



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
ANCHORAGE FIELD OFFICE
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ANCHORAGE, ALASKA 99507-2599

8100(042)
February 24, 2000

Judith E. Bittner
State Historic Preservation Officer
DNR/ Div. Of Parks & Outdoor Recreation
Office of History and Archaeology
550 W. 7th Ave.
Suite 1310
Anchorage, Alaska 99501-3565

Dear Ms. Bittner,

Our office is submitting the attached determination of eligibility to you for review. The Red Devil Mine is located along the Kuskowkim River approximately 8 miles downriver from the village of Sleetmute.

We have determined that this property is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places due to its lack of structural integrity. We would like to request a decision regarding the eligibility of this property from your office within thirty days. We plan to have some of these properties completely demolished and removed due to mercury contamination. Please contact me at (907) 267-1341 if you have any questions or need any further information.

Sincerely,

Donna Redding

attachment: 1 Determination of Eligibility (Red Devil Mine (8 pp)

Determination of Eligibility
of the Red Devil Mine
Kuskokwim River, Alaska

DESCRIPTION

The Red Devil Mine is located along the Kuskokwim River in T.19S., R.44W., sections 6 and 7, Seward Meridian. It is approximately eight miles downriver from the village of Sleetmute.

None of the buildings at the Red Devil mine have structural integrity. Salvaging of materials has been an ongoing process since the mine was shut down in 1972. A photo (photo #1) of the camp from 1962 shows several buildings that are no longer present. In particular, the two-story building on the left behind the head frame exists only as a foundation. The other two-story building on the right retains one wall from the one-story entrance(photo #4).

Eight houses identical to the one seen in photo # 5 were said to have been present during the DeCoursy Mt. Mining Company operation. Only two houses are now standing. These are open to the elements. The windows have been removed and the insides have been gutted. Foundation remains account for most of the rest of the houses, but the remains of several houses could not be found. They were most likely removed or scavenged when the mine discontinued operations.

The metal building shown in the upper left-hand area of photo #1 is collapsed. A similar metal building shown in photo #6 (and also the left-hand section of photo # 2) is in the process of collapsing. It served as a machine shop and office. It is missing one wall and several of the supports have given way. Two sheds (photo #2) are open to the elements and have been heavily scavenged.

The head frame structure seen in photos #1-3 has partially collapsed. Since the more recent photos were taken, unauthorized salvaging has occurred and several of the 6"x 6" frame supports have been removed with a chain-saw.

The retort building seen in photo #7 is in a state of incipient collapse. It is also contaminated by mercury and will have to be completely removed for public safety and environmental protection.

Although little information was available in dating the structures at the mine, most if not all appear to be associated with the DeCoursy Mt. Mining Company period of operation (1952-

1972). In all cases the structural integrity of the properties are severely compromised.

SIGNIFICANCE

Beginning in the 1920's several mercury mines were operated in the Sleetmute area. The Red Devil Mine was staked in 1933 by Hans Halverson after he worked other less productive prospects in the area (Oswalt 1980). The mine was operated seasonally between 1939 and 1946 by Halverson and Nick Mellick. In 1940 Smith (1942) reports that Halverson and Mellick were operating two retorts. Each of these were processing one ton of ore per day for the three month operating season. Presumably these retorts were torn down to build the one present at the mine today. The DeCourcy Mt. Mining Company reopened the mine in 1952 and operated there until 1972 (Cady 1955, Oswalt 1980).

In spite of its long history, the Red Devil Mine does not appear to be eligible to the National Register of Historic Places. This is due to the loss of integrity to the buildings remaining at this site.

References Cited

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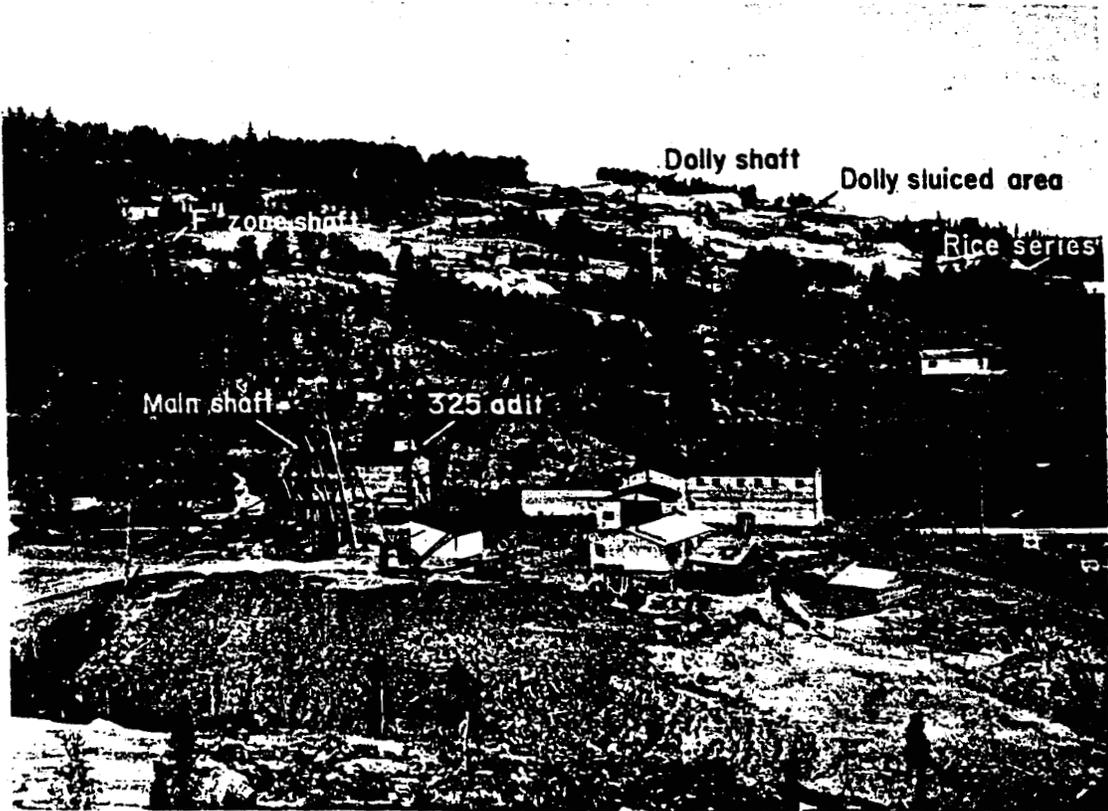


PHOTO 1

1962 photo of the Red Devil Mine looking northwest (MacKevett and Berg 1963)

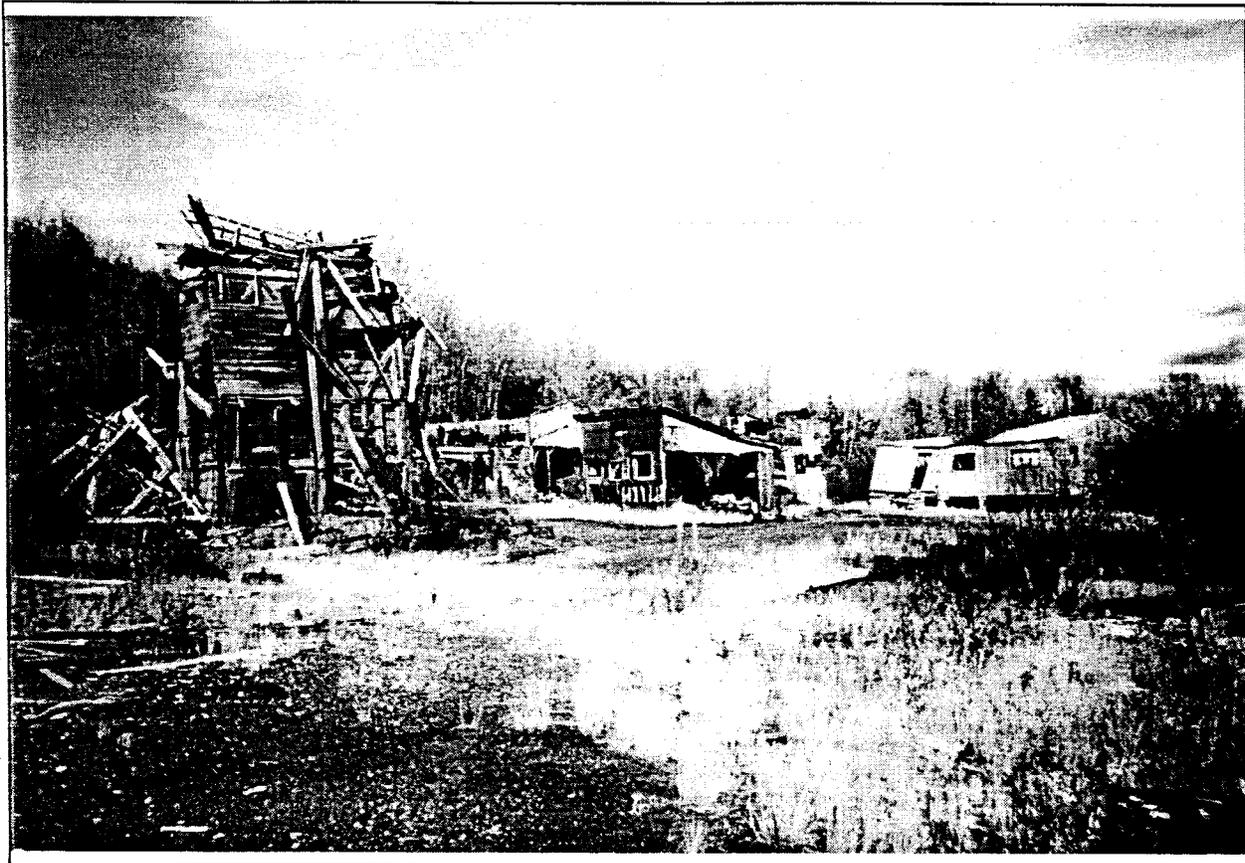


PHOTO 2

from left to right: head frame structure, front entrance to two-story building, shed, metal building, shed

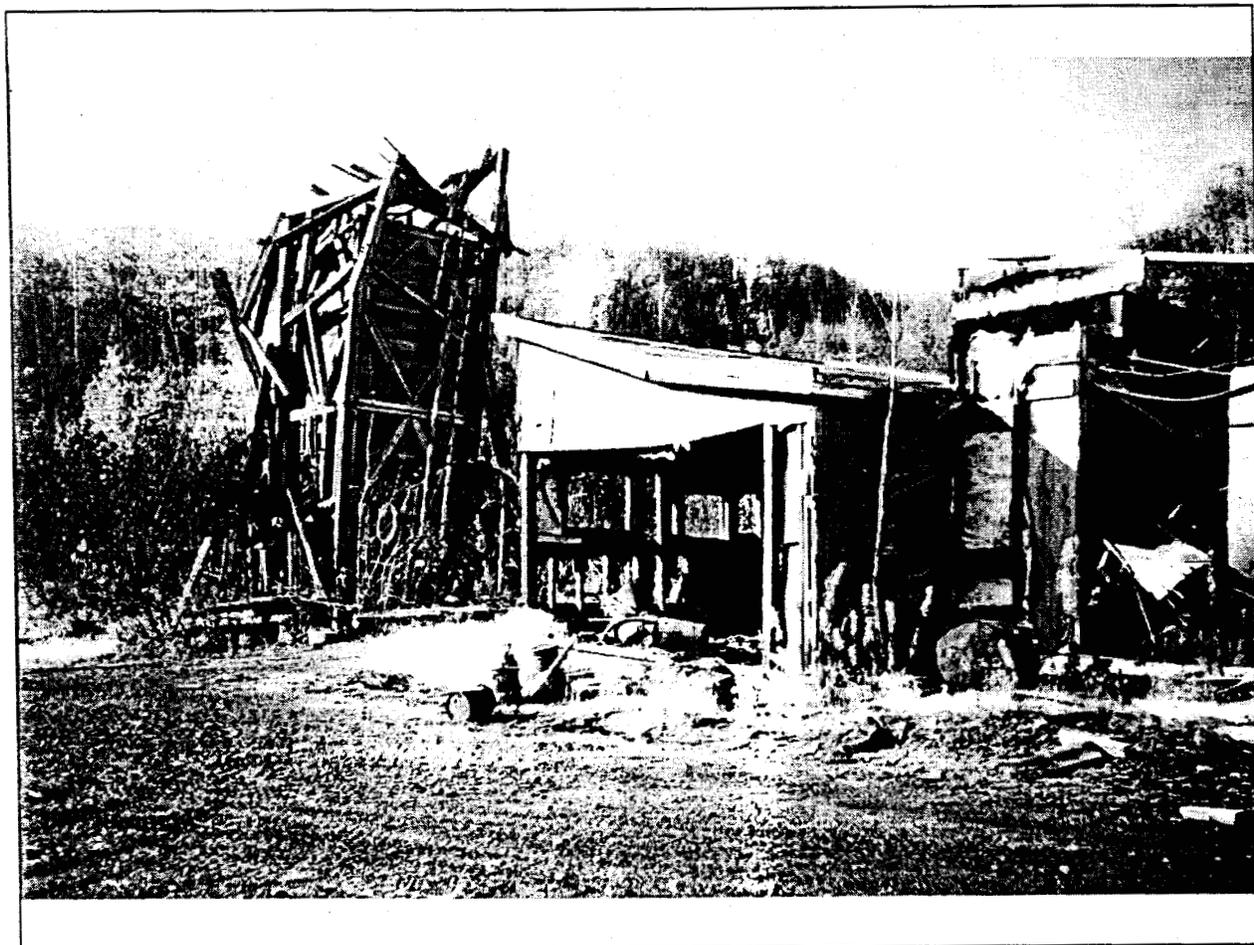


PHOTO 3
from left to right: head frame structure, shed, unidentified
structure which has been removed



PHOTO 4

Remains of two-story building- entrance.

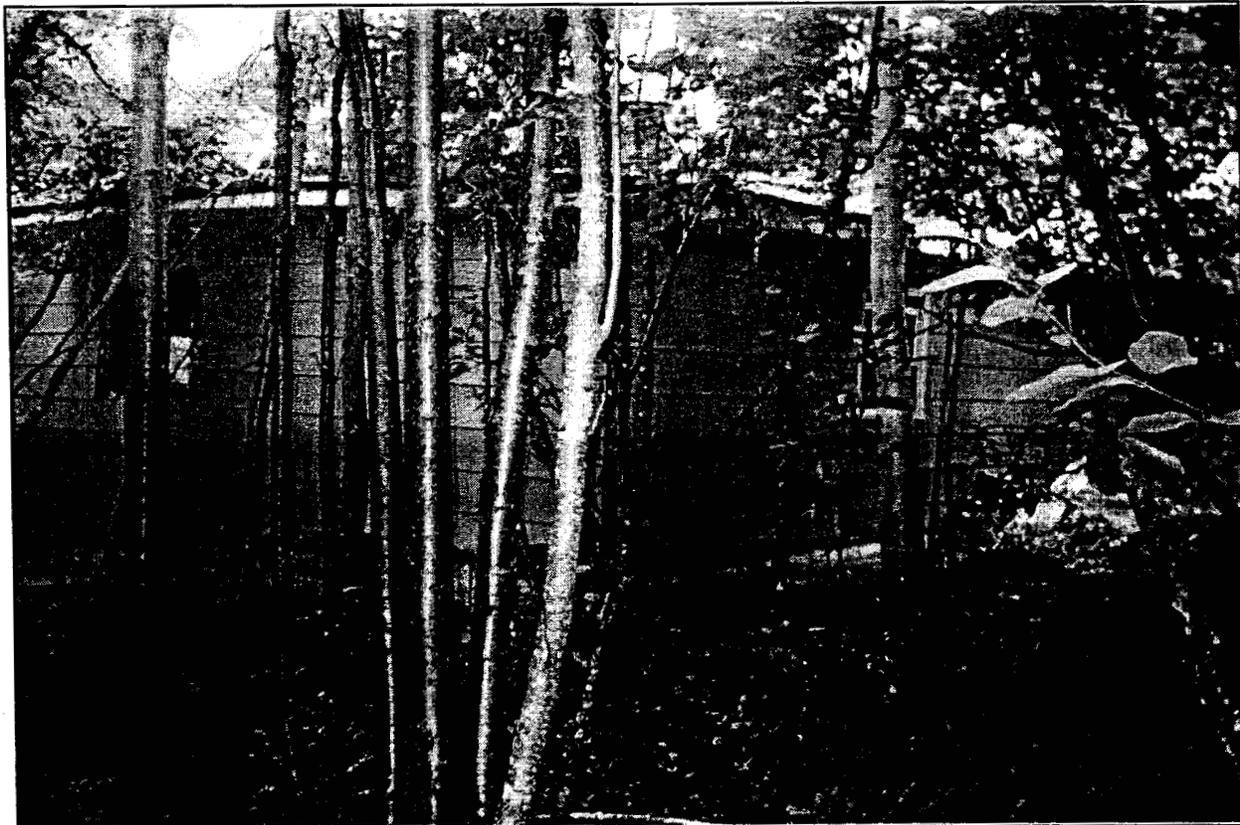


PHOTO 5

One of two remaining houses.

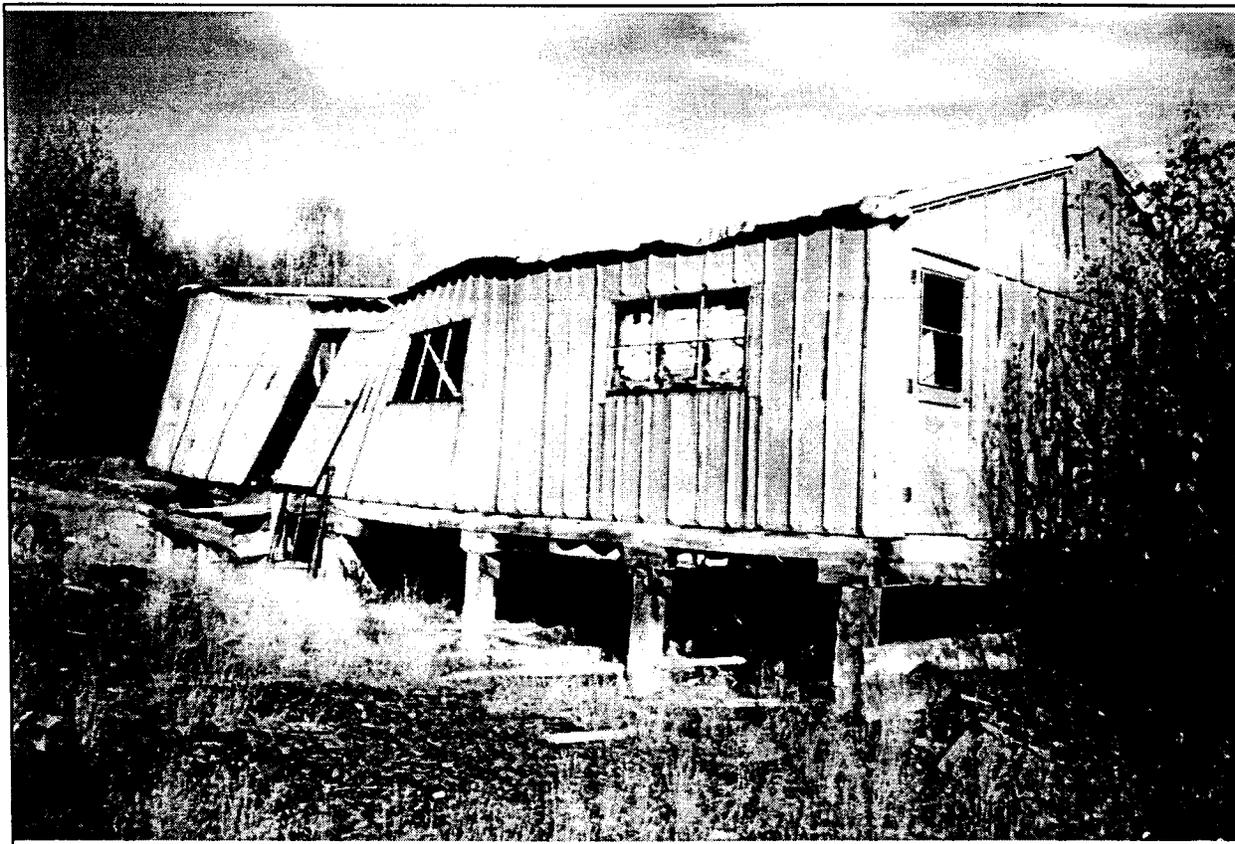


PHOTO 6

Collapsing metal building used as a machine shop and office.

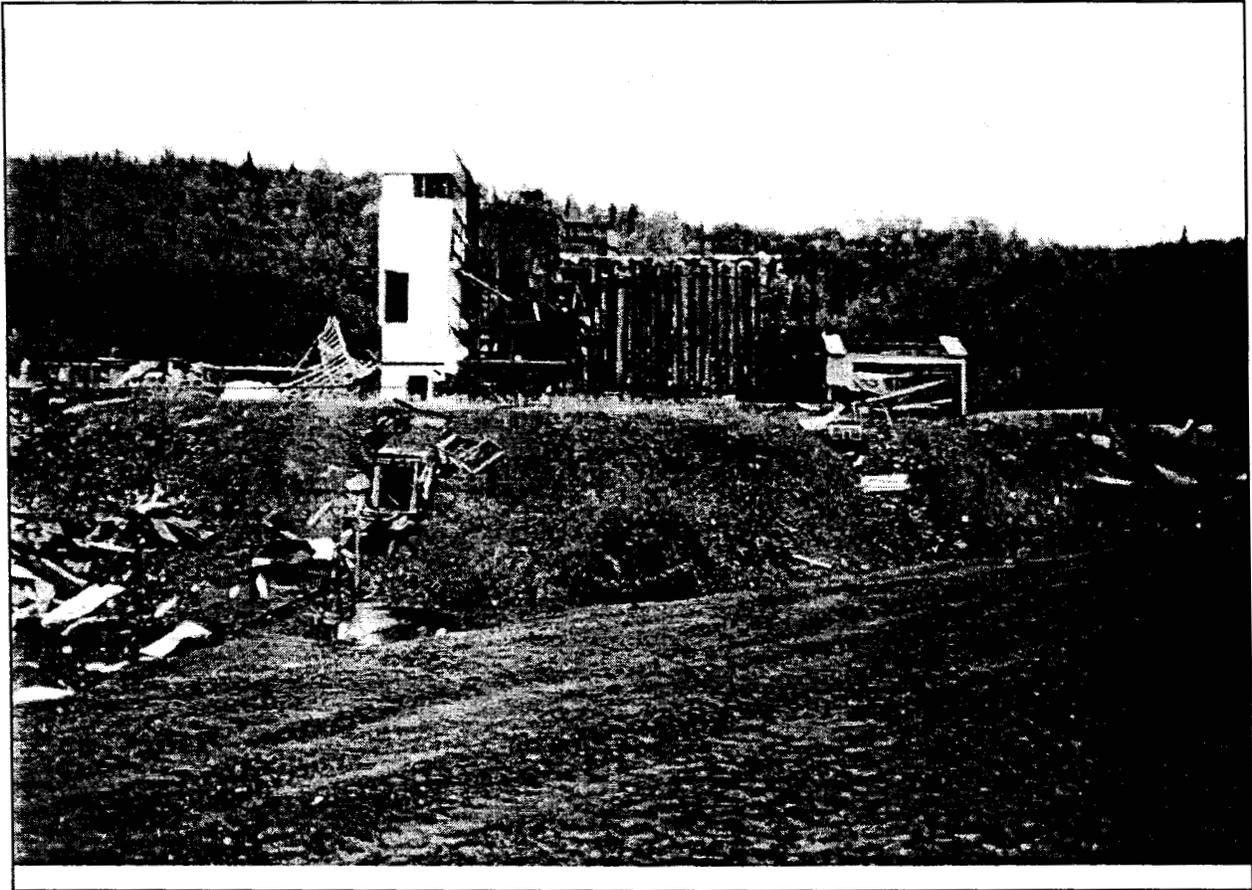


PHOTO 7

Mercury contaminated retort building.