

## **THE NORTH IDAHO CULTURAL SITE DOCUMENTATION PROJECT**

The North Idaho Cultural Site Documentation Project is a three-year program between the Kalispel Natural Resources Department's Cultural Resources Management (KNRD CRM) program and SWCA Environment Consultants, Inc. (SWCA) with funding through Bonneville Power Administration (BPA). The project focuses on the documentation of three historic archaeological sites on wildlife mitigation properties in northern Idaho.

The project consists of three phases: development of a historic context for the project area, documentation of three archaeological sites, and the construction of an interpretive product. Phase 1 (2013/2014): historic background and detailed land use information on each of the three identified parcels, Phase 2 (2014/2015): documentation of three historic archaeological sites by professional archaeologists, and Phase 3 (2015/2016): website conception, production of narrative, and public outreach.

These properties were acquired through the Albeni Falls Wildlife Mitigation Program (AFWMA), which is financed by BPA as mitigation for wetland habitat loss from the Albeni Falls Dam Project. The Kalispel Tribe will promote the health of the existing forest and wetland habitat and restore habitat function to the properties near Gamlin and Beaver Lakes, which were purchased from private landowners in 2002.



## **INTRODUCTION**

The following information is designed to summarize and introduce the historic settlement of northern Idaho. The general outline highlights how and why individuals settled in northern Idaho. After this introduction, we summarize the three properties examined in this project: the John B. Martin Homestead, Israel Gamlin Claim, and the William L. Vestal Homestead.

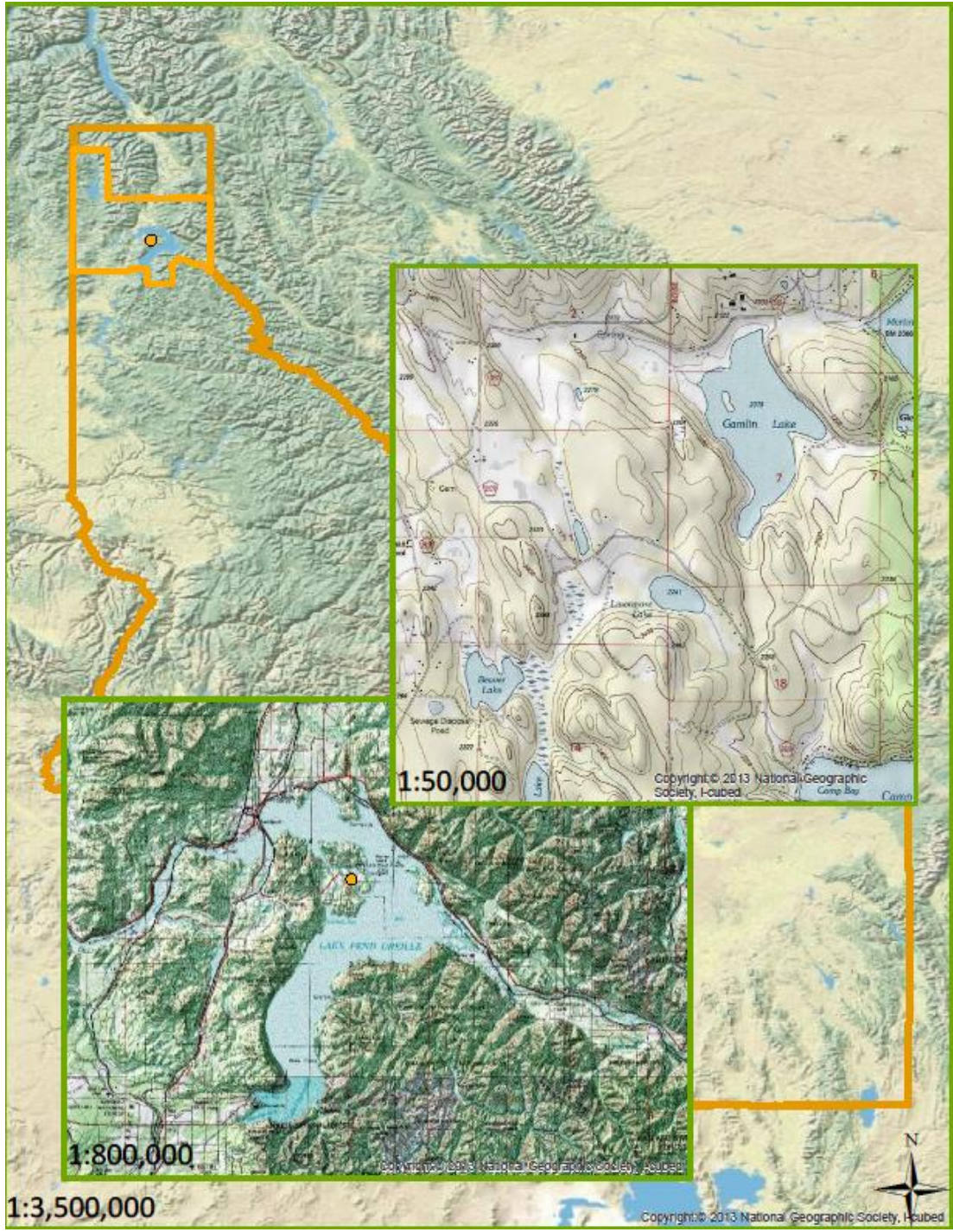


Figure 1. Project location.

## PRELIMINARY HISTORIC CONTEXT OF NORTH IDAHO SETTLEMENT

The lure of land, gold and other new opportunities brought many new people to the American West beginning in the mid-nineteenth century. Those who planned to claim land and establish a home usually settled first in the most fertile agricultural regions, but when these lands were no longer available, eventually fanned out into other areas where often the soil, climate or terrain made farming more difficult. Transportation was also a major determinant of where people chose to live, as easy access not only brought more settlers into a particular locale, but also provided a means to receive needed goods and sell local products (Meinig 1968:261-264; 487-488).

North Idaho was one of the areas where settlement developed later than other parts of the Northwest, as potential landowners initially chose coastal or well-watered inland lowlands that offered easier cultivation and better opportunities for developing products and markets. The mountainous, rough terrain and lack of easy transportation routes through the northern reaches of the inland Northwest made the area a less desirable destination for these early land seekers. The lakes and rivers provided an important avenue of travel within the region, but the only a few trails that the Kalispel, Pend Oreille and other Native peoples initially developed to reach hunting, fishing or gathering grounds or to travel to important trading centers served as viable links to outside areas.

For most others, this part of northern Idaho was more of a crossroads than a destination. Early in the century David Thompson with a few other Hudson's Bay Company fur trappers and traders had established an outpost in the region, and a small number of missionaries used the trails to minister to local tribes. It was not until 1853 that a government-funded survey under the direction of Washington Territorial Governor Isaac Ingalls Stevens found a potentially viable railroad route through the region. Otherwise, this rugged interior country saw only a few travelers and generally was ignored politically as it went from being part of Oregon Territory and then Washington Territory to becoming the northernmost section of Idaho Territory in 1863 during the Civil War era (Nisbet 2005: 71-78; Smalley 1975:80-81).

Mining prospects in the mountains of British Columbia and Montana also brought a rush of gold seekers through the area in the early 1860s and highlighted the need for better transportation if North Idaho was ever to be more than a conduit to other destinations. The first innovation was the construction of a steamer, the *Mary Moody*, to ferry passengers more quickly across Lake Pend Oreille and up the Clark Fork River. Then in 1869 Northern Pacific engineers began to survey once again for possible railroad routes across the North Idaho panhandle. Increasingly as outsiders were introduced to the vast natural resources and available land in the region, the economic benefits of building better transportation networks through North Idaho became more apparent (Meagher 1967: 572-573; Nolan 1971:18-20; Oberholtzer 1907:114-115.)

The impact of the Northern Pacific on the region began even before a single rail was laid. Farmers squatted on agricultural land in anticipation of the railroad, and promoters tried to guess where a potential settlement might be located. Once construction began, the thousands of workers who built the line, and all of the businesses that supplied their needs, established the first home-grown economy and the basis for future development. Towns were born as railroad depots were built, and the new line provided residents who settled nearby with the means to market local resources as well as purchase desirable commodities from around the world .

Soon after the Northern Pacific was completed in 1883, a second transcontinental line, the Great Northern, also chose a route through North Idaho. Construction in 1892 and 1893 brought a whole new wave of railroad workers to the region and cemented an expanding role for the town of Sandpoint, in particular, as a crossroads and supply center for two major transcontinental lines. Once completed, the two railroads also promoted North Idaho as an industrial site, tourist destination and future home for the thousands from around the world who were looking for a new place to settle. Both companies published pamphlets, brochures and other marketing materials, not only to encourage people to ship by rail, but also to ride the lines west to a new land of opportunity (Livingston-Little 1965:78; Meinig 1968:487-488; Schwantes and Ronda 2008: 119-120).

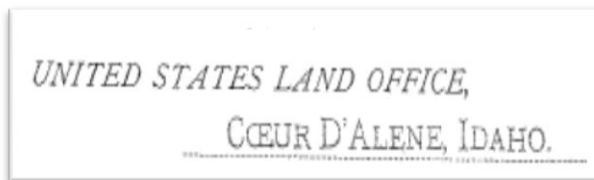
### **Claiming Land**

As a result of these improved transportation options, an increasing number of people took that opportunity to become landowners in North Idaho. Potential settlers could obtain property from several sources, but most important were the government and the railroad. Other individuals or private companies that had secured land also occasionally chose to resell. Federal programs offered the greatest source of low-cost acreage, but the sale of the Northern Pacific's land grants as well as cut-over timber company parcels also added to the availability. The American government from its earliest days had established a policy to transfer public lands to private ownership as quickly as possible. A series of laws passed by Congress provided for an orderly and fair system of land transfer and initially put regulation of the process in the hands of a government agency, the General Land Office (GLO). The GLO established a system of surveying, but the American territory was so vast that the surveys could not keep up with settlement, as the enthusiasm for property ownership drove increasing numbers westward. Especially in more remote areas like North Idaho, land claims often preceded the surveyors by many years and so, as a result, the government adopted several special land ordinances to protect these early settlers and provide additional means to establish title. The Preemption Act, passed in 1841 and amended in 1843, essentially established the rights of squatter on public lands and gave claimants the preferred opportunity to purchase up to 160 acres of land once the survey was complete. The minimum cost was \$1.25 per acre and in certain areas where the haste of some settlers to gain full title to the land outweighed the monetary outlays, preemption was popular (Shannon 1945:56; Opie 1987:55-56).

In more marginal agricultural areas the cost of filing for a preemption claim may have been a deterrent, so settlers frequently used other options. Among these alternatives was the Homestead Act, one of several measures enacted by Congress in 1862 with the goal of establishing a society of independent landowners in the West. The Homestead Act offered 160 acres free to any settler who resided on and improved a tract of land for five consecutive years. A settler also had the option to purchase the land for \$1.25 an acre after six months of residency, much like the Preemption Act (White 1991:142-143).

The Homestead Act made no provision for lands that were better for grazing, mining or logging than agriculture, so in areas like North Idaho, where much of the land was too heavily timbered, rocky or steep for farming, another alternative was the Timber and Stone Act, first passed in 1873. This measure initially had a provision that allowed individuals to purchase up to 160 acres of mineral or timber land for \$2.50 per acre. Claims under this act did not require residency or improvements and title could be obtained in as little as sixty days, so in many areas, lumber

companies hired what were called “dummy entry men” to file claims and then quickly turn them over to corporate interests (Shannon 1945:61).



The Timber Lands Act of 1878 tried to strengthen the provisions of the Timber and Stone Act, especially against fraud. The 1878 act continued to provide for the direct sale of a maximum of 160 acres of public forest land to individuals who paid \$2.50 per acre. The buyer was required to swear that the parcel was unsuitable for cultivation and primarily valuable for its timber and stone. The claimant also had to promise that the purchase was made “in faith to appropriate it to his own exclusive use and benefit; and that he/she had not directly or indirectly made any agreement or contract, or in any way or manner, with any person or persons whatsoever, by which the title...should...benefit... any person except himself...” The main purpose of the act was to avoid timber sales to those who had hired false claimants. According to some, however, the act produced more fraud than any other public land law (Royer 1982:41).

### **Railroad Lands**

Once the main line of the Northern Pacific was finished and full service began, the railroad brought thousands of new people to the region. The company had originally received a land grant from the government that gave them a total of nearly 44 million acres, with more than 1.26 million acres in Idaho alone. These grants included every other section on both sides of the track, and in Idaho they extended in a belt that was forty miles wide along the line. With these huge government land grants arrayed in a checkerboard pattern along its entire length, the Northern Pacific had plenty of land to sell and an incentive to encourage development as quickly as possible. The railroad opened land offices and initiated marketing campaigns to lure immigrants from throughout the world to the Northwest. The landless could own a piece of real estate for agriculture as well as a home. Small business owners could make their fortunes in new and up-and-coming towns, while big business operators like Weyerhaeuser and other timber companies could make even bigger fortunes on millions of forested acres purchased from the railroad. And, of course, tourists could come by rail to enjoy recreational opportunities or just the rugged beauty of the area’s mountains, lakes and streams (Livingston-Little 1965:64). The stops along the line initially experienced the greatest benefits from rail connections, but the impact quickly spread as new lands were settled and natural resources exploited. Logging, milling, and mining were the first important industries that developed in North Idaho, but small settlements also grew around each depot with a range of services for travelers as well as the local population. From hotels, restaurants and saloons to retail stores, a jail and courthouse and ultimately to schools and churches, new communities were built because of the railroad. Sawmills, shake and shingle mills added jobs to the local economy and helped a few towns to prosper. These small commercial centers, in turn, supplied even smaller rural communities as settlement spread to more remote areas where land could still be claimed.

### **Settlement in Rural North Idaho**

One of these rural communities that developed after the advent of the railroad was located on a relatively large peninsula that jutted into Lake Pend Oreille south across the lake from the railroad towns of Sandpoint and Hope. To the west by land was another railroad town, Sagle, but access to the area was primarily by boat, as the terrain in some parts was hilly, rough and rocky and in others, heavily timbered. On the uplands and around a few small lakes were some natural meadowlands that could be used for livestock and possibly some small crops. A portion of the area had been burned by fires in 1888 and thick underbrush with many downed trees made travel through these areas difficult (Sonnenkalb, T56N R1E, Sept. 7-Nov. 4, 1896; T56N R1W, Oct. 22-Nov. 9, 1896)

The area had been surveyed by a government team led by Oscar Sonnenkalb in September, October and early November of 1896. In his field notes Sonnenkalb described some level bottomland with dense, high undergrowth and as well as some rolling meadows along the west side of Gamble Lake. The area around the northern end of Beaver Lake was marshy, but also in some places was covered with thick underbrush and fallen trees, making it difficult to traverse. The surveyors also noted some fences and as they moved toward the Lake Pend Oreille, an occasional cabin. Some settlement had already occurred by the time the government survey was made, but once Sonnenkalb filed his survey plats and they were approved in April 1897, these lands were officially open for claim (Sonnenkalb, T56N R1E, Sept. 7-Nov. 4, 1896; T56N R1W, Oct. 22-Nov. 9, 1896).

In addition to those individuals or families who planned to farm or raise livestock, prospectors also had an interest in this area, particularly the mountainous formations on the southern end of Township 56 North. Claims such as the Apollo, Happy Day and Snowstorm were located in this rugged steep country along the shoreline of the lake to the east of Garfield Bay. As the son of one of the early settlers in the area described it: That part of the Peninsula from Camp Bay to Garfield Bay was a kind of no man's land of narrow ravines and rocky pinnacles which was referred to as Mineral Point Country... There has been quite a lot of prospecting done in that country... Silver lead ore occurs there in quartz veins but not enough to pay to work" (Newington 1977:23-24). Many prospectors tried their hand before the land was withdrawn from mineral claims, and at least one met his death on the extremely steep hillsides along the lake (Newington 1977:25).

All of the land to the east of Sagle, bordered by Garfield Bay, Glengary Bay and Bottle Bay on Lake Pend Oreille, was often called the Peninsula by its residents and was more generally known as Glengary as it later developed. Because of the rough terrain, most of its earlier settlers had to travel by boat from one of these nearby bays to Hope, and, occasionally, Sandpoint or other towns on the lake, for their supplies. An early county road was carved out of the hillside from Bottle Bay around Contest Point and later a steep track was built from the west over the Sagle hill. Residents who used these routes before the long wagon bridge was built across Lake Pend Oreille would then take a ferry from Dover to Sandpoint. Later, a steamboat, the *Western*, brought daily mail and supplies to the store at Glengary Bay (Newington 1977; Bonner County History Book Committee 1991: 26-27).

Old-time residents remember a strong sense of community among the farming families that originally settled in the area. Three post offices and several country stores served as gathering

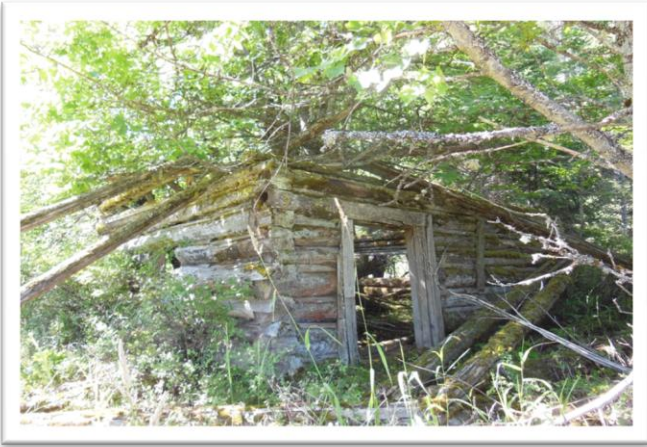
places as did a meeting hall built by neighborhood volunteers. A local landowner also donated an acre of his property for the Gamlin Lake Cemetery and another provided an additional acre as the site for the small wooden building that was used for Sunday services and was known as the Church in the Wildwood (Bonner County History Book Committee 1991: 26-27).

Much remains to be learned about the background and daily lives of these residents and the original motivations for settlement in this area. A brief review of land claims within the sections under study suggests that like other secondary settlement areas, many of the land claimants had first settled in other areas before moving to this fairly isolated region. Quite a few individuals of foreign birth were among the early settlers, with some emigrating from French-speaking Canada, England and Scandinavia. Many of them, however, had first tried their hand at settling in other parts of the country, including California and some Midwestern farming regions. The number of mortgages and at least one sheriff's sale of property in the vicinity suggests that making a living on this land was difficult, and even if property could be obtained for a low cost, it was not easy to eke out even a subsistence lifestyle. The following accounts look at the three individual pieces of property that have been identified in this study and attempt to reconstruct their land use history as background for later examination of the sites. Some details about the background and lifestyle of the owners or occupants are also included as the basis for further study of the some of the major economic and social trends that affected settlement in this region. This information was gathered from a variety of primary sources including federal and territorial censuses, marriage records, death indexes, voter rolls as well as land records, surveyor's field notes, maps, personal reminiscences, directories and letters. Many of these materials were accessed through Ancestry.com or at the National Archives facility in Seattle. Grantor-grantee indexes and deed books held by the Bonner County Recorder in Sandpoint, Idaho, were of particular importance in tracing land ownership as was an index of land transactions organized by section, township and range which is held by the Bonner County Historical Society. Newspaper clippings and an array of secondary materials from local and regional historical collections also provided some supporting information. Because of the number of records linked to arrive at these property histories, individual citations are not included within the text. Repositories and the document references are included in the bibliography and digital copies of the primary material have been retained for future reference.

## PROPERTIES

Three properties were examined in this study:

### 1. Gamlin Lake #1



### 2. Gamlin Lake #2



### 3. Beaver Lake #3





## **Gamlin Lake #1**

### **John B. Martin Homestead**

John B. Martin filed a homestead claim for 56.8 acres along Gamlin (Gamble) Lake on February 15, 1900. Martin fulfilled the terms of the Homestead Act by living on and cultivating the property for five years, and received a final patent in February of 1905.

Martin was originally from New Brunswick, Canada, and although there is some conflicting census evidence, it appears that he settled in the United States as early as 1882. He worked as a miner and in 1900 was boarding in Cocalalla with a number of other men who were identified as mine workers and mining engineers. The hills around Lake Cocalalla were found to have deposits of granite and Martin was likely involved in the early ore development of this area. Martin filed for his homestead claim at the same time he was living at Cocalalla. Although the terms of the Homestead Act required the claimant to live upon and cultivate the land, often the heads of households in North Idaho and other more marginal farming areas were employed at temporary outside jobs to supplement their income.

John Martin's brother, Paul, who was more than twenty years younger, also immigrated to the United States by 1899 and evidently joined him in Bonner County by the early 1900s. According to the descendants of a family who later lived on the property, the pair worked together to build the two-story log cabin at a location near the lake. Martin had claimed water rights, and he and his brother raised livestock, possibly dairy cattle. In directories of Sandpoint and Bonner County during this period, they are both listed as ranchers. Neighbors seemed to refer to them as "the Frenchmen" or the French Canadians (Newington 1977:21, 32).

Paul Martin eventually met Elsie Miller, whose family had come to North Idaho from Iowa, and they were married in October 1907 when she was 17 years old. The couple had three children, Archibald, Bertha and Edwin, and all of them evidently continued to live with John Martin on the homestead. The Martins were active in the local community, and one neighbor remembered that Paul Martin brought a team of horses to haul logs for the construction of the first schoolhouse in the area (Newington 1977: 32).

Aside from ranching, John Martin was also involved in some prospecting ventures and possibly mine investments in the region. Martin filed several mining claims in the region and may have been the J. B. Martin, who was listed as an ore separator in an early Hope directory. Local newspaper articles indicate that John Martin may also have invested in a saloon in Hope, Idaho, run by a long-time local businessman, Joseph Jeannot. Other Jeannot family members, including Joseph's brother Louis, had settled in Hope for the nearby mining prospects, but eventually operated stores and restaurants in the lakeside railroad town before going into the hotel and saloon business. A newspaper report suggests that Martin was Jeannot's longtime partner in a Hope bar before branching out to start his own saloon business (Henderson et al 1903: 979; *Pend Oreille Review*, Dec. 16, 1911).

In December of 1911, Martin evidently rowed from the Glengary area where his homestead was located across Lake Pend Oreille to Hope. After picking up supplies and drinking with friends, he left Hope to row back to his Gamlin Lake home. It was a cold and foggy evening with snow falling, and although friends tried to stop him from leaving because of this inebriated condition, he persisted. The next day his boat washed up on the lakeshore several miles to the west, and

Martin was found to have drowned (*Pend d'Oreille Review*, Dec 16, 1911). Martin was not married and had named no other heirs, so the Gamlin Lake homestead became the legal property of his elderly mother, Methaide Martin. She evidently transferred the land to her son, Paul Martin, for the sum of \$1.00. Martin and his wife continued to live in the log house by Gamlin Lake with their family over the next few years, and raised livestock on their land, possibly dairy cows like some of their neighbors.

In early 1913 the Martins took out a \$600 mortgage on the property from a nearby rancher, Thomas Newington, and then in June of 1916 sold a five-acre piece of Lot 6 to one of their neighbors, Ada Genson, for \$100. Martin held the mortgage on this smaller parcel. Land records indicate that although a few of the ranchers in the area borrowed from banks, it was a more common practice to mortgage their property to other nearby landowners for cash needed to finance upgrades, purchase more livestock, or possibly just subsist until markets improved. Over the next few decades the Gamlin Lake property changed hands several times. The five acre parcel was sold by the Ben and Ada Genson to Knud Lassen and then in late 1922 to Robert A. Schroeder and his wife, Christina. The Schroeders had followed other family members to North Idaho from Iowa in 1905 and had first settled on the lake, operating one of the Peninsula's most popular gathering places, the Glengary store and post office. After leaving the area for a time to be with their children, the Schroeders returned and purchased the Gamlin Lake property, where they lived until soon after Christina Schroeder's death in 1934. The Martins sold their remaining land to Nelson and Hattie Ratliff in April 1921, and then moved out of the area. By 1930 they were living on a farm that they had purchased in Jackson County, Oregon. The Ratliffs seemed to have been in difficult financial circumstances and after mortgaging the property and pledging their 1923 hay crop to a local bank, they appear to have lost their land the following year in a sheriff's sale. The new owners were William E. and Jennie Yeager, who had lived in Sandpoint for a number of years, owning a feed store and a garage. They retained the property until February of 1930, when it was sold to William J. Smith and his wife. It is not known whether the Jaegers ever occupied the property, but the Smiths lived at Gamlin Lake and farmed for a number of years.

William Smith oversaw farming activities on the small ranch, but his son, Paul, who was 30 in 1940, provided the labor. In 1942, the Smiths transferred the property to their son "for \$1 with love and affection," according to the wording of the deed. The property was later occupied by Stanley and Mary Henrickson, who purchased it in 1955 and remained there for more than twenty years. Reminiscences of one of Henrickson children describe the variety of fruits and vegetables grown on the property. In particular, a huge old cherry tree and several apples stood near the house, probably planted by the earliest residents. The trees provided fruit for family members, neighbors and friends as well as birds, deer and other wildlife that was abundant in the area. As late as the 1980s a milk house still stood nearby, and a porch had been added to the front of the home.

According to local lore, very close to the cabin along the shores of the lake were the remains of an old Hudson's Bay trapper's cabin, thought by residents to be one of the one of the oldest buildings in the area. On a rise in the distance were the Israel Gamlin home and the faint remains of a wagon road which evidently wound up the nearby hill. A family still occupied the original Martin cabin into the 1990s (Bonner County History Book Committee 1991:399).

## Gamlin Lake #2

A rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in cursive. The signature reads "John B. Martin" followed by a comma and "of Hope Idaho". The handwriting is dark and somewhat faded, typical of a historical document.

### Israel Gamlin Claim

Israel Gamlin, like the Martins, was a native of French-speaking Canada, but he may have immigrated to the United States with his family as early as 1853 (Census 1920). Gamlin served in Vermont military regiments during the Civil War, but sometime later in the 1860s he moved to California. Whether he experienced the lure of farming or mining opportunities in the West or simply wanted to claim land, Gamlin registered as a voter in Tulare County in 1869, listing himself as a farmer. Likely by that time he had already filed on a 160-acre homestead near Visalia and soon thereafter his brother, Thomas Gamlin, also filed a claim in the same section of land. This area was among the giant sequoias near the Kings River in the Sierra Nevada Mountains, and the Gamlin brothers were among some of the earlier settlers in that difficult to access region.

Israel Gamlin's land was in the midst of the trees that later became known as the General Grant Grove, containing some of the largest sequoias ever found in the United States. Native peoples of the area previously used the hollowed out shells of some of the giant trees for shelter, and some histories suggest that Gamlin and his brother lived temporarily in the base of one of the largest of the downed sequoias while they built the first cabin located within the huge grove. Whether or not Thomas Gamlin actually helped his brother with the construction is in dispute, but the one-story hewed-log cabin was built of sugar pine with uniquely notched corners, shake roof and a stone fireplace. Israel Gamlin grazed cattle on the grass among the trees and was said to have cleared the first road into the forest, cutting poles and shakes from the downed timber and providing assistance to visitors who braved the difficult mountain trails to view the giant trees (Tweed 1976).

Increasing number of settlers began to move into the area to prospect as well as farm, but eventually a larger number arrived who wanted to exploit the forests for timber. The federal government had begun to survey the land, and one of the field surveyors was said to have recognized the scenic importance of the huge sequoia grove. According to historical accounts the surveyor, on his own initiative, convinced Israel Gamlin to give up his claim with the expectation that the government would provide him with timberland elsewhere. Gamlin did abandon his cabin, but evidently did not receive the new land as promised from the government, although he did file a cash-entry claim for another 160-acre parcel nearby in 1875. Gamlin remained in the area, where he met and married Sarah Blain in 1878. The couple had a daughter, Ella, and the family was living in Kern County in 1880 with Sarah's father and two children by an earlier marriage. Gamlin continued to identify himself at this time as a farmer throughout this period (Tweed 1976).

The movement to preserve some of the nation's imperiled wilderness regions had begun to grow, but it was not until 1890 that Israel Gamlin's original land became part of the General Grant National Park. Later, it was folded into the legislation that created the Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks. By that time, however, Israel Gamlin had left California, possibly as a result of the government's withdrawal of so much of the land earlier settled by Gamlin and his

neighbors or his desire to locate more timberland. Gamlin also was separated or divorced from his wife and by 1887; he was living in Spokane County, which was then part of Washington Territory. The census of that year lists Gamlin as single and working as a mechanic and he evidently remained in that area for the next few years, as directories for Spokane Falls (later known simply as Spokane) show him as a carpenter who was boarding at a residence in the city.

Gamlin's next move may have been to settle on land consisting of lots 2 and 3, Township 56N, Range 1 East, Section 7 in what was first Kootenai and then later Bonner County, Idaho. Gamlin purchased the relatively remote parcel of 76.5 acres from the Northern Pacific Railroad on January 29, 1900, for the sum of \$76.50 (Bonner County Recorder, Contract 148, Deed 6679, Northern Pacific Railway Company, Book 4:75). The deed indicates that Gamlin's address was a Hope post office box, but it seems highly possible that he may have squatted on this property at least as early as 1896 when the land was surveyed by Oscar Sonnenkalb for the federal government. The property bordered on what was known as Gamble Lake, which was believed to have been named for Gamlin. If, in fact, Gamble was a variant of Gamlin's last name, then he would likely have been living in the vicinity during the 1896 survey, as Gamble Lake is mentioned several times in the surveyor's field notes. Plat maps drawn by the surveyors do not show any residence for Gamlin at the time (Oscar Sonnenkalb, T56N R1E, Sept. 7-Nov. 4, 1896).

It is not known when Gamlin constructed a dwelling on the property, but it would seem likely that it was either before or soon after his purchase of the land from the railroad. Land records indicate that he took out several small mortgages on the property and then sold it to M.M. Dickson for \$4000 in June of 1907. A court case ensued, possibly based on nonpayment, and by 1910 Dickson was legally forced to return the property to Gamlin (Bonner County Recorder, No. 13275, May 7, 1910). Gamlin once more mortgaged the property, this time for \$375, to Ignatz Weil, a noted Sandpoint land and business owner. The mortgage was negotiated in 1910 and Gamlin retired the debt within a year. Gamlin evidently continued to live on the property as he was listed as a Glengary resident in Bonner County directories in 1910, 1914 and 1916. Gamlin sold his property in March of 1919 to Nelson Ratliff and Martin Mushrow of Sandpoint for \$5000. Israel Gamlin moved back to California, where he purchased land in Placer County near the home of his brother, Thomas Gamlin, who had remained in the state with his family. Israel Gamlin died there at the age of 77 on July 14, 1924. The Ratliffs bought the neighboring Martin homestead in April of 1921 and when financial problems followed, the Gamlin property ultimately was put in the hands of W.E. Jaeger, who also took over the Martin land. Jaeger sold both parcels in 1930 to William J. Smith and his wife, who transferred it to their son, Paul, in 1942.

### Beaver Lake #3



#### William L. Vestal Homestead

To the southeast of Gamlin Lake was a much smaller body of water known as Beaver Lake. William L. Vestal entered a homestead claim on a 160-acre parcel that bordered a portion of the lake. Vestal and his wife, Minnie, filed their entry in November of 1903 and received their final patent on December 27, 1909.

Vestal was born in 1871 in the farming country of Madison County, Ohio, and his family later moved to rural Illinois, where his father, William, was a farmer. Vestal worked as a farm laborer, and by 1903, he and his wife Minnie had moved to North Idaho, where they formally entered their homestead claim. His brother, John H. Vestal, who was more than twenty years older, may have followed him to the area. John Vestal and his wife, Maggie, also took a homestead claim adjacent to William Vestal's property, filing their entry in July of 1906 and proving up on their claim in September 1911.

Initially both families may have farmed their property or raised livestock and built homes on their land according to the terms of the Homestead Act. William Vestal mortgaged his property several times after he had gained full title to the claim, and his brother sold him an additional 11 acres in about 1914. Vestal, however, developed another occupation, which was as the captain of the steamer, *Queen*, which carried freight and passengers on Lake Pend Oreille. According to a 1916 directory, he and his wife were living at the Sandpoint City Dock on a houseboat. His brother and his wife also lived on a boat along the lakeshore, and at least two of their older children lived in the town of Sandpoint as well. John Vestal died in 1917, but previously had sold parts of his homestead claim to his children.

William Vestal may have divided his time between his boat on Lake Pend Oreille and the Glengary area as in 1920 he and his wife were enumerated in the census at a home, not a farm, in the Gamlin Lake Precinct. Vestal had sold a portion of his property in 1914 to a neighbor, Albert Burger, who sold it again in 1918 to William R. Gresham. Gresham also purchased the remaining parcel, the SW4 of the NW4 of the property, from William Vestal in 1919. This portion was sold to one of his sons, Clyde B. Gresham, in 1922 while the rest remained in William Gresham's hands until one half of it was sold to another son, C.W. (Clint) Gresham in 1939. In the meantime, William Gresham had leased a portion of the property to H.M. Hausted, possibly as grazing land.

Census information suggests that the Gresham family primarily raised livestock throughout the decades that they owned this land. Members of the Gresham family appear in separate households but were enumerated consecutively in both the 1920 and the 1930 censuses, which may indicate that they lived in separate homes on the Beaver Lake property. William Gresham dies in 1943 and he and his wife were buried in the Gamlin Lake cemetery as was their son, Clint Gresham and his wife. Clint Gresham stayed on the Beaver Lake farm until 1955 (*Sandpoint Daily Bee*, April 13, 1981).

## CONCLUSIONS

The properties of Beaver and Gamlin demonstrate the Kalispel Tribe's value of the preservation and protection of wildlife habitat as well as historic resources and land use. The experiences of the families who lived and worked near these lakes provide valuable information on early settlement history and what it meant to live in rural north Idaho at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Resources can be lost through a number of means and at any time. It is important to take the initiative now to record these reminders of history before they are lost. The intent of this project is to preserve the story of these early homesteaders so that they can provide generations to come with a window into the past.

The Tribe hopes to work with the Bonner County Historical Society to create a digital exhibit so that much of this information is made more widely available.

An interactive website is being developed currently to allow the public to become part of the process of researching and recording these historic structures.

Classroom and public speaking events are planned around Bonner County to share the information gained through this project.

Our gratitude and appreciation to SWCA for the extraordinary historical research, to the archaeologists who diligently recorded the physical details of these historic structures, and to BPA for support.

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