**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**
**NATIONAL PARK SERVICE**

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

*Type all entries - complete applicable sections*

**1. NAME**

- **COMMON:** Little American Mine
- **AND/OR HISTORIC:** Little American Mine

**2. LOCATION**

- **STREET AND NUMBER:** Little American Island
- **CITY OR TOWN:** Island View
- **CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:** Eighth

**3. CLASSIFICATION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORY</th>
<th>OWNERSHIP</th>
<th>STATUS</th>
<th>ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Site</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>Occupied</td>
<td>Restricted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Unoccupied</td>
<td>Unrestricted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District</td>
<td>Both</td>
<td>Preservation work in progress</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)**

- Agricultural
- Commercial
- Educational
- Entertainment
- Industrial
- Military
- Government
- Private Residence
- Religious
- Transportation
- Other (Specify)
- Scientific

**4. OWNER OF PROPERTY**

- **OWNER'S NAME:** Nancy Scholz
- **STREET AND NUMBER:** 1204 Dellis Road
- **CITY OR TOWN:** Wheaton
- **STATE:** Illinois
- **CODE:** 60187

**5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

- **COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC:** Registrar of Deeds - Koochiching County Courthouse
- **STREET AND NUMBER:**
- **CITY OR TOWN:** International Falls
- **STATE:** Minnesota
- **CODE:** 22

**6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

- **TITLE OF SURVEY:** Statewide Historic Sites Survey
- **DATE OF SURVEY:** continuous
- **DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:** Minnesota Historical Society
- **CITY OR TOWN:** Building 27, Fort Snelling
- **STATE:** St. Paul
- **CODE:** 22
The Little American Mine is located on a three acre island in Rainy Lake approximately eleven miles east of International Falls, Minnesota. The island is 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 top. Other excavations are visible but appear to be open pit and not of any great depth. A reconnaissance of the island failed to discover any building remains.

Mining operations began at the Little American late in 1893 following the discovery of gold on the western side of the island by a prospector. He could not obtain financial backing to mine the ore and sold the property to a group of Duluth businessmen. This company began operation in January, 1894 with a small crew opening an adit along the original strike. A stamp mill, to extract the gold from the quartz, was built at Rainy Lake City about one mile east of the mine. By July of that year the mill was processing ore valued at $30 per ton.

Because the initial operation proved promising the company opened a vertical shaft to the 45 foot level from which drifts were extended to mine the exposed ore. This expansion resulted in the construction of a bunkhouse, shafthouse, headquarters building and several other smaller structures on the island. Loading facilities were also built along the south shore to speed transport of gold bearing rock to the stamp mill. Even though the ore assayed at $30 a ton and more the mine was closed due to improper administration.

Shortly after its closing a lawsuit between partners resulted in stoppage of all developments at the mine until late in 1895. Work began again under new management but the ore was of lower quality than anticipated and operations closed in December. The mine was opened again in 1896 operating sporadically throughout that year. By the end of 1897 a small but steady profit was being produced and the Little American appeared ready to prove its worth to investors. A short halt at Christmas resulted in permanent closure however and equipment was transferred to other mines nearby.

Two further attempts were made to reopen the Little American; once in 1901 and again in the 1920s. Neither of these attempts was successful and the shafts eventually filled with water. It was noted during the latter attempt that machinery was still in place on the lower levels of the mine and did not appear to have been badly damaged by water.
6. SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

☐ Pre-Columbian  ☐ 16th Century  ☐ 18th Century  ☐ 20th Century
☐ 15th Century  ☐ 17th Century  ☐ 19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

Aboriginal  ☐ Education  ☐ Political  ☐ Urban Planning
☐ Prehistoric  ☐ Engineering  ☐ Religion/Philosophy  ☐ Other (Specify)
☐ Historic  ☐ Industry  ☐ Science  ☐ Mining
☐ Agriculture  ☐ Invention  ☐ Sculpture
☐ Architecture  ☐ Landscape  ☐ Social/Humanitarian
☐ Art  ☐ Architecture  ☐ Literature
☐ Engineering  ☐ Literature  ☐ Theater
☐ Industry  ☐ Music  ☐ Transportation
☐ Invention  ☐ Music
☐ Landscape  ☐ Other (Specify)
☐ Architecture
☐ Prehistoric
☐ 16th Century
☐ 20th Century

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Little American Mine is the only gold mine in Minnesota known to have produced a profit during its period of operation. The mine's discovery resulted in the 1894 gold rush and was a factor in the rapid settlement of the Rainy Lake region during that period. The impact of the Little American was felt primarily in the town of Rainy Lake City which had sprung up near the mine.

The Little American operated during the period 1893-1898 producing ore that assayed from 18-300 dollars a ton. The average value was just over $30 per ton which represented a profit of about $12 a ton. The operators were not experienced miners however and the profits were wiped out through speculative investments and bad mining techniques. Several companies attempted to mine the location and even though the ore was productive a rich vein never was found and the mine subsequently shut down.

A direct result of the mine closure was the abandonment of Rainy Lake City. This town slowly disappeared between 1898 and 1901 due to the failure of the mine. Some buildings were moved twelve miles west to the new town of Koochiching (International Falls) while others fell into disrepair. The mine and town both demonstrate little indication that human occupation was ever very extensive. Even though the Little American never lived up to its believed potential its impact was felt in the region through the settlers who came to mine and remained to exploit the other resources available. The Little American's greatest influence in the mining industry occurred further north, in Canada, where the major gold fields were found to exist.
**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**


Rainy Lake Herald, December 2, 1897, Newspaper Dept., Minnesota Historical Society

Rainy Lake Journal, June 28, July 26, August 9, October 25, 1894; April 4, October 3, 1895; December 16, 1896; February 18, 1897, Newspaper Dept., Minnesota Historical Society


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**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

| LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES | OR | LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY</td>
<td>LATITUDE</td>
<td>DEGREES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NW</td>
<td>LATITUDE LONGITUDE</td>
<td>LATITUDE LONGITUDE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degrees Minutes Seconds</td>
<td>Degrees Minutes Seconds</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 48° 36' 09" | 93° 10' 05"

**APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY:** 3 acres

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STATE</th>
<th>CODE</th>
<th>COUNTY</th>
<th>CODE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
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**11. FORM PREPARED BY**

**NAME AND TITLE:**

Douglas George, Survey Archaeologist

**ORGANIZATION:**

Minnesota Historical Society

**STREET AND NUMBER:**

Building 27, Fort Snelling

**CITY OR TOWN:**

St. Paul

**DATE:**

12/18/74

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**12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION**

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

- National [ ]
- State [x]
- Local [ ]

**DATE:**

12/30/74

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**ATTEST:**

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

**DATE:**

4/16/75

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**ATTEST:**

Keeper of the National Register

**DATE:**

APR 8 1975
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number _____ Page _____

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

[Signature]
Keeper
19/69
Note: These changes apply to Little America Mine in Koochiching County, Minnesota.

REFERENCE NUMBER: 75000226

STATE: MINNESOTA

COUNTY: Koochiching

RESOURCE NAME (HISTORIC): Little American Mine

CITY:

VICINITY OF: Island View

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

CERTIFICATION DATE:

REMOVED DATE:

COMMENTS:

Nina M. Archabal
State Historic Preservation Officer

JUN 17 1988
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Evaluation/Return Sheet

Requested Action: Additional Documentation

Property Name: Little American Mine

Multiple Name: 

State & County: Minnesota, Koochiching

Date Received: 6/19/06
Date of 16th Day:
Date of Weekly List:
Date of Pending List:
Date of 45th Day: 8/02/06

Reference Number: 75000226

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

Rec./Criteria: Accept

Reviewer: Edna Bell
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.
Reference Number: 75000226

State: Minnesota (MN)

County: Koochiching (071)

Resource Name (Historic): Little American Mine

Location, Street & Number: on Little American Island in Rainy Lake in Voyageurs National Park and Unorganized Territory

Comments: Island View disbanded as a city

Britta L. Bloomberg  6/14/06  Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer
1. NAME
   COMMON: Little American Mine
   AND/OR HISTORIC: Little American Mine

2. LOCATION
   STREET AND NUMBER: Little American Island
   CITY OR TOWN: Island View
   STATE: Minnesota
   CODE: 22
   COUNTY: Koochiching
   CODE: 071

3. PHOTO REFERENCE
   PHOTO CREDIT: Douglas George
   DATE OF PHOTO: 1973
   NEGATIVE FILED AT:
   Minnesota Historical Society, 690 Cedar Street, St. Paul, Minnesota 55101

4. IDENTIFICATION
   DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.
   Little American Island from Black Bay Forestry Tower looking northeast
**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**
**NATIONAL PARK SERVICE**
**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**
**PROPERTY PHOTOGRAPH FORM**
(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with photograph)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STATE</th>
<th>Minnesota</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COUNTY</td>
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<td>ENTRY NUMBER</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>DATE</td>
<td>APR 16 1975</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**1. NAME**
- COMMON: Little American Mine
- AND/OR HISTORIC: Little American Mine

**2. LOCATION**
- STREET AND NUMBER: Little American Island
- CITY OR TOWN: Island View
- STATE: Minnesota
  - CODE: 22
  - COUNTY: Koochiching
  - NATIONAL REGISTER: 071

**3. PHOTO REFERENCE**
- PHOTO CREDIT: Unknown
- DATE OF PHOTO: 1894-95
- NEGATIVE FILED AT:
  - Minnesota Historical Society, 690 Cedar Street, St. Paul, Minnesota 55101

**4. IDENTIFICATION**
- DESCRIBE VIEW, DIRECTION, ETC.:
  - Little American Gold Mine in operation
  - View believed to be toward west end of island

# 2082

**RECEIVED**
JAN 16 1975