

**IMACS SITE FORM** (USFS R4-2300-2, 4/89)

**PART A - ADMINISTRATIVE DATA**

1. State No.: 10-VY-212
2. Agency No.: PY-305
3. Temp No.:
4. State: Idaho                      County: Valley
5. Project: Cultural Resource Site Evaluation  
Frank Church-River Of No Return Wilderness
6. Report No.:
7. Site Name: Taylor Ranch University of Idaho Research Station
8. Class:  Prehistoric  Historic  Paleontologic  Ethnographic
9. Site Type: Taylor Ranch University of Idaho Research Station
10. Elevation: 3,835 feet above sea level
11. UTM Grid: Zone 11, 669200 mE, 4996350 mN
  
12. Township and Range: T. 20 N, R. 13 E  
Section 03, NE 1/4, SE 1/4, SW 1/4, NE 1/4 & NW 1/4, SW 1/4, SE 1/4, NE 1/4
13. Meridian: Boise (03)
14. Map Reference: DAVE LEWIS PEAK, IDAHO 7.5 MINUTE QUAD. 1962, 322-4
15. Aerial Photo:
16. Location and Access: This cultural property is located within the Frank Church-River Of No Return (FC-RONR) Wilderness. The best approach is to take an aircraft directly to the Taylor Landing Field.
  
17. Land Owner: University of Idaho
18. Federal Admin. Units - Forest: Payette    District: Krassel
19. Location of Curated Materials: Idaho Historical Society
20. Site Description:  
The facilities at the Taylor Ranch consist of the following:
  1. Care takers residence
  2. Round Log Bunkhouse
  3. Square Log Bunkhouse
  4. Log Lab/Kitchen/Sleeping Quarters, originally constructed at Cabin Creek in circa 1988
  5. The historic log building were Cougar Dave lived
  6. HayBarn
  7. Green House
  8. West Outhouse
  9. East Outhouse
  10. West Airfield Shed
  11. East Airfield Shed
  12. West Duel Sheds
  13. East Duel Sheds, one that includes the 1911 historic Dave Lewis Cabin (altered)
  14. Sauna
  15. Water Works
  16. Hydroelectric facility
  17. Landing field



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**21. Site Condition:**  Excellent  Good  Fair  Poor

**22. Impact Agent(s):**

The Dave Lewis log cabin has been resided and reroofed. If this building were to be restored to what it was like when constructed it was constructed in 1911, the building would be considered as eligible for listing onto the National Register of Historic Places. The other buildings on this property at this time are not considered as unique nor special in architecture.

Dave Lewis is a historical Idaho character.

**23. Nat.Register Status:**  Eligible (C)  Insufficient Data To Evaluate (Z)  
 Ineligible (D)

Justify:

**24. Photos:** Photographs were last taken on September 23, 2000

**25. Recorded by:** This historic property was first mentioned by John Hartung in July 1977.

**26. Survey Organization:** USDA Payette National Forest

**27. Assisting Crew Members:** BAER Team

**28. Survey Date:** September 23, 2000



**PART A - ENVIRONMENTAL DATA Site No.(s): 10-VY-212**  
: PY-305

**29. Slope:** 06 degrees      **Aspect:** 360 degrees

**30. Distance to Permanent Water:** 3 X 100 Meters

**Type of Water Source:**     Spring/Seep(A)     Stream/River(B)  
                                   Lake(C)                     Other(D)

**Name of Water Source:** Pioneer Creek

**Distance to Nearest Other Water Source/Type:** 300 meters north to Big Creek

**31. Geographic Unit:** (N3Y)

**32. Topographic Location (Check one under each heading):**

**Primary Landform:**

mountain spine(O)     tableland/mesa(C)     valley(E)     canyon(G)  
 hill(B)                 ridge(D)                 plain(F)     island(H)

**Secondary Landform:**

alluvial fan(A)         ledge(K)                 spr mound/bog(V)  
 alcove/rock shelter(B)     mesa/butte(L)         valley(W)  
 arroyo(C)                 playa(M)                 cutbank(X)  
 basin(D)                 port. geo. feature(N)     riser(Y)  
 cave(E)                 plain(O)                 Multiple S.L.(1)  
 cliff(F)                 ridge/knoll(P)         Bar(2)  
 delta(G)                 slope(Q)                 Lagoon(3)  
 detached monolith(H)     terrace/bench(R)         EphemeralWash (4)  
 dune(I)                 island(T)                 Kipuka(5)  
 floodplain(J)             outcrop(U)             Saddle/Pass(6)

**Describe:** Prehistoric Indian artifacts were found next to Eagan Creek.

**33. On-Site Depositional Context:**

fan(A)     outcrop(Q)     moraine(J)     desert pavement(P)  
 talus(B)     extinct lake(F)     flood plain(K)     stream bed(R)  
 dune(C)     extant lake(G)     marsh(L)     aeolian(S)  
 stream/     alluvial plain(H)     landslide/     none(T)  
          terrace(D)                            slump(M)     residual(U)  
 playa(E)     colluvium(I)     delta(N)

**Description of Soil:** Soil consists of decomposed granitics with alluvial deposits

**34. Vegetation**

**a. Life Zone:**  Arctic-Alpine(A)     Hudsonian(B)     Canadian(C)  
 Transitional(D)     Upper Sonoran(E)     Lower Sonoran(F)

**b. Community:**  Primary On-Site  Secondary On-Site  Surrounding Site

Aspen(A)	Wet Meadow(I)	Low Sagebrush(Q)
Spruce-Fir(B)	Dry Meadow(J)	Barren(R)
Douglas-fir(C)	Oak-Maple Shrub(K)	Marsh/Swamp(S)
Alpine Tundra(D)	Riparian(L)	Lake/Reservoir(T)
Ponderosa Pine(E)	Grassland/Steppe(M)	Agricultural(U)
Lodgepole Pine(F)	Desert Lake Shore(N)	Blackbrush(V)
Other/Mixed Conifer(G)	Shadscale Community(O)	Creosote Bush(Y)
Pinyon-Juniper Woodland(H)	Tall Sagebrush(P)	



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**Describe:**

**35. Miscellaneous Text (25 character limit):**

**36. Comments/Continuations/Location of Curated Materials and Records:**

Records are stored at the Idaho Historical Society.

**List of Attachments:**  Part B  Part C  Topo Map  Site Sketch  
 Photos  Artifact/Feature Sketch  Continuation Sheets  Other



**PART C - HISTORIC SITES**

Site #(s): 10-VY-  
: PY-305

1. **Site Type:** Taylor Ranch University of Idaho Research Station  
 2. **Historic Theme(s):** Ranching  
 3. **Culture:** Affiliation Dating Methods

Euroamerican

4. **Oldest Date:** 1911 **Youngest Date:** 2000

**How Determined?** There is historic documentation that states Dave Lewis built his log cabin in 1911.

5. **Site Dimensions:** **Area:** by meters = Yet to be determined

6. **Surface Collection/Method:**  None (A)  Designed Sample (C)  
 Grab sample (B)  Complete Collection (D)

**Sampling Method:** none

7. **Estimated depth of fill:**  Surface (A)  20-100cm (C)  noted but unknown (E)  
 0-20cm (B)  100cm+ (D)

**How estimated**

8. **Excavation Status:**  Excavated (A)  Tested (B)  Unexcavated (C)

**Testing method:**

9. **Summary of Artifacts and Debris:** Every item listed below can be found at the Taylor Ranch.

- |  |  |   |  |
|--|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> glass (GL)            | <input type="checkbox"/> bone (BO)             | <input type="checkbox"/> leather (LE)     | <input type="checkbox"/> ammunition (AM) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> metal (ME)            | <input type="checkbox"/> ceramics (CS)         | <input type="checkbox"/> wire (WI)        | <input type="checkbox"/> wood (WD)       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> nails (NC, NW)        | <input type="checkbox"/> fabric (FA)           | <input type="checkbox"/> tin cans (TC,TD) | <input type="checkbox"/> rubber (RB)     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> mining machinery (MN) | <input type="checkbox"/> farm machinery (FM)   | <input type="checkbox"/> stove parts (SP) |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> domestic items (DI)   | <input type="checkbox"/> kitchen utensils (KI) | <input type="checkbox"/> Other            |  |

**Cans:** Cans were not observed.

#	Type	Size (inches)	opening type	Modified	Marks
					none

10. **Ceramics:**

Paste	Glaze/slip	Decoration	Pattern	Vessel form(s)	#

**Estimated number of ceramic trademarks:** 0

**Describe:** Ceramics were not observed.

11. **Glass:**

#	Manufacture	Color	Function	Trademarks	Decoration

**Describe:** Glass was not observed.

12. **Maximum Density - #/sq. m.:**

13. **Non-Architectural Features** (locate on map):

- |                      |                      |                    |
|----------------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| X trail/road (TR)    | dump (DU)            | dam - earthen (DA) |
| tailings (MT, ML)    | depression (DE)      | X ditch (DI)       |
| rock alignment (RA)  | cemetery/burial (CB) | inscriptions (IN)  |
| hearth/campfire (HE) | quarry (QU)          | other (OT)         |

**Describe:** A trail trends to the Taylor Ranch. Ditches transport irrigation water.

14. **Architectural Features** (locate on map): Building descriptions are required.

#	Material	Type

**Describe:**

15. **Comments/Continuations:**



## DAVE LEWIS, COUGAR DAVE



WATER IN THE SUMMER AND FIRE IN THE WINTER IS ALL THE NEED I NEED.

—CORMAC MCCARTHY

Mountain lions are loners. Elusive and evanescent. They live at the top of the food chain, shy survivors, solitary and cautious. Like the mountain lion, Cougar Dave Lewis was a loner. He, however, killed lions in order to live a notch above them.

Lewis claimed to have served in the Union army at the siege of Vicksburg in 1863; to have been a volunteer at the Modoc Indian uprising in northern California in 1872; and to have been a scout with 7th Cavalry Captain Frederick Benteen (also a Vicksburg veteran) in Montana Territory in 1876.

The tapestry of known fact concerning these claims is threadbare. That Lewis was born in 1844 in Wales and brought to New Orleans at age four is beyond doubt. So are his whereabouts in summer, 1877, when he traveled from Oregon, where he had been prospecting and trapping, with the Henry Jones family to Idaho's Camas Prairie near Grangeville. (It was at least his second visit, since years later he said that he first came to Idaho in 1867 from Arkansas.) He probably hired out as a civilian packer during the Nez Perce War that year. During the Sheepeater War of 1879—a four-month running battle between U. S. troops and a handful of mountain Shoshoni—he handled the ammunition train (two mules) for Lieut. Henry Catley. Lewis was on Big Creek, a tributary of consequence cleaving the west side of the Middle Fork of the Salmon River, when the Indians, weary of the three-month pursuit, ambushed the soldiers in a defile there, killing Pvt. Harry Eagan,



who was shot through the legs.

After the end of the war in October with the surrender of fifty-one Indians, Lewis settled on the Jewett Ranch at Slate Creek, near Riggins, Idaho, and from 1881 to 1894 raised horses. Then, with fifteen-year-old memories of Big Creek's sawtoothed seclusion, he rode back there and, finding Conyer Bar, a sizeable flat among endless-looking inclines, occupied, he squatted downstream at Goat Creek, at the head of Big Creek Canyon, and built himself a small, foursquare log cabin. When John Conyers and his wife abandoned their bar in 1909, Lewis moved west up-creek three miles and took possession, hosting a housewarming party there at age sixty-five.

Lewis largely supported himself on Big Creek by hunting cougars for the state bounty and whatever he could get for the pelt. He always had three or more dogs that slept beneath his bunk, and he used them to track and tree lions. There is no sport or skill to shooting a creature impotent and at bay in a tree—Lewis killed lions for the money. In 1922 the *Statesman* in Boise reported that he had collected \$1,400 in bounties for the year. "Mr. Lewis brought to Boise the pelts of 14 cougars, 15 coyotes, 2 bobcats, 2 foxes, and 4 mink, all of which were caught last winter." He saved the bounty "tokens" as his currency. Cougar Dave maintained that he and his cross-terriers had killed at least 500 cougars in his hunting years. State records cannot verify his claim—he might have been stretching the blanket.

In 1907, the state game warden was authorized "to devise and put into operation such methods and means as would best secure and attain extermination of wolves, coyotes, and cougars." The department employed a number of hunters and trappers for this purpose, but Lewis was not one of them. At that time, a cougar's bounty and pelt brought about thirty-five dollars. Still, in 1928 and 1929 only fifty-two cougar were taken statewide. Not until the forests were heavily roaded did the count jump to its present annual average of 200. (In winter, lions are thinly distributed: a single male may require twenty-five square miles of snow-covered slopes to survive.) Thus his tally seems improbably high.

Perhaps there was something more than money in Cougar Dave's quest, however. Harley Shaw, an expert on mountain lions, softly explains, "You follow them step by step, and then you relate to them. They're out there alone, without tools, without shelter, without food. Down deep I have an image of myself as being totally wild, and I know in comparison I never will be." Another writer observes, "Above all, the lion is fundamentally the cat that walks alone...it is the symbol of the instinctive and royal individual self."

Lewis did have other means of eking out a living: he packed for miners and for the Forest Service during the fire season; he sometimes guided sheep hunters (in 1913 he guided W. A. Edwards to a mountain goat whose horns proved to be a national record); he did blacksmithing on his forge for neighbors; he looked after John Conyers' cattle during the winter; and he received a small pension for military service.

At times during the summer and fall, pining for a visit, he would hike, according to a newspaper account, "to the Salmon River between Obsidian and Challis [sixty air-miles] for a smoke and a chat with a few genuine old sourdough bachelors who spoke his language and lived the same sort of life. Without reservation they acclaimed him the patriarch of the tribe and the best man among them."

In summer, 1922, the *Idaho Statesman* carried a column on its city news page:

#### PIONEER TRAPPER HERE FOR FIRST TIME IN FORTY YEARS

'You know it has always been a mystery to me to know how all the people you see in a big city like Boise make a living,' said David Lewis, pioneer trapper of Idaho who came to Boise Tuesday night after an absence of 44 years. Mr. Lewis has not been in the capital city since 1878.

Mr. Lewis is a little man and speaks with the slow drawl of the mountaineer. 'You know,' he said, 'You see



the same folks on the streets every day and it just makes a fellow wonder what they all do to make a living.' He was told that the many offices of the city provided employment for the city's inhabitants to which he answered that his office for the past 50 years has been the wild forests and his living has been the wild animals inhabiting his "office."

With the exception of two years, 1908-1910, spent at White Bird, the veteran trapper has not been out of his forest home since 1900. He never saw or rode in an automobile until two years ago and Tuesday when he rode from Cascade to Boise was the third time he had been in a car.

He was brought to Boise by Leroy Lisenby, a deputy game warden, who intends to show him the city. All Mr. Lewis can remember of Boise is a building which he referred to as the "Pioneer Hotel" and a little post office.

Of Welsh parents, Lewis was not tall—five feet, seven inches, 130 pounds. His politics were decidedly Republican. Less taciturn than a lion, he was friendly without being loquacious. He had a sense of humor, and one celebrated remark deserves repeating: "Anyone who says he's been et by a wolf or a lion is a liar." He was an avid reader in winter; books filled a dark hole in his isolation. He lived alone in his log fifteen-by-fifteen foot cabin under a roof insulated with six inches of dirt. (Visitors noted that rather than buck firewood, he simply fed log lengths into the fireplace: push-wood.)

In 1923 he was visited by Forest Service surveyor Francis Woods:

We rested at his cabin for a couple of days. The cabin, I remember, had an outside kitchen area, a living quarters built of logs, and an additional room.

The second day he said he was going to take his cougar dogs and hunt for some meat for them. [Lewis fed

his dogs venison.]

We noticed that he never went into the second room of the cabin. While he was away, we looked into the room through a window. There were cobwebs and dust everywhere. On the wall near the door was a large framed picture with its face to the wall. We just had to see the picture. We cut a small pole, four or five feet long, and opened the door to the room very carefully and pried the picture away from the wall, but not far enough to make it fall. It was the portrait of a beautiful young woman. For the past sixty years I have been intrigued by the picture with its face to the wall. What a mystery!

The portrait was that of a woman on a ranch in Oregon who had received and rejected the marriage proposal of a young Dave Lewis over fifty years earlier. How he packed the framed picture unscathed from Oregon to Camas Prairie and then to Big Creek, eight miles up-trail from the Middle Fork is an equal mystery.

In 1928, Lewis, with the assistance of friends, finally received a homestead certificate for his sixty-three acres. (Filing papers required his first trip to McCall, Idaho, in over twenty years.) The homestead spans the mouths of Rush, Trail, and Sheep creeks, although the last two names have been changed to Pioneer and Cliff creeks.

Five years later, by chance he met Jess Taylor, an eastern Idaho rancher and Boise building contractor, when the two of them were hunting above Big Creek. They got along like salt and pepper. Taylor was invited to stay at the cabin. In fall, 1934, he bought the homestead for \$1,200.

The sale was witnessed by Walt Estep, who had mining claims on nearby Ramey Ridge and assisted Lewis in legal matters. Estep agreed to carry the deed to Cascade, Idaho, to record it. Three miles west of the ranch, he was murdered—perhaps for paying too much attention to another man's wife. The Valley County sheriff had to ride in to recover Estep's body; he found the deed and had it recorded.



In June, 1936, Lewis felt the wind of age press hard against his chest. He contracted pneumonia, yet managed to ride horseback, accompanied by two of his dogs, over twenty-five miles to Big Creek Ranger Station for help. He fell off his gray horse at the end of the airstrip, and was helped inside the warehouse, where he rested for a couple of days. It was his last trip up Big Creek. When his condition did not improve, an ambulance, with Lewis lying inside, sped for Cascade by way of Yellow Pine. En route it had a head-on collision with a truck. Lewis died the next day, age ninety-two, at the Veteran's Administration Hospital in Boise—his only visit to a hospital. He was buried in Yoncalla, Oregon, where his surviving brother lived.

In its obituary notice for Cougar Dave Lewis, the *Idaho Statesman* reported:

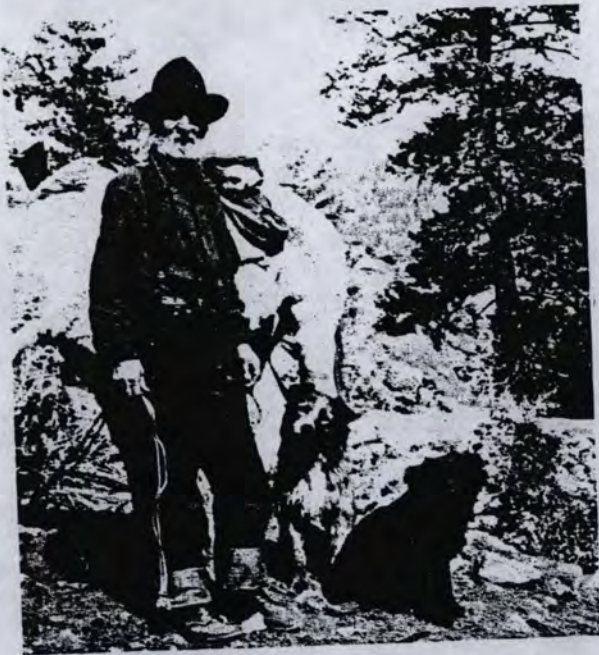
Last fall he complained that the country was settling up too fast. 'A man don't have no privacy no more,' he told his nearest neighbor—five miles away. He planned to spend a few years knocking down on the Oregon cougar crop around Rogue River where a brother lives. Snow came on, however, before he got over the Edwardsburg pass and he stayed on for his final season in the valley he frequently said would find him baking sourdough on his hundredth birthday.

Thirty-two years later, the Taylors sold their ranch to the University of Idaho as a field station for wilderness research. The sale was brought about by Dr. Maurice Hornocker, who had used the site as a base for his five-year study of mountain lions while associated with the university's Cooperative Wildlife Research Unit. Over forty lions were captured and marked in the Big Creek drainage, then recaptured at intervals, and their kills examined. Hornocker's study concluded that deer and elk populations were limited by winter food, and that predation by lions was inconsequential in determining the size of the herds.

In 1972, persuaded by his evidence, the state finally stopped

funding the bounty system. Instead, lions were classified as big game animals, and hunters were given a season and tags. So the animal whose slaughter had long been the mainstay of the old homestead became the means for its preservation, along with Cougar Dave's cabin. And the mountain lion—mysterious, seldom seen, surveyor of deer herds, long-tailed ghost of the Rockies—still leaves its pug tracks along the sandy banks of Big Creek.





21 LEWIS ON HIS IRON GRAY MARE, "OLD BELLE," IN 1932.

22 "UNCLE DAVE" LEWIS AT SOLDIER BAR IN 1935.

23 LEWIS WITH HIS CROSS-TERRIER HUNTING DOGS.





24 LOOKING EAST DOWN BIG CREEK TOWARD THE TAYLOR RANCH.  
25 LEWIS WITH HIS DOGS AT HIS CABIN.

## CLYDEUS DUNBAR, **WHEELBARROW ANNIE**



I DID NOT CHOOSE SOLITUDE. WHO WOULD? IT CAME ON ME LIKE A VOCATION, DEMANDING AN EFFORT THAT MARRIED MEN CAN'T PICTURE.

—MARY ADARE

A lot of good luck is undeserved but then so is a lot of bad luck. Both visited Annie Dunbar.

In November, 1931, as she trudged north into Hells Canyon—the border between Idaho and Oregon—towering cumuli billowed upward, trailing soft shadows like large unmapped lakes across the cliffed slopes high above Snake River. Dunbar struggled along the track that hugged the river, alone and unencumbered as if she had fallen off one of those clouds. The canyon walls pinched inward; heat that matched a bake oven in summer had given over to winter's cast-iron cold. Grim going.

Dunbar was, at that point in her life, what would later be called a bag lady. But this was the Great Depression and, along with millions of other societal castaways, she moved in search of a better shore.

She lugged two rag-wrapped bundles: one carried as far as her strength allowed, then dropped it and walked back for the other. In this manner, tracing each advance three times, she muled her meager possessions into the reaches of Hells Canyon.

Where she came from and why, and why she chose this remote region is now past knowing; she never volunteered, and in a still-young West where manners mattered, people did not ask. At Thorn Flat, four miles upriver from Homestead, Oregon, she did pause to request a glass of water from Mrs. Baker. After providing the drink,



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*Last of the Mountain Men*  
*Is Idaho in Iowa?*

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*Idaho Loners* was designed, typeset, and produced using Apple Macintosh™ computers. Layout was produced in Pagemaker 4.2™ and QuarkExpress™ 5.0. The typeface is Sabon.

Designed by Fletcher Sliker, Sliker Communications;  
Ada, Michigan.  
Production by Roger Cole; Boise, Idaho.

Printed in U.S.A. by BookCrafters, Inc.

ISBN 0-9603566-5-7

First Edition

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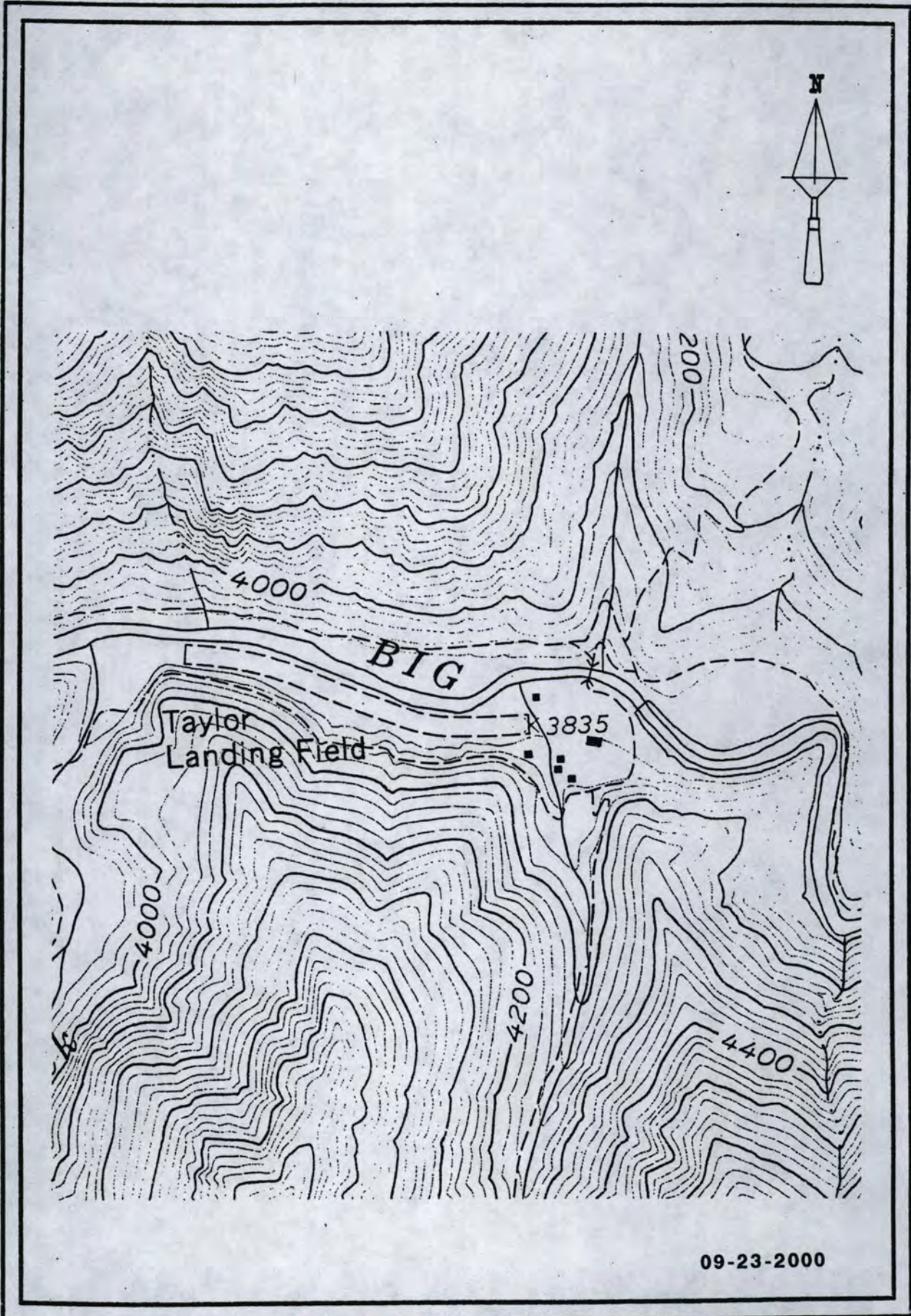
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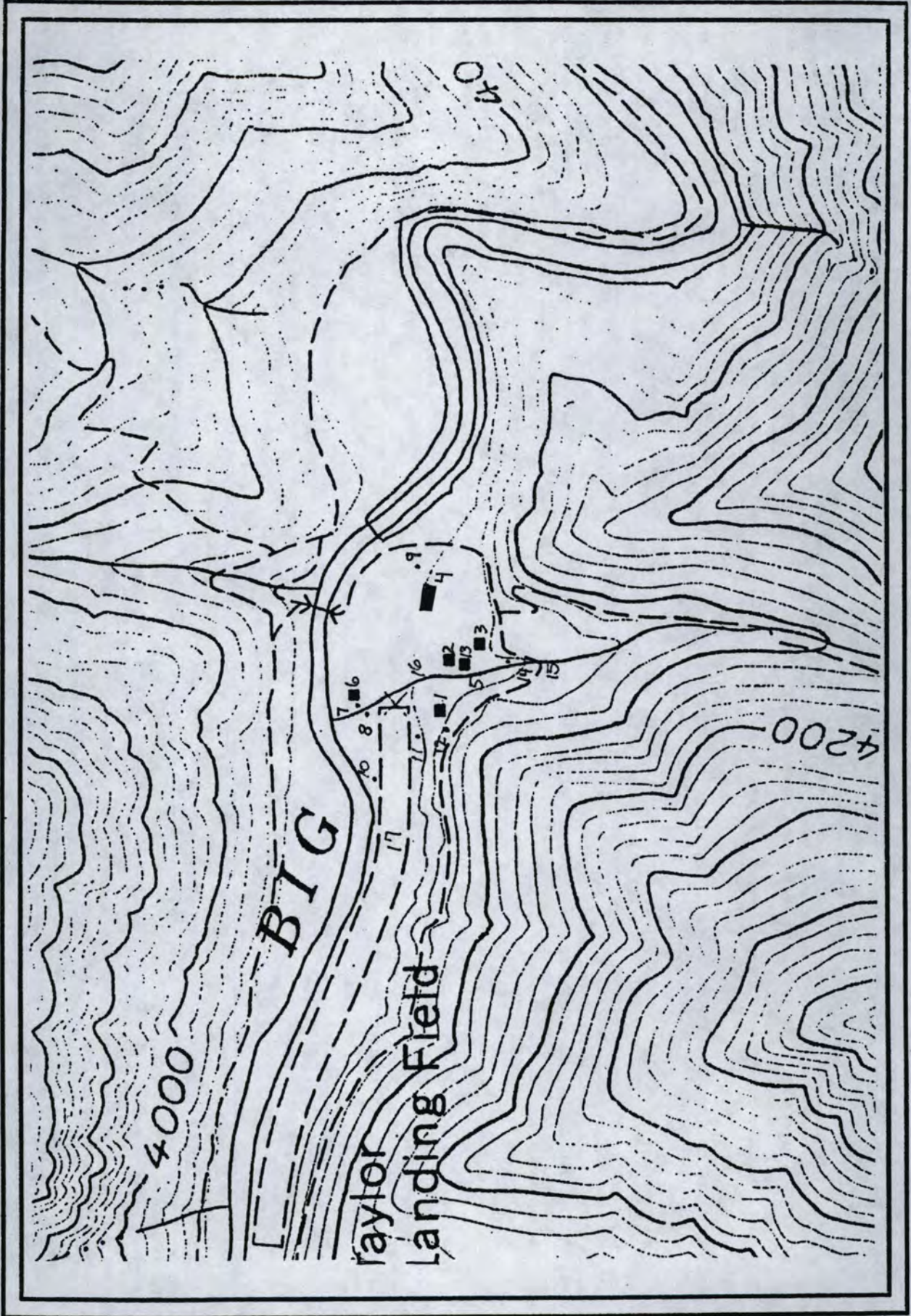
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**NORTH ELEVATION**



**WEST ELEVATION**

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