

Cabins – Triquet Island and Burnett Bay

This chapter describes my most controversial activities on the BC north coast. I built three little cabins, all of them illegally on Crown Land. So I'll begin with a justification and a caveat.

It was a vastly different and wilder coast in the early and mid-eighties then it was today. There were many other cabins that I found and was inspired by. Such squatters flourished much closer to civilization, particularly on Vancouver Island between Florencia Bay and Flores Island before it became Pacific Rim National Park and all were removed. Likewise, I found many tiny huts in the lush southern Queen Charlottes, many built by canoe and kayak paddlers (see my Queen Charlottes chapter). These were also removed when Haida Gwaii National Park was established.

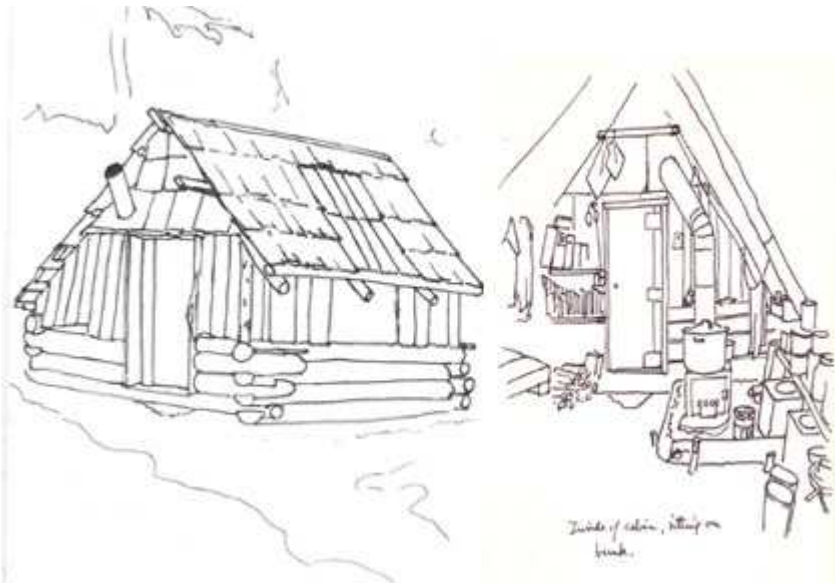
But on the mainland coast north of Vancouver Island, I found almost nothing – one or two old cabins, and hardly any traces of previous campers. There were few places where you could fit in a tent above the high tide line without chopping out a space in the brush. It seemed too rugged, inaccessible, or inhospitable to attract anyone. Assembling derelict materials from the beach into a little shelter hidden in the forest just didn't seem to matter. It seemed unlikely that anyone would find them.

The Burnett Bay cabin was discovered, in a very pleasing way. Passers-by, mostly kayakers, found it, stayed in it, left entries in its impromptu journal, and told each other about it. Not one of these notes scolded me for building it, or expressed regret about the cabin being at Burnett Bay. In fact, the consensus was that it added to the quality of their experience there. So I can't dredge up much guilt for having built it, or for maintaining and improving it for everyone to use.

But the time for that has passed. There are too many of us, mainly us kayakers, using the remote BC coast, for individuals such as myself to leave such large footprints behind.

Please don't use this chapter as an invitation for building squatter cabins. It is no longer appropriate today. My cabins are quickly being reclaimed by the voracious rain forest climate, and, for two out of three of them, that's for the best. I'm writing this not as an inspiration, but just because I know that many people have appreciated my little hovels, enjoyed their shelter, and were curious about how they were built. That's it.

Triquet Island 1977



I have least to say about building the first cabin, except that it was a tribute to my inexperience. Since Pam and I came there in my little sailboat “Murrelet”, I should have been able to supply myself with all the tools and materials I would need, but I didn’t know what that would be.

I did bring a big toolbox full of tools and instruments that I never used and which spent the summer gathering a nice coating of rust. And there were two items that I failed to bring and was set back substantially by their lack.

The first oversight was a big saw capable of getting through logs two or more feet in diameter. Instead, I brought a 36-inch bow saw which served up to a depth of about ten inches before bottoming out on its frame. (I also failed to bring a spare blade, so when it broke, we made a special eighty-mile round trip to Ocean Falls to buy one. The town was still thriving then and its department store had 30-inch blades, which I extended to fit with a piece from a shelf bracket.)

The bow saw was useless for the job that was needed most – cutting bolts from cedar beach logs to make shakes for the siding and roof. Ironically, I left the perfect tool at home – a four-foot, one-man cross cut saw, probably made before WWI and bought in a Vermont junk store in 1965. It looked like a huge carpenter’s saw with an extra handle on top that could be moved from one end to the other. I didn’t know what a treasure AI had, and had hardly used it. Later it became my most prized cabin-building and firewood-cutting tool.

The second missing item was nails. I brought a pitiful assortment. On our first shopping trip north to Bella Bella I bought a pound of shake nails at the BC Packers’ general store in Old Bella Bella (across the channel from Waglisla on Denny Island, but gone now). Otherwise, I scrounged. I took the single-seat Folbot to all the neighboring beaches to look not just for lumber, but for nails that I could extract. That wasn’t nearly enough, so I made a special all-day trip in the Folbot to the east side of Spider Island. The remains of a WWII coast watch station were located on the west side of the island. A plank road, in ruins, lead across the island to the ruins of a warehouse and dock. I spent the day climbing through brush to extract nails that had been rusting for 35 years from rotten wood. Most of them turned out to have too little metal left to straighten without breaking, much less drive.

To make up for the lack of nails, I resorted to cedar pegs, or “trunnels” (a wooden ship-building term derived from “tree nails”). Fortunately I had in my big tool chest a full brace and bit set, with augers up to one inch. These pegs proved very stout for joining the wall framing and rafters, and outlasted most other parts of the structure.

To do the roof, since I lacked a saw capable of cutting cedar bolts, I scrounged previously-cut cedar chunks on neighboring beaches, but they were rare, and consequently the roof took all summer to cover. I’d brought an antique froe, also bought in a Vermont junk store, hand-forged and probably a hundred years old. Since it was designed for eastern oak shakes, it was too short to make shakes as wide as some of the cedar pieces I found would have allowed, but it worked well enough. I discovered what a joy splitting a good piece of cedar can be and how many square feet of shakes can be derived from a small piece of wood. My technique for serious shake production would not develop until eight years later at the Burnett Bay cabin.

Building Triquet, 1977. Upper left: cedar peg in place of nails.



My original intent was to build a log cabin using bark-free drift logs off the beach, of which there were plenty right out in front. The cabin size would be 9 by 7 feet, meaning that the logs were cut to 11 ½ and 8 ½ feet. I cut several about eight inches in diameter and discovered how heavy salt-soaked logs can be. Even these cut lengths took all the energy Pam and I could muster to get them into the woods and into place. So, after about four courses of logs, I decided that I'd have to finish it as a framed structure, with walls covered with shakes or whatever. A salt-box design seemed good since the back rafters could rest on the existing log wall and the front rafters would be supported by the front wall, which would contain windows.

For the framing, I did cut living trees, about six small hemlocks which Pam skinned with the drawknife. I put them all together with the cedar pegs. But to cover the walls I'd need to come up with lumber.

To find siding lumber, I took the Folbot to beaches on all the surrounding islands. Many of these rocky or gravel coves faced directly into the swells coming in from Hecate Strait, but on many days the swells were low and I could get in and out with only minor surges. Ashore, I'd collect the shorter pieces (such as four-foot 2x4's) and put them inside the boat leaving just enough room for myself. For the longer pieces I made four loops of line that hung out across the deck on both sides, and slid the longer lumber into them so that they were supported just above or at the waterline. Carrying perhaps 300 pounds of lumber and barely able to paddle over my deck load, I made slow progress home through the rolling swells without frightening myself too badly (except now when I look back at it). At one beach on Edna Island I found most of a full sheet of half-inch plywood that would be suitable for the door. It was too big to support on the deck, so I paddled back with most of it trailing in the water, and felt fortunate to survive that.

Since shakes were in such short supply, I covered the roof with a single layer, overlapping each one about an inch with its neighbor on either side. The result was air gaps between the courses of shakes, which made the cabin drafty and doubtlessly contributed to its short life. Later, I made all of my roof surfaces double thickness.

Amazingly, we were able to put up a structure we could move into in only four days of work. The roof rafters were covered with a tarp and the end and front walls were still open, but it was better than the tent. And I was soon able to install the wood stove with the pipe exiting the top of the end wall. Though the cabin wouldn't hold heat yet, it was good for cooking and the radiance was helpful for drying things out. This stove was my first attempt at making one myself – just a sheet metal box with a removable door and with a draft hole in it.

It took a month to finish the cabin, covering the roof as I found the bolts for shakes, and building a bunk, table and shelves inside. The floor remained uncovered, and not bad as the conifer-needle duff dried out. It was fairly light and airy inside, with windows at the back end and in front, and a large skylight over the table in front center. All of these were covered with clear plastic, and I made a storm cover for the skylight out of scrap plywood.

I next returned to Triquet Island in 1984. The cabin hadn't deteriorated in the intervening seven years, but the surroundings were changed drastically. Commercial geoduck divers had set up their base camp there. Apparently they decided that they needed more light, since they cut down several of the big cedars. They built a large plywood-decked structure covered with tarps as a kitchen and living area just up the hill behind the cabin. The cabin itself was too small for the four of them, so they were using it for storage. I looked around briefly and left.



The cabin as it looked about 1986, after a kayak outfitter had converted the area to a base camp. Note the growth of ground cover compared to '77, which was probably due to the trees removed by the geoduck divers.

Four return trips over the next 17 years were more encouraging. After Hakai Recreation Area was established, a kayak outfitter took over the area as a base camp, and even put a picture of the cabin on his brochure! It was no longer habitable – smelling of mold and dampness, but still picturesque. The lower logs were rotting and the headroom was becoming lower. The outfitter had adapted the divers' kitchen platform to his own use and put in five tent pads around the area. Paths connected them all together and the ground cover grew in very nicely as shown. As of 2001, the Recreation Area wardens had left the cabin alone, but as it continues to deteriorate I would expect it to be removed.

Burnett Bay



This three-mile-long open bight faces west to Queen Charlotte Sound two miles south of Cape Caution. The entire length is a single beach all of which is exposed to surf from the ocean swells. A hook on the south end leading out to Bremner Point provides some reduction in the surf size due to refraction. Near here is the mouth of a creek. At high tide there is enough water for a shallow-draft boat to enter (if the surf is low) and go up stream for about a half mile.

At the north end of the bight there is a rocky area that separates the long beach from another smaller one to the north. Just offshore are two islets that provide quite good surf protection at low and mid tides, though at higher tides the swells sweep around both sides and meet in chaotic surf behind the islets.



The beach in front of the cabin, showing the surf protection between the two islets. From a picture by Audrey Sutherland, showing her inflatable kayak at the bottom.

My first visit to Burnett Bay was in 1983. I'd heard from a local boater that there was a cabin up the creek here, so I landed in the light surf in the hook and went to find it. It had been maintained by Haddington John, who subsists on the coast using (at that time) a St. Pierre dory that he was able to bring to the cabin at high tides. Many years later I met him at Lesqueti Island and he told me an amazing story about Burnett Bay. More about him in another chapter. I left a note for him and went on. I passed by the two islets at the north end of the beach, since I was short of time and wanted to get as far north as Wilke Point before heading back south to Shelter Bay the next day.

The next year I passed the beach again, this time on my way north to Prince Rupert. This time I did go ashore behind the two islets and saw that with some brush clearing there could be fair campsites in the thick forest, though there were no signs of any previous use. But this time my sights were set on making distance, so I move on.

Visiting Haddington John's cabin and seeing the vast allure of the long beach and its unlimited supply of building materials got me thinking about hiding a cabin at the north end of the beach. Now that I had some experience with hard-shell kayaks, and my own "freighter", the Shearwater, I knew that I could bring in everything I needed to stay a few weeks and build one. But carrying all the extra tools and materials along with food and gear for camping meant that it would have to be within a few day's travel of the road's end, and that trying to transport it all on the ferry to Bella Bella would be far too troublesome (particularly in light of how kayaks and equipment had to be unloaded from the Queen of the North in those days before the terminal was built, as described in the Central BC chapter). Triquet Island was simply too far away to get to with any regularity. I knew I could make Burnett Bay in two travelling days in reasonable weather from Port Hardy.

Since everything was going to have to fit in the Shearwater, I had to reduce and refine my tool and material list considerably. Having learned a lot at Triquet Island, it wasn't very hard. Here's what I brought.

- The four-foot crosscut saw. Vital for cutting cedar bolt and firewood for the stove. Actually not very bulky in the kayak rear hatch laying in the bottom of the boat. I removed the top handle and used a section of fire hose to protect the teeth (later I replaced that with a sheath of ¼ inch plywood that didn't take much more room).
- Collapsible bow saw. Became my general carpentry saw for cutting dimension lumber, etc. This was made from a 36 inch blade and spruce frame tensioned with a twisted rope. Comes apart to fit in a long skinny bag.
- Folding pruning saw. For general cutting, brush, or long cuts in plywood, trimming shakes, etc.
- Hatchet. Sharpened really well with the diamond stone, this was my most important tool for finishing shakes, getting a straight edge on lumber, as well as splitting firewood.
- Nail puller and pry bar. For salvaging lumber.
- Axe. For heavier splitting and driving wedges.
- Three plastic falling wedges. Proved vital for extracting cedar bolts from big logs, for preventing saw cuts from binding, and making long cedar splits to make lumber.

- Froe. For making cedar shakes. 16-inch long blade, handle made on site.
- Brace and bit. Inch and half-inch auger bits. The big one used for cedar peg holes. The smaller was for countersinking nail holes into logs so that 16-penny nails could be used to fasten poles, etc. On the first trip I brought the brace, but later I replaced it with a small clamp that fastened on the square auger shaft to make a T-handle to turn it – much smaller though less efficient.
- Claw hammer.
- Spokeshave. Takes the place of a plane for smoothing.
- Drawknife. For skinning green poles or rough shaping. Rarely used.
- Hand drill. For small holes in wood or metal – really no substitute. Assortment of bits.
- Small hacksaw.
- Tin snips. For trimming stovepipe flashing.
- Tape measure and carpenters pencils.
- Needle nose pliers. Miscellaneous uses, very handy for increasing the set on saw teeth if binding.
- Nail countersink. A large docking spike, with the end cut off square. With the ½ auger, used to sink the heads of 16 penny nails several inches into poles or thick lumber.
- Leather Work gloves.
- Files. Flat mill and triangular for saw sharpening.
- Several small c-clamps.

Materials:

- Two pounds of 16-penny nails. I used “sinkers”, which was a mistake, because when I recovered the roof I found that most had nearly rusted through. Should have used hot-dipped galvanized nails.
- One pound of 8-penny sinkers. Should have been galvanized.
- A pound each of 1 ¼ and 1 ¾ galvanized shake or box nails. For attaching shakes. Both lengths were handy.
- A roll of aluminum flashing. For stove collar in the roof, and heat protection around the stove, allowing it to be installed closer to the walls, etc.
- Four inch stovepipe (for later stoves replaced with three inch which works well enough). Three 2-foot lengths, nested inside each other and rolled tightly and secured with duct tape.
- Wood stove. The first was made from a 20 mm ammo can, cut down and finished with galvanized sheet metal. This one fitted into the Shearwater ahead of my feet, barely. Later I made them from flat sections, assembled with sheet metal screws, put together and fired for the first time on site (if taken apart after firing, it won't fit together again due to warping, etc.). Galvanized stoves and pipe must be burned off hot outside the first time to avoid noxious gasses from the galvanizing.

In late May, 1985, I drove to Port Hardy. I arranged to leave my car at Wildwood Campsites because I could also launch there. I slept in the back of the pickup and was up at 4:30 and on the water before seven. It was a windless, clear morning and I made good time out of Hardy Bay, stopping for a break behind Duvall Point and then out into Goletas Channel by nine. The seas stayed flat and I kept going through the island groups across Queen Charlotte Strait, arriving on the mainland at Shelter Bay at 1:30.

Now for the second half of the distance going up the coast. The northwest headwind began to come up as I passed Allison Harbour, and got stronger after I took a break at Skull Cove. Rounding the Fox Islands and crossing Slingsby Channel was slow and wet. I finally arrived at the north end of Burnett Bay at 8 pm, after thirteen hours of almost continuous paddling and 32 miles. Needless to say pretty beat, but thrilled to be here. Still lots of work to do, since the tide was out and there was a quarter-mile carry to get everything off the beach.

I established my camp just inside the trees. Not a bad spot, but difficult to find an even surface for the tent, and no sign that anyone had used it before. Today there are three ample flat tent pads there which get regular use.



Just inland from there thick salal extended back into the spruce and cedar forest. I climbed into it for about fifty feet and found an area that when cleared would serve nicely for the cabin without needing to remove any trees. It was far enough to be hidden (except for the roof ridge) but close enough to the beach for easy access. I cleared the salal out of the site and cut two trails, one to my campsite and one to the beach.

The next morning I went off down the beach to collect materials. That took most of the morning, moving up and down the pile of logs, spotting dimensioned lumber and throwing it out to the beach to be collected on the way back. Before I knew it I found I was half way down the bay, up to a mile and a half of sand over which to haul my finds. Fortunately my boat cart came to the rescue, and I was able to stack and tie on several hundred points. Its little seven-inch tires could support the weight on the damp sand near the tide line, but they sank in when I stopped, so I just kept moving. After several such trips I had a good start ready by the site.

I carried in four big rocks (not plentiful in this sandy area) to support each corner. The floor size would be 8 by 8 feet. Two 2 x 8 were laid on two opposite sides, and then I built two 8 by 4 foot rectangles of similar material to form the end walls. With another plank across the sides to connect up the tops of the end walls and plenty of temporary diagonal bracing, the stout but flimsy structure was ready for rafters. These were some poles off the beach connected and pegged together with a short brace a short distance below the peak. I made one of these for each end of the cabin and then two central ones out of lighter "2x4" that I split out of a big piece of cedar. After three days, this even more flimsy structure was ready for being covered with shakes, which I was counting on to stiffen it up, and it did.

Now for the shakes. This was the best part of the whole process. The first challenge was to find a good cedar log. All of the driftwood looked a similar gray to the extent that I couldn't be sure, so I took the hatchet and took a chip out which quickly identified them. Once a cedar log was spotted, I had to look for a section without branches and straight grain. Many of the cedar logs had spiral grain, which a visiting forester later told me reduced the big cedars behind the cabin to negligible value (happily making their removal as logs less likely). The lie of the grain was not easy to see and several bolts that I cut ended up being unable due to twist or hidden branches. The best were in really huge logs, partly because these had the best oils that prevent the shakes from rotting, and also tended to have nice tight grain. Unfortunately, they were the biggest challenge to saw and split out (since I couldn't cut all the way through these behemoths). Most of the time, the best section would be in the middle of the log, so I had to make a saw cut at both ends.

Sawing one of these big bolts could take all day. The saw might not even extend out the far side, so I'd have to shift from one side to the other. Fortunately my big saw had plenty of set in the teeth so it didn't tend to bind in these big cuts. At last I'd be ready to split out what I'd cut. I'd drive one of my plastic wedges with the axe in near one of the cuts as far as I could (trusting that I'd be able to get it back eventually). Then another one next to it, which might or might not free up the first one. I continued with all three, and then sharpened wooden wedges to hold the split open while hopefully extracting at least two of the wedges. This continued on both sides of the cuts, with no assurance that I'd get the whole thing out or my full complement of wedges back

(which would have cast the entire project in doubt). But perhaps a half dozen wooden wedges later, there would be much snapping and popping, and the whole thing would come loose.

Other logs were smaller and easier to cut, though they often had to be raised up out of the sand with levers and washed off before cutting could start. But the shakes from these smaller logs were always inferior.

Most of the work was now done and the fun really starts. But first the tools have to be readied. The froe needs a handle – about two feet long and stout enough to resist twisting and hammering on its upper end. It get trimmed with the hatchet until it can be pounded into the froe’s socket, pointing up away from the sharp edge of the blade. A cudgel is needed to pound the froe into the bolt to start each shake, and it has to be dense enough to stand up to pounding on the narrow froe and have enough heft to drive the froe. I usually found a chunk of branch four to five inches thick and a foot long, trimmed to fit my hand at one end.



The bolt is set up on one end. First it needs to be split so that a shake can be started running across the grain (as in “edge-sawn” in lumber-making terms). I generally aimed for quarter-inch thick shakes. The froe blade is positioned on top of the bolt and gently pounded to set it into the wood a little where it needs to be. Then I’d pound more vigorously to drive the full width of the blade down into the wood. Since the blade is 16 inches long, I would try to leave a few inches sticking out of the end and use that to hammer the froe a bit below the top of the blade, alternating with hitting the end of the handle to drive that down too.

Next comes twisting the froe with the handle to open and deepen the split. I’d brace my knee against the bolt and pull the handle toward me. This is the point to add something that helps immensely. I called it a “follower” – just a rough dowel of wood about six inches long and about an inch in diameter. With the gap held open by twisting the froe, the follower is dropped into the split above the froe. This holds the gap open so that the froe can be straightened and then worked a little deeper into the split by pressing down alternately on the handle and end of the blade (good gloves prevent a blister on that hand). Then twist the froe again, widening the gap. The follower drops down, and the cycle can be repeated, gaining about an inch or more each time. About six inches from the bottom (if the grain is good), the new shake pops off with a very satisfying “poink”.

The surface of the new shake will be smooth at the top of the split and gradually become increasingly uneven or wavy due to irregularities in the grain. This is what distinguishes a really good bolt from a poor one. Unless the grain is really good, it may have sections that waver beyond the quarter-inch thickness, visible at the bottom of the shake as a groove on one side and a ridge on the other. Since the ridge side needs to get trimmed flat so that the shake lies tightly against its neighbor, it may result in a gap toward the bottom, or a place that is very thin and likely to crack and leak. If that happens, the shake gets broken apart at that point, and the two pieces will still be put to good use.

I recently learned of a technique that I never got to try but might help: turning the bolt over end-to-end between each split. This gives each end one smooth surface on each end and may reduce losses due to grain run-out. (This procedure definitely introduces more effort, since bolts might weigh 50 pounds.)

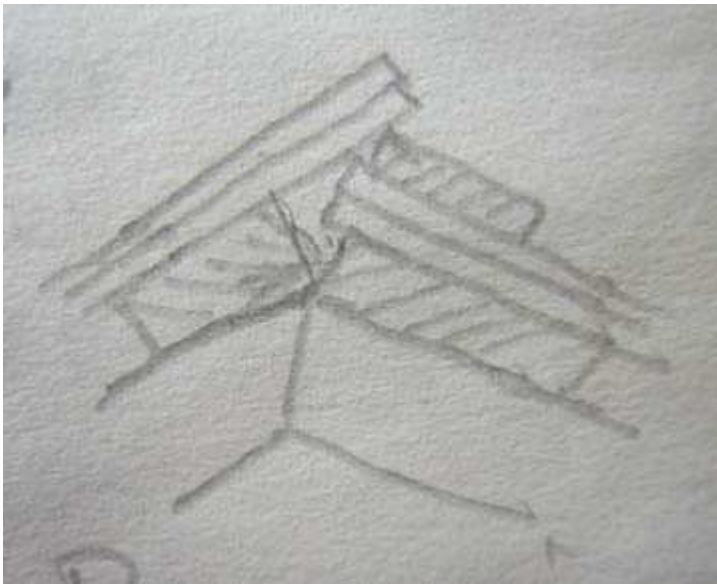
With a good bolt, trimming is not much work, but for a mediocre one (and I had many), it was a major chore. I sharpened the hatchet carefully with the diamond stone. Then a series of shallow chops into the grain would be

made to limit how much would split off when I made the final cleaning cut close to the grain. If the result seemed too thin at the end, I'd go ahead and break it apart. I left the edges alone until the shake was to be applied so that I could give it a final trim to fit its neighbor.

The majority of the shakes went on the roof, which would be two layers thick throughout, with the joints overlapping as much as possible. (At Triquet Island I spread them out leaving a gap between courses which was much inferior but took fewer shakes.) Each successive course would overlap the one below by about six inches, so that a 24-inch shake would cover an additional area of 18 inches. The walls were a single layer, with the joints (trimmed to fit as tight as possible) covered with a thin shake batten nailed on last with a little moss stuffed inside to cut the drafts.

To set up the roof I collected all the one-by dimension boards I could find – not many since they don't survive getting ground up in the logs in the surf as well as the thicker stuff. I only needed three-foot pieces to span the rafters. These were nailed on at 18 inch intervals to accommodate the overlap in the 24-inch shakes. Then I started at the lowest row, nailing on each shake after trimming its edge to match the neighbor if needed. Then came the second layer, staggering the overlaps from the layer below.

On this second layer I made a mistake that I learned about too late to fix. I placed these upper shakes tightly together as with the lower layer. I found out later that I should have left a half-inch gap. This would allow the rain to flush out the inevitable needles, etc that accumulate in the narrowest gap, turn to humus, and make a medium for moss and other plants to grow. (Audrey Sutherland made it a point to clean out these narrow gaps and remove moss on her visits, which helped a lot.) But as it was, it was ready for replacement in less than twenty years.



Shakes at peak, from my 85 journal

Once up to the top courses at the peak on both sides, I put on the westward side first, extending the tops well above the level of those on the east side, then butting the east ones tightly under the west ones. Then with one more course of narrow shakes laid sideways on the east side, it made a peak that never leaked and looked much better than the aluminum flashing I used at Triquet Island.

The walls were easy. I put up 2x4 nailers 24 inches apart, being careful that the lower edges of the upper course didn't extend below the nailer so that I could tack the upper end of the battens below upward into the nailer later.

Finally I cut pieces of shake to fit all the remaining gaps under the eaves and at the bottom of the wall to the ground.

The windows were mylar (clear and more durable than plastic sheeting), nailed up with thin shake battens with the plastic wrapped around them.

The four-inch stovepipe went straight up through the roof through a hole cut to allow about two inches of clearance, and covered with a piece of aluminum flashing pushed up under the higher course of shakes and with a four-inch hole to take the pipe.

The stove sat in a box of 2-by lumber about 18 inches high and filled with sand lugged in from the beach. Then I lined its upper edges with flashing and also the back wall so that the stove could be placed fairly close to it.



The door was so heavy that a bear would have a much easier time coming through the walls. It was built with 2-by boards and frame. I had to make the hinges. These were two by fours nailed to the door and to the wall so that those on the door rested on the ones on the wall. The hinge pins were cedar one-inch dowels. The latch was also two by fours with a cedar dowel that slid through a hole in the door edge into the frame. Another dowel served as the handle, in a slot in the door so that it could be worked from the outside. The illustrations describe it better.

For furniture, I built a 24-inch wide bunk with log stringers and surfaced with 2-by lumber. Later when Linda came to visit I added an upper bunk. It was located close under the eaves, so there was only about a foot of headroom when lying down. To keep from rolling out of the bunk, I added a rail pegged into the outer edge which could be swung out for access/egress.

A small table attached to the wall and a stool made for seating for two with one person sitting on the bunk. A cooking counter next to the door, with a shelf underneath with doors and wooden hinges for supposedly mouse-proof storage. For other amenities, there was an outside shower platform behind the rear wall with a holder for the hot water bag, soap, and pegs for clothes.

There was still no floor in the cabin. I just didn't have the time or energy the first summer to find and drag back enough lumber to do it. The next summer, Audrey Sutherland did it by herself, dragging the lumber home without benefit of a cart (I used to have a wonderful camera-timer self-portrait she'd sent me of her coming down the beach dragging a huge load of lumber. Sadly I lost it.). Lacking the tools I had, she put down some stringers and laid the boards un-nailed, where they have been ever since, as solid as ever.

I'd built the cabin for myself and occasionally Linda, hardly considering that anyone else might find and use it, though I hoped so. The beach seemed so unvisited and the cabin so inconspicuous that discovery seems unlikely. Still, I left an anonymous note pinned to the wall behind the stove, indicating in short that the cabin was built for everyone to use (illustration). It included a few instructions for taking care of the place, and in '86 Audrey Sutherland added others in a cryptic hand at the bottom.

In the next chapter, I'll tell you about how the cabin was discovered and later modified, and about my third cabin enterprise, in Queen Charlotte Strait.