



Burwash Landing



Walking Tour

History of Burwash Landing

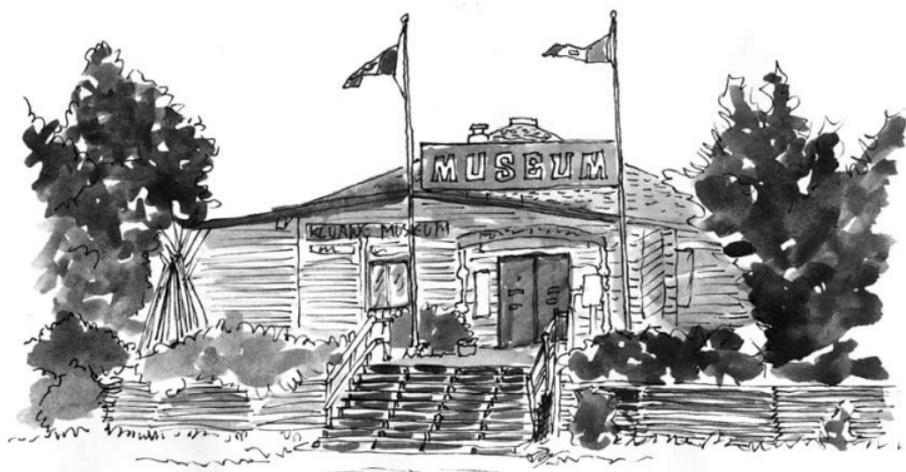
The community of Burwash Landing is situated on the southwest shore of beautiful Kluane Lake. This area is rich in First Nation's culture and history. The Southern Tutchone people have traditionally moved across the landscape, hunting, fishing and harvesting the land. The site of Burwash Landing was once a seasonal fishing camp for the Southern Tutchone.

The Jacquot brothers, who were trained as chefs in the Lorraine region of France, made their way to the Klondike in 1898 and were later attracted to the Kluane Gold Rush in 1904. Eugene used their cabin as a small trading post while Louis took up mining. In the fall of the first year, they built a larger trading post at Burwash Landing, naming their post after Lachlin Burwash, the mining recorder at Silver City. The Jacquots brought their supplies along the Kluane Wagon Road to Silver City or Christmas Bay, a route that was later followed by the Alaska Highway. The freight was stored in warehouses and shipped across Kluane Lake in small boats when the water was calm.

The community at Burwash Landing grew during the Alaska Highway construction. The Jacquots ran the only business in the Yukon north of Bear Creek Lodge and the operation included a hotel, restaurant, a general store and a big game outfitting business.



1) Kluane Museum of Natural History



Konrad Domes and his class at Yukon College originally designed this building as a Catholic Church and the First Nation congregation built it in 1974. The church was considered too large for the community but the design was so unique that Father Huijbers asked the museum society if they would be interested in using it for their planned museum structure. The society was a group of local people who had created displays about the Kluane region in the Burlbilly Cabin. Soon after the present Museum of Natural History was built, the artifacts were transferred into their new home.

The beautiful exhibits in the museum show Yukon animals in their own habitat and there are many displays of First Nation's tools and clothing. Local crafts are on sale in the lobby and you can get your photograph taken beside the biggest gold pan in the world. Fred O'Brien, a Roman Catholic missionary, painted the mural on the gold pan.



2) Our Lady of the Holy Rosary Church



Father Eusebe Morisset, OMI, travelled north in 1943 to serve as an auxiliary chaplain with the American Army. He was responsible for the area from Whitehorse to the Alaska border. Father Morisset built the main church at Burwash Landing in 1944 with the help of the Jacquot brothers and the First Nation congregation. The materials for the building came from an abandoned army mess hall at Duke Meadows and the Jacquots donated the land. Father Morisset lived and worked in this area until 1964, visiting his missions in Champagne, Snag and Aishihik every month for two or three days. He taught all the children of the area in the church during the 1940s and '50s.

Father Henk Huijbers, OMI, was born in Holland and came to the Yukon in 1947. He built a rectory for Our Lady of the Rosary Church in 1963. Father Huijbers was very interested in collecting historical and cultural objects and so he constructed exhibits in the old living quarters until his collection grew too large. Fred and Margaret O'Brien, missionaries at Burwash Landing in the early 1990s, set up the front room as an exhibit to represent the old schoolroom.



3) Burlbilly Hill Cabin



Arnold Allinger built this log cabin in 1958. Arnold was a brother to Leland Allinger, one of the owners of the Burwash Lodge. While Jack Gwartney was employed at the Mile 1128 compressor station for an oil pipeline that paralleled the Alaska Highway, his wife Jean became the driving force for the establishment of the Kluane Museum and Historical Society. The Kluane Historical Society housed its first museum in this cabin in 1966.

The Burlbilly Hill cabin was damaged in the 1999 forest fire that swept through town and destroyed four residences.



4) Jimmy Johnson House

Jimmy Johnson built this log house for his very large family in 1929. It was originally located on



the shore of Kluane Lake by the small dock. The Jacquots purchased the house from Jimmy in 1946 and used it as living quarters for the lodge staff.

Bill Brewster, who had worked on the Alaska Highway out of Watson Lake, returned to the Yukon in 1950 to work in various lodges around Haines Junction and Burwash Landing. He ran a small general store out of the cabin for a short time in the 1950s. Bill Brewster was first elected as a Member of the Legislative Assembly in 1982 and went on to have a long and respected career in Yukon politics. He left the Yukon in 1999 and is remembered for his efforts to make Kluane National Park more accessible to the public.

5) Moose Horn Cabin

This cabin was built by Louis Jacquot around 1939. During the early 1950s, Jack Saunders and

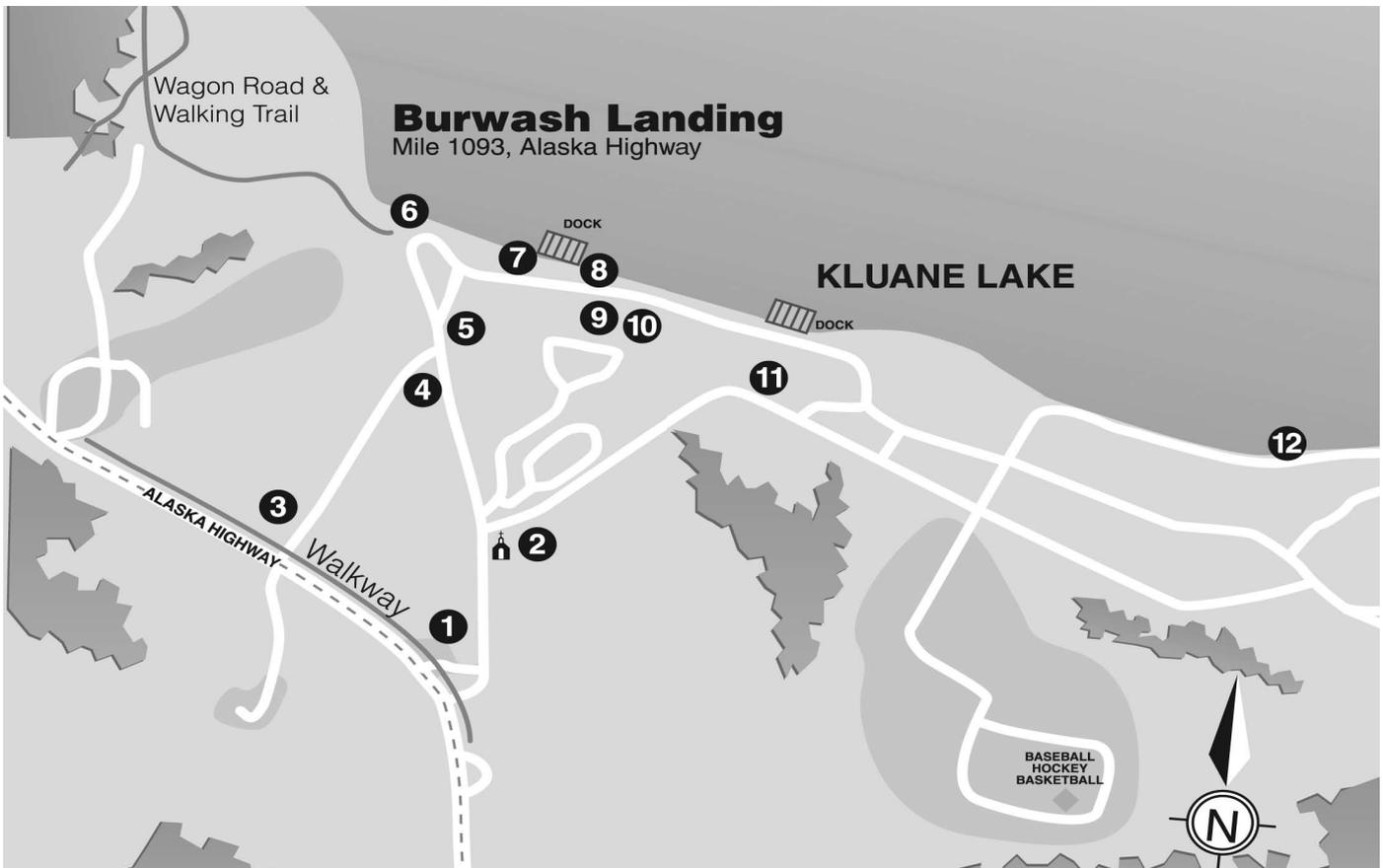


his wife and seven children lived cosily in this little log home. Jack was a surveyor on the Canol Road and Alaska Highway. Originally from Alabama, the Saunders were the first African-American family to live in the area. From 1955 to 1957, Pieter and Margaret Van der Veen lived in the Moose Horn Cabin with their children, Gary and Karen. Pieter was a grader and heavy equipment operator on the Alaska Highway.



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6) Burwash Landing Resort



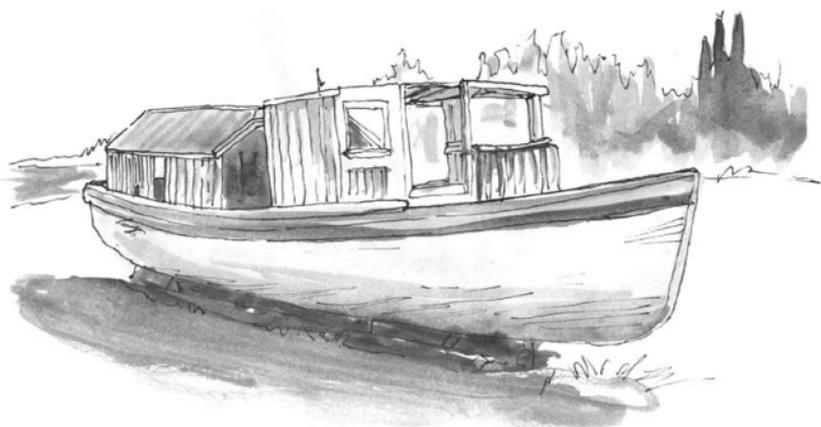
Soon after they arrived in the area, the Jacquot brothers started to work in the guiding business with Tom Dickson whom they had met at Dyea, Alaska on the way to the Klondike goldfields. Guiding turned into a family business when Gene Jacquot married Tom Dickson's eldest daughter, Ruth.

Their business was small until the American army established a base camp at Burwash Landing during the construction of the Alaska Highway. The original two-story lodge was built in 1948 and can be identified in the modern building by the low hip roof, small windows and oak flooring. The lodge was identical to a now demolished lodge at Johnsons Crossing. Logs for the lodge were milled by Mickey Blackmore at Bear Creek and were carted and barged to Burwash Landing. A large barn that also served as a dance hall spanned the creek near the current parking lot.

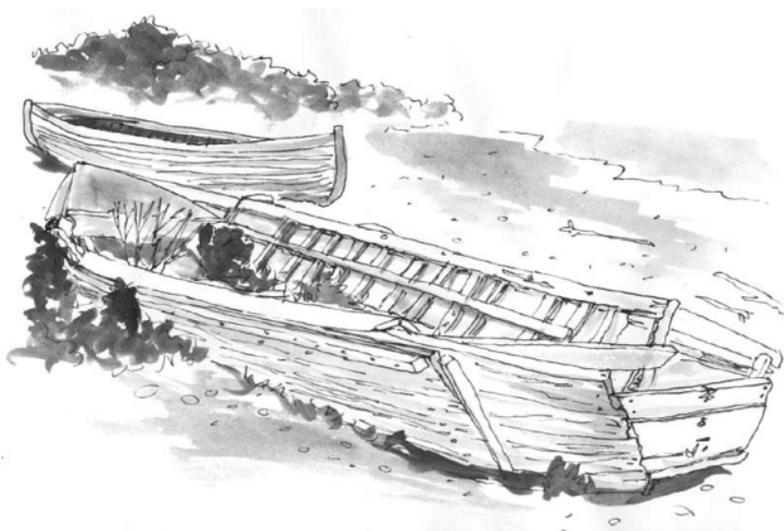
Eugene Jacquot owned and operated the Burwash lodge until his death in 1950. His widow, Ruth Jacquot, sold the business to Leland Allinger and Darrell Duensing. Both of these men had worked on the Alaska Highway construction and Allinger was a renowned wrangler. The remains of an underground barn, one that housed 50 head of cattle, can be seen on the road to the lodge. The resort has seen many renovations over the years and the logs were first covered with stucco and then pine siding.



7) Kluane Lake Boats



There are several boats on the beach behind the Burwash Landing Resort. The “Josephine” was built in 1931 by the Jacquots and named for one of Louis’ daughters, Josie Sias. It had an inboard motor and was rigged for sail. The “Josephine” replaced the Jacquot’s old unnamed 1920s freighting boat, beached to the right. The “Kluane” was originally named the “Rosalie”, for Louis’ other daughter, and was used in the 1940s. Archie Lampman built the blunt-ended boat around 1944 for Ruth Jacquot. As a child, Ruth delivered messages and mail in the area. By age 15, Ruth was travelling alone by dogteam to pick up supplies in Whitehorse. A walk along the shore will reveal many other remnants of Kluane Lake’s fishing and freighting history.





8) Boat House



The Jacquots built several structures of this type along Kluane Lake for their barges and boats. Bad weather on Kluane Lake is something to be feared as the lake is deep and extremely dangerous at times. In the spring and fall, the Jacquots brought their goods from Whitehorse along the old Kluane Wagon Road and stored them in warehouses on the south-east shore of the lake. Supplies and stores would have to wait there until good weather allowed passage by boat to Burwash Landing on the north-west shore. Kluane Lake is 74 km long and is the longest lake in the Yukon.

The Southern Tutchone name for Kluane Lake means 'big whitefish lake'. The Tlingit name $\grave{u}xh\grave{a}n\acute{i}$ 'whitefish country' is the source of the English name Kluane. This is a good fishing lake for whitefish, trout and th \grave{e} or dog salmon.

9) Gas House Dugout

The Jacquots brought in perishable meat and vegetables and distributed them to the area miners and First Nations hunters and fishers. This dugout is typical of many caches built around the lake to keep the goods refrigerated. The Jacquots favoured underground storage dugouts because they could keep block ice, cut from Kluane Lake in the winter, frozen for several months. The Gas House Dugout at Burwash Landing was built in 1904 and may have first been used for storing vegetables. More recently it served as gas storage for the freighting boats.



10) Ice House

This dugout was built by the Jacquots around 1915 and was used to store ice for the whole community. Storage for perishable goods was a problem before refrigerators



became common. The householders would use horses to drag big blocks of ice from the lake and pack them in sawdust. Ice stored in this fashion would last through the short summer.

11) Old Copper Joe's House

This building was one of the first buildings built on land that Ruth Jacquot-Donnelly donated to the Kluane



First Nations people. First Nation families from the upper White and Donjek rivers visited the Burwash Landing trading post during their seasonal travels to trapping, fishing and hunting areas. These families gradually settled in the community influenced perhaps by Copper Joe, the father of Louis Jacquot's wife, Mary. Copper Joe lived in this house after he moved from Fort Selkirk to Burwash Landing.

Copper Joe's father, Copper Chief, originally came from Copper Centre, Alaska and his first language was Upper Tanana. Copper Chief was a powerful man whose family controlled the White River copper sources by 1875. He settled in the Upper White River area and his children all lived in the Yukon River basin.



12) Mary's House



Mary Copper Joe and Louis Jacquot were married in 1920. Mary Jacquot learned fine pastry baking and cooking from her husband. She was fond of horses and an excellent marksman. The couple rode in the valleys around Kluane Lake.

Louis Jacquot built this house for his wife and their children, Louis Jr., Rosalie, and Josephine. Over the years, the Jacquot brothers worked as chefs and bakers, miners, traders, farmers, outfitters and guides, blacksmiths, veterinarians, road and bridge builders and carpenters. Although both brothers had a number of talents, Louis was more skilled as a miner and Eugene was better at business. Louis built the small cabin first to live in while constructing the main house. All of the logs were cut in the surrounding area.

This brochure was produced with the help of Burwash Landing residents. If you have additional information or corrections regarding the information presented here please contact YTG Cultural Services Branch at 667-3458.