



Fure's Cabin



NPS/J. Roy

Located on a remote arm of Naknek Lake, Fure's Cabin represents an exceptional example of historic log craftsmanship and the lifestyle of early 20th century non-native Alaskans. It offers a chance to explore the self reliance and solitude Katmai's former residents experienced.

Roy Fure



All of the structures and historic objects at the site demonstrate the lifestyle of Roy Fure, a trapper-pro prospector.

Born in Lithuania in the late 1800s, Roy Fure moved to Alaska in 1912. Fure prospected for gold in the area and did occasional work as a caretaker, cannery worker, and other odd jobs. He also spent time trapping, hunting, and fishing. He traveled the 55 miles to Naknek by skis in the winter and by dory in the summer.

In 1919, Roy met and married Anna Johnson, an Alaska Native from Bethel.

They had three sons. In January 1926 Anna gave birth to a girl named Marian, and later that year Roy built a one-room, 15' x 20' log cabin along the north shore of Naknek Lake in the Bay of Islands area.

In 1929 Anna Fure died and Roy remarried shortly thereafter. He and his second wife, Fanny, raised their son Alex and daughter Nola, born in 1930, in the cabin on Naknek Lake. Roy Fure used the cabin until 1960. He died in Portland, Oregon in 1962.

Craftsmanship

Fure's Cabin and associated structures are listed on the National Register of Historical Places. The level of craftsmanship achieved on the cabin is exceptional.

The hand-hewn, squared logs fit so tightly that little chinking was needed. All the logs used in the building were hewn by hand. Joints between wall logs and at dovetailed corners were carefully crafted to fit tightly.

The dovetail joints, as well as the roof and floor planks, reflect a Russian or Scandinavian influence. Fure, a Lithuanian-Russian, must have learned methods of construction in his homeland, as these methods are rare in Alaska. The cabin probably had a sod roof until Fure put a corrugated tin roof on it in the 1930s. Electricity was generated by a windmill near the cabin.

Conflict with the Government

To support a trapping lifestyle, hardy, self-reliant individuals like Fure built cabins, ancillary structures, and traplines near lakes and rivers. This mostly took place in the northern and western portions of today's park. Expansion of Katmai National Monument's boundaries brought the trappers' way of life into conflict with the National Park Service's natural resource protection policies, effectively ending the Katmai trappers' lifestyle.

Fure's Cabin and the surrounding countryside was absorbed within Katmai National Monument in 1931, but the NPS did not move to evict existing residents until the late 1930s. A General Land Office investigation

in 1939 found that Fure, along with several other trappers, had valid existing rights to land within the monument. They were allowed to continue to live in the monument, but were forbidden to trap. The Fures continued to live in their cabin until 1940 when Roy was arrested for violation of game laws.

In response, he either built or moved into a new cabin outside of the monument's boundaries on the east bank of American Creek. Despite his arrest, however, he continued to use the Bay of Islands as well as the American Creek cabin. This use certainly continued into the early 1950s and may have continued for the rest of his life.

Restoration and Public Use

Ownership of the cabin fell to the National Park Service after Roy Fure's death in 1962. In 1976, Fure's Cabin was found to be the most structurally sound historic building in the park. The cabin's fine and careful construction was evidenced by its excellent state of preservation.

In 1988, two National Park Service employees dismantled Fure's Cabin and separated salvageable logs from those which were too rotted to be useful. The cabin was then reconstructed and restored.

Today, Fure's Cabin is available by reservation for public use. Fure's Cabin is \$45 per

night June 1 through September 17. Guests at Fure's cabin are limited to no more than 4 consecutive nights and 7 nights per calendar year. Group size is limited to six. Discount passes are not valid for Fure's Cabin reservations.

Please note, outside of June 1 through September 17, reservations for Fure's Cabin are free and must be made through the park headquarters in King Salmon by calling (907)246-3305. Current year reservations for the Brooks Camp Campground and Fure's Cabin can be made starting January 5 at 8 AM Alaska Time. Visit www.recreation.gov to make a reservation.



Fure's Cabin in 1982, before restoration.