
National Park Service
Cultural Landscapes Inventory
1999



Washington Island
Isle Royale National Park

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Inventory Unit Summary & Site Plan

Inventory Summary

The Cultural Landscapes Inventory Overview:

CLI General Information:

Purpose and Goals of the CLI

The Cultural Landscapes Inventory (CLI), a comprehensive inventory of all cultural landscapes in the national park system, is one of the most ambitious initiatives of the National Park Service (NPS) Park Cultural Landscapes Program. The CLI is an evaluated inventory of all landscapes having historical significance that are listed on or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, or are otherwise managed as cultural resources through a public planning process and in which the NPS has or plans to acquire any legal interest. The CLI identifies and documents each landscape's location, size, physical development, condition, landscape characteristics, character-defining features, as well as other valuable information useful to park management. Cultural landscapes become approved CLIs when concurrence with the findings is obtained from the park superintendent and all required data fields are entered into a national database. In addition, for landscapes that are not currently listed on the National Register and/or do not have adequate documentation, concurrence is required from the State Historic Preservation Officer or the Keeper of the National Register.

The CLI, like the List of Classified Structures, assists the NPS in its efforts to fulfill the identification and management requirements associated with Section 110(a) of the National Historic Preservation Act, National Park Service Management Policies (2006), and Director's Order #28: Cultural Resource Management. Since launching the CLI nationwide, the NPS, in response to the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA), is required to report information that respond to NPS strategic plan accomplishments. Two GPRA goals are associated with the CLI: bringing certified cultural landscapes into good condition (Goal 1a7) and increasing the number of CLI records that have complete, accurate, and reliable information (Goal 1b2B).

Scope of the CLI

The information contained within the CLI is gathered from existing secondary sources found in park libraries and archives and at NPS regional offices and centers, as well as through on-site reconnaissance of the existing landscape. The baseline information collected provides a comprehensive look at the historical development and significance of the landscape, placing it in context of the site's overall significance. Documentation and analysis of the existing landscape identifies character-defining characteristics and features, and allows for an evaluation of the landscape's overall integrity and an assessment of the landscape's overall condition. The CLI also provides an illustrative site plan that indicates major features within the inventory unit. Unlike cultural landscape reports, the CLI does not provide management recommendations or

treatment guidelines for the cultural landscape.

Inventory Unit Description:

Isle Royale is located in Lake Superior, the largest of the Great Lakes which straddle the United States-Canadian border from New York to Minnesota. The Chippewa Indians called it by its generic name “Minong,” which simply means island, but they probably gave the word definite application in this case due to its prominence.

Washington Island contains cultural resources that relate to both the themes of commercial fishing and tourism, and illustrates the layering of history that was common to many of the best sites on the island. Some of the earliest buildings on Washington Island were built by Sam and Andrew Sivertson, who began fishing at Isle Royale in the early 1890s. The Sivertsons, of Norwegian descent, had first fished from the Apostle Islands. They obtained permission from John F. Johns to build on what is now Barnum Island, which John’s owned at the time. However, when Johns decided to open a tourist resort in 1892, the Sivertsons were asked to leave. Before they had arrived for the season, Johns moved the Sivertson’s buildings, boats, and equipment to the dock and claimed title to the island. This is how the Sivertsons moved their fishery to Washington Island. In addition to the Sivertson’s Fishery, the site is also associated with Einar Ekmark, a Scandinavian fisherman who lived in the Art Sivertson cottage until his death in 1986. Ekmark left his homeland of Sweden in 1929 when he was 24 and came to Minnesota. In 1943 he and his brother Karl came to Isle Royale and began fishing.

In 1902, Washington Island became the site of a resort at Isle Royale, established by Captain Walter Singer. Singer purchased a steamer to bring customers to his Washington Harbor resort, the Island House, and built additional vacation cabins and recreational buildings on his property. Although in close proximity to the Sivertson fishery, the two were operated separately, and the fishery survived much longer than the resort development. The “honeymoon cottage” and associated privy were later used in the Sivertson fishery operation. This example of recycling and reusing structures is a traditional practice used by islanders in an attempt to circumvent the high cost of shipping construction materials to the islands. Buildings were frequently moved from one site to another for a new use by fishermen, resort owners and summer residents.

The Sivertson Fishery stands alone as the longest continually operating commercial fishery on Isle Royale. The structures and abundant fishing equipment within the complex illustrate the evolution of early 20th century Lake Superior commercial fishing techniques.

Site Plan

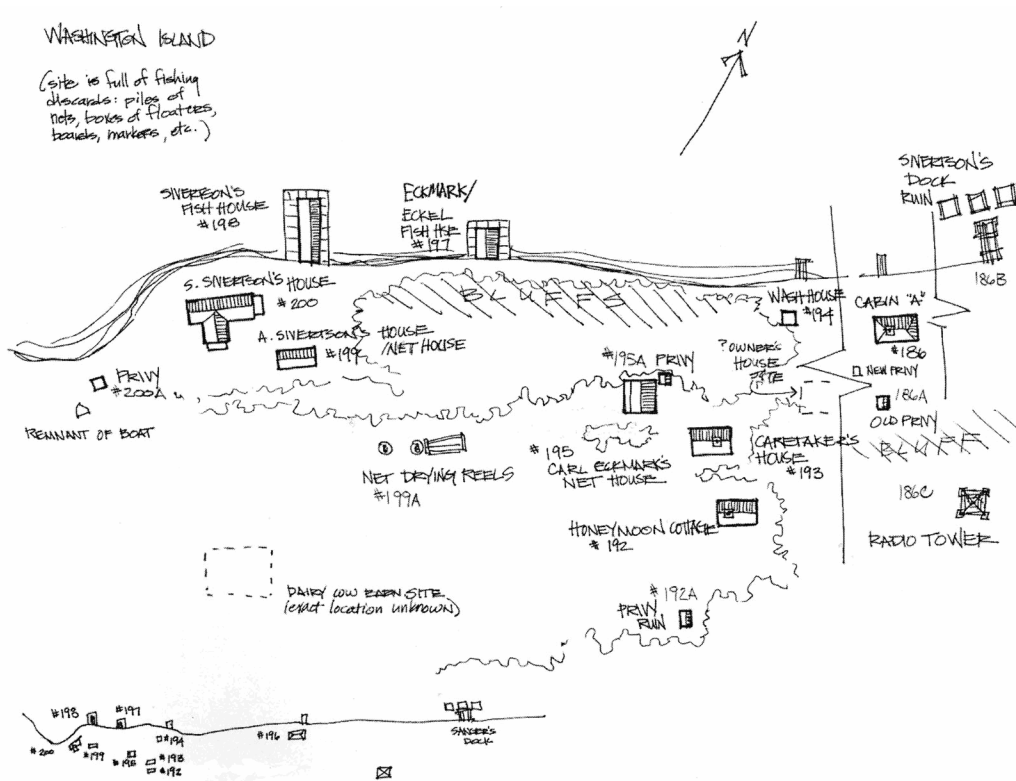
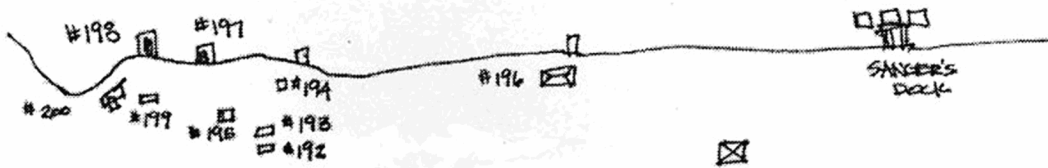


Figure 3.15. Plan view of Sivertson / Eckmark / Singer property on Washington Island. Drawing by Dena Sanford, 1995.

Plan of the settlement on Washington Island. 1995.



Sketch showing the spatial arrangement of structures along the shoreline. 1995.

Property Level and CLI Numbers

Inventory Unit Name:	Washington Island
Property Level:	Landscape
CLI Identification Number:	500568
Parent Landscape:	500568

Park Information

Park Name and Alpha Code:	Isle Royale National Park -ISRO
Park Organization Code:	6310
Park Administrative Unit:	Isle Royale National Park

CLI Hierarchy Description

Washington Island has been identified as a landscape at Isle Royale National Park. The larger island off of the western end of Isle Royale is the location of the Sivertson Fishery and the Singer resort, known as the Island House. The Island House and most of the cabins associated with the resort no longer survive. The remaining cabins were incorporated into the fishery, as recycling of buildings and materials was common at Isle Royale. Washington Island is separate historically and geographically from the other islands at Isle Royale and was therefore determined to be a unique landscape.

Concurrence Status

Inventory Status: Complete

Completion Status Explanatory Narrative:

Initial research conducted by seasonals Kathleen Fitzgerald and Richard Radford during FY99. Cultural Landscapes Program Leader Sherda Williams and Historical Landscape Architect Marla McEnaney reviewed the initial landscape hierarchy presented in CLAIMS. Initial information is part of the FY99 upload to the National Center. Landscape has significant integrity giving it a high priority for data entry. Site work was completed by Landscape Architect Gail Gladstone and Landscape Historian Alesha Hauser in FY08. Research and data entry was completed by Ms. Gladstone. Data entry will continue for the inventory unit as scheduled by the CLI Program.

Concurrence Status:

Park Superintendent Concurrence:	Yes
Park Superintendent Date of Concurrence:	11/25/2008
National Register Concurrence:	Eligible -- SHPO Consensus Determination
Date of Concurrence Determination:	02/05/2009

Concurrence Graphic Information:



IN REPLY REFER TO:

United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Isle Royale National Park
800 East Lakeshore Drive
Houghton, Michigan 49931-1869

November 25, 2008

H3017(MWR-CR/HAL)

Memorandum

To: Regional Director, Midwest Region

From: Superintendent, Isle Royale

Subject: Cultural Landscape Inventory for Washington Island landscape at Isle Royale

Thank you for the opportunity to review the draft Cultural Landscape Inventory (CLI) for the cultural landscape at Washington Island. Liz Valencia, Chief of the Interpretation and Cultural Resources Division, reviewed the document and emailed her comments and changes directly to Gail Gladstone. We concur with the landscape condition as "good" and the management category of "Must be Preserved and Maintained". Thank you for your continued efforts to inventory and document Isle Royale's cultural resources.

Phyllis A. Green



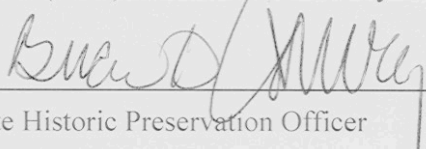
Superintendent concurrence for Washington Island CLI.

(SHPO letter head)

Name of Property: Washington Island

Location: Isle Royale National Park, Isle Royale, Michigan

The State Historic Preservation Officer or appointed designee concurs that the Washington Island is a cultural landscape for section 110 purposes of the National Historic Preservation Act as amended. The character defining features associated with the cultural landscape as documented in the Washington Island Cultural Landscape Report (2008) contribute to the body of knowledge and overall significance of the sites.

 2/5/09

State Historic Preservation Officer Date

SHPO concurrence for Washington Island.

Geographic Information & Location Map

Inventory Unit Boundary Description:

The boundary of the Isle Royale National Park includes submerged lands within the four and one-half miles of the shoreline of Isle Royale and the immediately surrounding islands. (Sullivan, 1944)
Washington Island is located in sections 10 & 11 Township 63 North, Range 39 on the southwest end of Isle Royale National Park in Washington Harbor.

State and County:

State: MI

County: Keweenaw County

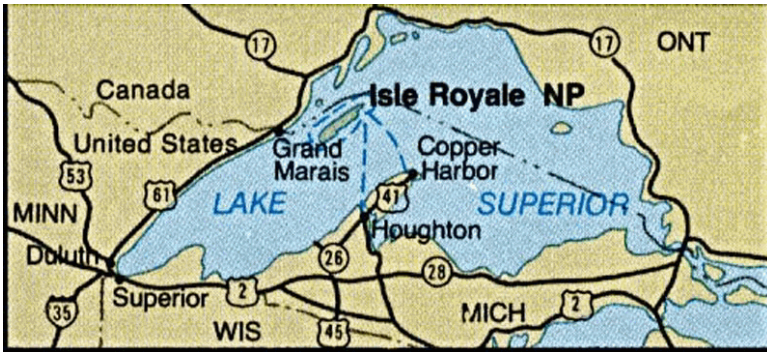
Size (Acres): 7.83

Boundary UTMS:

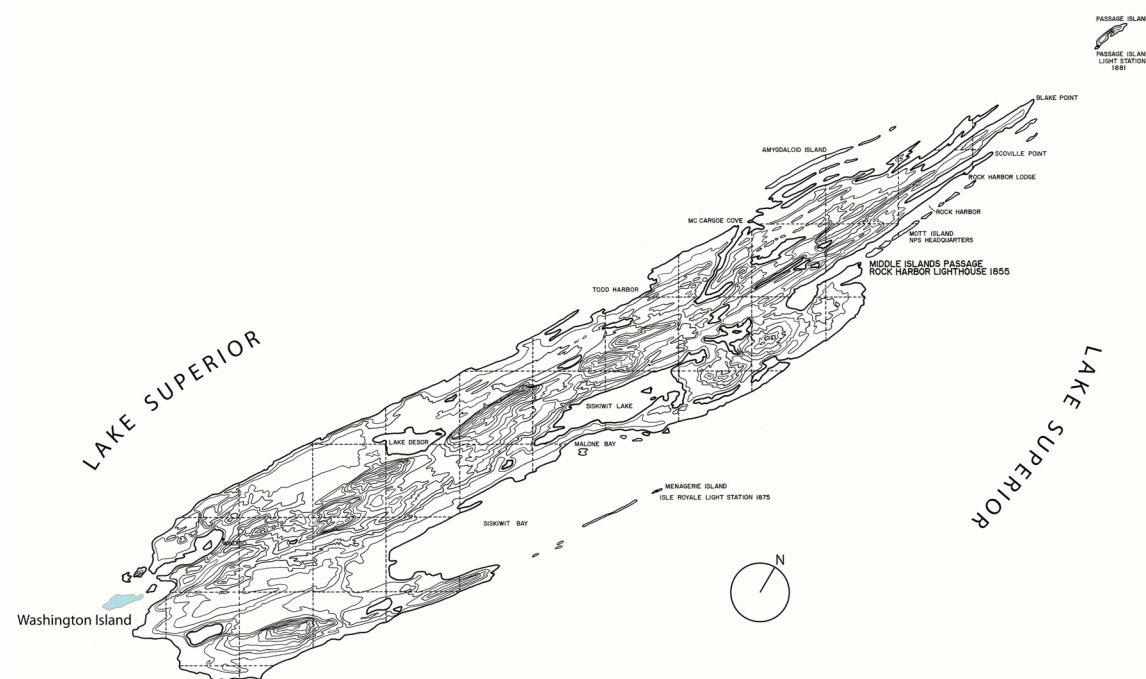
Source:	USGS Map 1:24,000
Type of Point:	Point
Datum:	NAD 27
UTM Zone:	16
UTM Easting:	333,032
UTM Northing:	5,304,808

Washington Island
Isle Royale National Park

Location Map:



Regional context of Isle Royale National Park



Location of Washington Island in Isle Royale National Park.



Location of the Eckmark/Sivertson fishery on Washington Island.



Aerial image of Washington Island and the southern end of the main island at Isle Royale National Park. (Image courtesy of the USGS)

Regional Context:

Type of Context: Cultural

Description:

Isle Royale's earliest users date to the Archaic period, and were miners who extracted native float copper. Later, native groups continued visiting the island to find copper, gather plants and berries, hunt, and fish. Isle Royale has had an abundance of fish, wildlife, plants, and minerals, that were exploited by both the prehistoric and historic residents of the island. The island's two most historically significant resources—copper and fish—were responsible for the sustained human presence on the island for the past 4,000 years, and drew numerous explorers and entrepreneurs over the last 200 years. However, Isle Royale has always been a very isolated and difficult place to live, and throughout history, occupancy on the island has been mostly seasonal.

Explorers and missionaries provided the first recorded accounts of the island, but it was the fur bearing animals of Isle Royale such as beaver, muskrat, otter, mink, hare, coyote, fox, and lynx that attracted trappers and traders during the 1600s and 1700s. The American Fur Company was the first to initiate commercial fishing operations from Isle Royale in 1837. The company had posts on the island during the 1830s, with the main depot located at Checker Point in Siskiwit Bay. The company would bring the first large vessels into the Isle Royale's harbors. These operations lasted only two years on Isle Royale, and the next commercial development would come in the form of copper mining ventures, the first boom occurring in 1843.

There were three phases of historic copper mining at Isle Royale, occurring between 1843-1855, 1873-1881, and 1889-1893. Most of the mining operations were located on the perimeter of the island, the majority of which were at the eastern end. Only four mines were located in the island's interior. Several companies had initial success, but eventually all ventures folded.

The navigational and maritime history of Isle Royale is closely associated with the historic mining, commercial fishing, and tourism industries. Copper mining on the island and the growth of Lake Superior shipping instigated the establishment of four lighthouses around Isle Royale. Between the 1880s and the 1920s, increased lake traffic at Isle Royale fostered the growth of both the commercial fishing and tourism industries. Harbor facilities that served the industries of mining, fishing, and tourist were developed, beginning in the late 1830s, at several points on the island: Washington Harbor at the northwestern end, Siskiwit Bay in the south-central area, Rock Harbor and Tobin Harbor at the southeastern end, and McCargoe Cove and Belle Harbor at the north eastern side of the island. The increased boat traffic brought inevitable shipwrecks, and ten large wrecked ships that date from 1877 to 1947 remain in Isle Royale's waters.

Commercial fishing had been initiated on Isle Royale with the American Fur Company operations in 1837, and would last on the island for over a century. In the 1880s, the commercial fishing industry boomed, as regular shipping and transportation was made available by the increased Lake Superior commercial traffic, and the establishment of large-scale fishing

companies on the island. The large A. Booth and Company operation was based on the western end of the island, while numerous other small scale operations were initiated in the island's sheltered harbors, with concentrations in the south east end in Rock and Tobin Harbors, at Siskiwit Bay, and a large number of Scandinavian fishermen settling near the Booth Company fishery at Washington Harbor. By the early 20th century, over 100 fishing families were seasonally based at locations all over the island.

It was Isle Royale's commercial fishermen who initiated the final industry of recreation on the island. National trends in recreation had initiated interest in Isle Royale in the late 1800s, and the tourist industry and commercial fishing industries on the island were reciprocal to each other, as each industry brought an increase in the essential shipping and passenger transportation opportunities to the island. Growing gradually from a few rooms to let at a fisherman's home in Washington Harbor, a number of resorts and summer homes dotted the island by the 1910s and 20s, and vital summer communities developed at the southeastern end of the island in Rock and Tobin Harbors. The tourism industry would thrive until the 1930s, when the idea for an Isle Royale National Park was initiated. The conservation movement and concern for Isle Royale's vulnerable wilderness brought the national government's involvement in creating a national park of the island archipelago. (Franks, 1999)

Type of Context: Physiographic

Description:

Isle Royale is an island archipelago located in northwestern Lake Superior, approximately 13 miles to the closest point of Ontario, Canada, and 18 miles to Minnesota. The main island of Isle Royale is 45 miles long and nine miles wide at its widest point. It has an area totaling 210 square miles, and has approximately 200 smaller islands scattered about the periphery of the island. The main island has 83 lakes in its interior, and a number of smaller ponds. Isle Royale's topography is characterized by ridge and swale contours that are oriented southwest-northeast, along the lines of uplifted geological features. The highest elevation on the island is Mt. Desor, which is 794 feet above Lake Superior, and 1,394 feet above sea level.

The geology of Isle Royale is dominated by Keweenaw volcanics. Interbedded sediments are exposed in the upwarping of the deposits that tilt towards the southeast, and mirror the formations in the Keweenaw Peninsula. The southwestern end of the island is comprised of sedimentary deposits that also have corresponding features on the south shore of Lake Superior as sandstones and conglomerates.

Fissure deposits of copper on the island were located in transverse faults (those which cut across the beds), and copper also occurred in lodes in sedimentary deposits. Most of the copper obtained by both prehistoric and historic miners was extracted from these fissures.

Soils throughout Isle Royale are very thin and poorly developed, although they are somewhat more developed on the southwestern end. There are two major upland forest types on Isle Royale: the southern boreal forest, dominated by spruce, fir, and birch; and a temperate deciduous community of sugar maple, yellow birch, and red oak. In the lowland areas of the

island, communities of cedar and spruce can be found.

The climate of Isle Royale is very similar to the general Upper Great Lakes region. Daily lows in winter are often 6 degrees (Fahrenheit) warmer than mainland temperatures, and summer temperatures are much lower than those on the mainland. (Franks, 1999)

Type of Context: Political

Description:

Isle Royale National Park is located about 60 miles from Michigan's Keweenaw Peninsula, 22 miles east of Grand Portage, Minnesota, and 35 miles from Thunder Bay, Ontario, Canada. The year-round headquarters for the park is in Houghton, Michigan.

The primary means of access to the park are via ferry and seaplane from Houghton, Michigan, and via ferry from Copper Harbor, Michigan, and Grand Portage, Minnesota. About 30% of visitors travel to the park in private boats. The park is closed from the end of October to mid-April due to the extreme winter weather conditions and for protection of wildlife and the safety and protection of visitors.

There is one overnight lodge at the east end of the main island. Visitors come to the island to hike, backpack, motorboat, canoe, kayak, sail, scuba dive, or fish. (GMP, 1998)

Management Information

General Management Information

Management Category: Must be Preserved and Maintained

Management Category Date: 08/16/2008

Management Category Explanatory Narrative:

The management category for Washintong Island is B, Should Be Preserved and Maintained. It is an inventory unit that meets National Register criteria for local significance, is compatible with the park's legislated significance, and has continuing or potential purpose that is appropriate to its traditional use or function.

Agreements, Legal Interest, and Access

Management Agreement:

Type of Agreement: Special Use Permit

Expiration Date: 12/31/2012

Management Agreement Explanatory Narrative:

Special Use Permit for Washington Island to use the site as a commercial fishing base. Permit is renewed every five years.

NPS Legal Interest:

Type of Interest: Fee Simple

Public Access:

Type of Access: Other Restrictions

Explanatory Narrative:

The only restriction is no overnight docking or overnight use of the island.

Adjacent Lands Information

Do Adjacent Lands Contribute? Yes

Adjacent Lands Description:

Sivertson/Ekmark Fishery and the Singer Resort are surrounded immediately by water and Barnum Island to the north. Washington Island, along with Isle Royale as a whole, has remained relatively unchanged since becoming a National Park. The association of the adjacent lands is contributing.

National Register Information

Existing National Register Status

National Register Landscape Documentation:

Undocumented

National Register Eligibility

National Register Concurrence:

Eligible -- SHPO Consensus Determination

Significance Criteria:

C - Embodies distinctive construction, work of master, or high artistic values

Significance Criteria:

A - Associated with events significant to broad patterns of our history

Period of Significance:

Time Period:

CE 1885 - 1900

Historic Context Theme:

Developing the American Economy

Subtheme:

Shipping and Transportation by Water

Facet:

Shipping And Transportation

Other Facet:

None

Time Period:

CE 1902 - 1932

Historic Context Theme:

Creating Social Institutions and Movements

Subtheme:

Recreation

Facet:

General Recreation

Other Facet:

None

Time Period:

CE 1932 - 1940

Historic Context Theme:

Transforming the Environment

Subtheme:

Conservation of Natural Resources

Facet:

Origin And Development Of The National Park Service

Other Facet:

None

Area of Significance:

Area of Significance Category: Entertainment - Recreation

Area of Significance Subcategory: None

Area of Significance Category: Commerce

Area of Significance Subcategory: None

Area of Significance Category: Conservation

Area of Significance Subcategory: None

Statement of Significance:

The Sivertson / Ekmark / Singer property on Washington Island contains cultural resources that relate to both the themes of commercial fishing and tourism, and illustrates the layering of history that was common to many of the best sites on the island. The fishery is unique in that it is the longest continually operated commercial fishery on Isle Royale.

Some of the earliest buildings on Washington Island were built by Sam and Andrew Sivertson, of Norwegian descent, who began fishing at Isle Royale in the early 1890s. In addition to the Sivertson's Fishery, the site is also associated with Einar Ekmark, a Scandinavian fisherman who lived in the Art Sivertson cottage until his death in 1986. Ekmark left his homeland of Sweden in 1929 when he was 24 and came to Minnesota. In 1943 he and his brother Karl came to Isle Royale and began fishing.

In 1902, Washington Island also became the site of the first resort at Isle Royale, established by Captain Walter Singer. Singer purchased a steamer to bring customers to his Washington Harbor resort, the Island House, and built additional vacation cabins and recreational buildings on his property. There are five structures that remain from Singer's resort. Although in close proximity to the Sivertson fishery, the two were operated separately, and the fishery survived much longer than the resort development. The Sivertson Fishery is the last to remain in use on the island under a Special Use Permit.

Surviving structures at the Sivertson Fishery are typical of a commercial Isle Royale fishery, and in addition to the necessary service buildings—fish houses, net houses, residence and docks, there is also a large collection of fishing equipment remaining on site, including nets, net buoys, fish boxes, boxes of floats, and “sticks,” as well as gas barrels and boats. There is also a recycled CCC-era building which was moved from nearby Camp Windigo and re-used as a fish house. The “honeymoon cottage” and associated privy from the Singer's Island House were used in the Sivertson fishery. These examples of recycling and reusing structures is a traditional practice used by islanders in an attempt to circumvent

the high cost of shipping construction materials to the islands. Buildings were frequently moved from one site to another for a new use, not only by fishermen, but also by resort owners and summer residents. (Franks, 1999)

The Siverston/Ekmark fishery on Washington Island is significant under National Register Criterion A, for its association with fishing and fishing families who fished on Isle Royale during the nine month annual fishing season that thrived between between 1890 and 1940s. These families were predominantly Norwegian and Swedish immigrants who settled in Minnesota and the Upper Great Lakes region. It also derives significance from its continuum of fishing practices and long-term family occupation at the site expressed by sustained small-scale commercial level and subsistence-level fishing practices. It is also eligible under Criterion C as a significant vernacular landscape that retains integrity of location, setting, feeling and association. The fishery as a whole represents a distinguishable entity related to local fishing history. The fishery possesses a linkage of structures and associated landscape features that are united by historic economic development and landscape uses on Isle Royale.

Chronology & Physical History

Cultural Landscape Type and Use

Cultural Landscape Type:	Vernacular
Other Use/Function	Other Type of Use or Function
Commerce/Trade-Other	Both Current And Historic
Recreation/Culture-Other	Both Current And Historic

Current and Historic Names:

Name	Type of Name
Phelps Island	Historic
Singers Island	Historic
Washington Island	Both Current And Historic

Ethnographic Study Conducted: No Survey Conducted

Chronology:

Year	Event	Annotation
CE 1885 - 1892	Built	In 1885, mining captain turned fisherman John F. Johns owned a comercial fishery which employed several other men. Johns began constructing rustic cabins to rent to fishing enthusiasts.

Washington Island
Isle Royale National Park

CE 1902	Built	Walter Singer began to develop a resort on Washington Island in 1902. He was hoping to control transportation routes by capatilizing on the tourist industry.
CE 1910	Built	Singer erected an immense radio tower in 1910 for recreational uses and as a navigational aid.

Physical History:

1902-1930

Mining Captain turned fisherman John F. Johns owned a commercial fishery which employed several other men on Washington Island after he had served at the Windigo Mine. Johns began constructing rustic shacks to rent to excursioning fishing enthusiasts. The Booth Company assisted Johns by offering passenger accommodations aboard their vessels. Johns also ran his own vessel, the “Crescent”. Johns eventually moved to Barnum Island, then called Johns Island, and built a four-room, two-story lodge. Johns then sold the island to George Barnum. This left no place for tourists or sportsmen to stop on the west end of Isle Royale. (Karamanski, 1988)

The need for a full-service public resort on Isle Royale was answered in 1902 by Walter H. (B.?) Singer, head of the Lake Michigan & Lake Superior transportation company. There was strong competition in the booming Great Lakes shipping industry at the turn of the century, and the biggest plans and the most money often secured domination of the most profitable shipping routes. Isle Royale was part of Singer’s plan to compete with the strong financial clout of A. Booth and Company, a shipping and fishing firm that had been working to control the industry on the North Shore. Singer planned to capitalize on the expanding tourist industry on Isle Royale, which would permit him to compete with Booth and Company.

Singer began his resort development by building an exceptionally large dock at Washington Harbor to accommodate the Iroquois, his new, two-hundred-passenger ship. The Booth Company responded by placing one of their fastest ships, the America, in direct competition for the Isle Royale and North Shore trade.

After establishing the Iroquois on the Isle Royale route, Singer began promoting his plans for an Isle Royale resort. He set the location on Washington Island, at the far west end of Isle Royale. It was here he built the Island House, a two-story frame hotel, complete with a kitchen, and dining room, and private guest rooms. Ten cottages that lined the lakeshore on either side of the main house provided additional accommodations. A boardwalk was built along the shore, and a recreation building, which included a bowling alley (that doubled as a dance floor), was constructed. An immense radio tower was erected in 1910 to be used for both entertainment and navigation. Singer’s was the first full-service resort on Isle Royale, and brought a dramatic change in the island resort accommodations. The Island House was able to offer amenities and recreational opportunities that no other resort operator even tried to match for years and was able to become “the principal destination for Isle Royale-bound travelers between 1904 and 1920 (Karamanski, 1988).” In time, the Washington Island resort became known as “Singerville.”

Singer’s resort was representative of the “golden era” in Isle Royale’s tourism history. During this period, the island was alive with tourists (the Island House was on the regular schedule of five different passenger boats), more consistent communication was available on the island, passenger ships like the America and the Iroquois provided comfortable accommodations for tourists, and rail-boat trips were offered to Isle Royale from Chicago, St. Paul, Minneapolis, and by the Omaha Railroad. Steamers stopped so frequently that in 1904 a customs house was

established on Washington Island. The island had seen so much growth as a result of Singer's resort, that in 1904 the Duluth Herald wrote: "The day is near at hand when Isle Royale will be the objective point for people from all over the country. Persons of wealth, or, at least, moderate means, will compose the throng...Isle Royale will become the Mackinac of Lake Superior."

However, regardless of the success of his resort, profits were not what Singer had hoped. Due to several unexpected problems related to his fleet, the Bon Ami caught fire and burned and several consecutive docking accidents caused by the Iroquois, Singer was involved in several lawsuits and unforeseen expenses. The Iroquois was eventually eliminated from Isle Royale trade routes. The America of Booth and Company became the new main access to the island for tourists.

1930-1940

The first requirement to create Isle Royale National Park was the settlement of the private land donation issue (public monies could not be used to purchase Isle Royale property). Michigan legislators authorized the creation of an Isle Royale National Park Commission to facilitate property donations and land transfers. Many seasonal residents and property owners wanted to extend life lease rights to their children and grandchildren. The National Park Service resisted issuing such long-term rights, and the process of land transfers lasted more than a decade.

Federal acquisition of Isle Royale lands would prove to be a long and difficult process. Private property owners, and even those people who did not legally own property but had a history of land use on the island, were asked to donate or sell their holdings to the Park Service for one dollar per acre for mineral rights and four dollars per acre for surface rights for their lands. Approximate increases were allowed for structures and other improvements. Property owners were offered life leases in return for the donation of their properties. The inclusion of children and grandchildren onto life leases occurred in only three instances, to those few that were insistent, and sought legal counsel. Special Use Permits were offered to resort owners and fishermen. Many of the summer residents and fishermen accepted this offer, but the resort owners sold their property outright. (Franks, 1999) At the end of the land acquisition process, thirty life leases were granted; thirty-five special use permits were issued to commercial fishermen and boat operators.

By the end of 1939, title to 2,000 acres remained outside government control. Final title to all lands reached Washington on April 3, 1940, the date the National Park Service officially declared the establishment of Isle Royale National Park. (Gale & Gale, 1995) The Sivertsons were granted a Special Use Permit to continue their commercial fishing operation.



A view of Washington Island from Barnum Island, ca. 1930. The pound scow, center, was used to drive pound net stakes into the lake bottom. (Gale, 1995)



The Island House was the first large scale resort on Isle Royale. The sprawling complex, dubbed Singerville, is said to have cost \$80,000 to build in 1902. This picture was taken prior to the construction of the radio tower in 1910. (Gale, 1995)

1940-Present

There is little remaining on Washington Island to give an indication of what a stay at Singer's Resort was like. The dock where the Iroquois and the America once debarked is now in ruins.

Several cottages remain extant. The honeymoon cottage, a one-room frame structure with serrated trim along the roof, is occasionally used by local fishermen. Most of the lodge, however, has been demolished. The Island House, once the core of the resort, exists only as an outline of the foundation remains. The most prominent extant feature of the old resort is Singer's wireless radio antenna which stands over the site, accessible only by the foot trails up to Sunset Lookout.

A good collection of fishery structures survive on the site: two residences, two privies, a laundry, two net houses, two fish houses and net drying reels. The old baseball field south of the net drying reels also remains cleared. Collectively, the structures and their relationships to the site retain a high degree of historic integrity, and are in good or fair condition.

Clara (Mrs. Stanley) Sivertson still has a Special Use Permit for a commercial fishing base at Washington Island. (Franks. 1999)

A. Booth Company and Scandinavian Immigrants at Isle Royale

The following is from Franks pg. 54-57:

The involvement of large-scale companies such as the A. Booth Company, which began fishery operations on Isle Royale and the influx of Scandinavian immigrants to the island, also boosted the Isle Royale fishing industry. The Booth Company established a fishery in Washington Harbor in 1886, and provided consistent shipping on the large-capacity, company-owned America vessel, creating a broader and more consistent market for the isolated Isle Royale fishermen. Additionally, the influx of Scandinavian immigrants to the island in the mid-1880s brought new fishing technologies to Isle Royale fisherman- technologies that lengthened the fishing season- and also served to help populate the island. By 1894, there were approximately 100 men operating 40 boats on Isle Royale. The fishing boom on Isle Royale peaked between 1915 and 1925, when there were about 75 families- more than 200 people- running seasonal commercial fisheries on the island.

The Booth Company was based in Chicago but operated out of Duluth, and integrated the Isle Royale fishing industry with the Chicago wholesale distribution market. For the first time since the American Fur Company's fishing operations, Isle Royale was connected with the national market scene. The Booth steamer services also led to tourism and resort development on the island.

Two Booth Company vessels had passenger accommodations, and provided passage for sports fishermen to Isle Royale. By 1902 the Booth steamer America drew much of the North Shore and Isle Royale trade, offering relatively sophisticated travel accommodations on board.

Booth and Company's mass marketing capabilities played a major role in the Lake Superior and Isle Royale fishing boom, as did the tremendous influx of Scandinavian immigrants. Up until 1885 the ethnic makeup of Isle Royale was a diverse population of German, Irish, English, French-Canadian, Chippewa, and American people; by the 1890s, the majority of Isle Royale fishermen were Scandinavians. The Booth Company took advantage of the new immigrant workforce, and extended credit, or "staked" the immigrant fishermen. The company purchased

Booth Island in Washington Harbor in order to house its new workforce of Scandinavians. Washington Harbor was largely Scandinavian, and by the early twentieth century it had become a relatively large fishing settlement of about 20 families. Some of the Scandinavians in Washington Harbor included Brunvall, Bjortin, Eckel, Ekmark, Elligson, Gill, Hanson, Koss, Lind, Miller, Nicholiason, Sivertson, Skadberg, Smuland, Torgerson, and Wick. Some fishermen were bachelors, and fished for the Booth Company, or hired on with established Isle Royale fishermen for a few years. Many stayed and raised families on the island, however. Andrew Sivertson had fished in the Apostle Islands area during the 1880s, and moved to Isle Royale by 1892. His fishery was passed on to Art and Stanley Sivertson, and is currently operated under a Special Use Permit by Stanley's wife, Clara, and their son, Stuart.

Other Scandinavian groups established small-scale fisheries in sheltered isolated bays or harbors, at Birch Island, Amygdaloid Island, Fish Island (currently known as Belle Isle), Johnson Island, at Tobin Harbor, Rock Harbor, Chippewa Harbor, Wright Island, Fisherman's Home, Long Point, Hay Bay, and Green Island in Todd Harbor. In Hay Bay, the Scandinavian fishermen included Kvalvick, Bjorvek, Sivert Anderson, and Skadberg. Although in November some Scandinavians emulated their predecessors and returned for the winter to Minnesota and Michigan, many brought canoes and enjoyed wintering over on the island.

Analysis & Evaluation of Integrity

Analysis and Evaluation of Integrity Narrative Summary:

Overall, the landscape characteristics of Washington Island have retained their essential historic character. Over time certain aspects have been altered, which can be expected as the fishery is still in use. Modern changes to buildings and other features were the result of repairs needed to maintain the fishing industry on the island. Vegetation that was cleared for views and the baseball field has been allowed to grow back. However, the modifications to the land for both work and play made by the fishing families are still visible. Visitors to the island experience the overall scene that was provided to the fishing families throughout the historic periods. The overall integrity of the landscape and its associated characteristics is high.

Aspects of Integrity:	Location
	Design
	Setting
	Materials
	Workmanship
	Feeling
	Association

Landscape Characteristic:

Circulation

Isle Royale is maintained in a road-less condition and is accessible only by boat or seaplane. Therefore, circulation to the site is limited by the difficulty of access. The island is accessed, most often, when approached from the southwestern end of Isle Royale. Both the fishery and the former resort are located on a northeastern tip of Washington Island. Washington and Barnum Islands share an association between the fishing families and the summer vacation community. There was simultaneous occupation by the fishermen and the lodgers on Barnum as well as an overlapping period between the resort community at Singer's on the northeastern tip and the fishery located just to the west on Washington Island. As a result of these overlapping occupations, there was often interaction between the fishermen and summer vacationers. Circulation existed across water routes and between the residences as a means of delivering fish and socializing between everyone.

Circulation is most strongly demonstrated by this close association with water. The water is the surrounding element and governs all aspects of socialization and economy at Isle Royale; "The streets and roads of the island were waterways and the only vehicles were boats" (Sivertson, 1992). Historically, the preferred mode of travel by fishermen would be via boat, either by gas, row, or sail, to get to almost any other spot on the island. The waters of Lake Superior are

considered some of the most dangerous in the world between the sudden changes in weather and the hidden shoals that lay off the shore. Therefore, all circulation is often at the whim of the conditions of the lake which determines when and for how long work will get done. It is significant that park boundaries extend for four ½ miles into the water surrounding the island.

Terrestrial circulation on Washington Island is by foot along trails through the woods. From the fishery, a trail follows the contour line along the bluff and leads through the woods to Cabin “A” (#186) and to the ruins of the old dock for Singer’s Resort. The trail continues up slope into the interior of the island to the Wireless Radio Tower (#186C) and to access the highest point on Washington Island that affords the view of Sunset Lookout; an overlook of the harbor and Barnum Island.

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:



Path to Cabin A (#186) and Singer dock ruins. (Gladstone for NPS, 2008)



Dock associated with Cabin A offers a means of travel between Washington and Barnum Islands. (Hauser for NPS, 2008)

Views and Vistas

The Sivertson/Ekmark Fishery on the north side of Washington Island face the resort community located on Barnum Island. The visual and physical proximity fostered a bond between the two island communities that served as a link across history as well as a link between two important economies on Isle Royale, one of commercial fishing and the other of recreation.

Approaching the fishery from the southern end of Isle Royale, Washington Island appears on the port side with Barnum Island on the starboard. The fishery is situated in a sheltered cove on Washington Island that offers views across to Barnum Island and beyond that, to Minnesota. Views to the northeast are into Washington Harbor and of the main body of Isle Royale. On approach, both the Ekmark and Sivertson Fish House are immediately visible from their place along the shoreline. The two fish houses, both surrounded by a wooden dock, announce their allegiances by showing both the American and the Norwegian flags. From the interior of the island, a trail leads to a high point, named Sunset Lookout. This point affords commanding

views to the west and down onto Barnum Island in its entirety.

Views to and from the fishery retain integrity and contribute to the cultural landscape.

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:



Barnum as viewed from Washington Island. (Gladstone for NPS, 2008)



*View from the Sivertson Fish House looking northeast to the Ekmark Fish House.
(Gladstone for NPS, 2008)*



View from Sunset Lookout on Washington Island. (Hauser for NPS, 2008)

Buildings and Structures

A good collection of representational fishery structure types survive on the site: two residences, two privies, a laundry, two net houses, two fish houses, and net drying reels. Collectively, the structures on the site retain a high degree of historic integrity, and are in good or fair condition. In 1902, Washington Island also became the site of the first resort at Isle Royale, established by Captain Walter Singer. Singer purchased a steamer to bring customers to his Washington Harbor resort, the Island House, and built additional vacation cabins and recreational buildings on his property. The Island House was destroyed after acquisition by the Park Service. There are eight extant structures associated with the resort period. Cabin "A" (#186) is now used as a private residence. The radio tower (#186C) is a remnant of the resort era along with two resort cabins, the Honeymoon Cottage and the Caretaker's Cabin (#192 and #193), the Ekmark net house (#195), two privies (#186A and #192A), and a dock ruin. These structures do not contribute to the period of the resort or to the time of the fishery. The radio tower (#186C), the honeymoon cottage (#192), the caretaker's cabin (#193), the wash house (#194) and the Ekmark net house (#195) are included in the LCS. With the exception of the radio tower, these were structures from the resort that were later repurposed and incorporated into the Sivertson fishery operation.

Surviving structures at the Sivertson Fishery are typical of a commercial Isle Royale fishery; in

addition to the necessary service buildings: fish houses, net houses, residence and docks, there is also a large collection of fishing equipment remaining on site, including nets, net buoys, fish boxes, boxes of floats, and "sticks," as well as gas barrels and boats. There is also a recycled CCC-era building which was moved from nearby Camp Windigo and re-used as a fish house (#198). This example of recycling and reusing structures is a traditional practice used by islanders in an attempt to circumvent the high cost of shipping construction materials to the islands. Buildings were frequently moved from one site to another for a new use, not only by fishermen, but also by resort owners and summer residents. The majority of structures are small, one-story, frame, gabled buildings with shallow roof overhangs and exposed rafter tails. Many structures have the typical horizontal board siding covered with paper or asphalt roll and held down with battens. A few have drop lap siding, and in many cases, both walls and roof are covered with asphalt rolled sheathing or roofer's paper. Distinguishing design features on several structures include centrally placed doors on gable ends, with a window located immediately to the right. Additionally, many of the structures do not have ridge boards.

The two residences, the Sam Sivertson house (#200) and the caretaker's cottage (#193), are distinguishable from the working structures in size, design, and materials. The two residences are similar in size, measuring approximately 40' x 12'6" (#200 has a 15'-long addition to the rear), and 18' x 32', respectively. Both are covered in wood shingles, which may be a more contemporary material. (Because the fishery is still in operation, the Sivertson structures are more likely to exhibit contemporary repairs and materials.) The Sam Sivertson residence, built in 1906, is a one-story, 'T' plan frame structure, is in good condition and has high integrity. The building has entries in the two gable ends, each with windows located to the side. Interior walls are unfinished, and the windows are six-light and six-over-six casement. Two roof skylights appear to be a later addition. The three room caretaker's cottage (#193) was built c. 1920 and is also in good condition and has high integrity. This structure has a deep, full-length front porch, which is not rare, but not the norm on Isle Royale fishery residences. It also has classical detailing in the corner returns at the gable ends, creating a pediment appearance. One pillar is covered with shingles. The entrance is off-center, the windows are two-over-two, and there is an interior brick chimney.

The honeymoon cottage (#192), once used by the Singers for - their resort, found new use as a residence for the Sivertsons fishing operations. Like the caretaker's cottage, this building was also built c. 1920, and is in good condition with high integrity. The one-story, frame building has a hipped roof and a full-facade recessed front porch. It retains the original decorative porch posts and roofing barge board, as well as its two-over-two double-hung windows. The original front door and screen also remain intact. The associated frame privy (#192A) is in poor condition and is lacking integrity.

The fishery's two net houses, the Sivertson net house (#199), and the Eckmark/Eckel net house (#195), were both built in 1906. The Sivertson net house was used as a residence by Art Sivertson in 1928 and is in good condition with high integrity. It is unlike the other residences in size and materials, and is a two-room frame structure that has walls and roof sheathed in rolled

asphalt held in place with battens. The roof boards are from recycled materials: one piece bears the stencil "Sivertson Washington Island Isle Royale." The Eckmark net house is in poor condition, but retains high integrity in all areas except materials, which have medium integrity. The building measures approximately 24' x 22', has shingles in the gable ends, and drop lap siding. There are centrally-placed panel doors, two-over-two windows, and nets and boxes still inside.

The Sivertson's two fish houses—the Sivertson fish house (#198), and the Eckmark fish house (#197)—are one-story frame with gabled roofs, have horizontal sliding doors, and rest on crib foundations. Both are set over water, and surrounded by decks on three sides. The Sivertson fish house is in fair condition and has high integrity. Built between 1939 and 1941, it was a CCC building that was relocated after Camp Windigo closed and recycled by Sam and Stanley Sivertson. As such, the building provides a good example of the acquisitory nature that contributed to the evolution of fisheries on the island. It measures 20' x 46', and is typical of the CCC camp temporary structures: built of pre-fabricated 4' sections seamed with vertical boards, with nine-light windows set into the upper corner of most sections. The nearby Eckmark fish house was built c. 1920 and was used by both Carl Eckmark and Tommy Eckel at varying periods of time. It is in fair to poor condition but demonstrates high integrity for the period. It is a much smaller building, measures approximately 15' x 19', and has two-light windows.

Two privies (#200A and #195A) are associated by location, respectively, with the Sam Sivertson residence (#200) and the Eckmark net house (#195). They are average size, and measure 5' x 5' and 4' x 4'. Several net drying reels (#199A), located between the two net houses, also survive at the fishery.

The construction date of the Sivertson laundry (#194) is unknown. The building has high integrity in all areas except for materials, which is medium, and it is in fair condition. It is a shed-roofed building measuring approximately 8' x 10'. It was first used by the resort and then used by the Sivertsons to house a water pump and a washing machine. Currently, it is being used as a sauna and wash house by the Sivertson family. The building rests on a log foundation, has rolled asphalt roofing, horizontal bead board siding, and a two-light window.

(Franks, 1999, 79-82)

Character-defining Features:

Feature: Carl Ekmark Net House

Feature Identification Number: 129527

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

<u>Feature UTM Source</u>	<u>Type of Point</u>	<u>Datum</u>	<u>UTM Zone</u>	<u>UTM Easting</u>	<u>UTM Northing</u>
GPS-Differentially	Point	NAD 83	16	333,060	5,304,987

Washington Island
Isle Royale National Park

Corrected

IDLCS Number: 73220
LCS Structure Name: Washington Island - Carl Ekmark's Net House
LCS Structure Number: HS195

Feature: Sivertson Residence

Feature Identification Number: 129529

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

<u>Feature UTM Source</u>	<u>Type of Point</u>	<u>Datum</u>	<u>UTM Zone</u>	<u>UTM Easting</u>	<u>UTM Northing</u>
GPS-Differentially Corrected	Point	NAD 83	16	332,981	5,304,983

IDLCS Number: 73221
LCS Structure Name: Washington Island - Sivertson Residence
LCS Structure Number: HS200

Feature: Sivertson Laundry

Feature Identification Number: 129531

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

<u>Feature UTM Source</u>	<u>Type of Point</u>	<u>Datum</u>	<u>UTM Zone</u>	<u>UTM Easting</u>	<u>UTM Northing</u>
GPS-Differentially Corrected	Point	NAD 83	16	333,100	5,305,015

IDLCS Number: 73225
LCS Structure Name: Washington Island - Sivertson's Laundry
LCS Structure Number: HS194

Feature: Sivertson Net House

Feature Identification Number: 129533

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

<u>Feature UTM Source</u>	<u>Type of Point</u>	<u>Datum</u>	<u>UTM Zone</u>	<u>UTM Easting</u>	<u>UTM Northing</u>
GPS-Differentially Corrected	Point	NAD 83	16	332,991	5,304,977

Washington Island
Isle Royale National Park

IDLCS Number: 73228
 LCS Structure Name: Washington Island - Sivertson Net House
 LCS Structure Number: HS199

Feature: Wireless Radio Antenna
 Feature Identification Number: 129535

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

<u>Feature UTM Source</u>	<u>Type of Point</u>	<u>Datum</u>	<u>UTM Zone</u>	<u>UTM Easting</u>	<u>UTM Northing</u>
GPS-Differentially Corrected	Point	NAD 83	16	333,336	5,305,010

IDLCS Number: 73230
 LCS Structure Name: Washington Island - Wireless Radio Antenna
 LCS Structure Number: HS186C

Feature: Honeymoon Cottage
 Feature Identification Number: 129537

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

<u>Feature UTM Source</u>	<u>Type of Point</u>	<u>Datum</u>	<u>UTM Zone</u>	<u>UTM Easting</u>	<u>UTM Northing</u>
GPS-Differentially Corrected	Point	NAD 83	16	333,101	5,304,983

IDLCS Number: 73229
 LCS Structure Name: Washington Island - Honeymoon Cottage
 LCS Structure Number: HS192

Feature: Carl Ekmark Fish House
 Feature Identification Number: 129539

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

<u>Feature UTM Source</u>	<u>Type of Point</u>	<u>Datum</u>	<u>UTM Zone</u>	<u>UTM Easting</u>	<u>UTM Northing</u>
GPS-Differentially Corrected	Point	NAD 83	16	333,342	5,305,013

Washington Island
 Isle Royale National Park

IDLCS Number: 73226
 LCS Structure Name: Washington Island - Carl Ekmark's Fish House
 LCS Structure Number: HS197

Feature: Caretaker's Cottage
 Feature Identification Number: 129541

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

<u>Feature UTM Source</u>	<u>Type of Point</u>	<u>Datum</u>	<u>UTM Zone</u>	<u>UTM Easting</u>	<u>UTM Northing</u>
GPS-Differentially Corrected	Point	NAD 83	16	333,080	5,304,991

IDLCS Number: 73224
 LCS Structure Name: Washington Island - Caretaker's Cottage
 LCS Structure Number: HS193

Feature: Sivertson Privy
 Feature Identification Number: 129543

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

<u>Feature UTM Source</u>	<u>Type of Point</u>	<u>Datum</u>	<u>UTM Zone</u>	<u>UTM Easting</u>	<u>UTM Northing</u>
GPS-Differentially Corrected	Point	NAD 83	16	332,968	5,304,952

IDLCS Number: 73222
 LCS Structure Name: Washington Island - Sivertson Privy
 LCS Structure Number: HS200A

Feature: Sivertson Privy #2
 Feature Identification Number: 129565

Type of Feature Contribution: Non Contributing

IDLCS Number: 73223
 LCS Structure Name: Washington Island - Sivertson Privy 2
 LCS Structure Number: HS195A

Feature: Sivertson Fish House

Washington Island
Isle Royale National Park

Feature Identification Number: 129569

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature UTM

Source

Type of
Point

Datum

UTM
Zone

UTM
Easting

UTM
Northing

GPS-Differentially
Corrected

Point

NAD 83

16

332,984

5,305,022

IDLCS Number: 73227

LCS Structure Name: Washington Island - Sivertson Fish House

LCS Structure Number: HS198

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:



View of Washington Fishery. Fish House (#198), S. Sivertson Residence (#200), and Net House (#199). NPS file photo.



Carl Eckmark Net House (#195). (Hauser for NPS, 2008)



S. Sivertson Residence (#200). (Hauser for NPS, 2008).



S. Sivertson Residence (#200) rear view. (Gladstone for NPS, 2008)



A. Sivertson Residence/Net House (#199). (Hauser for NPS, 2008)



A. Sivertson Residence/Net House (#199) view looking east. (Gladstone for NPS, 2008)



Sivertson Laundry (#194). (Hauser for NPS, 2008)



Ekmark/Eckel Fish House (#197). (Hauser for NPS, 2008)



Ekmark/Eckel Fish House viewed from Sivertson Fish House. Hauser for NPS, 2008)



Sivertson Privy (#200A). (Gladstone for NPS, 2008)



Honeymoon Cottage (#192). (Hauser for NPS, 2008)



Caretaker's Cottage (#193). (Hauser for NPS, 2008)



Cabin A'(#186). (Hauser for NPS, 2008)



Sivertson Fish House (#198) a recycled CCC building. (Hauser for NPS, 2008)



Sivertson Fish House viewed from the Eckmark Fish House. (Hauser for NPS, 2008)



Radio Tower (#186C). (Gladstone for NPS, 2008)

Cultural Traditions

Due to the remoteness of Isle Royale, there was often a strong connection forged between fishing families and resort families. During bad weather, shipwrecks, and times of scarcity families pitched in to help one another out. This alliance persisted during the good times as well. According to Betty (Sivertson) Strom, parties were held at Johns Hotel where fishing families would bring their fiddles, accordions, and concertinas and dance.

Once a year, on the Fourth of July, the fishing families played a game of baseball on Washington Island. The holiday represented their only day off during the fishing season. The baseball field was in a clearing in the landscape that lay behind the buildings of the fishery operation. The clearing for the field persists on the landscape as a faint memory of that annual game. Howard Sivertson, in his book “Once Upon An Isle: The Story of Fishing Families on Isle Royale”, describes the field:

“The Game was played in a clearing full of rocks, hummocks of tall grass, and bushes. First base was a lilac bush, a rock was second, and the outhouse, third...If somebody actually

managed to hit the ball, everyone nearby would run to chase it, often disappearing for awhile in the tall grass.” (Sivertson, 1992)

The following is excerpted from “Historic Structures at Isle Royale National Park”, by Katie Franks for the National Park Service, 1999:

Isle Royale fisherman, up until 1885, had represented an ethnically mixed population consisting of individuals of German, Irish, English, French Canadian, Chippewa, and American backgrounds. Fishermen were occasionally drawn into the business after working in the local copper mines. By the 1890s, Isle Royale fishermen were largely Scandinavians.

The Scandinavian fishermen brought well-established maritime skills to Isle Royale and to Minnesota's north shore. European techniques, especially those related to hook line and gill net use and small boat handling were brought to Isle Royale.

Typically, hook line fishing took place in deeper waters from April until July, after which time the lake trout would move into the shallower reefs around the island. The process of hook line fishing involved a main line, 1,600 feet long, suspended just under the surface of the lake, parallel to the water surface and anchored at each end. Every 40 feet, a line with a large weighted Snell hook baited with herring hung 100 to 200 feet down. Fisherman would often connect several main lines together, which would then stretch over three to five miles. The majority of the day was then spent checking and re-baiting the lines.

Gill nets were the mainstay on Isle Royale and Lake Superior. Adaptable in shallow or deep water, fish would become caught in the mesh; the fishes' girth prevented them from swimming through the mesh, and their gills stopped them from escaping backwards. The depth and location of the nets, as well as the size of the mesh opening, determined the size of fish caught.

A typical gill net ran roughly 200 300 feet. Two or three gill nets composed a "box." Island fishermen typically worked two men to a boat, handling 10,000 feet of nets a day during good weather. Gill nets were set for trout during the late summer and in the peak fishing season, from August through November.

Much of the gill net fisherman's equipment was made by hand. Nets were made of linen and tied by hand. Fishermen carved their own buoys and "corks" from cedar, and then rubbed warm linseed oil on the corks to preserve and seal them. Lead sinkers, which were used to keep the net vertical, were made in the hand forge. The nets would be dried on "net drying reels" to prevent them from rotting, and were then stored in net houses. A large number of net drying reels at a fishery signified a large gill net operation.

By 1875, innovative fishermen, who could afford them, were using pound nets on Isle Royale. Initially introduced from Scotland in 1836, pound nets were first used on Lake Ontario. While pound nets gave a tremendous boost to the commercial industry, they also ultimately hastened

the decline.

Pound nets (pronounced "pond and often spelled "pond") were set in the shape of a box and held in place by 25 to 50 foot long stakes. A large net was then run from this container out perpendicular to the shoreline. Fish were directed by the long net into a small opening in the pound net. Pound net fishing would begin in the spring after the breakup of the ice.

The pound nets themselves were expensive and required the use of specialized equipment such as stake drivers and flat decked boats. The operation of driving the stakes into the lake bottom to secure the net required a pound net boat, a stake driver, and 40 to 60 stakes. These stakes would be driven into soft bottomed bays with a stake driver, or "scow," which looked something like a small oil derrick. The "scow" consisted of a central tower floated on a platform which centered and steadied the stake, while above it, a pulley held a heavy wooden hammer which pounded the stake into the lake bottom. This task was performed with man power in early days; later the hammer was powered by gasoline engines. The use of pound nets decreased on Isle Royale after the turn of the century due to the expense and maintenance requirements.

The Scandinavians also brought changes to the social life of the fishermen. Because of the distribution of the Scandinavian population, the new fishermen on Isle Royale began to establish permanent residences in Minnesota's North Shore communities, rather than in Michigan or Wisconsin as earlier Isle Royale fishermen had done. Some even tried to winter on the island. The new arrivals stimulated a cordial social life as fishing communities sprang up around the island. Picnics and gathering occurred regularly, particularly as motorized small craft became available. Washington Harbor, in particular, had a relatively large fishing settlement of twenty families by the early twentieth century.

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:



Spring arrival on the ice at Washington Harbor on May, 1938. Fisherman, eager to begin hookline fishing, would head to the islands in early April, sometimes before the ice had cleared out of the harbors. (Gale, 1995)

Land Use

Land use at Washington Island is significant in that it was the location of the first resort established on Isle Royale. Built by Singer, the Island House and associated cottages lined the lakeshore opposite Barnum Island. Singer installed the radio tower in 1910 for purposes of entertainment and navigation. All amenities that were available at the time were present at the resort. Singer was able to take advantage of the passenger ship trade with boats arriving from Chicago, St. Paul and Minneapolis. Between 1904 and 1920 it was the destination of choice for resort visitors to the island. Currently, there are six structures that are extant from the resort period; these are the radio tower (#186C), Cabin "A" (# 186), the honeymoon cottage (#192), the caretaker's cabin (#193), the wash house (#194), and the Ekmark net house (#195). The structures have since been re-purposed; one for use as a private residence and the others for use by the fishery.

Settlement of the area dates from the last 4,000 years predominately for the harvesting of copper and fish. Later, during the 1600s and 1700s, explorers came for the fur trade. Historically, settlement was always of a seasonal nature and involved gathering whatever natural resources were accessible.

Fishing on Isle Royale operated seasonally with fishermen arriving in April, as soon as lake conditions permitted, and staying through until December. Families would follow as soon as school let out in the summer. Structures built on the site were essential to the function of the

fishery and were at the mercy of the weather of Lake Superior. Families were responsible for the chores on land which included planting small vegetable and flower gardens.

On Washington Island, both the Eckmark and Sivertson fishery had concomitant occupation of the site. The use of the site as a fishery dates from the turn of the 20th century and persists today as the longest commercial fishery in operation on Isle Royale. The Sivertson family continues to hold a permit for commercial fishing on the property. The buildings and small-scale features are arranged according to function and the needs of the fishery along the shoreline, in a protected cove, at the north end of Washington Island.

Location was crucial for the establishment of a commercial fishery. “The best sites would be near sheltered waters, in areas with favorable winds.” (Franks, 1999) Sites were reoccupied seasonally and passed down from generation to generation. Fishing grounds were divided among the fishermen based on past use and location. The division ensured that no fisherman encroached on another’s fishing grounds. Fishermen occupied sheltered coves or harbors, with water deep enough to accommodate their boats. (Rakestraw, 1967)

Natural Systems and Features

The combination of natural system and physical features contribute to the setting and feeling of the cultural landscape. The following descriptions are excerpted from the 1998 General Management Plan.

Isle Royale National Park lies in the Superior Upland physical province. Elevation ranges from 600 feet at Lake Superior to almost 1,400 feet along the Greenstone Ridge. The physiography of the park is a product of glaciation as modified by bedrock. The dominant features across the landscape are the ridge and valley topography with variable thickness of glacial drift deposits left from the last retreat of the continental glaciers about 10,000 years ago. There are many lakes and ponds, and vast areas of swamps cover depressions in the landscape. Numerous low gradient stream systems drain the interior of the island into Lake Superior.

Surficial deposits of glacial debris cover the island, ranging in thickness from over five feet near Lake Desor to less than two feet near the northeastern end of the island. Bedrock outcrops are common across the island.

Two major ridges parallel the long axis of the island, the Minong and Greenstone Ridges. Both ridges have steep escarpments with differences in elevation of several hundred feet.

Geology

Precambrian rock layers over one billion years old, the result of successive volcanism, sedimentation, uplift, and erosion, formed the Isle Royale archipelago. The bedrock sequence on the island consists of thick layers of lava and sedimentary rocks that have been tilted toward the southeast and linear ridges of the island. Significant minerals found in the park include copper, greenstones, datolite, and agates.

Keweenawan volcanics dominate the geology of Isle Royale. Interbedded sediments, exposed by the upwarping of deposits, lie on the southwestern end of the island and have corresponding features on the south shore of Lake Superior as sandstones and conglomerates. Cutting across the exposed beds are many transverse faults.

Glacial activity is visible throughout the island and includes abrasions on bedrock, quarrying of rocks by plucking, striation across the bedrock, deposits of glacial till, and landscape features such as drumlins and moraines. Former lake levels of Lake Superior are evidenced by inland beach ridges on the island.

Soils

A soil survey for Isle Royale mapped and described 15 soil series, and 14 distinct soil associations. Three new soil series were included based on their development associated with the various lake levels in the Lake Superior basin, the decay and retreat of the glaciers, and the uplift of the island mass following glacial retreat.

The soils on Isle Royale are derived from deposits and outwash left by the retreating glaciers and melt water. Glacial till deposits vary in thickness across the island and are much deeper toward the southwest end. The soils in the northeastern section are thin and highly organic; on the southwestern end, the soils are deeper, better developed, and less organic.

Air Quality

The Clean Air Act (1977) designated Isle Royale as a class I air shed, which provides for the highest level of protection of air quality. Air quality remains a long standing concern, as the health of this resource is so intimately linked to the other resources of the park.

In 1991-92, visibility monitoring equipment operating in the park identified industrial sources of visible pollutants in the view shed toward Thunder Bay, Ontario, Canada. The direct impact to park resources from these pollutants is unknown. Park staff has documented pulp and paper mill odors reaching the park from Thunder Bay; on average, these odors reach the park 20% of the time during visitor season.

The greatest concern for the park is aerially transported toxic contaminants. These contaminants include mercury, organochlorines, herbicides, and elemental zinc and sulfur. In 1993, lake trout in Siskiwit Bay exceeded the state consumption advisory for total chlordane, toxaphene, total PCBs, mercury, and total DDT. The resurgence of the bald eagle and osprey nesting in the park and the dramatic increase of double crested cormorants are linked in part to lower levels of PCBs than in previous decades. The effects of contaminants on the plant and animal life of Isle Royale remain unknown. The presence of certain species of lichen found on Isle Royale serve to indicate the higher level of air quality on the island. For example, Methuselah's Beard Lichen (*Usnea longissima*), is one of the more pollution-sensitive species

that is found on Isle Royale but is now extinct in Europe. (Walewski, 2007, 139)

Climate

The climate on Isle Royale is similar to that of the rest of the upper Great Lakes region. Snow may be expected any time from September to May, but it accumulates from mid November to April. Temperatures are moderated by Lake Superior. On Isle Royale, daily lows in winter may be 6 degrees warmer than those of the mainland. In summer, Isle Royale is much cooler than the mainland. Trees are not fully leafed out until June, and traces of autumn color appear in late August.

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:



Topography and vegetation around Washington Island. (Gladstone for NPS, 2008)

Small Scale Features

A variety of small scale features are found around Washington Island. These features are concentrated around the daily operations of the fishery and contribute greatly to the feeling and association for the period of significance at the site.

At Washington Island, there are two net drying reels, one sits near the wood line and the other is placed close to the shore. Net reels were a Swedish innovation and were used to dry and repair the nets while preventing them from becoming tangled. The nets were originally made of cotton then later, more durably, out of nylon with the floats being carved out of wood and then later made from plastic. Nets and floats varied in size depending on what was being fished for

while the weights were used on gill nets to keep them vertical. Also around the site, are nets found in piles and in discarded boxes on the ground as well as being piled and hanging in the Eckmark Net House. Both the Fish House and the Net House are filled with small-scale features which were the tools of a working commercial fishery.

Net boxes and the closely associated wheelbarrow are also found with the fisherman's tools. According to Les Mattson, the walls of the net box were sloped to match the angle of the wheelbarrow, which also determined the size of the boat. (Franks, 1999)

On the grounds of the fishery are several wooden and metal boats of varying sizes. There is the ruin of a gas boat that has been hauled up on shore. The gas boat was a wooden boat descended from the Mackinaw boat in size and shape but powered by a gasoline motor instead of by oars or sail. The gas boat at Washington Island is not maintained and badly weathered but it helps to convey the atmosphere of daily life on the island.

The necessity of boat travel illustrated how life on Isle Royale was different than the mainland. Boats became an emblem of a different way of life. For the visitor, boats were the manifest union of freedom and exhilaration offered by running calm or loamy seas. For the fisherman, boats were viewed more functionally. A boat was a "platform on the water off which you work." In the water or on shore, boats were an important part of the functional landscape. (Franks, 1999)

As the boats grew older they have become frail and disrepair scattered across the shore line of many old fisheries, some disappearing altogether. Even in their ruin the boats provide a distinctive flavor to abandoned fisheries and summer homes. The face-down vernacular boat provides a distinctive cast to the cultural landscape at Isle Royale. (Tolson & Cochrane, N.D.)

It is significant to note that the Sivertsons retain the last license for commercial fishing on Isle Royale. The family fish on the Sivertson permit every fall and family members continue to utilize the residence in the summer.

Character-defining Features:

Feature:	Gas Boat 'Sivie'	
Feature Identification Number:		132412
Type of Feature Contribution:		Contributing
Feature:	Net Reels	
Feature Identification Number:		132414
Type of Feature Contribution:		Contributing
Feature:	Nets and Floats	
Feature Identification Number:		132416

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature: Net Boxes

Feature Identification Number: 132418

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature: Various tools of fishing, wheelbarrow, outboard motors, etc.

Feature Identification Number: 132420

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Feature: Small wooden and aluminium hulled boats

Feature Identification Number: 132422

Type of Feature Contribution: Contributing

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:



Gas boat and assorted aluminium boats on shore. (Hauser for NPS, 2008)



Net reel. (Hauser for NPS, 2008)



Net reel with net in box. (Hauser for NPS, 2008)



Nets and boxes in the Eckmark Net House. (Gladstone for NPS, 2008)



Inside the Eckmark Net House. (Gladstone for NPS, 2008)



Fish cleaning table in the fish house. The holes are used for disposing of fish guts and other waste while cleaning fish. (Gladstone for NPS, 2008)



Wheelbarrow inside the Sivertson Fish House. (Hauser for NPS, 2008)



Tools of the fishery. (Gladstone for NPS, 2008)



Inside the Sivertson Fish House. (Gladstone for NPS, 2008)



Motor inside the Sivertson Fish House. (Gladstone for NPS, 2008)



Wooden boat at Washington Island. (Hauser for NPS, 2008)



Nets and floats. (Gladstone for NPS, 2008)



Wooden boat . (Gladstone for NPS, 2008)



The Fish House shows both an American and a Norwegian flag. (Hauser for NPS, 2008)

Spatial Organization

The buildings and landscape features are organized in a clearing along the beach at the northwestern tip of Washington Island. The buildings are located and arranged according to function and needs of a fishery. The arrangement evolved over time as the fishery developed a need for more seasonal and residential shelter. The space between the buildings emphasizes the functional needs of the fishery but also contains the extant features of the former domestic landscape, such as the garden and some persistent ornamental plantings. The location of the landscape is comprised of glaciated volcanic rock terrain with rocky slopes and pebbled beaches in the setting of a northern boreal forest. Access to the site is via the wooden dock surrounding either the Sivertson or the Eckmark fish house. The site has a continued summer use by the Sivertson family.

During the period of significance, the Eckmark/Sivertson Fishery and the Singer Resort were constructed in order to access the resources of the island. The resort does not have integrity for the period of significance. There are six structures extant from the resort period ranging

from fair to high integrity as individual structures and the ghost remains of the old Singer dock in the water northeast of the fishery.

Much of the fishery site is maintained as open lawn interspersed by taller native vegetation and surrounded by forest. The fishery retains its character in location and association.

Topography

The topographic grain of the Isle Royale archipelago reflects the structures of the bedrock. The main island and nearly all of the small islands are oriented in a northeast/southwest direction. The parallel ridges with valleys or water filled troughs in between are the result of differential erosion on the uplifted fault block. In general, massive basalt flows make up the resistant ridges; less resistant amygdaloidal basalts underlie the valleys and troughs, producing a “corrugated” pre-glacial topography. Ravines developed along joints and fault zones that cut across the main trend of the ridges.

The pre-glacial topography was accentuated by glacial erosion because glacial quarrying and plucking were more effective on the less resistant bedrock underlying the stream valleys. Elongated lakes, such as Angleworm Lake, Sargent Lake and Hatchet Lake, occupy basins excavated by glacial ice that followed the valley trends. Quarrying also deepened fjord like inlets along the shore and some of the channels between the elongate lakes. (Harris, 1977)

Vegetation

The following is excerpted from the General Management Plan, 1998:

Approximately 700 species of vascular plants are found at Isle Royale. Over 100 species of this population are nonnative. A continuous forest, broken only by marshlands or open bedrock ridges of brush and grass covers most of the park.

Lake Superior strongly influences the island climate; this influence in turn largely determines the forest vegetation patterns on the island. The cool and moist shoreline is predominately boreal forest. Farther inland and upland the influence of the lake wanes, and drier warmer conditions, that northern hardwoods forest prefer, prevail. Boreal forests are widespread at the eastern end due to the narrow width (3 5 miles) and the shallow soils of the main island there. On the western end, where the island is about 8 miles wide and soils are deeper, the northern hardwood forests associated with drier, warmer conditions are more widespread.

The northern hardwoods forest is typified by the sugar maple/yellow birch forest. The large sugar maple forest centered on Greenstone Ridge on the west end is perhaps the largest tract of undisturbed and unaltered forest stands on Isle Royale. Northern red oak is also found on the dry hillsides. A dense undergrowth of sugar maple seedlings has developed, along with several herbaceous species, including trillium, yellow clintonia, and twisted stalk.

Additional shrubs and lesser trees are found throughout Isle Royale. Mountain alder is found around lakes, bays, and rock openings. Beaked hazelnut is located in old burns and rock openings along with mountain ash, bush honeysuckle, and thimbleberry. Mountain maple is in

Washington Island
Isle Royale National Park

mixed woods and rocky cliffs. Black ash grows in damp upland areas. Serviceberry, blueberry, and wood rose are on open ridges. Redosier dogwood is along the shores, bogs, and swamps. Red raspberry can be found in forest clearings, rock openings, and old beaver meadows.

Domestic gardens were commonly planted by the fishing families. At Washington Island, in the space between the Sivertson Fish House, the S. Sivertson Residence and the A. Sivertson Residence/Net House is the area that had been the domestic garden space. Extant there is the rose bush and sweet william that was planted by Theodora Sivertson, wife of Sam Sivertson. The garden is described by Howard Sivertson in his book, "Once Upon An Isle: The Story of Fishing Families on Isle Royale": "Most fisherman's wives took time and pride in their well-kept garden plots of sweet william, nasturtium, pansies, phlox, and roses...they cultivated a thin layer of soil between rocks and boulders. Plots were ringed with white cobblestones selected from island beaches." (Sivertson, 1992, 50)

Landscape Characteristic Graphics:



Forest type at the edge on Washington Island. (Hauser for NPS, 2008)



Vegetation at the fishery is mainly native shrubs and perennials surrounding domestic plantings and a low lawn and path system maintained closer to residence. (Gladstone for NPS, 2008)

Condition

Condition Assessment and Impacts

Condition Assessment: Fair
Assessment Date: 07/01/2002
Condition Assessment: Good
Assessment Date: 08/14/2008

Condition Assessment Explanatory Narrative:

Structures on the site should be evaluated annually to ensure stability and to ensure management of vegetation. Trails and views should be cleared of overgrown and fallen down vegetation.

Impacts

Type of Impact: Structural Deterioration
External or Internal: Internal

Type of Impact: Exposure To Elements
External or Internal: External
Impact Description: Exposure to the harsh winters and wet summers on Isle Royale increase the rate of deterioration of structures at the fishery

Type of Impact: Deferred Maintenance
External or Internal: Internal
Impact Description: Due to climactic extremes and limited occupancy, structures and landscape suffer from deferred maintenance.

Treatment

Treatment

Approved Treatment: Undetermined
Approved Treatment Completed: No

Bibliography and Supplemental Information

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Citation Title: Island Wilderness, a History of Isle Royal National Park
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Citation Number: 002967
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- Citation Author:** Sivertson, Howard
Citation Title: Once Upon an Isle: The Story of Fishing Families on Isle Royale
Year of Publication: 1992
Citation Publisher: Wisconsin Folk Museum
Source Name: Library of Congress/Dewey Decimal
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Citation Title: The Isle Royale Vernacular Boat Tradition
Source Name: CRBIB
Citation Type: Narrative
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Citation Author: Walewski, Joe
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