

WASHINGTON HERITAGE REGISTER

A) Identification

Historic Name: **Bell Family Cabin**
Common Name:
Address: 49321 North Fork Trail
City: Gold Bar County: Snohomish

B) Site Access (describe site access, restrictions, etc.)

Property is accessed off of the Index-Galena Road approximately 200 feet from Hwy 2, on Intermountain Road, leading to North Fork Trail, approximately another 1/3rd mile to the site and cabin on the North Fork of the Skykomish River. *Note the cabin is down river from the town of Index about 1 mile and until a couple of years ago, the mailing and county recognized address was "Index". The postal system since changed the address to "Goldbar", though the town of Goldbar is approximately 8 miles away, west on State highway 2. The site itself is in 'unincorporated' Snohomish County.*

C) Property owner(s), Address and Zip

Name: David Bell
Address: 7926 198th LN SW
City: Rochester State: WA Zip: 98579

D) Legal boundary description and boundary justification

Tax No./Parcel: 004808-001-005-00; Encompasses Lots 4, 5, and 6 of Block 1 of the Intermountain Park Addition, just outside the community of Index.
Boundary Justification: The boundaries include the entire 3 lots which includes the cabin sits and its associated features.

FORM PREPARED BY

Name: David Bell
Address: 7926 198th LN SW
City / State / Zip: Rochester, WA 98579
Email: Indexbell@comcast.net
Phone: 360-561-9074
Nomination Date: 8/9/2023

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E) Category of Property (Choose One)

- | | | |
|---|--|-----------------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> structure (pond and flood walls) | <input type="checkbox"/> district |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> object (grave marker and memorial.) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> cemetery/burial site | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> historic site (site of an important event) | <input type="checkbox"/> archaeological site | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> traditional cultural property (spiritual or creation site, etc.) | | |
| cultural landscape | | |

F) Area of Significance – Check as many as apply

- ☐ The property belongs to the early settlement, commercial development, or original native occupation of a community or region.
- ☐ The property is directly connected to a movement, organization, institution, religion, or club which served as a focal point for a community or group.
- ☐ The property is directly connected to specific activities or events which had a lasting impact on the community or region.
- ☐ The property is associated with legends, spiritual or religious practices, or life ways which are uniquely related to a piece of land or to a natural feature.
- ☒ The property displays strong patterns of land use or alterations of the environment which occurred during the historic period (cultivation, landscaping, industry, mining, irrigation, logging, recreation).
- ☒ The property is directly associated with an individual who made an important contribution to a community or to a group of people.
- ☒ The property has strong artistic, architectural or engineering qualities, or displays unusual materials or craftwork belonging to a historic era.
- ☐ The property was designed or built by an influential architect, or reflects the work of an important artisan.
- ☐ Archaeological investigation of the property has or will increase our understanding of past cultures or life ways.

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G) Property Description

The Bell Family Cabin is located west of the community of Index on the south side of the North Fork of the Skykomish River. To the north are views of the "Index town wall" (the granite face of the former mining operation) and to the west are views of Mt. Index and Mount Persus. The cabin sits close to the river within Block 1, lots 4-6 of the Intermountain Park addition which was platted in 1928.

The lot is heavily wooded with mature Douglas Fir trees and native plants. A majority of the lot is protected from the adjacent river by a hand-built, 3' to 8' tall river rock flood wall. Comprised of a concrete slurry and intermixed with various sized river rocks, the wall has a rounded top and is approximately 3-4' thick. The average height of the wall is 3' to 4' above grade and has a total length of approximately 325 feet. Several smaller walls, rock outlined planter beds, and rock features are found within the rectangular footprint of the lot, including a rock wall that outlines a man-made pond on the west side of the lot. Constructed by David Bell in the early 1960s, the trout pond's water is supplied via a water line approximately 400 feet away from a spring flowing from one of the adjacent properties. The pond is approximately 30 ft. by 60 ft. and 6 ft. deep. Entrance to the walled lot is via an "arch" opening of rock on the south face which leads to a paved concrete walkway to the front door of the cabin.

At the river side, atop the rock wall is a miniature log playhouse house. Constructed by David and his first wife, Karen, for use by their children in the 1960s, the playhouse has a post and pier foundation, a cedar shake covered gable roof, and an open deck facing the river.

Also on site are the remains of Alvah J.N. Bell. Interned next to an old growth Spruce tree, and surrounded by his favorite flower, native Trilliums. A concrete marker constructed by his son, David Bell, was erected at the site using some of the old cobble stones that A.J. and David packed off the mountain. The monument is in the form of a cross and at the base holds a bronze plaque with the inscription:

*"In loving memory of
Alvah Jordon Nelson Bell
Father
Dec 28, 1918 - May 28, 1996
A Place Loved"*

The cabin is approximately 1800 sq. ft. and, with the exception of the subflooring, was constructed of locally grown cedar and fir, both inside and out. The irregular footprint of the cabin is indicative of its construction period which spanned over 15+ years. The first floor is clad with horizontal weatherboard while the second floor (which only covers the eastern portion of the plan) is clad with vertical T & G boards. Originally the gable roof was cedar shake boards, cut and harvested from log jams on the Skykomish River by the owner. In recent years, the roof covering was replaced with metal. The cabin has wide over-hanging eaves and exposed rafter tails. The windows are a combination of wood framed fixed glazing units (often grouped in pairs of three) and aluminum frame single-hung units.

All design work and construction was performed by the father and son team of Alvah J. and David Bell, including the making of the furniture, electrical, plumbing, and rock work.

The interior of the cabin is a celebration of wood and stone, attesting to the skills and ingenuity of the builders. The walls are primarily covered in cedar and throughout the cabin are oak and slate flooring. The windows and doors are framed with mahogany. Two large fireplaces, constructed with “blue” granite and limestone serve as the heart of the cabin. Harvested in the 1950s several miles above the community of Index by Alvah and David, the two also cut and built these features. Both of the fireplaces have chimneys of native rock and cobble stones. In addition to the two fireplaces, further heat is provided by three large circa 1950’s wood stoves and an electric furnace.

The first floor includes a living room, dining room, kitchen and utility room, a small shop, and 1/4 bathroom, as well as a second living room known as the “museum.” This space has cathedral ceilings with exposed roof trusses. The west living room has an open set of wooden stairs to allow access to the second floor which contains two bedrooms and a bath.

Throughout the cabin is an extensive collection of books, family memorabilia, and artifacts documenting the logging and mining history of the local community. Many of these are housed in hand-crafted, glass enclosed, display cases. Additionally, a vast collection of historic photos printed from glass plates which document the early years of settlers in the Skykomish River Valley and Index area are found throughout the cabin. The photos focus on the mining and logging industries which drove the economy. Many of the photos are taken from the original plates in the Lee Pickett Collection and the Asahel Curtis Photo Company collections. Noted photographer, Lee Pickett, and his wife lived in Index and were friends of David and Freya Brodeck. Mrs. Pickett was considerably younger than her husband and allowed the Bells to choose the photos they wanted copies of before she bequeathed them to the University of Washington.

H) Significance

The Bell Family Cabin, in the Skykomish River Valley just west of Index, is historically significant as a property that represents the hard work and skills of blue-collar tradesmen, a father-and-son team, who bonded over the construction of a simple cabin. With no experience at the time, the two capitalized on hard work and ingenuity, as well as a desire to build a lasting family legacy. Today the cabin is a celebration of wood and stone, attesting to the skills and dedication of the builders.

Construction of the cabin started in the late 1940s and developed over the course of the next 20+ years as a family project. Alvah Jordan N. (A.J.) and his wife Henrietta Bell, their son, David, and the extended family used the cabin as a weekend retreat, and off-and-on as a main residence.

Euro-American development of the Skykomish River Valley in King and Snohomish Counties is largely associated with the arrival of the Great Northern Railroad. Completed in 1893, the railroad runs through the narrow river valley from the foothills of the Cascade Mountains to Everett. While a limited amount of speculative mining for gold, copper, and other precious metals occurred after the arrival of rail service, due to the ease of shipping, the construction of the railroad allowed for the development of several granite and limestone quarries. These

included massive operations at Index and a smaller quarry in Baring (the Baring Granite Co.).

By the turn-of-the-century, this portion of the Cascade foothills was teeming with rock quarries and mining claims. Maps indicate nearly 30 claims south of the South Fork of the Skykomish River near Baring. These included a quarry for the Tacoma-Roche Harbor Limestone Company, the Northwest Portland Cement Company, the Apex Lode, the Koko Lode, and the Oso Lode.

While mining activity, as well as the continued growth of the timber industry, brought increased prosperity during the first decades of the 20th century (there were once nine such settlements between Stevens Pass and Index), increasingly the area became noted as a tourist center. As early as 1912 there was an effort to build a road across the Cascades, but the scenic highway was not completed until 1925. Initially it was little more than a narrow, winding dirt road, but by 1930 the road had been graveled through Skykomish; and by 1936 it was partially paved. Vehicle access to the scenic area also prompted an increase in recreational use. The Stevens Pass ski area started to develop in the late 1930s and various parcels of land up and down the Skykomish River Valley was platted for residential recreational use.

The nominated resource is an example of a lot that was constructed as part of this change in use. Platted in 1928 by the partnership of Arthur Newton and Al Moore. The cabin site and several surrounding lots were purchased shortly thereafter by Alfred A. and Freya Brodeck. Alfred, was an influential "Democrat," prominent business leader, and tireless promoter of Everett. He co-owned the city's largest men's clothing store (Brodeck-Field Clothing Company, founded in 1891). He also served as the Commissioner of Public Safety for the City of Everett, and was president of the Everett Commercial Club (1918). In retirement they built a house and planted an orchard on several of the lots in Block 2, however the nominated lots, adjacent to the river in Block 1, remained vacant.

In the early 1940s, the lots were gifted to Alfred and Freya's daughter and son-in-law, Henrietta Inez and Alvah J. N. Bell. Additional lots were gifted to a second daughter, Alberta and her husband Harold Anderson. Those lots were later sold.

Alvah Jordan Nelson Bell was born in 1918, and graduated with honors from Lowell High School, outside of Everett in the Snohomish Valley and later attended Stanford University. While there he was captain of the golf team, and was a member of boxing and cross country teams. At age 18, he joined the National Guard Reserves. Upon graduation he returned to Everett, and took a job at the Boeing Company. In 1938 his mother, Stella, passed away and his father, Raymond largely left the kids to their own devices. That same year, Alvah "secretly" married Alfred A. Brodeck's 19 year-old daughter, Henrietta Inez. Together they had one son, David (1942-).

Plans were made by Alvah and Henrietta to build a family cabin on the gifted lots adjacent to the river. As a child David actually lived on and on off with his grandmother in the original Brodeck cabin (still standing, but under different ownership), which was adjacent to the nominated site. On weekends, his dad would come up to visit, and the two of them began building a cabin together despite having little to no construction experience. As David mixed bags of cement, his dad would set the cement and stones for a foundation. Back then, cement was \$1.00 a 94 lb. bag and it was purchased directly from the cement plant in Grotto, WA, just up the road on Highway 2. After laboring to construct the foundation of native stone, they had the cabin partially framed-in by the mid-1950s using \$25.00 worth of materials each weekend.

Most of the materials for the cabin came from local native sources, including the custom cut beams from a mill in Goldbar, rocks from the river shore, cement from Grotto, and shakes from

cedar in log jams harvested and cut by David. Much of the framing lumber actually came from an old airplane hanger located on Boeing Field in Seattle, which at the time was being demolished. Alvah loaded the lumber on a flatbed truck owned by his employer at the time, and trucked the building material to Index.

Alvah was an accountant by trade and in the mid 1950s he took a job as office manager for Washington Aircraft. For reasons unknown, around 1957 he formed a partnership with James H. Mulkey, a residential building contractor, and together they built homes mostly in south Seattle. Per building permits posted in the local newspapers, they built several homes scattered throughout the city, but mainly on the south side. Alvah served on the financial side of the partnership, but gained valuable construction experience which he would use in the construction of the cabin, and more importantly would pass on to his son. The partnership with Mulkey continued until 1964 when the local economy went into a tailspin as a result of lost contracts at Boeing Company. Under the stress of hard times, his wife, Henrietta passed in 1964.

Having learned valuable skills from working on the cabin with his father, David became a carpenter. He and his dad continued working on the cabin as time allowed, completing interior finishes and site stonework.

After high school, David landed a job as a residential builder and for the next 5 years, he worked summers and weekends, paying for his living expenses and education at the University of Washington. In his last year at the University, he landed a job with a large general contracting firm, rising to the level of foreman on several commercial projects. Over the years side jobs were residential construction, until he completed graduate school. The building trades became his passion and for most of his life was associated with residential housing in one form or another. For the last 15 years of his employment, he built and rehabbed homes for various Indian Tribes in Southwest Washington. In retirement, David still does carpenter work and manages several rentals, doing the maintenance and upgrades.

The design for the cabin was created by Alvah J., a guy who worked hard, and loved the land. He was just a plain guy who had an idea, and his vision was taken up by his son who worked hard to make it happen. Alvah J. lived in the cabin in the early 1970s. David's son Nelson lived there in the 1990s, and today the cabin still remains in the Ball family and serves as a part time home for David and his wife Kathy.

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I) Documentation

Xerox and attach any information or evidence that supports the property's significance.

Written Sources (books, articles, newspapers):

“Mill Town: A Social History of Everett, Washington” (Norman H. Clark) Discusses Alfred A. Brodeck and Alvah (Cap) Jordan’s political, social, and business leadership in the community.

J) Map and Photographs

Attach copies of historic maps or photos if available, and current photos (min 5 x 7 digital images, 300 DPI). Include a current map – appropriate Google Earth/U.S.G.S. map and parcel map – with the location of the property and its boundaries clearly marked. (see instructions)



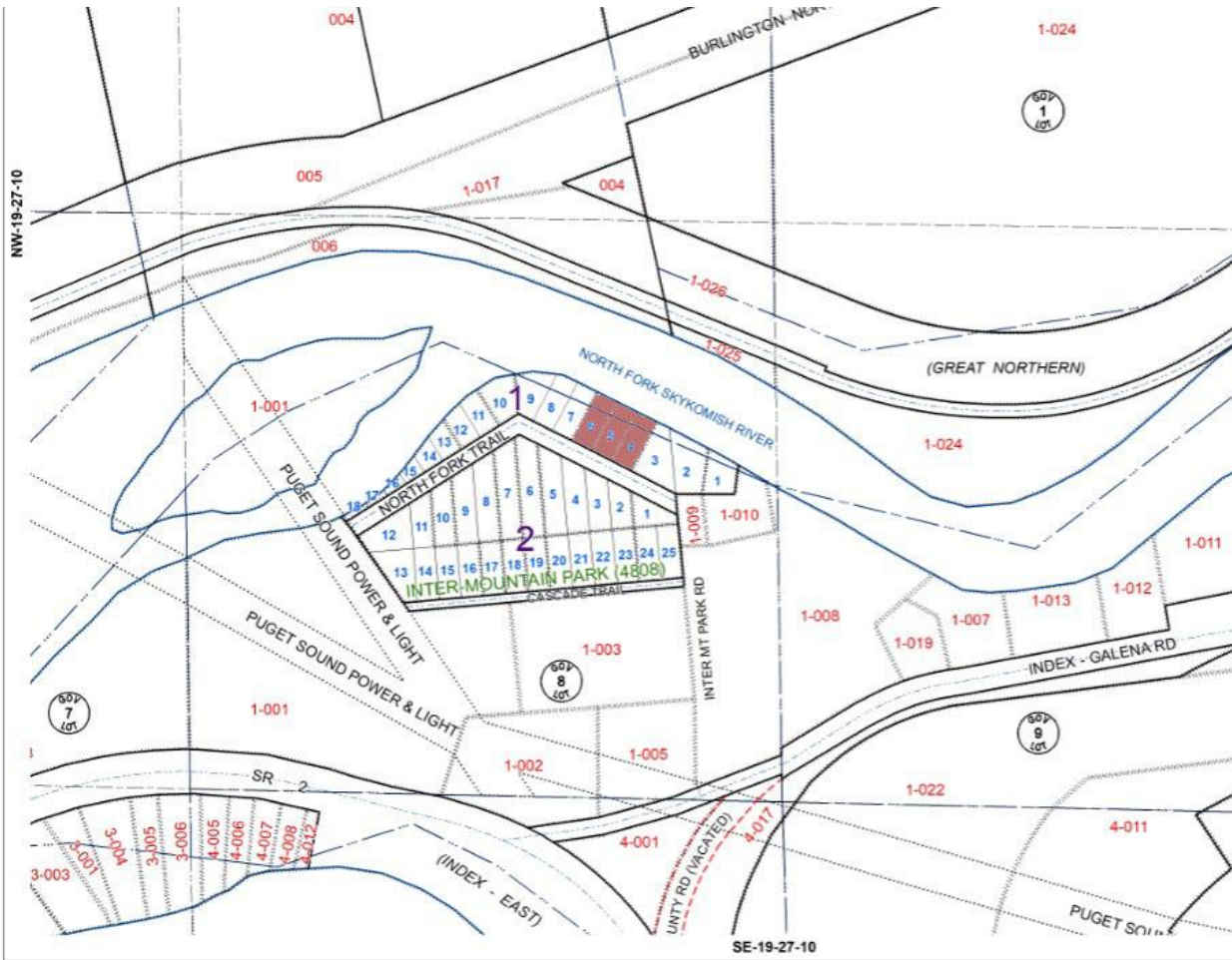
Google Earth Map

Bell Family Cabin
49321 North Fork Trail
Gold Bar, WA

Name: Bell Family Cabin

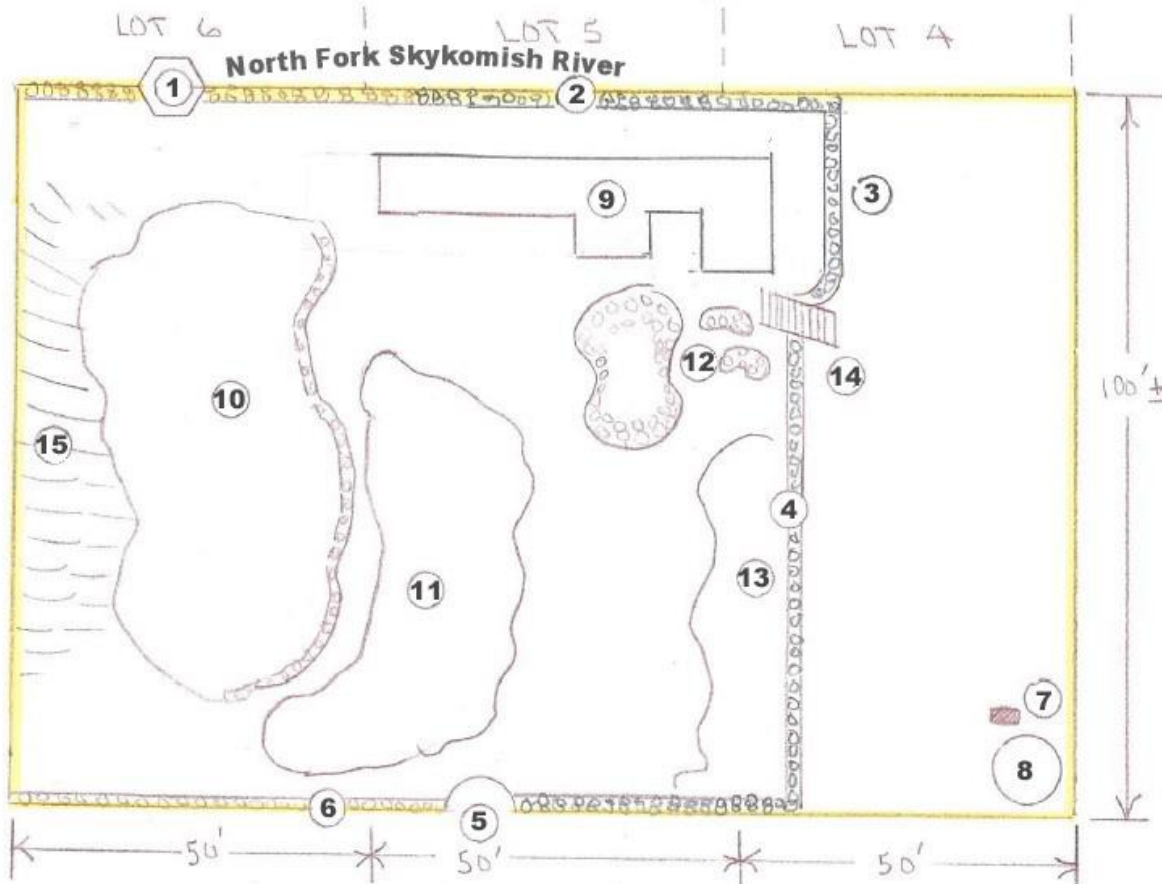
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Longitude: -121.570130°



Tax Parcel Map

Bell Family Cabin
49321 North Fork Trail
Gold Bar, WA



BELL FAMILY CABIN SITE MAP Inter-Mountain Park on North Fork Trail Block 1

Notes: Retainer walls, Arch and trout Pond made of native rock and cement hand-mixed and hand-set

Site Plan

Bell Family Cabin
49321 North Fork Trail
Gold Bar, WA

- ① Log miniature house overlooking river
- ② Flood retaining wall facing river 3'x 8'
- ③ Flood wall 3'x 5'
- ④ Flood wall 3'x 4'
- ⑤ Stone arch leading to cabin
- ⑥ Flood 3'x 3'
- ⑦ Alvah Bell burial site
- ⑧ Large diameter old growth spruce tree part of burial site where Alvah wished to be interred
- ⑨ Bell Family Cabin
- ⑩ Trout Pond
- ⑪ Landscape Zone-Azeleas
- ⑫ Rock gardens
- ⑬ Landscape zone-Rhodes
- ⑭ Steps over wall
- ⑮ Retainer wall



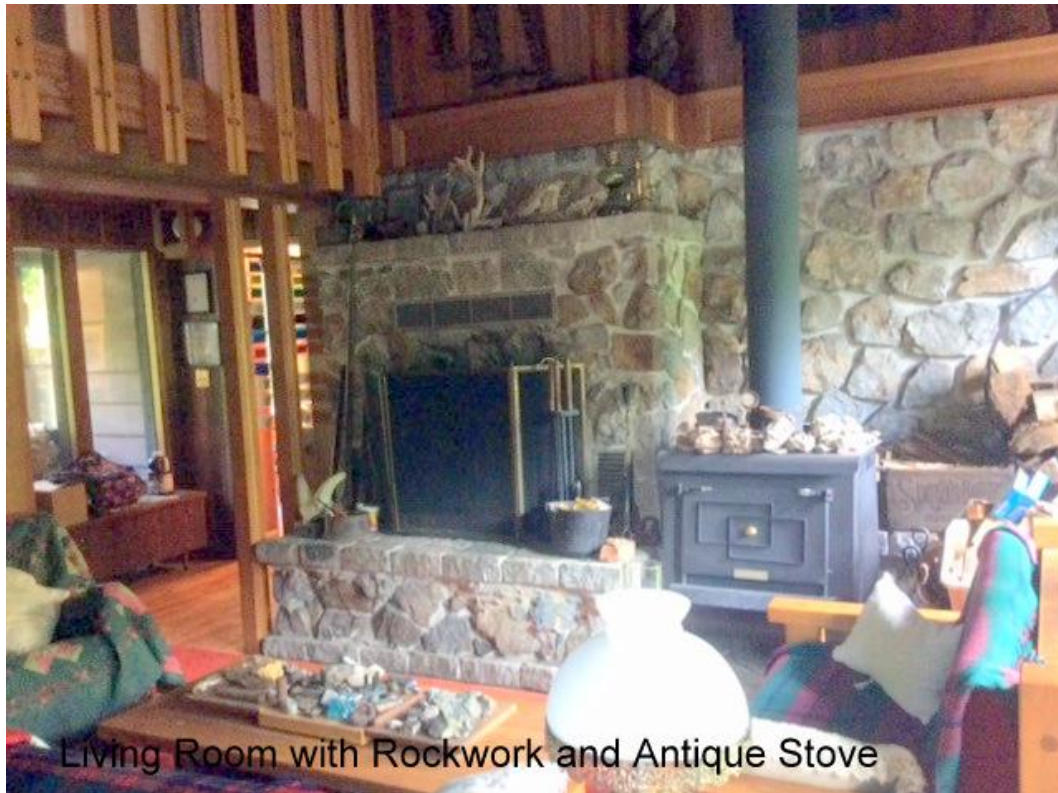
Floor Plan

Bell Family Cabin
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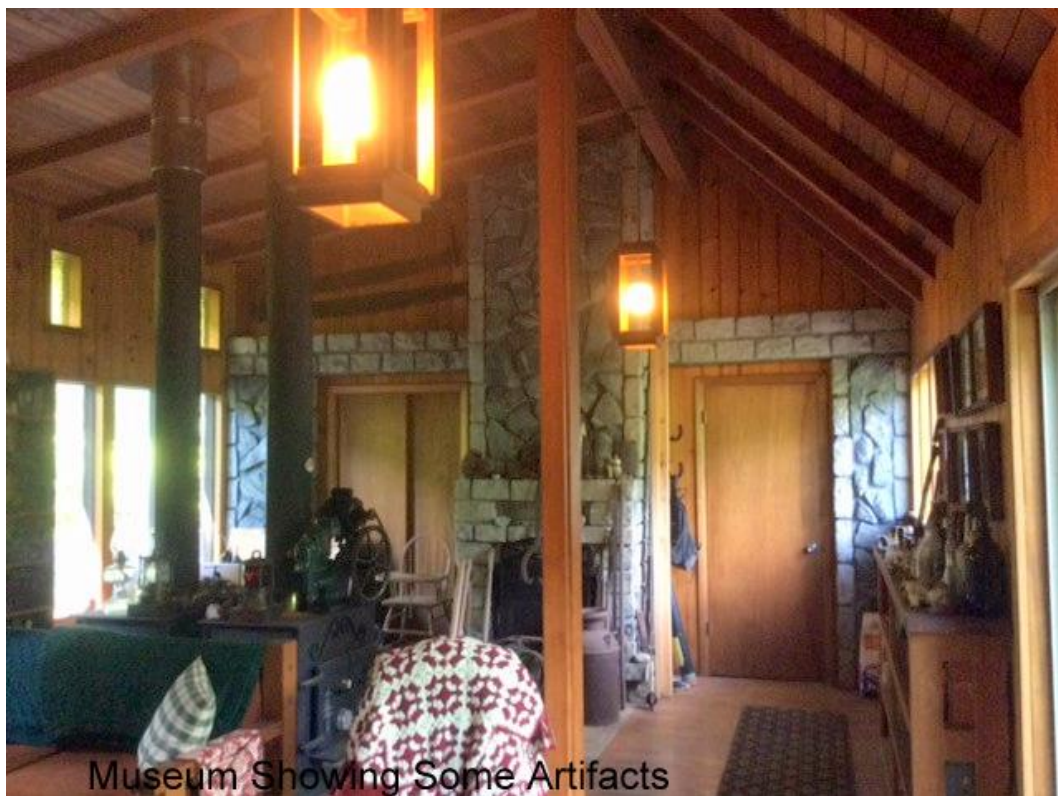
Current Images







Living Room with Rockwork and Antique Stove



Museum Showing Some Artifacts



Living Room



Stairs and Historic Photos



Fireplace Rockwork





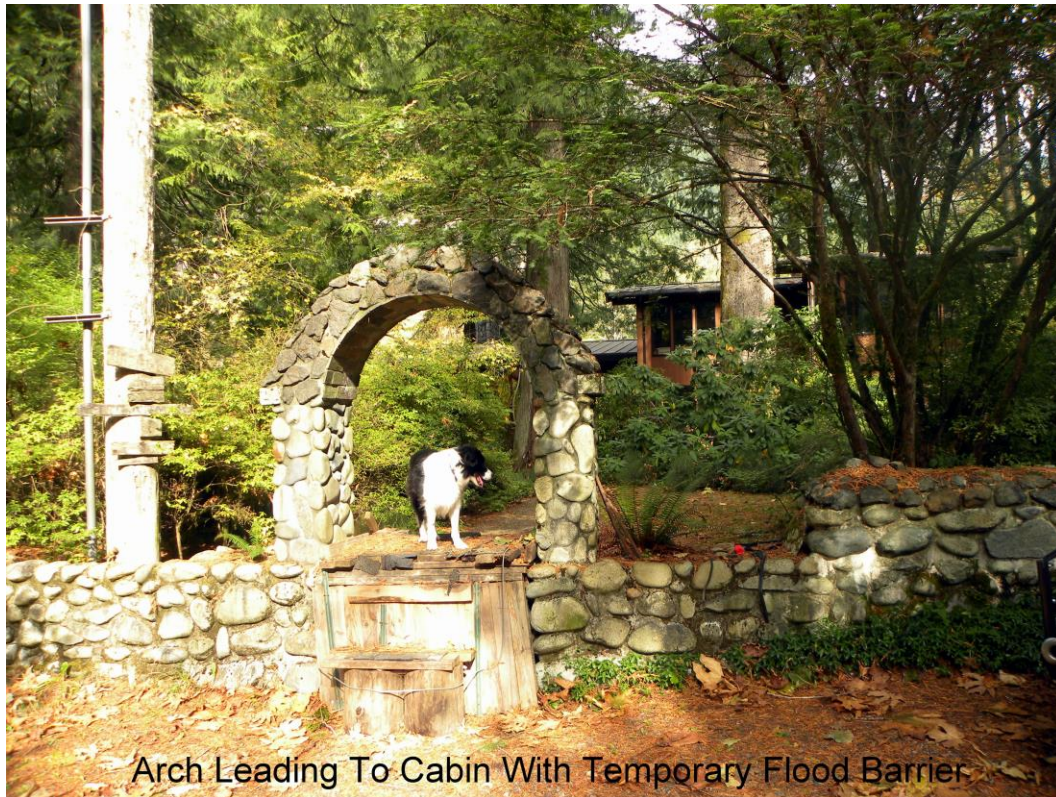
Sidewalk to Arch Leading From Cabin



Trout Pond Adjacent to Cabin







Arch Leading To Cabin With Temporary Flood Barrier



Old Lumber and mining tools



Family Grave Site Adjacent To Cabin



Part of Rock Gardent