UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM
FOR FEDERAL PROPERTIES

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

1 NAME
HISTORIC Desert Queen Mine
AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION
STREET & NUMBER Not applicable
CITY, TOWN Joshua Tree National Monument x VICINITY OF Twenty-nine Palms Forty-third
STATE California CODE 06 COUNTY Riverside CODE 065

2 CLASSIFICATION
CATEGORY [x] DISTRICT [x] BUILDING(S) [x] STRUCTURE [x] SITE [x] OBJECT
OWNERSHIP [x] PUBLIC [x] PRIVATE [x] BOTH
PUBLIC ACQUISITION [x] IN PROCESS [x] BEING CONSIDERED
STATUS [x] OCCUPIED [x] UNOCCUPIED [x] WORK IN PROGRESS [x] ACCESSIBLE

4 AGENCY
REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS: (If applicable)
National Park Service, Western Region Office
STREET & NUMBER 450 Golden Gate Avenue
CITY, TOWN San Francisco STATE California

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION
COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Riverside County Recorder's Office
STREET & NUMBER P.O. Box 751
CITY, TOWN Riverside STATE California (92502)

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS
TITLE
DATE
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS
CITY, TOWN
STATE
The Desert Queen Mine consisted of a number of tunnels and inclined and vertical shafts. There remain four large vertical shafts which historical data indicates were in the range of 65 to 75 feet in depth, five inclined shafts of about 35 to 45 degree slope, and ten adits to horizontal tunnels, five of which have suffered considerable decay, three being nearly entirely sealed off. Tailing piles adjacent to these workings are generally small, indicating removal of little ore, except for the tailings from the main adit which constitute a mound 65 feet high spilling into the wash below. One-half mile northwest of the main mining site six additional tailings piles indicate additional workings.

The mine area is littered with historic debris, including timbers, scrap metal and rusted pipe. There are approximately 39 feet of 16-inch pipe, 48 feet of two-inch pipe, and over 145 feet of one inch pipe, with more buried throughout the main tailings dump. Additional scrap equipment includes: two cyanide tanks, one in poor condition; one cyanide tank lid in the wash; cable; an undetermined length of mine tramway track (rail spiked down on ties) in the main tunnel; railroad ties with rail removed; a twelve-foot piece of tramway track in the wash; metal screen; concrete debris; two concrete pads, each 3½ by 6 feet; two concrete pads 5 by 6 feet; one concrete pad four feet square and three feet high; one wooden adit door still in place; one rusted oil drum in the wash; one air pump and reservoir, mounted on two large ten-foot wooden beams, labeled "Chicago Pneumatic", but missing its engine; an iron container, one by one by four feet; an iron container on four legs, 4½ feet tall; an iron wheel, perhaps a flywheel, 2½ feet in diameter, mounted on a shaft on wooden beams anchored in rock.

Some of these remains pertained to an aerial tramway which carried ore across the gully in buckets for loading into wagons or trucks. Most of the sheet metal, timbers and other debris is located within a few hundred feet north of the main adit and tailings pile, and many timbers have been thrown down the steep slope.

On the opposite hillside is a winch with some cable, and the remains of a stone house, one of whose walls is 7½ feet high, the remainder being about 3½ feet high, and the north and west walls being almost entirely gone.

Safety of visitors may require sealing of the mine shafts and tunnels.
SIGNIFICANCE

The Desert Queen Mine is of local historical significance under the category of Industry and the subcategory of mining, being one of the more successful and longer-lived mines of high desert country of Southern California in Joshua Tree National Monument. Its history was all too typical of southwestern desert frontier mines. It brought death rather than fortune to its discoverer, and its subsequent owner lost it to a financial institution. Its operation was sporadic, but it occasionally offered up a pocket of gold ore sufficiently rich to maintain interest in intermittent operation for nearly three-quarters of a century. It was associated with a notorious local outlaw. Its tunnels, inclined shafts and shafts represent three basic types of mine approach which were typical of southwestern desert mines, but the Desert Queen Mine was more productive and far longer-lived than most of its contemporaries.

The above statement of significance is derived from the following sketchy and inadequate historical data:

A. James discovered the outcropping of gold ore which he developed as the Desert Queen Mine during the early 1890s; although one source claims that the discovery was made in 1891, another cites 1893 as the year of James' death. The ore processed initially was apparently quite rich, and a local cattle rustler named Jim McHaney decided to take over the mine. He sent two cronies, Charley Martin and a man named Myers, to force James to sign over the mine. James refused, so Martin borrowed a gun from Myers and forced James to sign, then shot him. Martin was tried for murder, claimed self defense, and was acquitted.

McHaney's first ore shipments reportedly netted him $27,000, but he spent it quickly and then borrowed from a local bank against future production. When subsequent ore shipments proved unable to keep up with his borrowing, the mine passed into ownership of the bank. It was later owned by several individuals, passing into the hands of William F. Keys possibly in 1917. Keys operated the mine intermittently until 1961.
MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES
Fact File, Joshua Tree National Monument Library
Perkins Papers, Joshua Tree National Monument Library

GEOGRAPHICAL DATA
ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 80

UTM REFERENCES

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION
The boundary is approximately a square containing approximately 80 acres, with the corners as indicated by the four UTM references cited above.

FORM PREPARED BY
Gordon Chappell, Regional Historian (revision of form by F. Ross Holland, 1971)
National Park Service, Western Region Office
450 Golden Gate Avenue, Box 36063
San Francisco, California

CERTIFICATION OF NOMINATION
STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER RECOMMENDATION
YES X NO

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

IN COMPLIANCE WITH EXECUTIVE ORDER 11593, I HEREBY NOMINATE THIS PROPERTY TO THE NATIONAL REGISTER, CERTIFYING THAT THE STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER HAS BEEN ALLOWED 90 DAYS IN WHICH TO PRESENT THE NOMINATION TO THE STATE REVIEW BOARD AND TO EVALUATE ITS SIGNIFICANCE. THE EVALUATED LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE IS NATIONAL.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE
Deputy Assistant Secretary

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

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 1/13/76
Desert Queen Mine Area
T2S R9E Sec 5+6
Joshua Tree Nat'l Mon.
10-15-1975
DMB etc.