

# DATA SHEET

PH 0665843

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

FOR NPS USE ONLY  
MAR 29 1978  
RECEIVED  
DATE ENTERED SEP 13 1978

## NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS

### 1 NAME

HISTORIC

\*\* (AHRIS SITE NO. ANC-129) SEW-191 1/26/79

Crow Creek Consolidated Gold Mining Company; Crow Creek Gold Mining Company

AND/OR COMMON

Crow Creek Mine or Erickson's Crow Creek Mine

### 2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

Crow Creek Road

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Girdwood

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

VICINITY OF Girdwood

STATE

Alaska

CODE

COUNTY

Anchorage

CODE

20

### 3 CLASSIFICATION

#### CATEGORY

DISTRICT

BUILDING(S)

STRUCTURE

SITE

OBJECT

#### OWNERSHIP

PUBLIC

PRIVATE

BOTH

#### PUBLIC ACQUISITION

IN PROCESS

BEING CONSIDERED

#### STATUS

OCCUPIED

UNOCCUPIED

WORK IN PROGRESS

#### ACCESSIBLE

YES: RESTRICTED

YES: UNRESTRICTED

NO

#### PRESENT USE

AGRICULTURE

COMMERCIAL

EDUCATIONAL

ENTERTAINMENT

GOVERNMENT

INDUSTRIAL

MILITARY

MUSEUM

PARK

PRIVATE RESIDENCE

RELIGIOUS

SCIENTIFIC

TRANSPORTATION

OTHER:

### 4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Bernard J. Toohey; Cynthia D. Toohey

STREET & NUMBER

Box 113

CITY, TOWN

Girdwood

STATE

Alaska

99587

VICINITY OF

### 5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

District Recording Office

STREET & NUMBER

911 West 4th Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Anchorage,

STATE

Alaska

### 6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Alaska Heritage Resources Survey

DATE

February 1977

FEDERAL  STATE  COUNTY  LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

Office of Archeology & History, Alaska Division of Parks

CITY, TOWN

Anchorage,

STATE  
Alaska

99501

# 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED*	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED	*Two of the ten buildings were expanded in the continuous operation of the mine.	

## DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The mining operations on the lower portion of Crow Creek began in earnest in the years subsequent to 1897, the year that claims are said to have been first staked. The history of the first few years of mining on Crow Creek is sketchy, however, Chris Spillum and his associates are said to have been the earliest group to work the claims there. The mining methods quickly switched from pick and shovel labor to hydraulic operations. The buildings which are associated with the Crow Creek Mine or Erickson Mine, as it is called today, were built over a succession of years starting around 1898. By 1906 there were about fifteen buildings at the mine including a two-story messhouse, a log cabin, a commissary, a manager's house, bunkhouses, a machine shop, a blacksmith shop, a sawmill, a stable and a bathhouse. In 1915 an expanded sawmilling operation was undertaken to construct the wooden diversion flume which rerouted the waters of Crow Creek and permitted the mining of the gravel beds of the creek. Snow slides along the steep slopes of the valley removed any traces of that flume. Scattered sections of diversion pipe still lie in the drainage basin.

During the 1920's the large messhall burned down. The manager's house was expanded and made into a new messhall, and a new manager's house was constructed. Few changes took place in the ensuing years until the sixties, during which time a tool shed was constructed and an additional room was added to the manager's house. In 1975 a two man bunkhouse was constructed to replace one which had been lost to fire.

Today Crow Creek Mine presents a remarkable collection of buildings which are associated with the placer mining. Remaining from the earliest period (1898-1906) are: the commissary, blacksmith shop, the original manager's house (later converted to the mess hall), a four man bunkhouse, an ice house, a tool shed and smokehouse. From the 1920's the manager's house and the second messhall are left.

The most recently constructed buildings, a tool shed and bunkhouse, are made out of the same type of framing as the earliest buildings and compliment the material fabric of the site.

The sense of mining history does not end with the exterior of these buildings. The messhall is still equipped with a Lang cooking stove and cooking utensils. The kitchen of the manager's house is similarly furnished. The blacksmith shop retains some of the implements associated with hydraulic mining. The four man bunkhouse has a single woodstove with bunkbeds on either side to the structure. The newer tool shed, which was built around the time of the Alaska Purchase Centennial, contains sluice boxes, pans and shovels which are lent to modern day tin horns in their search for color. The site is not supplied with electricity nor other utilities; between the interior decor wood stoves and lanterns, the atmosphere of mining camp is much intact.

Within a couple hundred yards of the site is Crow Creek. The stream runs in the excavated bed with the debris of the mining past strewn around its banks and waters; pipe, couplings and related hydraulic equipment are markers to the former operation. The man-made geologic cut is much in evidence upon close observation. Piles of boulders tell the story of that which could not be removed, and the V-shaped gorge itself is the mark of an incredible human endeavor and suggests the extent of the hydraulic operation of the earlier part of this century.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	Mining
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES 1898-1967 (Alaska Centennial) BUILDER/ARCHITECT

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Crow Creek Mine is a major remnant of the mining activity which transpired in the Turnagain Arm region of Alaska. Notoriety and fortunes in the gold mining episodes there were certainly not equal to those of the Klondike, Nome or Iddarod, yet the mining activities in the drainage basins of this section of Cook Inlet were remarkably persistent forces which lasted from the 1890's until the Second World War. Both placer and lode gold mining sparked the development of the region: small thriving towns such as Hope, Sunrise and Girdwood sprang to life as supply centers to the hinterland. The Crow Creek Mine is but a part of that overall movement, however, it is an important one not only because of the magnitude of the placer operation during its heyday, but also because the fabric of the mining buildings, associated equipment and geologic features are prominently preserved in the lower Crow Creek Valley.

In looking at the context of the Crow Creek Mine in relation to the mining history in the Kenai/Turnagain Arm region, one would logically start with the prospecting of the Russian American Company. First documented references point to the activities of Peter Doroshin, a graduate of the Imperial Mining School at St. Petersburg. He led mineral explorations on the Kenai Peninsula from 1843 to 1852, and in doing so, he found placer gold along the Russian River. Prospecting was presumedly dormant in the next thirty odd years until Joseph Cooper discovered gold in 1884. Still, it was not until a prospector by the name of King returned to Kenai in the late 1880's with four pokes of gold to repay a grubstake debt that mining possibilities were taken seriously. Successful prospecting and placer mining in 1894 brought a minor rush in the following two years; it is estimated that during the summer of 1896 that about 2,500 men, and an additional few women, came to the arm. Logically, the prospecting spilled across into the north side of Turnagain Arm. There in 1895 Christopher Spillum, F.J. Perry and Fred Crow, acting as partners, staked the first claims on California Creek.

California Creek was just one of a series of tributaries to Glacier Creek; Crow Creek whose headwaters are high in the Chugach near Raven Glacier proved to be the richest source of gold on the north side of Turnagain Arm. The first claims on Crow Creek are said to have been made in 1897. James E. Girdwood, for whom the town at the mouth of Glacier Creek is named, staked the claims on upper Crow Creek and ran one of two hydraulic mining operations in the early years.

The other operation, the subject of this nomination, was located just above the so called "canyon" near the confluence of Crow Creek and Glacier Creek. In 1898, a geologist W.C. Mendenhall, who was part of the military exploration led by Captain Edwin F. Glenn, reported that mining on the creek was in its incipient stages. The early history of the claims and the buildings associated with them is not entirely clear; a group of eight partners, known in the valley as the "Crow Creek Boys" operated the hydraulic works in 1904. These "boys" probably included Andrew Nisbet, K.A. Schlifer, Paul Buckley, Dante Barton, W.C. Jack, George W. Davis, D.E. Oldham, Chris Spillum, S.W. Wimble, and G.W. Davies who owned the Pathfinder, Three C's and Weaver Claims of

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

(see attached)

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 4 acres

UTM REFERENCES

A	<sup>06</sup> 05	387500	6764175	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The buildings are located about one-half mile to the north of the confluence of Crow and Glacier Creeks. They sit at the end of a gravel road (one-quarter mile in length) which runs northeasterly from Crow Creek Road.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Michael E. Carberry, Historic Preservation Specialist October 3, 1977

ORGANIZATION

DATE

Planning Department

STREET & NUMBER

TELEPHONE

Pouch 6-650

(907) 264-4267

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

Anchorage

Alaska 99502

# 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

LOCAL

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

*William Shanahan*

TITLE

State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

March 21, 1978

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

*P. B. Ketter*

DATE

9/13/78

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST

*William Lebovich*

DATE

9/12/78

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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lower Crow Creek; they were stockholders in the Crow Creek Consolidated Mining Company which operated until 1906. The following year that company sold out to D.H. Nutter, C.M. Nutter and R.B. Dawson; it was known as the Nutter-Dawson Company until 1912 when they incorporated (under the laws of the State of Washington) as the Crow Creek Gold Mining Company.

During the early 1900's it was the most productive camp of the Turnagain-Knik Region. The glacially deposited gravels were as much as 250 feet thick along the claims there, yet through the use of a diversion ditch, headys, pipe and hydraulic giants, those gravels were excavated and sluiced for over 1,000 feet along the creek. The resulting gorge is still apparent today and scattered sections of pipe and other hydraulic equipment bear witness to the mammoth task. A U.S.G.S. bulletin of 1906 reported that over 200,000 yards of gravel had been removed that year alone. The gold saving apparatus was a series of sluice boxes over 200 feet in length; each was over 5 feet and had spruce riffles which typically wore out in 3 months.

In the season of 1915 the operation was altered because of the danger of the diversion ditch spilling over to placer workings and because substantial gold bearing deposits were located under the ditch and pipe. Thus a sawmill was built and a diversion flume of about 3,400 feet in length was constructed. The sluice line was 1,800 feet long then consisting of boxes five feet wide and four feet deep. Between 20 and 30 men were employed that season. They worked ten hours each day and were compensated between \$105 and \$120 each month (plus board).

In the 1920's the ownership again changed hands. In 1921 the Crow Creek Mining Co., represented by J.B. Wood, President, and D.H. Nutter, Secretary, transferred both real and personal property associated with the mine to Paul Denkert of Seattle, Washington. Personal property included a sawmill, giants and boxes, flumes, blacksmith shop, messhall and equipment, bunkhouse and furniture, one frame log warehouse, and related mining items. From the precinct records it appears that Denkert was not actively involved in the mining himself. In 1922 Arne S. Erickson was hired to supervise the operations. His association with the mine continued into the 1970's. Erickson worked with John E. Holmgren who became the owner in 1925. During the early 1930's the claims were known as the Holmgren-Erickson property, operated through the Crow Creek Gold Mining Company. Erickson acquired the deed to the property in 1933, and continued to operate the mine until 1958 when labor costs almost equalled production costs. A record of the total production at the mine would be difficult, if not impossible, to establish; the Erickson's reported that about \$40,000 worth of gold was an average take during the years in which they were associated with the mine. The mine was opened to the public in 1967 as one of the activities of the Alaska Purchase Centennial - an example of a mining operation and its associated buildings where visitors could sluice and pan. That opportunity still is presented today through Barney Toohey and his family who reside in the manager's house and oversee the part-time and recreational mining on his claims.

Age, history and exemplary mining buildings mark the significance of this property. In that the oldest buildings at the mine were built slightly before or around the turn of the century, they are among the earliest to be constructed in the Municipality and represent the first dwellings and and outbuildings, associated with the American period of settlement in this political subdivision of Alaska.

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(The Eklutna Village site and other native sites would obviously predate the mining activity discussed in this nomination).

The mine's buildings and its history, as described above are important, in offering to the residents and tourists a glimpse of what the mining era was like and what it had to do with the settlement of the State. The hydraulic operation at the Crow Creek Mine was reputed to be the largest of any placer operation in the region; the mining operation was described time after time in the U.S.G.S. bulletins as being the most extensive and productive mine.

The fact that the mines buildings are still standing is, in itself, incredible. This fact can be attributed to the continuous residency at the site. Very few other buildings are still around which hint of the chapters of mining history in the region. Old sites have typically been pilfered and vandalized. The Crow Creek Mining buildings are one of the most, if not the most, representative collection of mining buildings in the Turnagain-Kink Region.

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