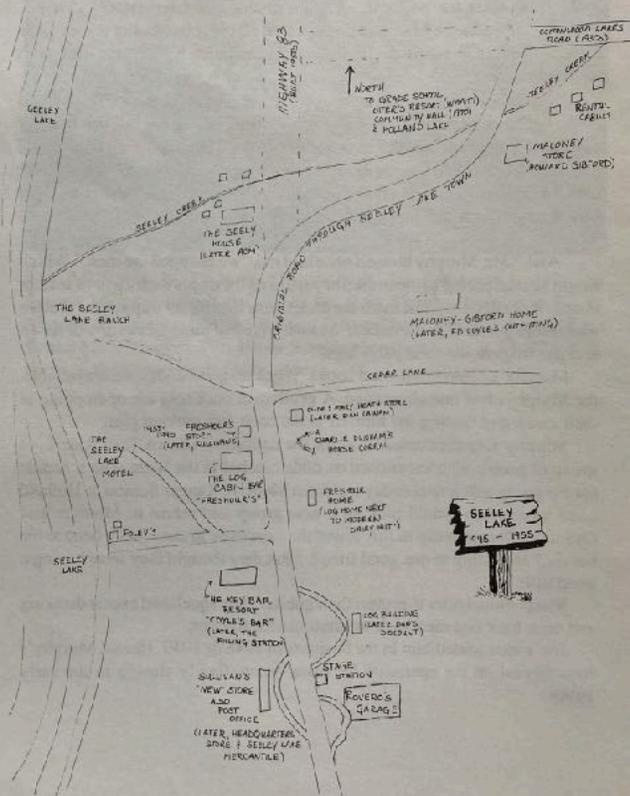


A Real Town

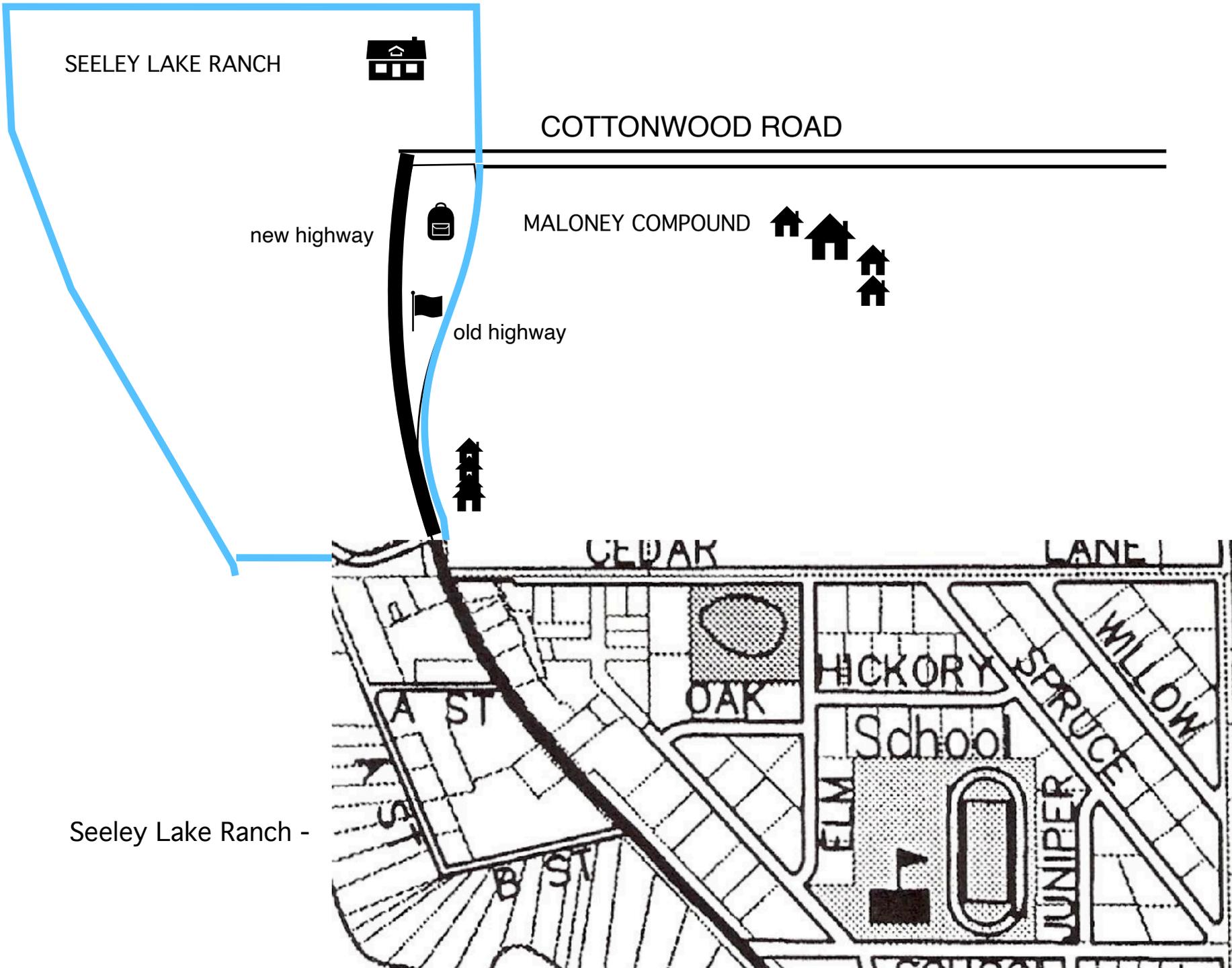
"... for now a logging boom had descended on Seeley Lake, bringing people into the area in small flocks and bunches..."

— Mildred Chaffin
writing about the building of the
Seeley Lake Community Hall



**SEELEY
LAKE**
THE WAY WE WERE
-
THE WAY WE ARE
1920S TO NOW

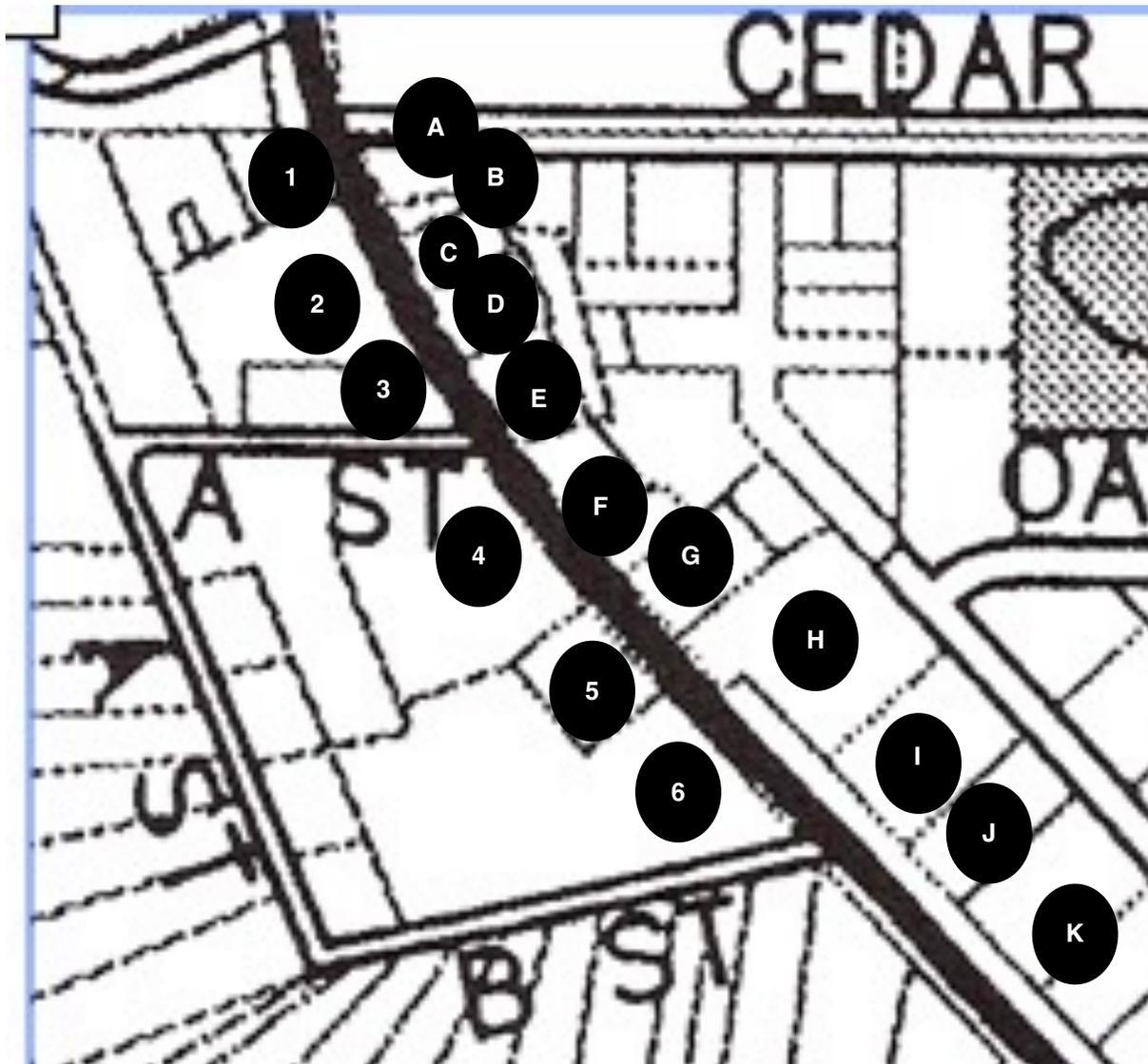
1/5/2024



Maloney Compound - In 1920's Clarence and his twin brother came to the valley. His brother migrated to the Condon area and Clarence envisioned a compound. He first built a store run by his son-in-law Howard Gibford. Adding gas made it the first gas station in the valley. The addition of three rental cabins focusing on loggers made up what he called "Headquarters." Unusual for the area was his use of the 'Nordique' style of log buildings. Other operations that were operating out of the compound was a set of corrals and then Coyle's outfitting business.



1. Heritage Building
2. Wood Building
3. BBQ
4. Filling Station
5. Grizzly Claw
6. Kurt's

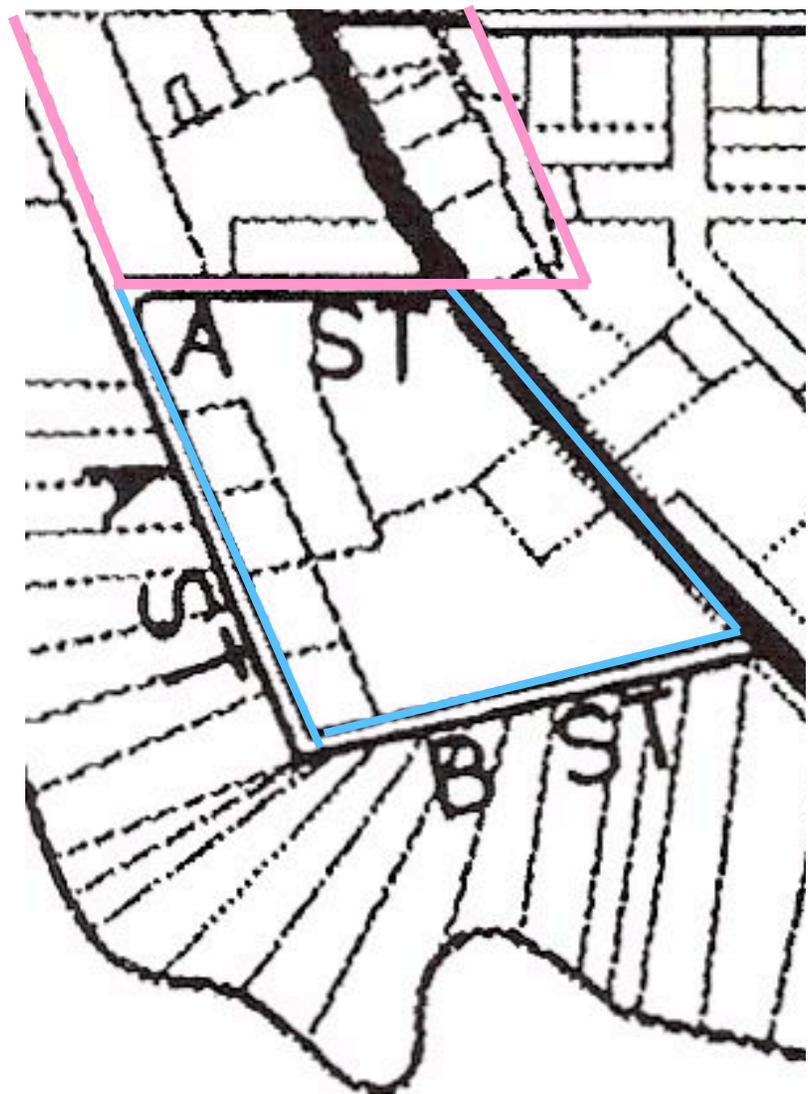
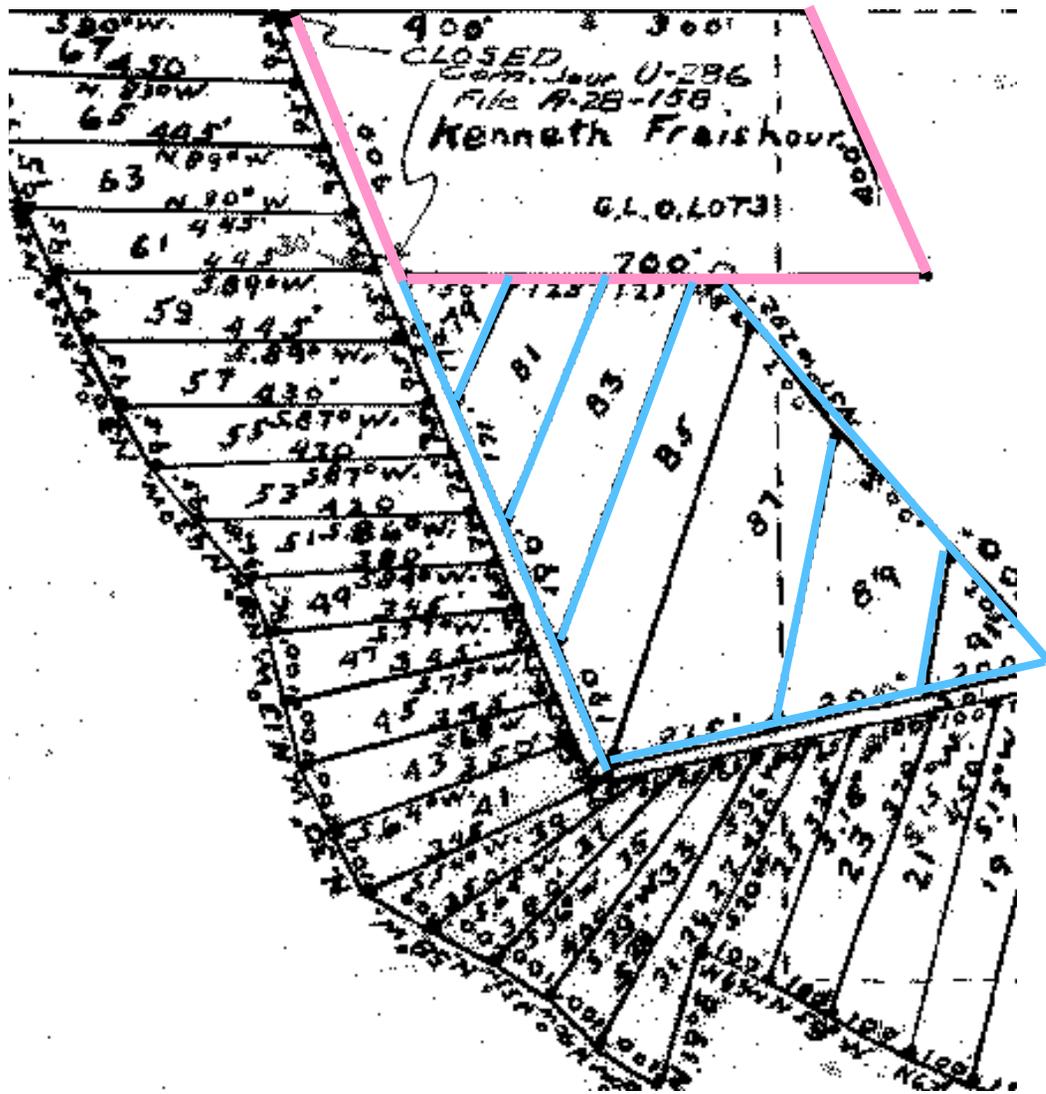


- A. Air BNB
- B. Floral Shop
- C. Rental
- D. Ice Cream Place
- E. Cannabis Store
- F. Stage Station
- G. Old Rovero's
- H. Rovero's
- I. NAPA
- J. Liquor Store
- K. Post Office

THEN

AND

NOW



1. Heritage Building - Originally part of the Freshour compound and the location of Freshour's store built in 1933 (the second store in Seeley, the first up behind the VFW memorial at the place known as the Headquarters). The first Seeley post office was located in the very back of the store. Jim and Bert Sullivan bought the store from Freshour and Bert was the Postmistress until 1970. They built a new store and replaced the old store with their house. The house is now located up on Canyon Drive and the new building is called The Heritage Building. When built it housed the plumbing business and copy shop as well as various other businesses.



2. Freshour's Log Cabin Bar, a very popular watering hole, was part of the Freshour compound which also included a cafe and the store. It changed hands several times and when called Ozzie's, it burned in the mid 60's. Next came Barney's Bar and Cafe. You entered into a foyer. The bathrooms were straight ahead the door to the right led into the bar and the one to the left entered the cafe. After it burned the new owners built the big building.



Pathfinder May 14, 1987 issue

Bob Hall, well-known Western Montana artist, created this pen and ink sketch of Freshour's store in Seeley Lake during the early 1930s. As Herb Townsend remembers, the sketch is pretty accurate, although the hitching rail may not have been in front of the store. These buildings were located approximately where the big brown building is today. Bob Hall sketch courtesy Herb Townsend.



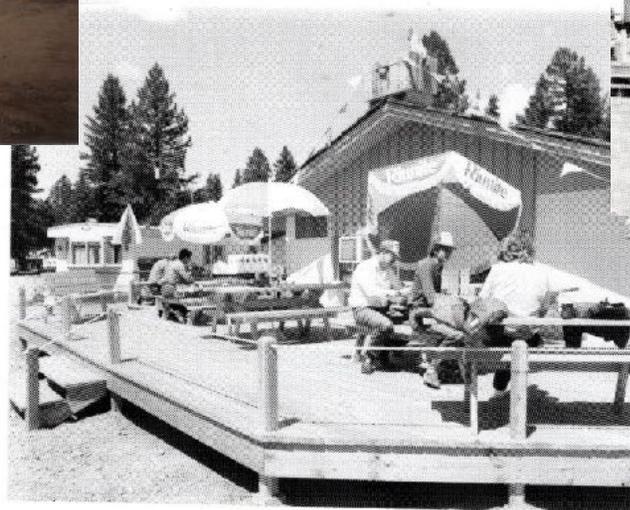
THE ORIGINAL - KENNY FRESHOUR - BAR & CAFE - BUILT IN 1936
A BIG IMPRESSIVE LOG CABIN - NO EARLY PICTURES
DISTROYED BY
FIRE 1960 -



from the Eddie Coyle collection



3.



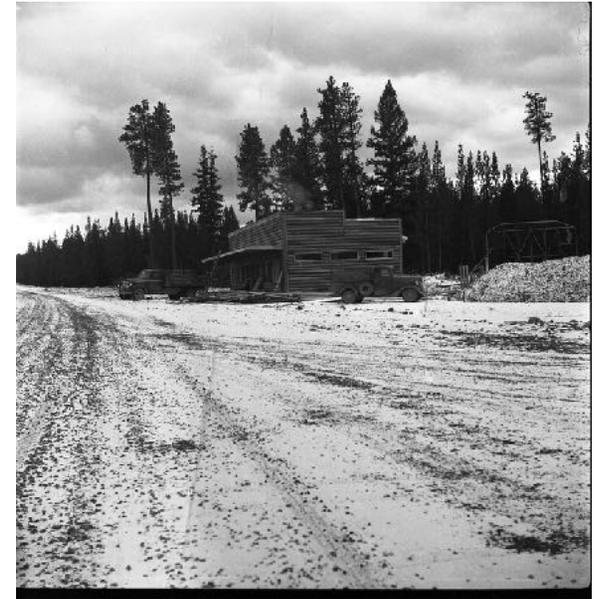
4. BBQ Pit - Originally the site of the anxiously awaited Ice Cream Stand annually. In 1975 it was painted with light and dark pink stripes and was run by Barney's. After being vacant for many many years, Missoula Vet Clinic set up shop and once a week on Wednesday, Dr. Andy Cross came to Seeley to care for the menagerie of animals. When he sold the Seeley clinic, it moved to Redwood St. again leaving the building empty until the BBQ Pit arrived. Wondering if this is the same tree that you can see in the sketch of Freshour's Bar.



5. The Filling Station - Originally Coyle's Key Resort Bar. Coyle started as an outfitter out of Maloney's Headquarters in 1939, after the depression, returned to outfit, left during WWII and returned to work at Freshour's. When the state said they'd give one liquor license to the first built bar, Coyle brought a pre-fab log building from Missoula in 1947 and got it stuck on the bridge over the Blackfoot near Sunset dragging it home, but he was first. Coyle ran the bar and Jerrie ran the restaurant for 25 years and sold it to Don Larson who sold it to Kris Martin.



6. Grizzly Claw - Coyle sold a lot to the Sullivan's with the stipulation they build a store and post office within the year. They called the store the Seeley Lake Merc, when built by the Sullivan's in 1950. Sullivans sold to Potters to Mannys to Bird to Davis to Bud Anderson (who grew up here) to Herncanes to Baker. Baker also bought the old liquor store next door and built a connector between them for the coffee shop and book store.



6. Kurt's Polaris - Coyle had a vision of a lake side resort including; swimming pool, ice rink, summer theatre, 150 unit motel, restaurant, miniature golf, beach swimming area. The plans fell through when the bank that had promised a loan changed their mind. Parts had already been constructed such as the swimming pool and skating rink. Now long gone.



A. Air BNB - Dude and Mary and L, Pulici Sandwich shop, etc. The northeast corner of the store and the storage shed were actually built on the designated county road.

Heath's Store, Dan's, Paul's Superette, J



B. Floral Shop - Post Office, Video Vision. The first post office was at Corlett across from the Double Arrow golf course close to the hill. Next it was moved to Pop Miller's, east of the north Boy Scout bridge and on the south side of the road. Then it was moved to Otter's, the resort behind what is now called Base Camp bar, down to Freshour's store, the new Merc store and finally here in it's own building. When the new post office was built, this became the most beloved video rental store.



C. Rental - Empty Lot during the early years of Seeley Lake. Another holding of the Freshour's.

D. Ice Cream Place (ICP)- Freshour's home. This was where Kenny and Betty Freshour lived. It passed through several hands including Bud Anderson, one of the last owners of the Merc. One of the tenants had a son who got mad at his dad and set fire to the place. The two lilac bushes were on either side of the front porch. Ed Aumaugher had a vision for the ICP and converted the garage into a successful business.



E. Fat Hippie - Pharmacy. Built by Nels and Edna Newgard and opened in 1962. Cainans and Newgards were both in business in Missoula and knew each other before relocating to Seeley Lake. When the Newgards retired, they sold the store and the new owners added a floral shop in the back. When the pharmacy relocated to the south end of town it was sold again.



F. Blue River Station - Stage Station. The Stage Station was built in the late 30's early 40's to house the stage. The stage had the mail contract from the USPS, but that hardly paid the fuel costs let alone wages and repairs, thus the name stage. The stage hauled passengers, drunk or sober and freight including household goods and groceries as well as product like milk or cream to go to town. This was also the first garage in town. Repairs were done by Alvin Rovero when Rovero's was built next door.

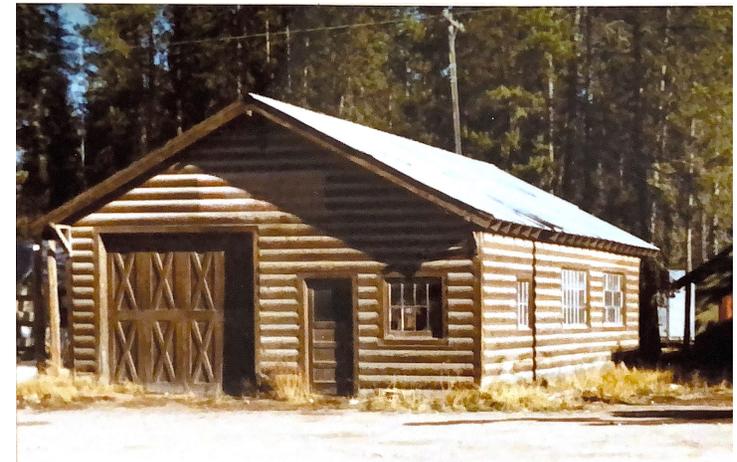


Lacy and Nora Gibbs, owners of the Seeley Lake Stage, stand with a snow machine they used for transportation in 1935.

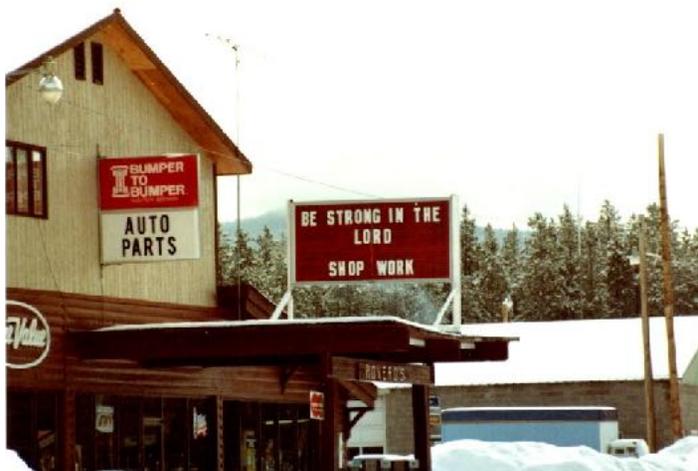
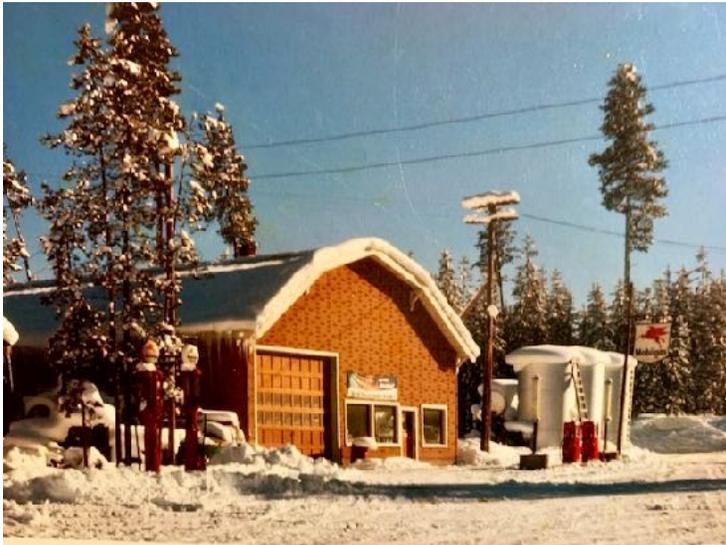
Photograph courtesy of Roy Gibbs



Seeley Lake Mail Stage, called a "snow car", at work in 1931. The vehicle is a 1929 Ford model "A" coach with three sets of wheels and tracks in the rear and skis in front for steering. (The tips of the skis can be seen at the right of the photo.) This picture was taken up the Blackfoot on Blanchard Flats, just north of Clearwater Junction, just after the worst snow storm of the winter. A man by the name of Cows is standing out in the snow. He had the mail hauling contract at the time. During the 1920's and early 1930's, the Blackfoot Road was never snow plowed. Vehicles had to make their own tracks, and when two met, one would "dive" off into the snow and after the second one had passed, it would back up and hook on and help the first one back into the road.
Photo by Bill Hartley, Missoula, Montana.



G. Old Roveros - Built by Alvin Rovero. The family came to the valley in the early 1900's and had a ranch just south of the summit. Alvin built the garage, sold it to Martin Cahoon to Larry Marx to Koepke.



- H. New Rovero's - Jack Long of Long Machinery, well known heavy equipment company and logging company built a concrete block shop in Seeley Lake at the site of the new Rovero's built by Larry Marx, on the south side parking. After he left, quite a few businesses took up residency; such as a second hand store, a plumber and Fun Unlimited. The old building was demolished for more parking at Rovero's.



- I. NAPA - Western Montana Co-op (present day Cenex) built a garage and gas station in the '60s. It was sold and the Gas Haus came into being. After being burnt by arson, a NAPA store was built.



J. Liquor Store - A Saw Shop was the original tenant of the current liquor store. Red Cole, the manager of the Cenex saw a need for a saw shop in a community of loggers. It was a side business that is still needed today.

