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Golden Shovel

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Golden Shovel

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Send your related articles, stories, photographs, and letters to OminecaMiningAssociation@gmail.com. Text should be unformatted and images should be in high-resolution .jpg format.

MISSION

- Provide awareness and increase knowledge of mining, including various types of mines and mining practices.
- Promote the OMA objective of facilitating a balance where industry and the environment can prosper, where a governing practice of scientific fact is the law of the land, and development is tempered with reclamation.
- Feature stories about those who sought their fortune in mining— some made their fortune in gold, others found adventure, and the lucky ones found both.

DISCLAIMER

Opinions presented in the *Golden Shovel* are not necessarily those of the *Golden Nugget* or the OMA. We take no responsibility for errors or omissions in content.



STATE OF THE ASSOCIATION

Our First Golden Shovel

Mitch Mortensen

Thats right. Its the first of what we hope to see become a successful venture of expression.

After years of enduring difficulties and wishing to take a more direct approach, the Golden Shovel is our means to do so. For as long as possibel we will publish what is going on in our industry and share the history of mining. Through this it is hoped that people will gain a better understanding of what miners do and how we do it.

We will call out the government and ministry office in a public way to bring to light what people need to know.

I want to thank Mark Oldenburg and Christopher Warren for taking this step with me to form the Omineca Mining Association. The OMA is meant to be political, educational and a source of credible news,

Individual memberships are \$50 and come with a subscription. There are three corporate levels of memberships. Silver, Gold and Platinum



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Mark Oldenburg

I am thrilled to introduce myself as the President of the Omineca Mining Association.

As a long time prospector and small scale miner, I am thoroughly looking forward to assisting the mining community in protecting our livelihoods during this time of extreme pressure on the mining industry.

I believe there is a great misconception about small scale placer mining and our environmental impact, and that we need to word toward eliminating some of those misconceptions.

I thoroughly enjoy my time at different mine sites, and meeting the great variety of miners from experienced pros to people just beginning their mining career.

I have owned my own business for many years, and for about the past 5 years have also been a supplier for small scale mining equipment.

I understand the frustrations that a small business will encounter, and in particular the frustrations that miners encounter while dealing with many levels of government

I ask all of you to become active with an organization such as ours, or to at least become members, as there is far more strength in numbers than there is alone.

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Perilous Time In The Mining Industry



Mitch Mortensen

The true north strong and free has been under siege.

A lot of well intentioned but incredibly ignorant people have also inadvertently played their

part to shut down small scale placer/hard rock miners.

While a balance of resource extraction and preservation of the environment must be maintained, shutting down Canada is not the answer. Driving small scale placer/hard rock miners out of a livelihood and larger companies to seek the very resources we use daily from somewhere else is a failure...not a success.

BC already has some of the most stringent labour and environmental laws in the world. However, small scale placer/hard rock miners have been painted with a broad brush that has come from the failures of the large hard rock mines we have heard about in the news. Mount Polley pond spill (2014) and just recently the contaminated ponds of the Wolverine Mine in the Yukon are just a few of the failures that come with large hard rock mines with even larger headlines.

The siege on the small scale placer/hard rock miners has been furthered by "independent decision makers" (Inspectors) within the ministry and an exasperated public looking to see accountably and change. What was once common public knowledge of mining and mining history is not so common anymore.

To what end?

If there is 500 Notices of Work in the Omineca with roughly 1 hectare of disturbance per year per permitted, equals 500 hectares spread out over an area of nearly 16 million hectares...It is hard to accept we are a threat to the environment when there hasn't been any serious environmental failure from small scale placer/hard rock mines.

The days of the Billion Pit Hydralicking 220 million

tonnes of material into Quesnel river ended a century ago and we have a century worth of fish data to tell us what the environmental fall out will be from Mount Polley pond spill into Quesnel Lake. Machines haven't worked within our water ways and riparian areas in many decades. Neither have we used mercury to separate the gold in generations. So why is it that these myths persist and continue to fuel public contempt?

How is it that Update 38 can justify a hand shovel and a pan on par with a machine that can move thousands of yards material per day to a hand miners one yard? For a hand miner, the gold is in the riparian area. The same areas that the old timers worked by hand all those years ago with no regulations. What has yet to be realized is that except for some extreme cases (bullion pit) all those areas worked by the old timers has reclaimed itself with little to no consequence to the environment.

The real failure is

- Lack of public education on small scale placer and hard rock mining,
- Public ignorance of our mining history
- The absolute power of Independent Decision Makers (Inspectors) within the ministry
- Apathy towards the aboriginal peoples
- Small scale placer/hard rock miners are true entrepreneurs and stewards of the environment. Its time to address the failures

Small scale placer/hard rock miners are true entrepreneurs and stewards of the environment. Its time to address the failures.

GOLD NUGGET

Talk is cheap. It takes money to buy whiskey.
- Fred Andrusko

They Choose Employment Trades And Skills Over Poverty



Hank Siegel

Hank - There it is protesters, the wet'suwet'en people are looking to take care of there own so stop the protests. Poverty for the wet'suwet'en is no more. They choose Employment Trades and

Skills over poverty... They took control of their destiny, their interests and are moving forward with the pipeline.

Response to Hanks Post - Hank they are not Protesters. They are land defenders.

Hank -you know I'm not trying to be rude, sorry...but unless you can figure out a better way than working to get your community out of poverty, to me they are protestors. I've heard the terms Land Keepers and Water Protectors. Now I am hearing Land Defenders.

Go and tell the rest of Canada they are Land Defenders because Canadians see them as Country Disturbers!

Watch the video I posted. Not once did they ask for anybody to protest under wet'suwet'en name.

I fund myself to attend these functions so I have the right to my opinion. Just like these so-called Land Defenders who haven't really stated what they defend. Is it Idle No More, Missing and Murdered Woman and Men, or Reconciliation?

So, what is the University of Winnipeg marching around portage and main for because I'm more confused on that. Especially when the wet'suwet'en have said 87% of them are for the pipeline.

I'm definitely not into social programs being the solution for starving communities.

The only ones that prosper from that life are Chief and Council. I'll take the work and if it means my kids eat one more day, I'm good with that.

Response to Hanks Post - How do a few thousand protesters speak for a whole population? How many treaty people are there?

Hank - I guess that's the point, they are not treaty or fall under the Indian act. I think they are a distinct society

much like Quebec. They have been dealing with coastal gas and LNG for the last four years. The conferences I have attended they simply stated they didn't ask for these protesters help. The blockade they put up was because they were being thrown out of their territory's trap lines, medicine picking traditional areas and so on. They were negotiating on jobs and trades and said no to the one time pay out.

Their hereditary Chief Government is much like the Royal family of the UK. They inherited it and they believe elected Chief and Council only represent the inter structure of the reserve and not the territory. The local band here in Mcleod lake just received money to construct a major refiner plant where their members will receive jobs, trades and Skills.

Trades such as millwrights, pipe fitters, Electrician's and so on training and education will be given on construction of this plant. That's self sustainable economic growth.

I think this will set precedents across Canada for all First Nations.

The Omineca Mining Association is a non-profit organization.

THE OMA MISSION

- 🔗 EDUCATE the public, government, and miners in the importance of mining;
- 🔗 RAISE AWARENESS about problems and solutions in the mining industry and government in the Omineca; and
- 🔗 PROMOTE responsible, environmentally sustainable, mining practices, and innovative mining methods and solutions.
- 🔗 ASSIST, SUPPORT, AND ADVOCATE for our members.

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Frustration With Mines Act Policy And Inspector Demands



John Olsen

Are you frustrated by Mine Act Policy, the time it takes to obtain a work permit or the multitude of other steps a mines inspector demands? Are you also frustrated by the inaccurate

mapping software on the MTO site?

The Ministry and the policies created from numerous regulations and policy set out by the Minister and agents is a disappointment. The length of time to issue a work permit has become far too long and complex. The arduous process from filing a Notice Of Work (NOW) to receiving a Permit takes several months and is vulnerable to frustration by other parties. The delays incurred creates significant loss of earnings for the placer miner

The First Nations and environmentalists position on placer mining has produced several documents including “BC Placer Mining High Environmental Impact VS Low Economic Return”. The similarities of this document to update 38 are startling.

The Government appears to want “no” environmental impact that “upsets” the aforementioned parties or that have low financial reward for the Government. The policies in Update 38 mirror the demands of the Fair Mining Collaborative. www.fairmining.ca

So the questions now are;

Can we fight this? How do we fight this? When can we fight this? Who do we fight?

It is clear the government only wants large scale mining operations that fund the government through taxes and other fees. Placer mining is very low on the priority scale of the government. The evidence of this is the regulations and the difficulty in obtaining a work permit in a timely manner.

The minister also knows placer miners generally do not have large financial resources to fight back. Placer miners are an easy target for them to regulate, manipulate and threaten with “charges”.

The ministry and its agents have absolute control over the

rules and policy. The Minister through his agents, create rules or policy as they go along. This is not a fair and/or just system. The system is slow to work, fast to penalize or threaten to prosecute a miner for any infraction.

There is no table or reference to any silt guidelines that are an acceptable amount of discharge for placer miners. The Ministry has a zero-discharge policy. However, there are acceptable effluent discharge limits for the pulp and paper industry. Pulp and paper effluent is toxic and can cause harm to all life forms in a river system.

The Ministry of mines falsely states that “silt” is effluent. Silt fails to meet the definition of effluent as it has not been altered by any means. Silt contains only natural chemicals produced by natural processes.

We are guaranteed equal benefit and protection in the law. Placer miners are entitled to “equal benefit and protection” in law. Does the fact there is no allowable silt discharge tables for placer mining, violate our rights in the Charter?

Few people read Canadian laws. However, it is the means by which we can fight the Ministry of Energy Mines. Being cooperative and bending to every requirement the government demands, does not change or alter the way they treat placer miners.

The Constitution Act (Charter of Rights and Freedoms) describes what we are entitled to as Canadian citizens. This law describes what is and what are our “rights”. It further Guarantees these rights to each of us without exception. The Charter at section 32 directs all governments to obey these basic rights and freedoms.

Further the federal Human Rights Act protects your right to earn a living. (Section 6).

If a person’s rights were violated by anyone or the government, you do have a recourse through the Human Rights Tribunal. If the government creates a policy or procedure or a regulation that impedes your ability to earn a living you may have a human rights complaint.

The Minister can be taken before the Human Rights Tribunal. If the tribunal finds discrimination has occurred, the Tribunal can and will order the government to cease a discriminatory act or action. It can also levy costs and order the Government to accommodate. All these things can be done IF the Tribunal finds that your rights have been violated.

A good example of how the Human rights law can help

is a case in point. Mr. Hall (a hunter) filed a complaint with the tribunal. The tribunal found the Minister of Environment violated his rights. The tribunal ordered them to accommodate Mr. Halls needs as a disabled hunter. The restrictions applied to Mr. Halls “permit” were too restrictive, the Tribunal found that Mr. Halls rights were further violated by overly restrictive conditions of his Permit. The Tribunal ordered the Minister to accommodate most of Mr. Hall’s needs. I am disabled and I have one of these permits. The permit exempts me from criminal and Wildlife Act offences. My permit is a specifically tailored defense to specific charges.

A Mines Act work permit, is also a specifically tailored defense to a charge. The permit cannot be unreasonably withheld. The Supreme Court of Canada has ruled on this (Supreme Court Canada Decision; Regina VS Morgentaler.)

The Work Permit offered in the Mines Act, cannot be made so difficult to obtain, that the law is held in disrepute.

You have a guaranteed right to seek employment and earn a living anywhere in Canada. If the Ministry frustrates the NOW and denies or withholds a permit for any undue

reason. There may be grounds there for a complaint. The Ministry may be violating the miners right to earn a living, because their demands are overly restrictive.

I do recommend reading the Charter of Rights, the federal Human Rights Act and learn what you are entitled to. We will not win the fight by direct communication with the Ministry. Their policies preclude a fair interaction. Miners complaints are falling on deaf ears.

The last question; Can we miners unite, form an alliance fund a legal action fund to pursue a human rights complaint against the Minister responsible? A human rights complaint can be filed and have all Free Miners as the complainant.

What we would need from interested miners is your story regarding the issues of getting a Work Permit. This is evidence backed by documents, emails, letters etc that is needed to take to a lawyer for his opinion on whether or not there is a violation of your rights. All the information would be under the control of the Association.

Your feedback would be appreciated.

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Omineca Miner

SATURDAY, SEPT 09, 1911

Native Silver Found on Hudson Bay Mountain

While it has been demonstrated beyond doubt that this district is remarkable for the excellence of its mineral showings, and while all capable mining men unite in declaring that its future as a big producer is assured, the development of our various camps has been so gradual and consistent that, although many rich showings of ore are ready for the inspection of visitors, and high assays are quite the usual thing, there has heretofore been no excitement such as is caused by the discovery of rich placers or native minerals. This state of affairs obtains no longer.

Since news of a strike of native silver on Hudson Bay Mountain reached town a few days ago, and samples of the rich mineral were displayed in the window of a local firm, little else has been talked about, even the election taking second place in the public estimation.

The find was made by Fred Allan and Phil Hankin, on ground adjoining the Lakeview group, eight miles from the railway, on the northeast slope of the mountain.

They staked four claims, and claim to have the vein exposed on three. The discoverers say the ore, which is a beautiful bornite, carrying a remarkable amount of native silver, in leaves and small flakes, occurs on the footwall side of a dike of porphyry in a limonite formation.

The vein is stated to have a width of from 22 to 26 inches.

In Harvey and McKinnon's office, where the ore is displayed there is a constant stream of visitors, all of whom wish to handle the specimens. It has been found advisable to tie a string on the largest piece of the native metal, lest some absentminded visitor should collect it, while some of the best specimens have not been publicly displayed. An assay of the bornite gave returns of 5640 ounces of silver to the ton, equal to a value of \$2932.80. There is also a high percentage of copper in the ore. Rod McCrimmon resigned the position of superintendent of the Silver Standard. He left for the Coast on the Hazelton. George McBean, the original owner of the group, is again in charge of the property for the company. Among the specimens of high grade ore brought in during the week were some fine pieces from Silver Island, Babine Lake. This ore, which was obtained by Ben Siverson, shows a great deal of wire silver and is undoubtedly of very high grade.

In Harvey & McKinnon's office are displayed a large number of striking specimens of the ores uncovered on the Rocher de Boule group, hitherto worked by Trimble & Pemberton and recently bonded to W. J. Cowan. The showing on the property is declared by recent visitors to be truly remarkable.

R. G. Steele, a mining engineer of wide repute, who last year bonded two groups of claims on Hudson Bay Mountain, has returned to the district and expects to proceed with development work at once on the High Ore group, bonded from Angus McLean and Angus Matheson, and the group acquired from L. M. Woods and partner. Mr. Steele is now on the ground, examining the claims.



Hudson Bay Mountain - Wikimedia Commons

French Snowshoe Creek, Yanks Peak

Mitch Mortensen

Prospecting is much like the restaurant business...nine out of ten discovery's fail to develop into a mine.

Like the restaurant business, the three greatest secrets are location, location, location!

However, there is also a few more of many factors that can set the stage for a successful project or a dismal failure. That is thorough research and painstaking field work.

We have so many advantages in the 21st century that were unheard in the in the 19th century. Yet we also have many challenges that the old timers didn't have.

When the old timers came here looking for their fortune, the entire province was virgin ground.

Every history book pertaining to the BC Gold rush starts with "Gold was first discovered on the Fraser River...".

The old timers followed the gold up the Fraser river and found rich placer deposits on many creeks and rivers

throughout the province.

The history books also tell us these areas of richness were mined out...yes...at 20 dollars per ounce!

At that time there were no regulations on construction of a shaft or tunnel. There was a common sense in them days. The secret to life was simply...not dying.

This was a time in our history where people thought for themselves when they constructed their shaft or tunnel.

It was built so that it would stand the test of time. If their shaft or tunnel collapsed and buried them alive, was that anyone's problem?

Yes, but only to the extent of where to place the headstone or what to describe on their head stone if their body was recovered!

Now we have a regulation for everything and you know every bit of it was written in memory of someone who did something that proved to be fatal.





Below-Snowshoe Creek Cemetary. Above - John Palmere who died on Snowshoe Creek.



Mouth of the Canyon, French Snowshoe Creek

Just like the old days, all miners are a big family. Some have their own nickname and some Like William Luce lived on known as the Wild Yank that Yanks Peak is named after.

Mining knowledge is traditionally past down by word of mouth. My fortune was my Step Father survived the war to teach me what he had learned as a boy in the 1930's from his uncle.

A lot of knowledge has been lost through war and disease. The last school of education we had for placer mining was in the 1930's

When I staked my first claims on French Snowshoe Creek, a fellow miner going back to the 1950's in this area gave me a copy of a Yanks Peak map drawn by Amos Bowman in 1886. That old map is a treasure map to me.

At the time there was no internet, online archives, geo science, GPS or a Google search.

Claims were staked by post and tag. Maps were drawn by hand in the field with only a compass and common knowledge of the area for accuracy.

This map revealed a great deal about the location of paying gravels.

There are many operations from the gold rush on this map including, Pat McGovern and his discovery on a bench 10 feet above the creek in the canyon. His recovery of 7000oz

was proof of a substantial channel.

A shaft that read "43 feet no bedrock" is important information in planning any diggings to bedrock. There is a cabin site near that shaft that is dated to original construction in the 1800's and refurbished in the 1930's. Only a few artifacts remain today.

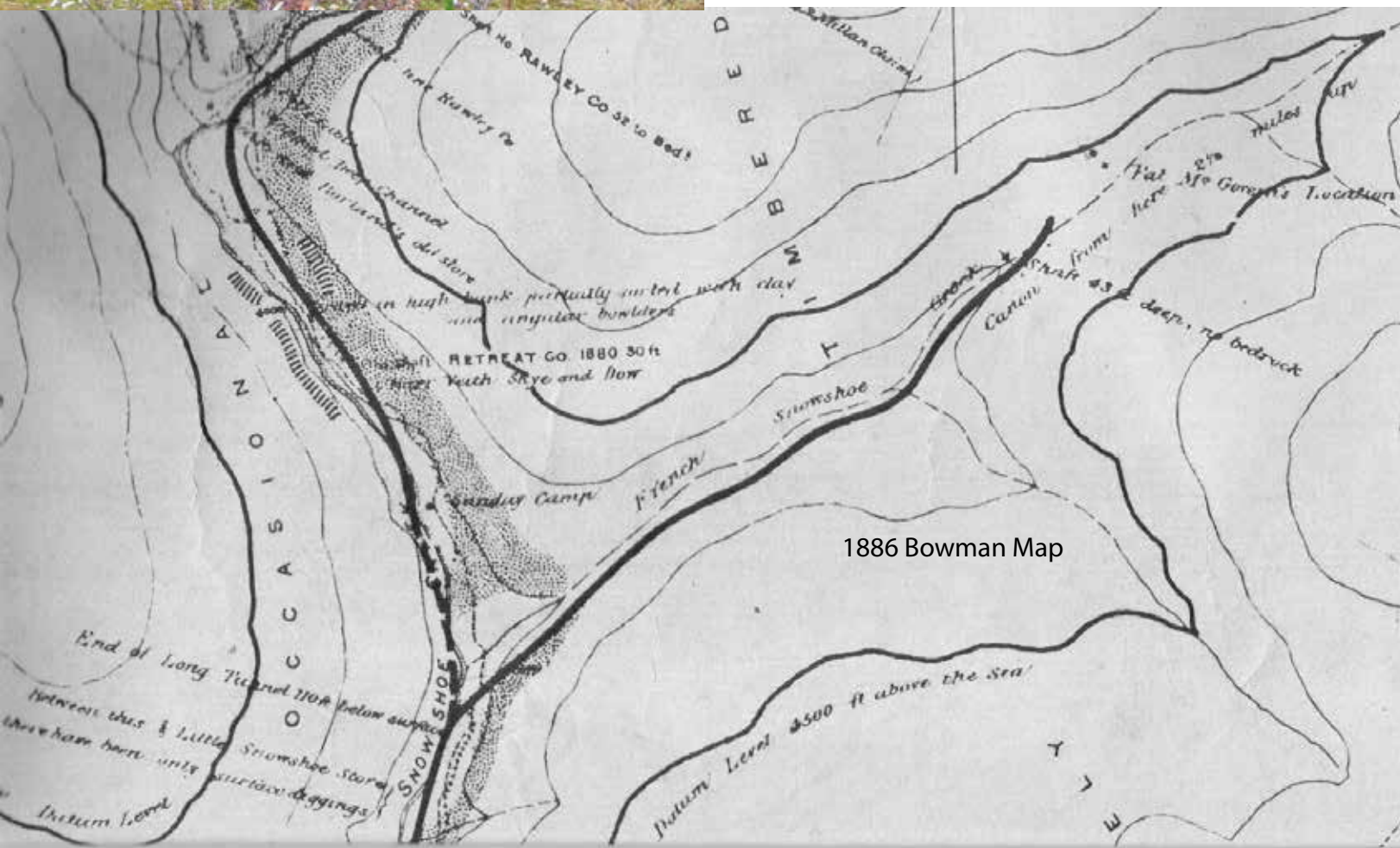
Later I learned of the Holland Report. This report details an in-depth analysis of the local geology and historical workings. The Holland report confirms that French Snowshoe Creek was never bottomed.

More clues of a potential channel at bottom are described in the historical data from Jim Adams one-mile tunnel 110 feet below surface and just down steam from the junction of French Snowshoe and Snowshoe creek.

The one-mile tunnel is known as a bedrock drain. It was a means to address ground water that otherwise would have flooded out a conventional shaft and tunnel to drift a creek. It was constructed in such a way that it allowed ground water to follow the flow of gravity out to the surface.

Ground water has always been the challenge with working French Snowshoe below the canyon. A successful operation would follow in the example set by the one-mile tunnel starting just below the junction of Snowshoe and French Snowshoe creeks and continuing up to the canyon.

There were extensive workings above the canyon from the gold rush and again in the 1930's. There was enough to



1886 Bowman Map



43 Feet No bedrock, historic site.

warrant the creation of what is known as Calgary Dam. Just upstream of the switchbacks is the remnants of a small town from the 1930's. this settlement was called Snarlsburg.

There is very little indication left that a town existed as mother nature has reclaimed the area. However, there are old workings in the area that are still identifiable to the trained eye. Many of these workings remain undated and some are still a mystery for documentation.

What is known is upstream from the head of the canyon are extensive old placer diggings extending to the mouth of Dutchman Creek. Small shallow diggings extend along the creek upstream from Dutchman Creek north of Calgary Dam

There are several min files on French Snowshoe Creek that will lead to many technical reports detailing the potential in the area. Many conclude that more testing is recommended.

French Snowshoe Creek like every creek in the area has its own source of gold. The sources of gold for these creeks has never been fully discovered.

There is a type of gold I know as "sunburned" gold and that is believed to have been formed in placer seams with Manganese.

Anyone who has a claim on Yanks Peak and area will have a copy of the Holland Report and Bowman map as part of their research.

Below/right - Remains of a wood cook stove. Above right - Glass wine bottle 1930's era



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