are usually accessible by road, and have more amenities than remote cabins. Remote cabins or "true" cabins remain male-dominated spaces.

Willis, who built several houses, noted that a man's attachment to a house, which he builds himself, is different from that of his wife. He said that when a man builds a house with his own two hands, every piece of wood is harvested from the forest with his own

physical might and sweat—he feels as if part of him goes into every piece of wood that goes into the house. A man has a different kind of experiential and emotional attachment to a house that he built himself than a woman who inhabits the same house. This is also true for cabins. They are artefacts related to a way of life, deeply rooted in male building traditions of the past. Ed noted that with modernization, these skills are at risk of being lost.

6.4 Cabin Exteriors and Interiors

Both the cabins' exteriors and interiors project a male sense of space. The owners are unconcerned about how the cabins look; they do not treat them like a main residence. They are concerned only that they are adequate for how they are used, and the structures never exceed a manageable 12x16 configuration. These buildings provide only basic amenities and are never meant for public display, unlike main residences.

6.4.1 Basic Interiors of the Cabins

The cabin space is essentially an outdoor room in the wilderness. Structural elements that serve as a mark of transition to the interior are the door and threshold; when a person enters the cabin, the physical penetration is abrupt and immediate (Van Gennep 1960: 20-5). Although these inner spaces are a mix of private and public realms, there is no clear distinction between them. When two or more people are at a cabin, whether male or

mixed-gender groups, there is little personal privacy. This is typically less important for males than for females, making the space more user-friendly to males.

The décor of the interiors reflects a male sense of space, with no touch of the refinement culturally associated with females. Like the exteriors, the interiors are austere, with minimal embellishments. These buildings function to meet the needs of their primarily male users and do not provide creature comforts. The male cabin owners enjoy the cabin for what it does not have.

Cliff did not put the pictures of moose in his cabin, but he left them there as they represent the rugged world of hunting. He can see a real moose just by looking through the window, but the pictures remind him of how cabin ownership and access can get complicated.

The double bunk sleeping compartments, made from rough undressed lumber, are as hard and rough as the ground that the foundation rests on. The men, however, are not likely to complain about discomfort, for this would go against the stereotype of male hardiness. There is little more than a sleeping bag, sponge, camp roll or blankets between the boards and the camper.

One of the biggest concerns inside the cabin is the stove, which generates as much conversation as heat—the men have many stories about stoves. This is not surprising as it is the single crucial element. It is the focal point of the room, and the core of heating, cooking, cleaning and drying systems. It is the item most often replaced because stoves tend to burn out. The men discuss how they are maintained, acquired, or made by other

men. Usually the stove is a handmade 12x16 inch metal box or an oil barrel, but some cabins have old wood-burning space heaters.

For males, the beauty of the cabins is that outfitting them in whatever way you can is more important than decor. The cabins and their contents are a bricolage of castoffs and reused materials. The cabins are kept plain and bare not only to avoid theft or vandalism but because it suits the wear and tear of recreational activities. There is a certain aesthetic in the reuse and repurposing, however, and the austerity that fits the cabin into the land.

6.5 Cabin Cleaning

Abe observed that men and women have a vastly different approach to cabin spaces, especially for cleaning. He claimed that the first thing a woman wants to do when she arrives at the cabin is to clean it. A man, he says, does not see cleaning as the first order of priority. Another informant said, "I suppose women think men are slobs." At the cabin, men are unlikely to go about housekeeping in a careful manner. This difference in approach suggests that cultural conditioning persists even in this relaxed environment. In a cabin there is little separation between the inside space and the dirt of the outside, and a certain amount of dirt is inevitable. The space reinforces the cultural expectation that men can be a bit dirty because having some tolerance of dirt suggests that a man is hardy and tough (Van Slyck 2006).

The rules at a cabin are not the same as those for a house. Boots are worn indoors (whereas footwear is normally removed when entering a Newfoundland home). Abe

wears a pair of worn cut-off rubber boots as slippers in the cabin. He calls them his "fairy boots," because he left a long tongue of rubber at the front and heel to make them easy to pull on and off, and scooped the sides low around the ankles.[36] They protect his feet from the rough surface and the debris scattered about. Each cabin has a flop mop and a straw broom; debris from the outdoors and the firewood are swept up, and the mop is used to soak up water tracked indoors. In a home, strict control of dirt and germs is part of the cleaning objective, but this is unrealistic in the wilderness. The cabin experience puts men in direct contact with the raw organic elements of life.

Cabin owners mentioned other matters of cleaning. There is no indoor plumbing, and getting water for cooking and cleaning involves walking for ten to fifteen minutes to a stream and bringing it back in a bucket. Dirty water from cleaning or dishwashing at Abe's cabin is caught in a five-gallon bucket beneath the sink, and dumped in the outhouse. A wash basin is used for washing face and hands. Abe says that if he is at the cabin for more than a few days in the summer, he hangs a black bag of water from a porcelain insulator above the cabin door to heat by the sun, and he showers on the doorstep. Several owners say they shave every day using a hand razor, but for others, not having to shave or bathe is an expression of their manliness and their idea of relaxation. A scruffy appearance is not a concern if there are only males present.

Other issues with cleaning have to do with providing for basic needs and managing garbage disposal. Wood ash is cleaned from the stoves to improve their efficiency. Cliff

[36] Fairy boots are similar to goat boots: cut-off rubbers used in the pursuit of goats or sheep (Story, Kirwin, Widdowson. 1982: 218). They are also called "go rubbers," used in rural Newfoundland prior to modernization, to be pulled on quickly for a trip to the outhouse.

notes that the ashes act as fertilizer (potash), and it is scattered over the snow, care being taken that there are no live sparks. The ashes are considered good for the environment. Not so the burnt-out stoves left outside; snow covers a lot of garbage around the cabins, even though the owners have intentions to remove it. Bob said they had to clean up the site of Ed's cabin by burning mattresses and bedding ruined by squirrels. Garbage is brought home for disposal, although Abe sometimes digs a pit to bury food waste. A sign posted in Cliff's cabin pleads, "Use but do not abuse, do not leave garbage. Thank-you." This sign asks visitors to take their garbage with them, such as beer, liquor, and soft drink bottles and cans. Although a lax attitude prevails, the men do have a certain standard of what is acceptable, especially as to garbage. Garbage can attract wild animals and pests, and create other hazards.

6.6 Social Behaviour

In North America, there is a certain cultural negativity toward the idea of "idle" play (Aaron 1999: 8-9), even though play is an innate part of human nature. The boundaries between work and play are sometimes blurred, especially for the men at Blue Wilds cabins. For them, part of being at the cabin is to have fun, or to engage in play, but this often involves building, doing repairs, and tinkering. Abe said that fixing up the cabin is not real work—it has to be enjoyable because otherwise he would not do it. This kind of activity is a form of leisure (not work) and an expression of male identity. Carpentry, other than at the cabin, is "real work" for Abe because that is how he earns a living; at his job, he has a boss to answer to, but at his cabin, he is his own boss. Sharing the work at

the cabin with other males is about camaraderie, and confirming friendship. One cabin owner claimed that this activity is not of interest to women and is one of the reasons his wife does not go to the cabin.

The time spent at the cabins is dramatically different from the time spent at the owners' homes. At the cabin, normal activities are suspended. A state of liminality occurs because the owners have been released from their normal routines, obligations, and ways of being in their everyday lives (Van Gennep 1960: 11-12, 21; Turner and Turner 1978: 6). In this way, the cabins provide a break or a mental vacation for the men. The suspension of time is an effect difficult to duplicate at home. Abe said that at the cabin, not only is work enjoyable, but his bedtime and waking times are earlier than usual. The rhythms of nature become the time regulator, and people are more active during daylight hours, especially outdoors. At night, human activity happens inside.

Cabin spaces are both egalitarian and hierarchical; local residents and the males in this study stress the former. This social frame of mind is common to Newfoundland rural communities (Omohundro 1994: 70, 223; Mellin 2003: 67; Pocius 1991: 102). An ethos of egalitarianism is reflected in the use of rural outbuildings and land. Bunks of cabins, for instance, are one area that can be claimed as personal space. The bottom bunk is a privileged bunk, "the best one in the house," and is reserved for the owner (because the top bunks become uncomfortably hot as heat rises from the stove). Guests are given the top bunk, and when there are extra guests, some double up and share the bunk with others. With sleeping bags, the floor space also becomes a sleeping space. The owners

tell stories about having up to ten or twelve people at one time. Even when crowding occurs, there is willingness to make do, no matter how uncomfortable conditions may become. "My cabin is everyone's cabin," Abe declared.

For all-male gatherings in wilderness cabins, whether the objective is to partake in sports, recreation or just relaxation, male bonding is a major part of the experience. Bonding activities include hunting, fishing, cooking, playing cards, drinking, playing pranks, joking and interacting. Carter describes a summer camp in Henry Fork River, Idaho, where male bonding occurs in a camp away from the main camp that has women and children. He suggests that the upriver venue is an all-male space because men do more fishing than women (2004:84-5). The preference is a gender-specific choice.

In the Blue Wilds cabins men can be free in their expressions of being male. One May 24th holiday weekend, three fathers brought their teenage sons with them to Cliff's cabin for fishing.[37] The interviewees try to have a father-son outing at least once a year. Bob proudly shows photographs from one of those weekends, displaying the camaraderie between the male friends, fathers, and sons (Figure 26). The photographs have frozen in time the images of the men sharing food and drink. The sons seem destined to follow the same pattern of male behaviour. Cliff also mentioned that his group tries to set aside at least one weekend a year to be together at his cabin enjoying each other's company, free from the constraints of home. They can go around half-clothed if they like. "Nobody

[37] In Newfoundland, the May 24th holiday weekend is traditionally a men's weekend to go fishing. Lara Maynard also noted this (*Culture & Tradition* 1997: 14).

cares," said one cabin owner, "This is just a bunch of men, if you take your shirt off and go around in your shirt waist, or underwear, it does not matter."

Figure 26 Male Talk and time together set aside just for males

6.6.1 Cooking, Food, and Cooking Tools

Just as the men are not fussy about how they build a cabin or how it looks, they are not overly concerned about how food is cooked, served, or eaten. Cooking at the cabin is a casual affair. An anecdote illustrates: one of the owners and his buddies at the cabin were cooking a Jiggs dinner. When it was time to put the split peas for the Pease pudding into the pot, he realized he had forgotten to bring a pudding bag for the peas. Without

hesitation, his buddy grabbed a dirty old dishtowel hanging from an overhead beam, put the peas in it, tied it, and threw it into the pot of vegetables and salt meat cooking on the stove. The dishtowel was as black as could be, said the owner, but "I don't mind eating dirt so long as it is well cooked." Cyril Goodyear tells a similar pudding bag story (2001:26), suggesting that this was not something that a woman would do. A certain amount of dirt is expected as part of the cabin experience. A boil-up in the woods is no different–debris will get into a mug of tea or the food. The wilderness or the cabins are not places where it is acceptable to fuss or complain of such things. Being at the cabin is a chance for males to escape female or maternal standards. In her research on summer camps, Van Slyck noted that boys who were not willing to be dirty were scorned and tagged as sissies, and practising less hygiene and less personal modesty restored their male images (2006: 148).

Just as in construction, unconventional solutions are often found to the problems of dirt and dishes. At Cliff's cabin, for instance, a frying pan was propped against a tree, where it had been on an earlier visit because there was no soap to clean it. They put the dirty pan outside to avoid attracting vermin to the inside. At cabins without sinks dishes are simply washed in a bucket, sometimes without soap.

Cooking at the cabin is essentially a form of outdoor cooking like barbequing, which most men enjoy. Outdoor cooking, cooking game, barbequing and beer are all linked to males, and to leisure and recreation, and is an area in which men are willing to show expertise. In this setting, cooking is a novelty, whereas for women it is often viewed as

work.[38] Gender studies of cooking at home suggest that men take it less seriously than women do (DeVault 1997: 189). Men are more apt to cook if the method is barbequing, and they are often assigned this task. Cooking at the cabin is an extension of the stereotype of male outdoor cookery.

Foods taken to the cabin tend to be things that are easily boiled, fried or barbequed. Foods that can cook all in one pot are favoured, since the only cooking surface is the small top of the cabin stove. Perishable foods are avoided since there is no refrigeration. Tinned goods, like beans and soups, are convenient. The men remove the lid and place the can on stove to heat. Dried and salted foods are useful, such as dried peas, beans, or salt meat. The traditional Jiggs dinner requires salt meat or riblettes, root vegetables, turnip, cabbage, potato, and dried split peas. It is a popular and special meal at the cabin. One man said that he brings in leftovers or "couldens" or leftovers (so-called because you *couldn't* eat it yesterday). Other favourites are soups, stews, boiled beans, baloney, wieners, Vienna sausage (canned sausage), bacon and eggs, bread and jam, and any trout or rabbit that happen to be caught.

Breakfast is one of the favourite meals at the cabin. According to research, breakfast is the meal most typically associated with maleness (Long 2004: 31; Bentley 2004: 212-13). Breakfast foods at the cabin are eggs, bacon, sausage, baloney, beans and toast--substantial "man-sized" meals. Bacon-and-egg breakfasts in the home are often reserved for special occasions or weekends, and frequently prepared by males. At the cabin,

[38]According to Dummit, barbeque was introduced to Canada in the 1960s, and it was intentionally masculinised in popular culture by advertisers, where it was presented as fun as opposed to work (2006: 92-103).

cooking this breakfast is simple. The surface of the stove is used to fry, reheat, and toast. Bob described a special feast: "We had everything...frying the bacon and eggs, beans, toast (homemade bread) ... homemade rhubarb jam."

The usual cooking vessels are frying pans, boilers or pots, and kettles. Frying pans and utensils hang on a nail on a wall near the stove; a kettle sits on the stove top; pots are in a cupboard or on a shelf (if one exists). These items are discards or castoffs from main residences, where the women no longer want them: each cabin has old unmatched dishes, cutlery, pots, pans and utensils.

The cabins also inherit discarded furniture items no longer stylish enough for the home, but still functional. The men take a certain pleasure in using items that women have decommissioned from the domestic environment. This is another manifestation of thrift and utility trumping aesthetics. Mellin suggests that cabins have come to replace back kitchens (a feature of some earlier houses) as repositories for used items (2003: 138). In my memory of rural Newfoundland, people did not own excess goods; every summer they simply transferred items from the main kitchen to the back kitchen, which was a fully functional kitchen using the same utensils and tools.[39] The cabin owners in this study have modern houses without back kitchens, and people in general have more material means, so the cabins now receive the cast-offs.

The camp kettle is essential gear at these cabins, or for any wilderness travel, for the "boil-up" or "mug-up" of tea. The "slut kettle" is an enduring cultural object in

[39] In Newfoundland, back kitchens (also referred to as summer kitchens) were used for cooking in summer to prevent heat from accumulating in the main part of the house, thus improving comfort levels for sleep.

Newfoundland–especially for camping, fishing, and hunting.[40] A "slut" (also called a bibby, quickie, or smut) is made out of welded sheet metal, and has a wide base and narrow top (Story, Kirwin and Widdowson 1982: 497).[41] Bob has made several. People also make them from large tin cans; Cliff has one made from an apple juice can. For a handle, picture cord is placed through two punctures on either side of the upper rim of the can.[42] In a slut kettle or "black slut," campers make "slut tea" over an open fire or on a cabin stove. The "black" presumably refers to the sooty residue that collects on the outside of the kettle from the smoke of an open fire or from contact with the flame of a woodstove.

Because the word "slut" carries a dual connotation, it often crops up in cabin banter. Philip Hiscock suggests that, even if it is only a reference to a kettle, the use of a word like "slut" in this context is like a "spicy morsel."[43] There is an awareness that bawdy words and language are like forbidden fruits to take delight in. Indeed, it is not unusual for males to use lewd, rough, and unrefined language at the cabin or in other all-male settings. It would not be acceptable in their homes, but at the cabin they are less guarded in how they express themselves. With only males present at the cabin, it is a safe place to be expressly male, and this includes the use of crude language (Gilborn 2000:xxxi). Ed

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[40] The wide use of tin cans coincides with their mass production in the mid-nineteenth century, when tin revolutionized cookery practices. Its portability also created new options for those partaking in outdoor wilderness travel.

[41] A slut is designed to be hung by a stick over an open outdoor fire or set on a camp stove or a galley stove on a schooner. The wide base provides stability especially for on a boat or a camp stove, its light weight makes it ideal for travelling in the wilderness, and it heats up quickly.

[42] In a conversation in 2006 with my uncle, Jesse Lush, he mentioned how in the 1930s, gallon paint cans were used for cooking pots at cabins. His wife Louisa confirmed that she made sure all traces of paint were removed from the cans. My father and his brother Jesse were woodsmen and trappers in Gambo in northeastern Newfoundland.

[43] Philip Hiscock, email message to author, October 7, 2008.

says that to understand what happens at a cabin when a group of men are drinking and interacting, it is necessary to be there. When I asked Cliff about conversations, jokes, and songs at the cabin, he said that "it [the language] was not fit for a woman to hear." Then too, some discussions are private, including personal and confidential topics that men discuss only with other men.

6.6.2 Drinking and Pranks at the Cabin

Enjoying alcoholic beverages is a part of the cabin experience and the male bonding experience. Empty beer cases or empty rum bottles are under many bunks. Some cabin owners said that if you are in a cabin with a bunch of men and you are drinking, you must make sure you do not pass out because God knows what the others may do to you. Ed said he passed out once when he was at the cabin, and when he woke up, his face was smeared with soot from the stove. He said it was only a bit of fun, but admitted that a person does feel embarrassed if he overindulges to that point. The fact that males must accept pranks graciously has been noted by Brandes, who suggests that a certain amount of aggression is acceptable among men because that is how they demonstrate masculinity (1992: 9-10, 203, 125). The loss of control and passing out can be perceived as unmanly in that it takes a "real man" to handle his liquor. This includes a prohibition on aggression: men who have a reputation of exhibiting rough and violent behaviour when they drink are not allowed to go to the cabin. The group sets limits on what is acceptable behaviour at the cabin, and knowing the limits ensures an individual's membership in the group.

Face-blackening is a common prank; Ian Radforth noted it in men's work camps, where it was practised by shantymen as an initiation rite to ensure group conformity (2006: 143-44). It is an example similar to rough play and entertainment also called in Newfoundland rompsing, rampsing, driving works, and carrying on (Story, Kirwin and Widdowson 1982: 417). It is typical of fish stages and other places where males engage in horseplay to prove manliness and strength (Primmer 1983: 17-36). Another example is the guest who passed out and awoke to find his face covered with lipstick--not only was he as weak as a woman because he could not handle liquor, but he was effeminised with lipstick. [44] (What the lipstick was doing at the cabin was not explained.)

6.6.3 The Writing on the Wall

It is the custom at many cabins for visitors to write on walls or in a cabin journal, similar to the male custom of wall inscriptions on fish stages. In Tilting, for example, Mellin discovered messages left on the interior walls of fish stages by visitors; he linked these inscriptions to the idea that visiting outbuildings is specifically a male behaviour and that outbuildings are male social realms (2003: 148).[45] The male custom of visiting outbuildings extends to backyard sheds, garages, and remote cabins.[46] The fish stage messages are important in that they are the only written record of these buildings, offering a rough idea of the time period each stage was in use, and who used it. Wall

[44] Men typically avoid being feminized in any social setting, but more so in all-male situations. In cabins, close contact is inevitable, and even though male bonding and camaraderie occurs, men typically will guard against encounters with other males that are too close.
[45] Mellin noted that, unlike males, females tend to visit houses.
[46] Mellin observed that people now have fewer outbuildings than they did in the past.

messages at cabins provide documentation over time of how the places are used and how men spent their time there.

The messages range from brief to more detailed notations. Some contain only a name, the date of the visit, and sometimes its purpose (Mellin 2003:148). The cabin inscriptions confirm that the majority of visitors were male. At Ed's cabin, the messages span the period from 1993 to 2000. They show that some visitors were drop-ins who stayed only long enough to get warm and to have a "mug-up," while others stayed for a few days. There were notations from all four seasons, but the majority of visits occurred in winter. They showed that the visitors' main activities were rabbit hunting, trout fishing, card games like cribbage, relaxing, drinking, and having a "big feed" (large meal). These types of male bonding activities have been confirmed in other areas of North America (Carter 2004: 85). The greatest number of messages were thank-you notes for the use of the cabin, and one note was from a group of expatriate males who came from Ontario during summer holidays. Oddly, there was little mention of snowmobiling, because that is how people usually get there.

Some notes mentioned maintenance or cleaning done by the visitor(s): "Cleared snow off roof," "full tank of propane," "kept everything clean." Although meant for the owner, the notes have the added effect of showing others that an obligation goes with the use of the place. The notes can also express, or contain, emotions not overtly expressed. Cliff said that some of the notes were of great personal value to him because the handwriting was

his father's—and his father had an untimely death and died several months before our interview.

Some notes date from the time when the owners in this study first visited the cabin. These visits were part of their social maturing process, and certain activities gave them a chance to express a sense of male bravado. Maynard has noted how youths in cabins tend to mimic adult behaviour (1997: 13).[47] One man wrote that he "missed a good time at the cabin" because he had to play hockey---a trade of one macho activity for another. Another wrote that he and his friends took his old man's (i.e., his father's) beer without his knowledge. For young males to outwit a male authority figure gives them a sense of growing into manliness.

6.7 Journal Entries from Abe's Cabin

The journal at Abe's cabin provides insight into how campers maintain privacy and discretion. In a one-room space, everything is open and not conducive to privacy. The situation is complicated for couples desiring sexual intimacy. Arrangements for such encounters are not presented in a straightforward manner, but in codes that some at the cabin can decipher, although others perceive only a literal meaning. One journal entry, for example, said a husband and wife arranged a sexual encounter by stating that they were going to take a nap together. The other couple who was with them then announced

[47] Maynard's research in Torbay shows that youths built cabins from an early age, and that these are spaces in which they explore sexuality. Other writers have discussed similar behaviour occurring in similar settings (Pittman 1984, Browne 1972, Whelan 1971).

their plans to go fishing at the pond. The journal entry stated that the second couple "went trouting last night so we could take a NAP! What a nap." The word NAP written in upper case implies that they engaged in sexual activity rather than slumber. And in Newfoundland as in many other cultures, a "nap" is a euphemism for sex, especially a "Sunday afternoon nap." "Sleeping together" has a similar meaning.

Then there are issues of bodily functions such as flatulence. One entry concerned a camper's suffering "a fart jam," and needing many cups of tea and rum for relief. Exposure to other people's gas emissions is unavoidable in a one-room space, and especially in an-all male context, many men are uninhibited about passing gas or producing loud belches. Ed's approach to flatulence was to forcefully tell the person, in a joking manner, to go to the outhouse. If beer is being drunk, belches soon follow. It is acceptable for a man to produce a loud belch, and it is even considered a macho act. Farting can become game-like as well when only men are present. Farting and belching are natural and not off limits, except for when foul-smelling gas gets too offensive to everyone's olfactory systems.

The absence of commercialism or other forms of media at these cabins mean that the owners and guests make their own forms of entertainment (as was done in the outports before radio and electricity). Wall entries show that besides outdoor recreation (hunting, trout fishing and berry-picking), the favourite pastimes were: drinking; playing card games like growl, scat, 120s, or cribbage; and joking, singing, or playing music. Abe has compiled, and keeps at his cabin a book of favourite songs. Accordion and guitar are the

main instruments, he says, because they can be transported over rough terrain. Cliff also said that his male friends sing and play music at the cabin. He also noted that they did sometimes have serious discussions and engage in sharing their problems.

6.8 Conclusion

The determination that the architecture of Blue Wilds wilderness cabins are expressly male spaces is based on ideas that these inexpensive rough buildings are built and maintained by males for their own usage. This idea of a male space is reinforced by the cabin owners' notion that, although they are not barred from entry, females do not share the same interest in these cabins, the recreation or the wilderness as men do, nor are they prepared to endure the same level of roughing-it as males. These cabins are rough places with few conveniences or amenities. The cabin owners and their friends have traditional building skills and wilderness skills that originate from past generations of males, and they take great pride in their ability to improvise and jerry-rig. The dominant male utilitarian approach is reflected in the austere nature of the cabin exteriors and interiors; this is associated with the rough, tough, hardy male stereotype, and lacks a decorative feminine touch. These males, however, go to these places to enjoy themselves, and they are very unassuming about any expression of masculinity. Part of the experience of visiting these cabins for these men is about male bonding and camaraderie and male identity; these cabins are some of the few remaining places where a male can expressly be a male without being negatively judged for it.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

7.1 Wilderness, Culture, Cabins and Male Space

When I first saw the cabins in this study little did I know how extensive their story would be. Based in ethnography and vernacular architecture approaches, inquiry into small remote cabins used for recreation and leisure in the Blue Wilds region is the first of its kind. Exploring these buildings as male spaces and cultural artefacts reveals how unusual the cabins and their owners' ideologies are in comparison to industrialized societies. The late and slow industrial development of Newfoundland shaped this difference in attitudes toward the wilderness.

Local attitudes toward the wilderness are pragmatic, uninfluenced by romantic ideals. The ideology is unlike that of areas that have undergone longstanding extensive industrialism, which fostered romanticized views of the wilderness. Sometimes the culture of the male owners and users who create and appreciate these cabins is misunderstood.

These cabins are linked to local urbanization, industrialization, and demographics, and differ from leisure abodes in other parts of the world. They are a fusion of traditional culture and modernization. According to Abe, building and using these structures is an opportunity for men to recreate, revisit and experience the Newfoundland outport, and to maintain a way of life that is dying out. They build these cabins in part to practice, maintain, and reinterpret traditions in a modern way. The cabins represent a tradition of sharing in contrast to the modern practice of single ownership. Studies of wilderness in Newfoundland tend to exclude the broader underpinnings of wilderness ideology of other

countries. The utilitarian mindset that dominates use of land in Newfoundland applies to and is reflected in these cabins. In Newfoundland, the wilderness was integral to subsistence lifestyles, and people remain connected to it. Use and value of lands is a complex web involving common lands, cabins and a sense of self and belonging. Change is evident, as levies and permits to occupy are now required for cabins. Sadly, this means cabins are monetarized and are unavailable to all classes, and it may be a death blow to cabins as emergency shelters and to the sharing custom.

The three cabins of this study are one-room forms, like diminutive houses devoid of extras both inside and out. Economy of interior space is paramount. Sites are selected in secluded areas within tree stands to protect against the elements and unwanted visitors. The cabins are built on commons land, and have deep roots to the free use of land traditions of "non licensing" and sharing. They are inexpensively built from salvaged materials attained through established social networks, and are linked to a traditional building culture where nothing was wasted. The builders and owners are working class men who have a range of skill sets based in generational learning.

The "tilt" and "bough wiffen" were forerunners of cabins. The modern use of cabins reflects a shift in culture and in how the people define such spaces. My research supports the idea that modern and traditional elements coexist, and that local people use both to maintain traditions they value (Pocius 1991).

Freedom of form and simplicity are the hallmarks of the cabins, and modifications abound. Only hand tools are used, as limited access and weather affects construction and

what can be brought to the site. Unconstrained by codes, the cabins allow a free relationship between man and materials. Folk building techniques and cabin culture short-cuts are typically employed. Because the buildings are small (12x16 or less), the integrity of the form is not compromised (Glassie 1975:180; Rempel 1967:13-14). Owners build the easiest way they can, using traditional knowledge and deriving inspiration from local cabins and camps of the past. They "think" a cabin without resort to physical plans, architects or contractors. They give the building a low profile to deflect attention. The building's purpose determines its quality, and the built form follows a path of least resistance. Entry trails circumvent obstructions, form buffer zones against the elements, and hide cabins.

In Newfoundland, repurposing building materials is an old tradition, but it is not like modern ideas of recycling. Cabins are built cheaply because they are used only part-time and mostly left unattended. They are the essence of inconspicuous consumption. Free or cheap materials flow from well-established social networks, work contacts or by reciprocity. Home renovations generate materials that easily recycled. Their re-imagination allows owners to practice old traditions in a modern way.

It is men who mostly frequent the cabins, and take great interest and involvement in their construction and use. "Roughing it" is expected and a sense of male space is reflected in the architecture and lack of ornamentation or luxury. Men get to use the building and wilderness skills that they learned through patriarchal lines, and use their ingenuity. This activity is part of their heritage and identity. The spaces connected them to their social

network, and male bonding and camaraderie occur unimpeded during simple activities such as cooking, drinking or motor sport. These spaces provide an opportunity for men to behave in ways that are outside social convention.

These cabins are usually overlooked objects of study; such writing as does exist about them does not include the viewpoints of those who build and use them. There is equally little writing about masculinity in Newfoundland—there has been more study of the construction of buildings than the construction of gender identities. In this study, I found that the two went together.

7.2 Future Directions and Recommendations

These remote wilderness buildings should be documented, not only on the Avalon Peninsula, but also in other regions of the island and in Labrador. Cabins are part of the vernacular architectural history of each region and are indicators of cultural and economic change, and how the changes can influence whether traditions are lost or maintained. We can also learn more about cultural and economic progression by considering related architecture and behaviours in other cultures. The work of recording needs to be done before existing structures disappear. This is a real concern given the limited access to these spaces. New regulations and restrictions make it difficult to do repairs, which can lead to the demise of the cabins. It is unfortunate that the cabins might disappear at a time when motorsport has increased the popularity of wilderness recreation, because emergency shelters are more important than ever before. The open-door policy is a tradition of courtesy that would disappear along with the buildings. Other

types of recreational cabins have locked doors and do not partake in the same sharing tradition.

Understanding attitudes toward the wilderness may provide insight for regulators or policy makers in the development of outdoor recreation. It can help with gaining local support for projects such as developing groomed snowmobile trails across the island. Newfoundland is in the position to learn from the examples or mistakes of others in planning for wilderness preservation. Ideally the province can avoid the perils of commodification and industrialization of wildernesses experienced in some areas (Michael Melford 2006: 76-77). The popularization of the wilderness may destroy rather than save it, with damage from motorized recreation and the growing recreational industry. Industrialization and urbanization can create unforeseen pressures not recognized or dealt with until it is too late.

These study of these cabins broadens the understanding of why people think as they do about the wilderness and lands. It provides a gateway into local ways of thinking and how it differs from that of people in other places. As older traditions give way to modern ideas, maybe we can be less judgemental of ideals based in utility and masculinity as exhibited by these cabins.

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Appendix A: Abe's Cedar Shake Cabin – Structural Elements

Frame Type: Lightweight timber framing, stud uprights.

Category: Remote Cabin (Cottage) with Permit to Occupy

Constructed: 1983 (present owner took possession Fall 1997)

Cottage Name: Cedar Shake Cabin

Description: Single Storey with attic and ceiling, rectangular plan, one multipurpose room, external outhouse with single pitch roof setback from the cabin at the Northeast flank of the lot.

Height to Eave: 8 feet

Height to Ridge: 11 feet 8 inches

Roof: Rectangular gabled roof, stovepipe with a spark arrestor pierces the roof on the Northwest monopitch, 16 inch eave overhang, built without eaves trough.

Frame: Stud system on 2 x 4 sill that rests on foundation posts made from 12 inch diameter reused creosote utility poles.

Cladding: 4 feet x 8 feet ¾ inch aspenite sheets, twice used cedar shakes on only the Southeast elevation, shakes are reused from a home renovation, all elevations were originally wrapped with tarpaper held in place with narrow vertically applied laths, the laths remain but most of the tarpaper is missing; two corner caps made from halves of a

spruce sapling, painted black and applied to the ends of Southeast elevation or to the corners of the front face of the cabin.

Northwest Elevation: Back flank; one window piercing, second-use vinyl window slider style, two lights. Roughly constructed handmade ladder for access to chimney leans against the eave.

Northeast Elevation: Gable end wall, air vent in peak of gable; aspenite lacks siding.

Southeast Elevation: Front face; the only elevation clad with cedar shake siding. One window, and one door piercing. One large secondhand vinyl slider window with two lights, window trim painted with red cedar solid stain; in-swinging hollow core wooden door with an exterior screen and an interior wooden shuttered vent and a fixed sidelight of fluted glass; painted door surfaces excessive flaking.

Southwest Elevation: Gable end, white vinyl air vent in peak of gable; aspenite cladding lacks siding; lower corner of aspenite sheet has a patch.

Structural Anomalies and Modifications:

Large plain bargeboard or eave overhang

Trusses reinforced with extra bracing by current owner

Floor reinforced with extra bracing attached to centre foundation posts to shore up the floor; floor joists not staggered as is typical for carpentry standards; fieldstones were

installed underneath foundation posts around the edges of the cabin by current owner to prevent rot from ground contact; open foundations at least one foot gap above ground

Southwest elevation has a patch in the lower front corner of the wall, the puncture occurred due to someone trying to gain entry to the cabin because it was locked. These cabins never have locked doors according to tradition, a courtesy sometimes referred to as a wilderness or bush code.

Appendix B: Cliff's Clapboard Cabin – Structural Elements

Frame Type: Lightweight timber framing, stud uprights

Category: Remote Cabin (Cottage) with Permit to Occupy

Constructed: early 1980s (present owner took possession 2005)

Cottage Name: Clapboard Cabin

Description: Single Story, open rafters, rectangular one-room plan considered as a multipurpose space, external outhouse with single-pitch roof set back from the cabin at the northwest flank of the lot.

Height to Eave: 6 feet 9 ½ inches

Height to ridge: 8 feet 1 inch

Roof: Rectangular gable-end roof, no ridgepole or board, no crossbeams. Trusses butted at the ridge and each rafter pinned with a triangle piece of plywood forming a collar beam. Stovepipe with a spark arrestor pierces the roof on the northwest monopitch. Roof has an extremely shallow pitch and the overhang is one inch. Built without eavestrough.

Frame: Stud system 16 inch on centre, may vary slightly. Building rests on a combination of concrete cinder blocks and foundation posts.

Cladding: Sheathed with ¾ inch aspenite sheets. Southeast and southwest elevations clad with used clapboard or weatherboard discarded from a home renovation; all elevations originally wrapped tarpaper but pieces are missing.

Northwest Elevation: Remaining pieces of tarpaper pinned to exterior surfaces with scrap pieces of rough board of varying lengths and widths applied on angle in every-which-way. A roughly constructed ladder rests against the eave. Two aluminum-framed awning windows with one light, opens inward from the top and held in place with a chain for stability. The other window is a wooden fixed frame with one light, roughly made, positioned in the north elevation next to the top bunk. At the rear of the cabin there is a large tree braced with heavy wire to keep the tree from falling on the cabin.

Northeast Elevation: Gabled end has no piercing such as an air vent, no clapboard siding, only pieces of tarpaper held in place with random strapping.

Southeast Elevation: Front face of the cabin is clad with clapboard and has one window and one door piercing. The window is aluminum, and the door is constructed of vertical rough tongue and groove board stabilized with three battens and two braces (Z-batten door similar to the traditional storm doors built in Newfoundland). The door has a handmade wooden door cleat or button. The button is pinned in the centre to the outer doorframe and swivels from the centre nail, and the door can only be closed from the outside. The door swings outward to the right.

Condition: Roof in bad shape, waterlogged and has a heavy layer of moss, chimney braced temporarily with metal strapping.

Structural Anomalies:

Open rafters, no ridgepole, no crossbeams, trusses secured at the peak with triangle pieces of used plywood.

Cabin wall elevations are less than 8 feet.

Extremely shallow pitch roof

Foundations: stump and stick method mentioned, timber with bark left on. Open foundations at least one foot between base of cabin and the ground

Appendix C: Ed's Plywood Cabin – Structural Elements

Frame Type: Lightweight timber framing, stud uprights

Category: Remote Cabin (Cottage) with Permit to Occupy

Constructed: Circa 1984

Cottage Name: Plywood Cabin

Description: Single story with open rafters, rectangular plan one-cell multipurpose room, external outhouse with single-pitch roof east of the cabin

Height to eave: 7 feet 4 ½ inches

Height to ridge: 12 feet 7 ½ inches

Roof: rectangular gabled roof (partially finished), eave incomplete but framed for 12 inches overhang in gable ends, steep pitch, no eavestrough

Frame: Stud system on foundations posts and concrete cinder blocks, foundation joists perpendicular to gable end instead of parallel to the gable end

Cladding: 4 feet x 8 feet x ¼ inch aspenite sheets finished with green paint, trim painted black, no siding.

South Elevation: Back flank one central window piercing, double-hung aluminum sash window with two lights

West Elevation: Gable end bunk wall, no piercings

North Elevation: Front face, no siding, one window and one door piercings, one double-hung aluminum sash window, and one steel door with foam insulation core and three applied decorative resin moulds adhered to the exterior face, painted surface excessive flaking, grey primer base surface exposed

East Elevation: Gable end, no siding, floor joists ends exposed, previous window piercing boarded up with plywood

Structural Anomalies and Modifications:

Floor joists run perpendicular to gable ends instead of running parallel to the gable ends

1 inch x 11 inch finished tongue and groove boards nailed to inner studs of elevations as an inner wall surface

Open foundations

Steep pitch roof recent addition, previously gable roof was so shallow it had a near negligent pitch, changes to the roof not done by the owner

Modern application for new trusses joined with gang nails