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Burnett Inlet Cannery



Figure 173.

The cannery and warehouses of the Burnett Inlet Salmon Company were wrapped around the shore of Cannery Point, facing the photographer (looking southwest), with other buildings on pilings tucked into the cove at right.

Aleuts from Unalaska were resettled at the Burnett Inlet cannery, not far from Wrangell Institute (Figure 148). Burnett Inlet is a narrow water body seven miles long on the southwest side of Etolin Island, about 30 miles south of Wrangell (U.S. Department of Commerce 1978:83-84). The island's rugged mountains reach heights of over 3000', and the land is covered in spruce/hemlock/cedar forest up to an elevation of about 2000' (Figure 173). Near the mouth of Burnett Inlet, on the west side, is a small bulbous peninsula known as Cannery Point.

Early Years

In 1912 the Sanborn Cram Company of Astoria, Oregon, built a cannery at Cannery Point (Cobb 1917:50). The Sanborn family had a long history in business and were part of Astoria's affluent during the late 1800s; in 1889 under the name Astoria and Alaska Packing Company, George W. Sanborn and a partner built one of Alaska's earliest canneries at Pavlof Harbor on Chichagof Island – across Chatham Strait midway between Funter Bay and Angoon (Cobb 1922:40). The same year they began the Burnett Inlet cannery, George W. Sanborn



Figure 174.
One of the few pre-war images of the Burnett Inlet cannery looks northwest at the cannery and warehouses on Cannery Point.

University of Alaska Fairbanks
 Southeast cannery collection
 82.108.5

and his son Frank joined several other investors to form the Sanborn Cutting Company and built a cannery at Kake (District of Columbia Court of Appeals 1918:673-679; MacDonald 1949:33; Mobley 2009). The two companies were based in Astoria and for a time were contemporaries – both firms exhibited at the 1915 Panama-Pacific International Exposition in San Francisco (Wahlgreen Company 1915). By 1920 a large portion of the Astoria waterfront was taken up by the docks and warehouses of George W. Sanborn and Sons (Pacific Fisherman 1920:21), at a time when the elder Sanborn was one of the city’s three port commissioners (Special Correspondent 1918:142).

The Burnett Inlet industrial plant was contained in four large buildings on pilings over the intertidal zone,

facing east into the mouth of Burnett Inlet (Figure 174), while other buildings crept up the slope and back down again into the intertidal zone of a small cove to the north (Figure 173). Archival research did not turn up an historic map, but likely there were close to a couple dozen buildings counting individual cabins and bunk houses. After packing fish for six years, the Sanborn Cram Company sold their Burnett Inlet property in 1918 to the Burnett Inlet Packing Company, which operated the plant for the subsequent 12 years (MacDonald 1949:33). Polk’s Alaska-Yukon Gazetteer for 1923-24 lists the company in its Wrangell pages with Adolph Hall as manager (R.U. Polk & Company 1923:35). In 1930 the Burnett Inlet Packing Company sold the cannery to Alaska Pacific Fisheries,

which may have operated it that season (Bower 1931:42). But the company thereafter shuttered the cannery, and it didn't pack fish again until 1937 when the plant was sold to the Burnett Inlet Salmon Company.

The revitalization was short-lived, however, because the industrial plant caught fire and burned on November 21, 1940 (The Wrangell Sentinel 1940). The one-line operation had been packing fish for several seasons under the ownership of A.W. Breuger – a local Wrangell packer who had merged his operation with that of the Far West Alaska Company in 1935 (Paige et al. 2009:15). Three dwellings, the main cannery building, the store, and the warehouse were lost as well as considerable netting and gear. But no boats were destroyed, and the buildings were insured, according to the newspaper account.

The Burnett Inlet Salmon Company stayed in business, purchased a floating cannery – the *Retriever* – from the Red Salmon Packers Association, and packed fish on Lisianski Inlet at the north end of Chichagof Island (Bower 1942:25). Then the company moved its operations the following year to a facility at Elfin Cove at the north end of Chichagof Island

(U.S. Senate 1941:209), and was in business at least until 1948 (Commerce Clearing House Inc. 1963:9822). But fish were never packed at the Burnett Inlet cannery after the 1940 fire.

World War II and the Camp Experience

The Burnett Inlet Salmon Company still owned the cannery when the

I was born here in Wrangell, 83 years ago....I spent three years in Burnett [before the war]....My dad fished and my mother worked in the cannery....They had small houses about the size of this room here – they just had it divided into two rooms. The kitchen, the parlor, and everything else. They had a good stove, kitchen – they had everything that we needed. It was right during the Depression, too. My mother would make an egg-less, milk-less, butter-less cake, and it was good!...There was another bunkhouse, yes, for the non-Filipinos...right near the superintendent's quarters. The [Ole P.] Nergaard family lived there, and he was the superintendent, if I remember right. There used to be a little store there, off the main deal. You could get whatever you wanted. I know I used to charge a nickel's worth of hard candy, and boy you could get a lot for a nickel in them days. The Native workers lived in those little houses, and there was a boardwalk [6' wide], and there must have been at least ten houses. And they usually had people in all of them. A gridiron [marine railway], they called it, was off the side, in between the cabins. No one lived there [Burnett Inlet cannery] during the winter, except the Aleuts. It must have been miserable for them. Not much there. There was good fishing along in there, though. Halibut, king salmon. Lot of deer.

Richard Stokes



Figure 175.
A cannery bunkhouse that survived the 1940 fire became one of the housing units for Unalaska evacuees in 1942.

Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association
 Gertrude Svarney collection

federal government began searching for potential camp locations in earnest, and a deal was struck. In late August of 1942 when 111 Unalaska evacuees were moved from Wrangell Institute to the Burnett Inlet cannery, they found eleven cabins and a large bunkhouse still standing (Kirtland and Coffin 1981:35). Though dilapidated, the original cannery buildings still retained their red paint (Mayberry 1943:48). One board-and-battened cabin on pilings extending into the cove to the north illustrates the austerity of the accommodations (Figure 175). Several of the building's window penetrations seem to have no glazing. Blankets hang to dry, and five people including two men, a woman, and two children appear to be hanging fish to dry.

A row of small cabins was hastily constructed among the scorched machinery left from the cannery fire, facing the inlet (Figure 176). The example photographed in 1943 is a one-story frame cabin about 20' long with a shallow gable roof and a gable facing the inlet. The north wall was perforated for a stove chimney, and a door was set in the east end of the north eave wall. Tarpaper covered the roofs (Mayberry 1943:48). While many of the cannery buildings were elevated above the wet ground on piling foundations, the new cabins appear to have been set low to the ground. Plank boardwalks were rebuilt to connect the new buildings to the old (Figures 175-178). Mayberry (1943:48) described the camp layout as a "V" with two wings of buildings, meeting at a low promontory on which

a school and church were built (Figure 177). The new cabins built along the shore over the burned cannery zone were one arm of the V with the apex at the north end of Cannery Point, and the second arm consisted of original cannery buildings on pilings inside the cove to the north (Figure 173).

The church was built to facilitate worship in the Russian Orthodox faith and housed icons, vestments, candelabra, and other religious items selected for the purpose by elder Anfesia Shapnikoff, who otherwise buried the majority at Unalaska before the villagers were evacuated (Oleksa 1991:50; Kohlhoff 1995:124). It had a shallow-pitched gable roof (Mayberry (1943:48) described it as already sagging) and an enclosed gable-roofed entry (Figure 177). The main block and the entry were each topped by a white Russian Orthodox cross. The entrance was approached by a plank boardwalk and stairs fitted with handrails. Mayberry (1943:48) refers to “four silver-toned bells” outside the church, possibly hung from the rack visible outside the entry (Figure 177).

The Burnett Inlet cannery was the most isolated of the evacuation camps, and exhibited the initial deficiencies found at the others: crowded quarters, a single outhouse, no bath house, a limited water system, lack of transportation and medical care, and an unvarying diet (Kohlhoff 1995:123). No doubt the arrival of 46 people



Figure 176.

By spring of 1943 new cabins (right) were built amid the burned cannery debris. View is south-southeast. Note boiler at center.

From Mayberry (1943)



Figure 177.

The displaced Unalaskans built a church at Burnett Inlet. Compare skyline angle at right with that in Figure 174.

From Mayberry (1943)



Figure 178.

The northernmost cannery buildings survived the 1940 fire. Note engine on concrete pedestal, looking north-northeast in 1943.

From Mayberry (1943)

transferred from the Ward Lake camp in late spring of 1944 made matters

little better (Kohlhoff 1995:130). The Unalaskan Aleuts were not pleased with the accommodations and lodged complaints about the poor living conditions. Perhaps as a consequence of the isolation, Burnett Inlet turned out to have the lowest mortality of the

relocation camps, though “at least four persons” died there (Kirtland and Coffin 1981:62).

The couple employed by the BIA at Unalaska – Mr. and Mrs. Elmer Long – became the federal on-site representatives at Burnett Inlet (Mayberry 1943:48-49). Mrs. Long was the schoolteacher and – with a new school building constructed at the camp – 36 Unalaska students were taught there rather than sent to the Wrangell Institute. Mr. Long became “general manager, construction foreman, storekeeper and ‘complaint clerk’” (Mayberry 1943:49). A number of adult Aleuts left the camp to take jobs in Wrangell, Ketchikan, and elsewhere, as the evacuees were expected to pay for the food and other wares supplied to them at the camp. In 1943 when Mayberry visited the camp the community had direct access to only one boat – a “dory with an inboard motor” – controlled by Mr. Long (Mayberry 1943:49). The Unalaskans endured Burnett Inlet until mid-April of 1945, when the USAT *David W. Branch* – freshly loaded with the Ward Lake evacuees – stopped to pick them up on the way to Killisnoo.

The Aleut village [at Burnett Inlet] is built in a V-shape. The church and schoolhouse occupy the place of honor, for they have been built at the top of the walk that leads from the float where the boats are tied. They form the apex of the angle formed by the two wings of the village. Some of the houses are the red cannery buildings left standing when the great fire destroyed the cannery at Burnett Inlet a few years ago. Other houses are new structures of rough board and tar-paper roofs, erected for the shelter of the refugees. Every house is on “Front Street” and commands a view of the lovely little inlet....The houses, on the whole, are warm and comfortable. There are 21...[extended] families.

On the beach lies many tons of blackened and rusted scrap iron – the residue of the burned cannery....Supplies and mail are brought in from Wrangell and Ketchikan....A number have left the colony and accepted work in government defense projects. Some have moved to nearby towns and have fitted themselves into the industries there....

The colony at Burnett has no doctor or trained nurse. Mrs. Alice Hope, wife of the postmaster at Unalaska, is an excellent practical nurse and it is upon her that the colonists depend in case of sickness. In case of emergency, plane service is available from Ketchikan, although there is no means of communication save by boat...early in April [of 1943]...books, desks and other equipment arrived and Mrs. Long had begun with 36 pupils and all grades.

Mayberry (1943:48-49)



Figure 179.
Cannery Point at the mouth of Burnett Inlet, here looking southeast, cradles a small sheltered cove (right). Note absence of visible ruins, and alder patch at left.

Post-War Development

Unlike the Funter Bay properties or Killisnoo, the land and water over which the Burnett Inlet cannery was built were never patented – a process by which federal property can be transferred to private hands – and eventually it reverted back to the U.S. Forest Service. The agency took note of the site in the 1970s (Plaskett 1977), and in 1999 USFS archaeologists began mapping it (Smith 2003). The circumstances of the property after World War II are one of neglect and decay, as the Burnett Inlet cannery gradually entered the archaeological record. In 1977 there were at least five buildings left standing (Plaskett 1977:14); 25 years later there were none (Smith 2003).

Current Condition

From the air the Burnett Inlet cannery is practically invisible – no building ruins are evident, and only a patch of second-growth alder hints at the former facility (Figures 173, 179). Except for that portion in the intertidal zone, the site is completely vegetated in mostly second-growth spruce, hemlock, and red cedar, and the aforementioned alder. Here and there stumps up to five feet in diameter sport notches for a springboard – the short plank wedged into the tree for the sawyer to stand on (Figure 180). One old-growth red cedar left standing has two small wood cleats nailed to its trunk to create a ladder (Figure 181), with a large ferrous staple affixed 20' above ground surface, suggesting the tree may once have had a radio antenna attached to it.

LEFT

Figure 180.

Becky Saleeby stands next to a large stump with spring-board notches.



RIGHT

Figure 181.

A large old-growth red cedar spared by cannery development, 50' south of Feature 23, had wood cleats for climbing the trunk.

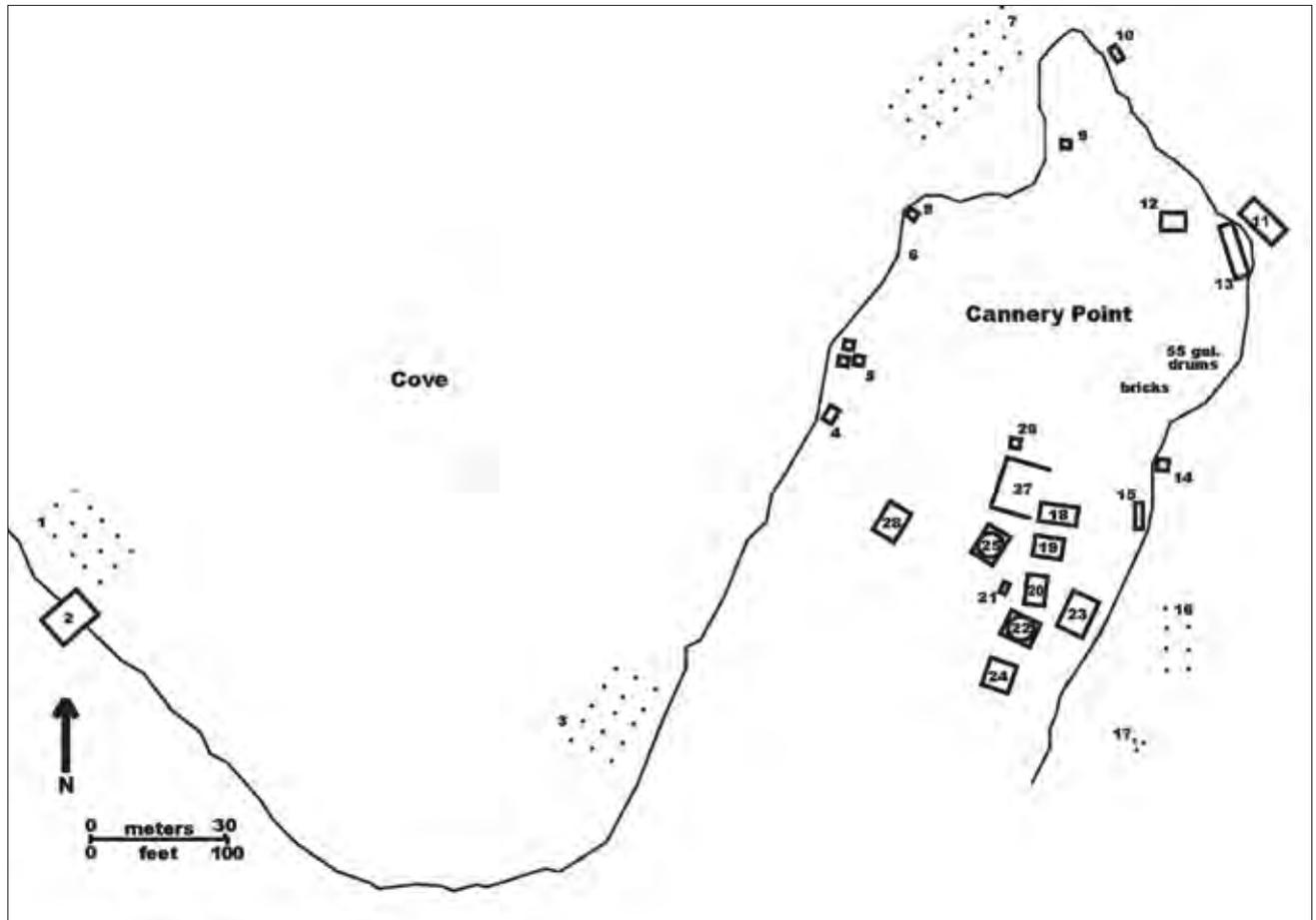


A map of the Burnett Inlet cannery site assembled by USFS archaeologist Jane Smith in 2003 guided the 2008 reconnaissance (Figure 182). The team, including Wrangell resident and historian Patricia Roppel, walked the beach from the protected cove counterclockwise to an indentation on the south side of Cannery Point (off the USFS map), and also walked inland across the narrow rocky ridge separating the cove from the Inlet. Standing buildings are no longer found at the Burnett Inlet cannery, and most of the evidence has entered the archaeological record. Observed were most of the intertidal piling clusters, building ruins, stationary features, and large artifact scatters described by Smith (2003), and her 28 feature numbers have been retained (Table 1). Other ruins and artifacts discovered outside Smith's

(2003) mapping effort are also reported here. A shell deposit described by Smith (2003) but not confirmed as a cultural midden was not found in 2008. Graves have never been identified at the site, nor were they found mentioned in archival sources.

BUILDING RUINS

Eleven of the 28 features recorded by USFS are building ruins, one is a plank platform, and one is a doghouse. The plank platform (Feature 23) was described as of 2"x6" construction and measuring about 35'x20', located on the east side of Cannery Point where the cannery buildings stood before the 1940 fire. The 2008 reconnaissance found a considerably smaller plank platform there unlike Smith's (2003) photograph of Feature 23. The moss-covered plank platform observed just



inside the treeline in 2008 was about 10'x12', or about the size of a wall tent (Figure 183), and had the appearance of a temporary sportsman's camp a few decades old at most. The doghouse (Feature 26) could be considered the only standing building at the Funter Bay cannery (Figure 184), and it may postdate the Aleut occupation.

Of the 11 building ruins mapped in 2003, four were reconfirmed in 2008: Features 2, 11, 19, and 24. Feature 2 is a collapsed wood frame building straddling the treeline, with half of the ruin in the intertidal zone and half in the uplands (Figure 182). Within the

pile of lumber are 1"x8", 2"x8", and 4"x12" planks, as well as logs ranging from 8" to 14" in diameter. The roof had a gable facing out into the cove, and the northwest half of the roof has fallen in place to cap the ruin (Figure 185). Bits of tarpaper still adhere to the roof boards. This building ruin and the associated pilings (Feature 1) may represent the bunkhouse depicted in a wartime photograph contributed by Gertrude Svarney (Figure 175). A building (one of two) appears at this location on the USGS topographic map for the locality, based on aerial photography decades old.

Figure 182.
A 2003 map of the Burnett Inlet cannery site (PET-136) assembled by USFS archaeologist Jane Smith was used to prepare this illustration. Feature numbers are described in Table 1.

Figure 183.

A moss-covered rectangle of 2"x6" planks (possibly Smith's (2003) Feature 23) post-dates the 1940 cannery fire and appears to be a tent platform no more than a few decades old.



Figure 184.

The most intact building at the Burnett Inlet cannery is a doghouse.



In 2008 a collection of round and square timbers and other boards (Feature 11) at the high tide mark was found near the north end of the point where a wartime cannery building

once stood (Figure 178), but it didn't clearly represent that building. Some of the material had drifted in, and no piling stubs were visible (Figure 186). Smith (2003) observed a belt-driven

Feature	Description
01	Fifteen pilings on the SW end of the cove; 21x11.7 m.
02	Collapsed plank structure on beach, S end partially in woods; 10.6x7.7 m.
03	Twenty-two pilings on beach; 22.2x12.9 m.
04	Possible raft at tree line, dimensional beams bound by iron staves, disarticulated; 4x2.9 m.
05	Outhouse/trash pits, three pits total, one filled with trash; 8.9x6.6 m total area. Some dimensional lumber is present. Two pits are 1x1 m and other is 1.5x2 m.
06	One piling on beach.
07	Twenty-nine pilings on beach; 37x9.2 m.
08	Collapsed plank-lined pit, corrugated metal (roofing?); 1.4x2.5 m.
09	Plank structure with corrugated metal roof, partially intact but fallen over. Roof is 1.75x1.75 m.
10	Iron vat set in cemented rock foundation on rocky point that marks cove entrance. Space for fire below vat (rendering?), dimensional planks associated, platform/dock? Tar in area; vat and foundation 3.2 m L x 1.8 m W x 1.4 m H.
11	Beam and timber structure on pilings; 10.4x4.8 m. Located on rock outcrop beach. A lot of rotten net on top plus some hardware that rotates belts (hauling gear?), possible net shed. Could have been floating at one time.
12	Collapsed plank structure with a lot of tar paper inside tree line above bedrock beach, dimensions undetermined. Area dimensions 4.5 x 2.5 m.
13	Collapsed plank (2 by 4) and beam structure at the tree line above bedrock beach; 3x12 m.
14	Iron cannery hardware mounted on cement piling at tree line, belt drive system, possible water pump; 4 m H, 2.8x1.2 m across base.
15	Iron cannery "tin man" boiler inside tree line, steam driven; 5.7x1.2 m.
16	Eleven pilings on beach; 13.7x6 m.
17	Three pilings on beach; 13.4 m L.
18	Collapsed plank and 2 by 4 structure in woods; 7.5x3.9 m.
19	Collapsed plank rack shack in woods, planks painted red, about 15 can racks in structure; 6.5x4.3 m.
20	Collapsed framed structure in woods; 7x5.8 m. Peak rafters visible, tar paper, bed frames.
21	Rectangular pit in woods, moss lined; .4 m deep, 2x1.3 m.
22	Mostly collapsed circular wood tank on pilings in woods, rectangular base; 7x5.7 m. Metal hoops on top, oil spill in area.
23	Plank and 2 by 6 platform just inside tree line; 10.3x6.2 m.
24	Painted tongue and groove sided structure in woods; 6.8x6.2 m. Distinguishable framed window, most intact structure.
25	Wood water tank supported by pilings on second bench above majority of features, wooden pipe remains lead downhill to other structures.
26	Intact plank dog house.
27	Collapsed plank dwelling on second bench; 10x8 m.
28	Collapsed plank structure on third bench just below top ridge of point (probably dwelling), 6.5x3 m.

Table 1.

Features recorded by USFS archaeologists at the Burnett Inlet cannery site in 1999, 2002, and 2003, from Smith (2003).

Figure 185.

Feature 2 is a building ruin at the treeline on the shore of the protected cove (here looking northeast), counter-clockwise from Cannery Point.



Figure 186.

Feature 11 is a collection of round and square timbers on the beach where the central building in Figure 178 would have been, though at least some of the material has drifted in (note shackle around log left of center).



power train amid the debris, but this was not evident in 2008. Though pilings were observed by the USFS at this locale, they suggested that the building they recorded could have been on floats (Table 1).

Red paint could still be seen in 2003 on the frame members of Feature 19 – a building collapsed upon about 15 ferrous racks used to hold cans in the cannery’s retorts. The feature was evident in 2008 (Figure 187), though the



Figure 187.
 Feature 19 is a wood frame building collapsed around metal artifacts including strap-steel trays used to hold cans for insertion into the retorts.

paint was indiscernible. Other large metal items including several 55-gallon drums were nearby.

The fourth building ruin detected in 2008 was Feature 24 at the south end of the shore facing Burnett Inlet (Figure 182), described by Smith (2003) as about 22'x20'. USFS investigations documented tongue-and-groove siding and a window frame, and considered it to be the site's most intact building at that time (Table 1). Smith (2003) detected paint of an undetermined color on the siding. In 2008 Feature 24 barely protrudes above the forest floor more than any other building ruin (Figure 188).

Investigations in 2008 turned up a building ruin not plotted on the USFS map (Figure 182), just north of the doghouse (Feature 26), where

moss-covered planks formed a rectangle measuring about 30'x20'.

INTERTIDAL PILINGS

The USFS gave feature numbers (Features 1, 3, 6, 7, 16, and 17) to six sets of pilings on the beach, ranging from one isolated example to a group of 29 (Table 1). The larger samples were plotted schematically on the USFS map (Figure 182). The pilings show up either as vertical remnants protruding from the intertidal zone, or as dark organic circles eroded flush with the tidal floor. Over time wave action and decay create fewer of the former and more of the latter, with shifts in erosion and sedimentation further altering their visible pattern from year to year. Storms and salvagers may remove pilings completely, further changing the patterns and their interpretation.

Figure 188.

Patricia Roppel and Becky Saleeby inspect the collapsed building designated as Feature 24.



Features 16 and 17, for example, totaling 14 pilings (Figure 182), were all that could be seen in 2003 where historic photography (Figure 174) shows industrial buildings supported by hundreds of pilings.

The 2008 reconnaissance relocated Smith's (2003) four largest piling groups. Because the shoreline setting of the Aleut bunkhouse in Figure 175 was comparable to that behind 15 pilings and a collapsed building (Features 1 and 2) on the southwest side of the cove (Figure 189), the pilings were mapped to determine if the pattern matched the archival photograph. A total of 54 pilings were found in contrast to the 15 tallied a decade earlier (Figure 190). Most of the pilings were on 10' centers, with two instances

of double pilings and two occasions of a supplemental piling centered at diagonal intersections. Despite the mapping effort, the pilings didn't particularly match those of the wartime bunkhouse, so correlation of the feature with the building in Figure 175 is unconfirmed.

Along the east shore of the cove is another set of intertidal pilings, designated Feature 3. Smith (2003) counted 22 pilings in three rows (Figure 182). The upper row consists of three tall pilings, while the two lower rows contain more pilings uniformly cut flat 20" above the beach gravel (Figure 191). USFS measured the feature as a 72'x42' rectangle. The feature appears to be a grid for stranding boats at high tide so that hull work can be performed.



Figure 189.
 Along the southwest shore of the cove are intertidal piling stubs (Feature 1, center) and a building ruin (Feature 2, left of center). This is possibly the site of the building in Figure 175.

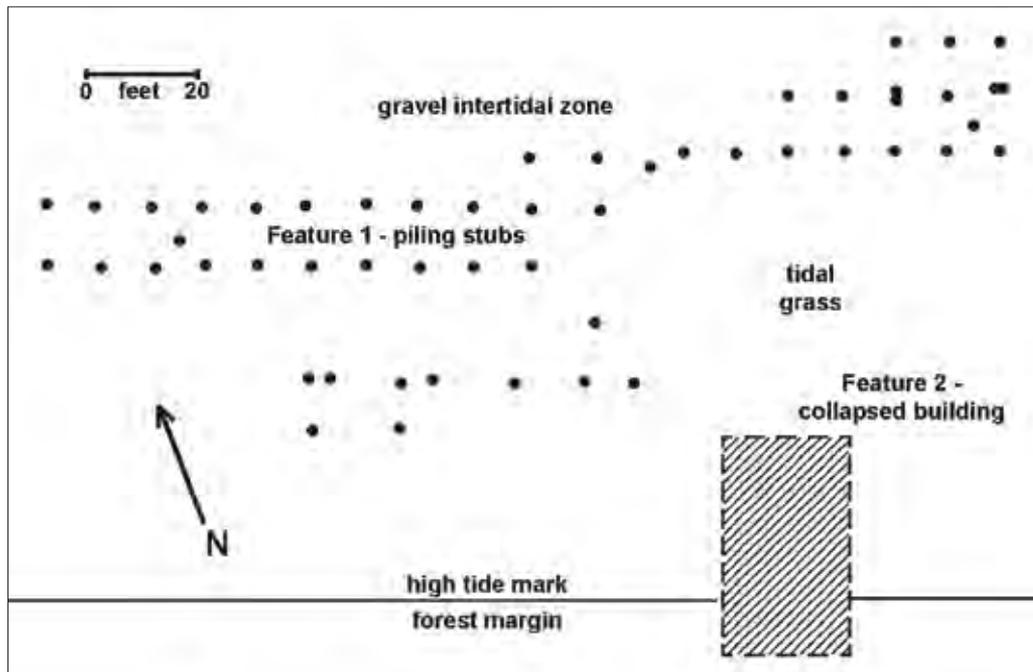


Figure 190.
 Together, Features 1 and 2 in 2008 displayed 54 piling stubs, compared to the earlier count of 15 (Smith 2003).

Feature 7 is a collection of 29 piling remnants in three rows just inside the cove from cannery point, spanning an area of about 120'x30' (Figure

192). Just south at the treeline USFS plotted a single piling as Feature 6 (Figure 182), but it was not located in 2008.

A collection of 11 intertidal pilings (USFS's schematic map shows seven) on the east side of Cannery Point is Feature 16 (Figure 193), and a small group of three pilings 50' further south is Feature 17. This area is part of the

industrial complex that burned in 1940 (Figure 174), and large rusty pieces of machinery litter the intertidal zone (see Figure 199). Most of the many pilings that must have supported the large buildings were not evident.

Figure 191.

Along the southeast side of the cove are three rows of pilings (Feature 3) with the two lower rows cut 20" above the gravel and three taller pilings forming the upper row – likely remains of a grid used to elevate boats at high tide so that hull work could be performed.



Figure 192.

Feature 7 is a collection of 29 piling remnants in three rows just inside the cove from Cannery Point, spanning a 120'x30' area.



OTHER FEATURES

Besides the buildings and pilings, the USFS team recorded pits, tanks, and stationary equipment (Smith 2003). Three unlined pits (Feature 5), another lined with planks and associated with corrugated metal (Feature 8), and a single unlined rectangular pit (Feature 21) were all surmised to be outhouse features in 2003; none were seen in 2008.

The ruins of two wood-stave tanks remain at Cannery Point. Feature 22 is a pile of rotten wood including pilings and other members of an 18'x22' platform, with the collapsed staves of a tank that must have been about 18' in diameter. In 2008 the feature was barely discernible under a thick cover of moss and alder growth. Smith (2003) observed oil and said in her

field notes that the place “reeks of oil,” and the shore location (Figure 182) is typical of historic cannery fuel tank placement (see the Funter Bay cannery). Feature 25 is another wood-stave tank on a rotten wood platform, similar in appearance to the first but elevated on the rocky ridge forming Cannery Point. Smith (2003) noted wood-stave pipe leading from the tank to various building ruins and consequently judged it to be a water tank. The rotten staves, compression hoops, and other structural elements of Feature 25 (Figure 194) are more visible than those of Feature 22.

Three stationary pieces of equipment were recognized in 2003 and again in 2008: a boiler, an engine, and a vat. The boiler (Feature 15) is of the tubular type and is devoid of identifying



Figure 193.

The shore on the east side of Cannery Point – home to the cannery’s extensive industrial complex until the 1940 fire – now displays only a few pilings along with rusty metal machinery (Feature 16 is at right).

markings (Figure 195). The remains of the firebox indicate an oil-fired system rather than wood- or coal-fired. The foundation is not visible and the apparatus has sunk unevenly into the forest floor. The boiler is in its original location judging from a wartime photograph (Figure 176).

The remains of at least three engines were observed at Cannery Point but only one – Feature 14 – is stationary. That feature is a pyramidal concrete pedestal surmounted by a large engine oriented so the drive belt would have run perpendicular to shore (Figure 196). The feature (a survivor of

Figure 194.

Feature 25 is the ruin of a wood-stave tank – probably a water tank – similar to the cannery’s wood-stave fuel tank (Feature 22).



Figure 195.

A large oil-fired boiler (Feature 15) remains in its wartime position just inside the treeline where the 1940 cannery fire dropped it through a burned floor (Figure 176).





the 1940 cannery fire) shows in a 1943 photograph (Figure 178).

The third stationary feature (Feature 10) is a ferrous vat set in a stone masonry vault at the high tide mark on the very north end of Cannery Point (Figure 182). It measures about 10'x6' by 4½' high, and the masonry at the north end has a cavity containing charcoal and reddened rock (Figure 197). Globes of nearby tar suggest the vat was used to heat and liquefy tar so that fishing nets could be dipped into it, to preserve the cotton web. Boxes for dipping seine nets into heated tar were a typical feature at early canneries (Mobley 1999:62-63), though Richard Stokes – who worked at the Burnett Inlet cannery before the 1940 fire, insisted the seiners didn't tar their nets to preserve them but instead hosed them with “blue stone” (copper sulfite).



LEFT

Figure 196.

A concrete pedestal at the high tide line supports a large engine (Feature 14) – another survivor of the 1940 fire (Figure 178).

RIGHT

Figure 197.

At the north end of Cannery Point is a metal vat encased in rock masonry, probably to dip seine nets in hot tar to preserve them.

ARTIFACT SCATTERS

The 2003 map plotted without feature numbers three scatters of large artifacts inside the treeline: a dozen 55-gallon metal drums, another group of fewer drums, and – in between – a pile of bricks (Figure 182). The smaller collection of drums was noticed in 2008, just north of Feature 18, but the other two groups of artifacts were not.

Conspicuous during low tide in 2008 were large metal artifacts along the east shore of Cannery Point, where the industrial buildings were prior to the 1940 fire (Figures 174, 193). Between 20 and 30 specimens are strewn in the intertidal zone between Feature 14 and Feature 17, including parts of a lathe (Figure 198), engines (Figures 199-200), and other machines (Figure 201). Seaweed and barnacles

cover most specimens, making the burned, corroded, and wave-battered artifacts difficult to identify.

Summary

The Burnett Inlet cannery has had no standing buildings for a decade

(doghouse excepted) and is now an archaeological site on Tongass National Forest land. Many of the features plotted in 2003 (Smith 2003) were observed in 2008, including building ruins, intertidal pilings, miscellaneous features and stationary equipment, and

Figure 198.

One of many pieces of machinery in the intertidal zone on the east side of Cannery Point is a lathe.



Figure 199.

Large metal machine pieces lie in the intertidal zone where the cannery's industrial buildings burned in 1940.





TOP

Figure 200.

Part of an engine lies in the beach gravel just at treeline, on the east side of Cannery Point.

BOTTOM

Figure 201.

Barnacles obscure many of the intertidal artifacts.



artifact scatters. Four of the 11 buildings mapped in 2003 were found, and all were fast descending into the forest floor. Four large piling groups in the intertidal zone were relocated, and one was mapped in an (inconclusive) attempt to match it with an Aleut-occupied wartime bunkhouse depicted in a photograph.

Other features include the remains of a wood-stave water tank on pilings in the forest, and another similar one closer to shore used for oil. Small depressions observed in 2003 that could have been outhouse holes were not seen in 2008. Stationary equipment consisted of a boiler, a large engine on a concrete pedestal, and a masonry-enclosed metal vat probably used to soak nets.

They blue-stoned [the nets]. It preserved the nets. They didn't tar it. They used bluestone. The gillnetters here used blue-stone, too. It looked like blue rocks. They just throw it in there and the water dissolves [it]. Each night when we'd come in from fishing we'd have to get a sack, and we'd take and put a hose in the sack and we'd walk all over the seine and the blue stone would go through it. It kept it from rotting. Because everything was cotton in them days.

Richard Stokes

The intertidal zone facing the inlet is strewn with large pieces of machinery

that probably fell through the decking of the cannery's industrial buildings during the 1940 fire. Some of it is basic machine shop equipment, some is from the cannery's power train, and some is fish-processing equipment. Inside the treeline is a small collection of 55-gallon metal drums, but another such group and a scatter of red bricks noted in 2003 were not seen in 2008. Few small artifacts such as glass or ceramic shards were noted, though bits of melted metal from the 1940 cannery fire were observed in the intertidal zone. A small indentation in the shore cliff on the south side of Cannery Point was found to have a separate suite of features including at least one cabin ruin and domestic debris.

Due to the lack of standing buildings the Burnett Inlet cannery has shifted from an architectural property into an archaeological site. The site's subtle plank and metal features sinking into the earth, and its intertidal zone strewn with rusty barnacle-clad junk and piling stubs, are both typical of cannery ruins in southeast Alaska. No evidence was found at the Burnett Inlet cannery site that particularly reflects

the Aleut relocation experience during World War II.