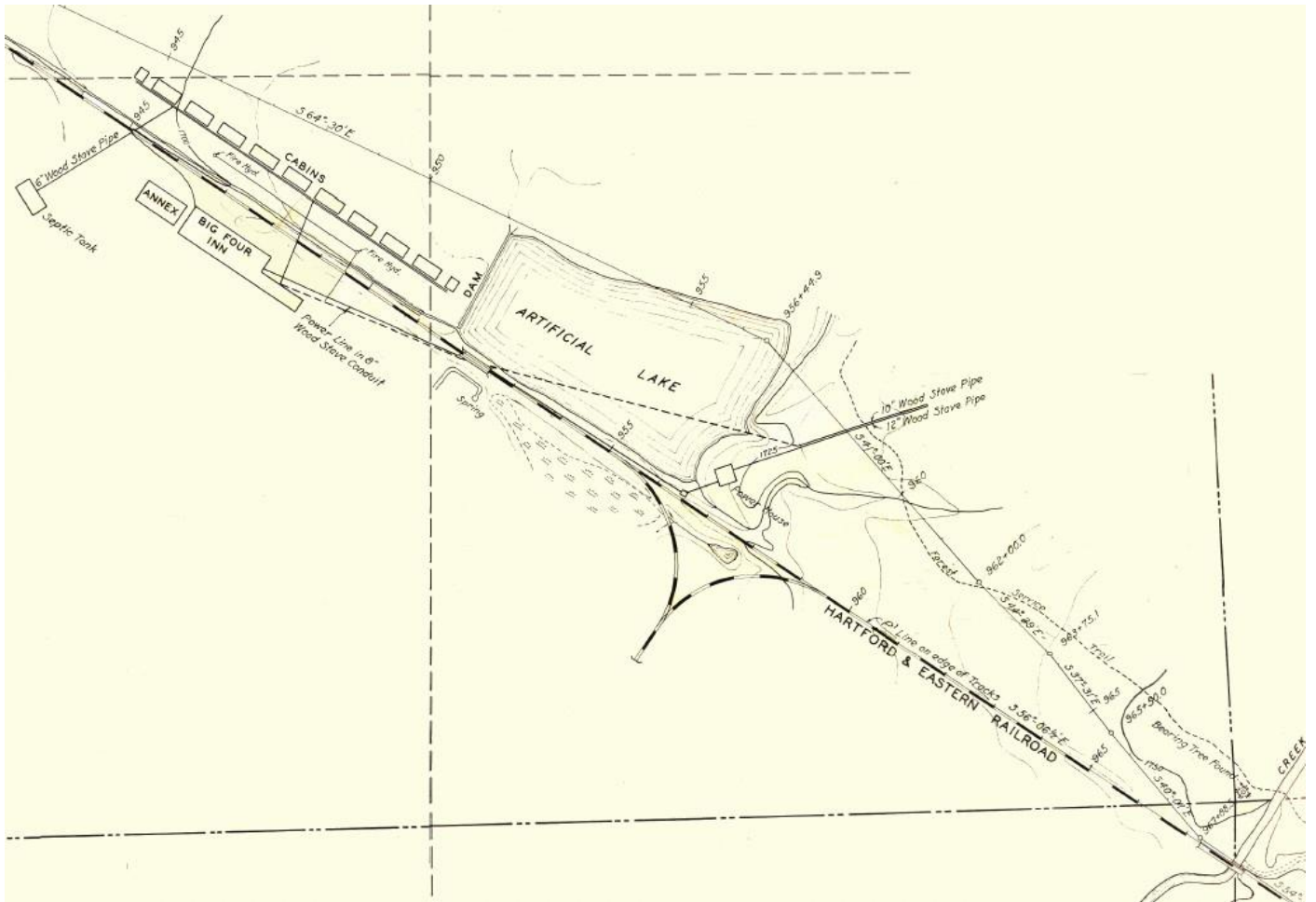


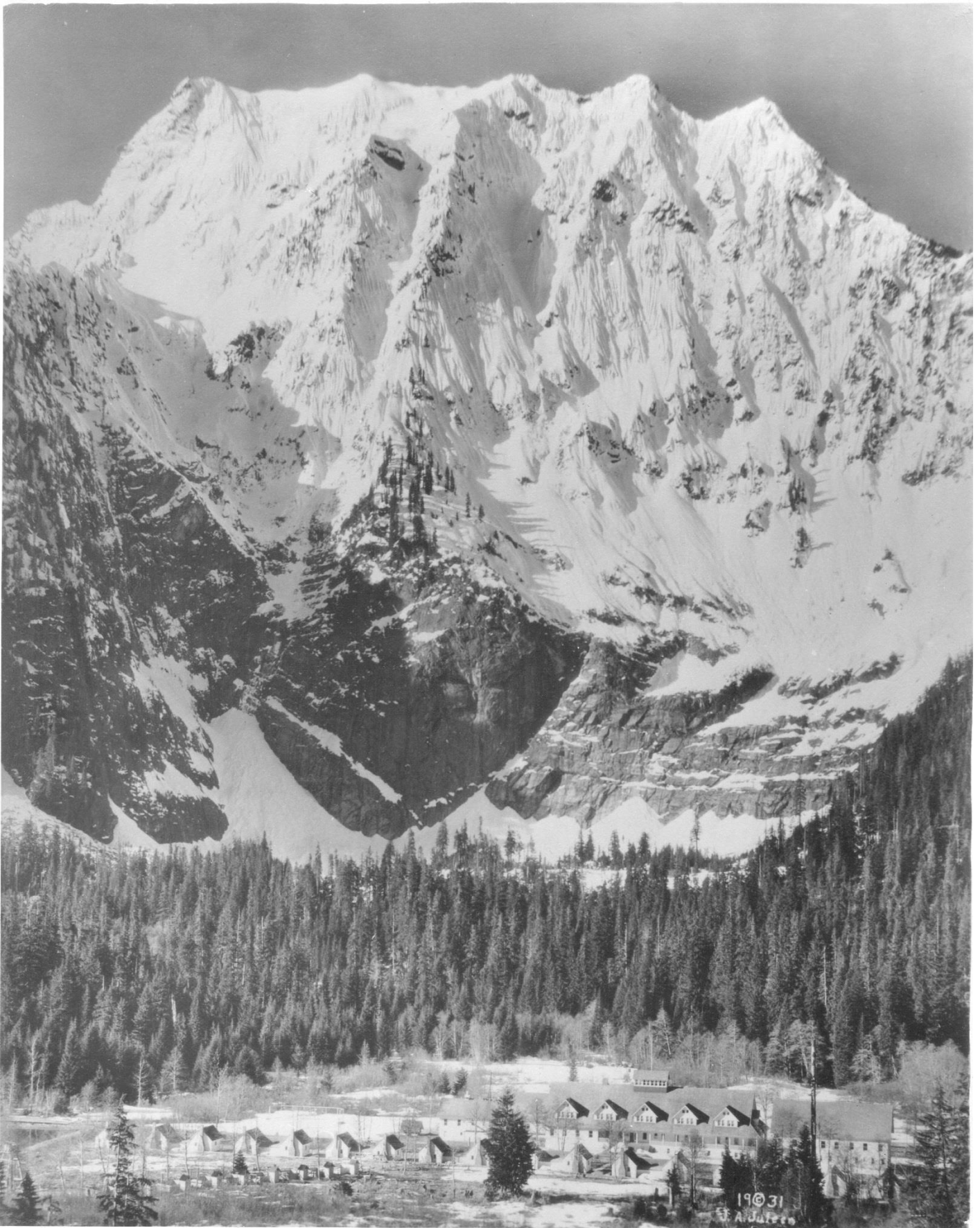
It's Spring – Hit the Big Four Inn!

Sure enough, Spring has sprung! The Mountain Loop Highway will soon be open, and thousands of folks will flock to the beautiful Loop. Stopping at the Big Four Inn is almost mandatory, although little is left except the fireplace from the lobby. Earlier this week, Bill Cayford of Stanwood brought us a detailed map of the Big Four Inn complex, drawn back in its heyday when it was serviced by the Hartford Eastern Railway (original the Everett & Monte Cristo). Perusing the map was the first time this author realized there had been a “wye” just past the Inn, for turning the rail cars. So, if you make the short trek to enjoy the beautiful sunshine and scenery, take a look around and imagine the spot in its grandeur, complete with tennis courts, artificial lake, power house, cabins (each with its own stone fireplace), etc.



Here are a few more shots, showing the cabins, the annex, and the rail line itself as it passed in front of the hotel. The fireplace you see today was just below the “R” in “BIG FOUR INN” on the map. People often ask why the fireplace was so high off the ground – then they look at the wintertime pictures and realize the first floor was about eight feet off the ground to avoid having the typical snow bury the first floor entrance.

The Inn was used by the Coast Guard during WWII, and we had the pleasure of hosting a gentleman in 2015 who had spent time there while he was in the service. What memories! The Inn burned down in 1949.



Looking southward, the annex is at the right, cabins in front of the Inn, and Big Four Mt is the backdrop.



The lobby was attractive, with the wall above the fireplace decorated. The chimney was “wide-on” to the front of the hotel, while the fireplace opening faced along the length of the lobby. That 90 degree shift was to make sure the chimney looked more impressive (i.e. wider) from the front.

Remember, this was the first floor, but raised significantly above ground level due to the snow shown in the pictures below.



The snow is almost as high as the rail car that made the trip for opening day in the Spring. The cabins are almost buried in snow, with an extra cap on each chimney showing the effects of snow and wind.



A great train trip, and a beautiful automobile ride once the tracks were removed in the mid-1930s.



The chimney actually survived the fire, but was taken down for safety reasons. The special use permit for the Inn was not renewed, the cabins were removed, so today the fireplace stands as the lone reminder of a great resort. Of course, this is also the start of the wonderful hike to the local ice caves . . . be careful out there!