1 NAME

HISTORIC: Gold Mine Historic District

AND/OR COMMON: 

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER: Dryweed Island, Rainy Lake

CITY, TOWN: Island View

STATE: Minnesota

3 CLASSIFICATION

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4 AGENCY

REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS: National Park Service, Midwest Region

STREET & NUMBER: 1709 Jackson Street

CITY, TOWN: Omaha

STATE: Nebraska

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC: Koochiching County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER: 

CITY, TOWN: International Falls

STATE: Minnesota

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE: Voyageurs National Park Survey of Historical Structures PX 6000 6 0057

DATE: 31 December 1975

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS: National Park Service, Midwest Region

CITY, TOWN: 1709 Jackson Street, Omaha

STATE: Nebraska
7 DESCRIPTION

DESCRIPTION THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Gold Mine Historic District is an area of Rainy Lake, encompassing the Little American Mine National Register site, which was the scene of the 1894 gold rush in northern Minnesota. It now lies within the boundaries of Voyageurs National Park. The area of intensive mining operations was centered in sections 23, 25, 26, 27, 33, and 34, T71N, R22W. This lake region is a rocky wilderness, dotted with many islands, and covered by mixed coniferous and deciduous forest. The mines were accessible only by boat. In spite of the fact that numerous shafts and test pits were sunk, some of considerable depth, only one mine, the Little American, produced a profit. Many of the prospects were titled "mine" but were worked for only a short time and abandoned. Information about the original shafts was not recorded, except for general location, on any but the most promising strikes. Seven "mines", including the Little American, make up this district.

Gold mines of this district were set up on two types of gold bearing deposits. The most extensive types are the segregated veins of gold bearing quartz, the largest of which included the Little American mine and strikes to the east known as Big American, Gold Harbor or Holman, and Bushyhead mines. One other shaft, unnamed, was started still further east on a similar segregated vein. To the north of this area are two mines sunk in fahlband deposits: the Old Soldier and Lyle mines.

The Gold Mine Historic District is made up of seven distinct sites totaling approximately 20 acres. These locations in turn define the area of an event which occurred in an area of much larger acreage, approximately 1224 acres. The boundaries created by connecting the separate mine locations encompasses many post gold rush structures only seven of which are actually within the sphere of acreage designated to protect each location of significance. These seven are homes, out buildings, a dock and two summer residences. Five are on the island of the Lyle mine and two are on the peninsula location of the unnamed shaft. All other occurrences of summer cabins, out buildings, and docking facilities are incidental intrusions that appear within the district boundary connecting the mine locations in time but not by geographic juxtaposition. A majority of these structures have been built since 1950. Any buildings related to the gold mining activities have either been moved out of the district or razed. The shafts described in this nomination are now the visible evidence of the gold mining in northern Minnesota.

The Little American mine (15 487630 5383040) is located on a four acre island of the same name in Rainy Lake approximately eleven miles east of International Falls, Minnesota. It is located in the NE¼, NW¼, section 33, T71N, R22W and was discovered late in 1893. In January of 1894 the first ore was taken from a vertical shaft that eventually reached 100 feet. The ore was shipped to a stamp mill set up at the boom town of Rainy Lake City about one mile east of the mine. Numerous other shafts and drifts were opened to extract the gold bearing ore. This expansion resulted in the construction of a bunkhouse, shafthouse, headquarters building, out buildings, and loading facilities along the south side of the island to speed transport of gold bearing rock to the Rainy Lake City stamp mill. Eventually a ten stamp mill was erected on the site that had come from the defunct Lyle mine 2½ miles to the northeast. The Little American mine operated for about one year and was closed down. It operated sporadically during the next three years with a permanent closure at Christmas 1897. Two further attempts were made to work the mine in the 1920s and 1930s, but
The Gold Mine Historic District is significant as a representation of an historic event contributing to the exploration and settlement of the Rainy Lake region in northern Minnesota. This area is now within the boundaries of Voyageurs National Park. Gold prospecting and mining activities brought hundreds of people to the northern reaches of the state. Although most of the gold strikes were small and of little or no profit, three of the mines operated for more than two years. When the strikes were deserted, and when the boom town of Rainy Lake City disappeared, many of the inhabitants stayed in the north moving west to the town of Koochiching. Koochiching was later renamed International Falls and became the lumber capitol of northern Minnesota and part of Canada.

The gold rush to northern Minnesota was sparked by the discovery of gold in 1893 on Little American Island in Rainy Lake. Prospector George Davis did not have the capital to work his discovery and sold his claim to a group of Duluth businessmen who formed the Bevier Mining Company. Assays from the property ranged between $37 and $300 per ton and work began in January 1894. In that year Rainy Lake became an area of intense prospecting and testing activity and the rush was on. Most of the prospecting flurry was over in 1894 although mining activities continued until 1897. The short duration of gold mining in this region was due to inexperience, poor management, and a "get rich quick" attitude on the part of the investors. However short lived the industry was, the feverish activity and desire to penetrate this wilderness in search of wealth, contributed to the recognition that this boundary area held vast resources.

At the time of the first gold strike in 1893 the closest town with rail connections to the southern part of the state was Tower, 100 miles away. Transportation of machinery and lumber north from Tower was a slow one of water and portages by summer and slightly easier during the freezes of winter. In addition, all the strikes had to be reached by boat which added another expense. Rainy Lake City developed as a gold boom town on the Kabetogama peninsula in 1894. The town was the site of the first stamp mill for the local mines and was the location of support people not directly involved in the mining process. Prior to the discovery of gold in the Rainy Lake area the vast lake and forest wilderness had been seen only by trappers, pine estimaters, explorers, and the local Indian people. Recognition of other riches such as lumber encouraged the people to remain in the north even after the gold mining industry closed down.
MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES


GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 20 acres within 1224 acres

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION: Beginning at a point approximately 650 feet east-southeast of the southeast shore of an island south of Dryweed Island in SE4, SE4, sec. 25, T71N, R22W (15 493490 5383000) proceed approximately 20,060 feet along a line to a point 93' west (15 487460 5382860), thence to a point 1000 feet due north (15 487470 5383180), thence approximately 12,200 feet along a line to a point 61' northeast (15 490720 5384840), thence approximately 2600 feet along a line to a point 40' east-northeast (15 491470 5385040), thence approximately 9650 feet along a line 242' southeast to point of beginning.

FORM PREPARED BY

Liza Nagle, Survey Inventory Coordinator
John J. Hackett, Survey Coordinator

MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

DATE: September 13, 1976

CERTIFICATION OF NOMINATION

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

YES X NO

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY

DATE: DEC 15 1976

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE: 5/6/77

DATE: 5/6/77
The land within Voyageurs National Park is going to be purchased by the National Park Service, United States Department of the Interior. To date the properties specified in this nomination are still owned privately.

Little American mine (15 487630 5383040)
On Little American Island in the NE¼, NW¼, sec. 33, T71N, R22W.
Nancy Scholz
1204 Dellis Road
Wheaton, Illinois 60187

Big American mine (15 489040 5383360)
On Big American Island in the SW¼, SW¼, sec. 27, T71N, R22W.
Ms. Eveline Douglas
Mt. Clemens, Michigan 48043

Gold Harbor or Holman mine (15 489700 5383010)
On the Kabetogama peninsula in the NW¼, NE¼, sec. 34, T71N, R22W.
Mr. Ancy L. Morse
1735 Hiawatha Court NE
Rochester, Minnesota 55901

Bushyhead mine (15 491300 5383500)
On Bushyhead Island in the NW¼, SE¼, sec. 26, T71N, R22W.
Mr. Richard Fox
Route 8, Box 461
International Falls, Minnesota 56649

Unnamed shaft (15 493060 5383310)
On the northern point of an unnamed island in the SE¼, SE¼, sec. 25, T71N, R22W.
Mr. John W. Gruner
986 15th Avenue SE, Apt. 1
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55414

Old Soldier mine (15 490740 5384810)
On an unnamed island in the SE¼, SW¼, sec. 23, T71N, R22W,
Mr. Stuart Cameron III
2409 24th Street Road
Greeley, Colorado 80631
Lyle mine (15 491400 5384930)
On an unnamed island in the SW_{4}, SE_{4}, sec. 23, T71N, R22W.
Mr. Norbert Goulet
Box 191
Ranier, Minnesota  56668
without success. Total profit from the mine was approximately $5,000 with the gold being extracted from a composit quartz vein in the sheared chloritic and biotitic schist of the island.

The Little American mine location is presently overgrown with brush, jack pine, and poplar and appears to be used most commonly by occasional campers and picnickers. The site is accessible by boat with the best landing area on the south shore at a spoil dump remaining from the mining operations. Remains of the mine consist of several shafts and scattered fragments of mine machinery. Two major excavations are visible: a vertical, cribbed shaft and a horizontal adit. The adit is partially filled with water which prevented the recording of measurements during the field visit. The vertical shaft, which measures 7 by 11 feet, is filled with debris to about 15 feet from its tip. Other excavations are visible but appear to be open pits and not of any great depth. All appear to be in fair condition. A reconnaissance of the island failed to discover any building remains.

The Big American mine (15 489040 5383360) is a shaft located at the top of a rise on the southwest end of Big American Island in the SW¼, SW¼, section 27, T71N, R22W. In 1894 the state geologist N. H. Winchell reported of the shaft that it was "a pit five feet square and five feet deep...dug in the usual siliceous sericitic schist of the island. In the pit are three quartz lenses, none of them more than a foot in width." (pp. 79-80) The mining operations were not further described until 1897 when the shaft was reported to have reached 45 feet. Presently the shaft appears as a water filled hole approximately 10 by 12 feet. The water fills it at approximately the 18 foot level so that total shaft depth could not be measured. The mine is in good condition. A slope created by the mining debris is visible at the southwest edge of the shaft. The area is overgrown with mosses, coniferous and deciduous vegetation.

Gold Harbor or Holman mine (15 489700 5383010) was actually only a test pit opened in 1894 on a quartz-pyrite vein on the Kabetogama peninsula southeast of the Big American mine. Conflicting reports allude to two mines located very close to each other, or one mine called by two names. A field visit to the area located only one strike in the NW¼, NE¼, section 34, T71N, R22W. No specific description could be found of its original appearance. Today it appears as a shallow pit measuring approximately 4 by 4 by 3 feet. A slight ridge around the mouth is formed by the testing debris. It is now filled in partially with rotting leaves and rubbish. The pit is in good condition and the location is undeveloped.

The Bushyhead mine (15 491300 5383500) on Bushyhead Island was a horizontal adit driven into a quartz-pyrite vein just above water level along the south side of the island. Bushyhead Island is located in the NW¼, SE¼, section 26, T71N, R22W. This was one of two mines, other than the Little American, that operated for more than one year. Although this mine operated for over two years there are no descriptions
of the extent of the strike. Presently the mine appears as an opening approximately 6 by 4 feet and is of undetermined length and good condition.

An additional unnamed shaft (15 493060 5383310), possibly the "Line Island mine", was sunk on an island east-southeast of Bushyhead Island. It is located in the SE₁, SE₂, section 25, T71N, R22W. This island is composed of mixed chloritic and biotitic schist. Specific historical documentation is not available as to the nature of this strike. Today it has been filled in and covered by a small outbuilding belonging to the summer residence of a retired University of Minnesota geology professor.

Two additional mines are located to the north of Dryweed Island in Rainy Lake. Old Soldier mine (15 490740 5384810) is located on a small point of land on the north side of Dryweed Island in the SE₁, SE₂, section 23, T71N, R22W. The point is composed of mica schist laced with small veins of quartz with considerable amounts of pyrite. Old Soldier mine has been capped for safety by a concrete slab approximately 12 by 15 feet. Remains of the mining debris are visible along the south edge of the cap. The rest of the point appears undeveloped and overgrown with brush, deciduous and coniferous trees.

The Lyle mine (15 491400 5384930) is located on the south side of a small island to the east of Old Soldier mine in the SW₁, SE₂, section, T71N, R22W. This mine operated for two years but was finally closed down in late 1897. In 1894 Winchell reported the depth of the shaft as 22 feet into "a peculiar kind of siliceous rock which consists of narrow bands of (1) finely divided quartz, (2) a dark greenish material, perhaps largely chlorite, and (3) bands of 1 and 2 combined." (pp. 86-86) The shaft was reported to be 100 feet deep in 1895. A ten stamp mill had been set up on Dryweed Island to process the Lyle mine ore. When the mine was closed in 1897, all machinery was moved to the Little American mine which had been purchased by the Lyle Mining Company the summer before. Presently the island is a summer residence with four buildings and a dock. The mine shaft is situated between two of the buildings and fenced with chicken wire. It measures approximately 12 by 15 feet and it is filled to about 18 feet from the top with the upper layer consisting of rubbish. It is in good condition and the mining debris forms a slope on the south side of the island.

Even though period newspapers and geological reports note the occurrence of numerous other strikes in the area, they were primarily workings of surface deposits. A number of companies were formed to run local mining operations and many individuals prospected in hopes of a big strike. The seven locations described above are those which could be found through research and field visitation as the visible evidence of the gold rush activity in northern Minnesota.


NW¼, SE½, Sec. 26, T71N, R22W
(Bushyhead Island)

SW¼, SW½, Sec. 27, T71N, R22W
(Big American Island)

SW¼, SE½, Sec. 23, T71N, R22W

SE¼, SW¼, Sec. 23, T71N, R22W
Gov't. Lot 2, Mandan Subdiv.
Lot 10

SE½, SE½, Sec. 25, T71N, R22W

NW¼, NE¼, Sec. 34, T71N, R22W
(Kabetogama Peninsula)

Mr. Richard Fox
Route 8, Box 461
International Falls, Mn 56649

Ms. Eveline Douglas
Mt. Clemens, Michigan 48043

Mr. Norbert Goulet
Box 191
Ranier, Mn 56668

Mr. Stuart Cameron III
2409 24th Street Road
Greeley, Colorado 80631

Mr. John W. Gruner
986 15th Avenue SE
Apt. 1
Minneapolis, Mn 55414

Mr. Ancy L. Morse
1735 Hiawatha Court NE
Rochester, Mn 55901

TAX REFORM ACT
MAR 14 1977

PENDING
Gold Mine Historic District
Voyageurs National Park, Minnesota

LYLE Mine
(is 498700 5555500)

The island is 1.20 acres.

GOLD HARBOR or HOLMAN Mine
(is 489700 5555510)

The mine is located within the north 3 acres of a 6.35 acre tract.

KABETOGAMA PENINSULA

UNNAMED Shaft
(is 493060 5533310)

Shaft located under out building

The peninsula is approximately 3 acres.

DRIWEED ISLAND

The island is 3.9 acres.

BUSHYHEAD Mine
(is 4981200 5555500)

The mine is located within 5 acres of an 18.35 acre tract.

OLD SOLDIER Mine
(is 490740 5558410)

The peninsula is .85 acres.

BIG AMERICAN Mine
(is 489040 5533360)
**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**  
**NATIONAL PARK SERVICE**  
**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**  
**PROPERTY MAP FORM**  

**SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS**  
**TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- ENCLOSE WITH MAP**

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Gold Mine Historic District
Voyageurs National Park, Minnesota

LITTLE AMERICAN Mine
The island is 4.65 acres.

(18 487630 5868040)
NAME
HISTORIC
Gold Mine Historic District
AND/OR COMMON
Gold Mine Historic District

2 LOCATION
CITY, TOWN
Island View
VICINITY OF
COUNTY Koochiching
STATE Minnesota

3 MAP REFERENCE
SOURCE
Sketch Map
SCALE
1:200 (approximate)
DATE September 1976

REQUIREMENTS
TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS
1. PROPERTY BOUNDARIES
2. NORTH ARROW
3. UTM REFERENCES
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number ______  Page ______

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Keeper ____________________

[Signature]

[Date: 11/17/89]
Note: These changes apply to Gold Mine Sites Historic District in Koochiching County, Minnesota.

REFERENCE NUMBER: 77000155

STATE: MINNESOTA

COUNTY: Koochiching

RESOURCE NAME (HISTORIC):

CITY:

VICINITY OF:

ADDRESS: off Mn. Hwy. 11 in Voyageurs National Park

CERTIFICATION DATE:

REMOVED DATE:

COMMENTS:

Nina M. Archabal
State Historic Preservation Officer

JUN 17 1988
Date
REQUESTED ACTION: ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION

PROPERTY NAME: Gold Mine Sites

MULTIPLE NAME:

STATE & COUNTY: MINNESOTA, Koochiching

DATE RECEIVED: 6/19/06  DATE OF PENDING LIST:
DATE OF 16TH DAY:
DATE OF WEEKLY LIST: 8/02/06
DATE OF 45TH DAY:

REFERENCE NUMBER: 77000155

NOMINATOR: STATE

REASONS FOR REVIEW:

APPEAL: N  DATA PROBLEM: N  LANDSCAPE: N  LESS THAN 50 YEARS: N
OTHER: N  PDIL: N  PERIOD: N  PROGRAM UNAPPROVED: N
REQUEST: N  SAMPLE: N  SLR DRAFT: N  NATIONAL: N

COMMENT WAIVER: N

__ACCEPT  __RETURN  __REJECT  ___________ DATE

ABSTRACT/SUMMARY COMMENTS:

additional documentation accepted

RECOM./CRITERIA Accept
REVIEWER Edward Heath DISCIPLINE History
TELEPHONE ______________________ DATE 8.2.06

DOCUMENTATION see attached comments Y/N see attached SLR Y/N

If a nomination is returned to the nominating authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the NPS.
National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Name of property: Gold Mine Historic District
Koochiching County, MN

Reference Number: 77000155
State: Minnesota (MN)
County: Koochiching (071)
Resource Name (Historic): Gold Mine Historic District
Location, Street & Number: off Minn. Hwy. 11 in Voyageurs National Park and in Unorganized Territory
Comments: Island View disbanded as a city

Britta L. Bloomberg
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

Date: 6/14/06
**NAME**
Big American Mine Shaft
Gold Mine Historic District

**LOCATION**
City, Town: Island View
X Vicinity Of: Island View
County: Koochiching
State: Minnesota

**PHOTO REFERENCE**
Photo Credit: Liza Nagle
Date of Photo: August 1976

Negative Filed At: Minnesota Historical Society, 690 Cedar Street, St. Paul, Minn. 55101

**IDENTIFICATION**
Describe View, Direction, Etc. If District, Give Building Name & Street
Detail of the Big American Mine shaft opening. Photograph taken facing west.
**Name**
Big American Mine Shaft

**Historic**
Gold Mine Historic District

**Date Entered**
MAY 6 1977

**Location**

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**Identification**

Big American Mine shaft opening and talus slope to the right (west). Photograph taken facing south.
NAME:
aerial view of Little American Island

HISTORIC:
Gold Mine Historic District

LOCATION:

Island View, Koochiching, Minnesota

PHOTO REFERENCE:

PHOTO CREDIT: Douglas George

DATE OF PHOTO: 1973

NEGATIVE FILED AT: Minnesota Historical Society, 690 Cedar Street, St. Paul, Minn. 55101

IDENTIFICATION:

DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC. IF DISTRICT, GIVE BUILDING NAME & STREET

Little American Island from Black Bay Forestry Tower. Photograph taken facing the northeast.
Aerial photograph of Dryweed Island to the left and Kabetogama Peninsula to the right. Photograph taken facing east.
Old Soldier Mine with cement cap and talus slope to the rear (south side). Photograph taken facing south.
**NAME**
Lyle Mine Shaft
Gold Mine Historic District

**LOCATION**

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**PHOTO REFERENCE**

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<td>August 1976</td>
<td>Minnesota Historical Society, 690 Cedar Street, St. Paul, Minn. 55101</td>
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**IDENTIFICATION**

no negative number - request by county and subject.

Describe view, direction, etc. If district, give building name & street

View of Lyle Mine in center of photograph. Summer residence built around the mine shaft. Talus dump is evident on south side of shaft. Photograph taken facing northwest.
### National Register of Historic Places Property Photograph Form

#### See Instructions in How To Complete National Register Forms

**1 NAME**

- Bushyhead Mine
- Gold Mine Historic District

**2 LOCATION**

- City, Town: Island View
- Vicinity Of: X
- County: Koochiching
- State: Minnesota

**3 PHOTO REFERENCE**

- Photo Credit: John J. Hackett
- Date of Photo: October 1975
- Negative Filed At: Minnesota Historical Society, 690 Cedar Street, St. Paul, Minn. 55101

**4 IDENTIFICATION**

- Describe View, Direction, Etc. If District, Give Building Name & Street: Bushyhead gold mine adit opening located on Bushyhead Island. Photograph facing north.

- Photo No: 01346-5
Holman or Gold Harbor gold mine shaft opening. Photograph taken facing north.