

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

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: Oregon	
COUNTY: Baker	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER 71/10.41.0008	DATE 10/26/71

1. NAME

COMMON:
AND/OR HISTORIC:
Sumpter Valley Gold Dredge

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:
SW of town near
CITY OR TOWN:
Sumpter Cracker Creek

STATE Oregon 97877	CODE 41	COUNTY: Baker	CODE 001
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3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Object <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Structure 	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both 	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Being Considered <input type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress 	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No

PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural	<input type="checkbox"/> Government	<input type="checkbox"/> Park	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation	<input type="checkbox"/> Comments
<input type="checkbox"/> Commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> Industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Educational	<input type="checkbox"/> Military	<input type="checkbox"/> Religious		
<input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input type="checkbox"/> Scientific		

4. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:
Mr. Ken Alexander

STREET AND NUMBER:
Box 535

CITY OR TOWN:
Sumpter

STATE: Oregon	CODE 41
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5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:
Baker County Courthouse

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:
Baker

STATE Oregon	CODE 41
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6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:
Statewide Inventory of Historic Sites and Buildings

DATE OF SURVEY:
 Federal State County Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:
Parks and Recreation Section

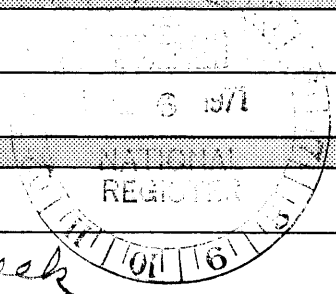
STREET AND NUMBER:
Oregon State Highway Division

CITY OR TOWN:
Salem

STATE: Oregon	CODE 41
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SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: Oregon
COUNTY: Baker
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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered		<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site	

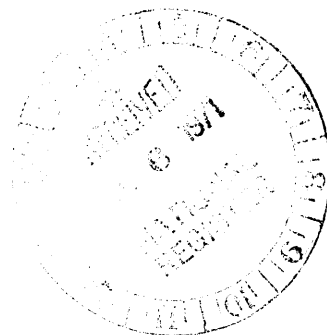
DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Sumpter Valley Gold Dredge is located in historic context on the outskirts of the old mining town of Sumpter, approximately 30 miles West of Baker. The last of three Yuba type gold dredges which ravaged Sumpter Valley between 1913 and 1954, it is moored in a pond amid miles of tailings near the entrance of Cracker Creek into the Powder River. Deteriorated due to exposure to extreme winter temperatures over the years of inactivity, it is being refurbished by the present owner for operation as a mining museum which is to be open to tours.

Built in 1935, it was operated initially by the Sumpter Valley Dredging Company which was based in Portland and largely financed by a prominent family whose shipbuilding firm had flourished during the First World War. The dredge was engineered by W. H. Cullers of the Boles' shipbuilding firm. Cullers became President of the Dredging Company and was active in its affairs until his death in 1944. Following boat building procedures, the dredge was built on the bank and launched into the water, unlike earlier boats which were built in pits later flooded with water.

The hull of Coast fir measures 52 by 120 feet. The steel frame is housed in with horizontal siding. The gravel stacker measures 96 feet with 36-inch belt. The bucket line has 72 buckets, each with a capacity of 9 cubic feet. The digging line was powered by a 250 horse power electric motor. The bucket line ran 20 to 25 buckets per minute. The winch was operated by compressed air, and the boiler was fueled by oil. Two 10-inch pumps and one 6-inch pump supplied 8,000 gallons of water per minute. Additional equipment required for the full operation included an office, sand house, machine shops, two diesel tractors and two trucks. These features are now gone. The digging line dug into bedrock or hardpan 13 to 16 feet. Gravels were washed through revolving screens which took out everything up to three quarters of an inch in diameter. In 1938 the dredge was reported to have washed as many as 10 acres of river bottom land in a month.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS



SIGNIFICANCE

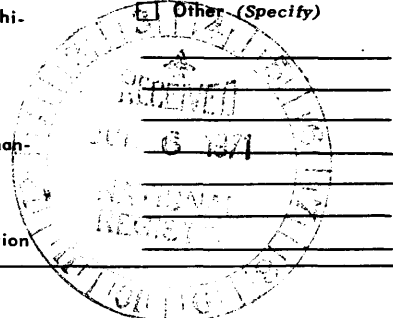
PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

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

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1935-1954

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- | | | | |
|-----------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal | <input type="checkbox"/> Education | <input type="checkbox"/> Political | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Industry | <input type="checkbox"/> Science | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> Military | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music | | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation | | | _____ |



STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

The Blue Mountains are some of the oldest land formations in Oregon and are most important among the three or four principal gold bearing areas of the state. Geological surveys have determined there the presence not only of gold, but silver, platinum, copper and a lengthy catalog of other minerals. The first finds in the Powder River district were made in 1862 during the advent of gold excitement in Eastern Oregon and Western Idaho when prospectors streamed to placer mines. The mining towns of Sumpter, Bourne and Granite described a triangle of activity on the upper Powder River.

In 1896 discovery of a big lode near Bourne and completion of the Sumpter Valley narrow gauge railroad from Baker to Sumpter introduced a new period of "hard-rock" mining. Heavy machinery was brought in to open up rich ore veins. Sumpter boomed between 1899 and 1903. In 1901, according to local accounts, it covered an area of 1400 acres and boasted improvements valued at \$500,000. Thereafter, the town's fortunes waned and fire took its toll. Lumbering and agriculture rose in importance, but mining activity continued.

The first gold dredge in the valley operated from 1913 to 1924. A second dredge was active between 1915 and 1923. The third, constructed in 1935 and incorporating some of the machinery of the antiquated No. 1 dredge, is the last surviving gold dredge in the state.

No. 3 dredge was put into operation by the Sumpter Valley Dredging Company in the days of The New Deal when, under President Franklin D. Roosevelt's gold policy, the price of gold was elevated to between \$34 and \$35 an ounce.

The actual digging operation continued day and night, requiring three men on a shift. However, as many as twenty additional men were employed in the overall operation as laborers, machinists and office workers. Most of the labor force was made up of local townspeople.

No. 3 dredge closed down during the Second World War, but during the idle period repairs and improvements were made. In 1948 the dredge was sold to the Baker Dredging Company, and in 1950 it became the property of the Powder River Dredging Company.

Originally, land for dredging was acquired at about \$50 an acre. Prices later reached \$150 to \$300 per acre. The land area dredged in Sumpter Valley is estimated at 2500 acres. All the combined dredging is estimated to have grossed in the neighborhood of \$10,000,000. Of this total production, \$4,500,000 was produced by dredge No. 3.

(Continued)

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Corning, Howard McKinley, ed., Dictionary of Oregon History (Portland: Bin-fords and Mort, 1956), 203.
An Illustrated History of Baker, Grant, Malheur and Harney Counties...
 (Spokane, Washington: Western Historical Publishing Company, 1902), 219-221.

Hawley, Brooks, and Kathan, Melvin L., Gold in Sumpter Valley (Baker: Brooks Hawley, 1968). 30 pgs. Reproduces description of Sumpter Valley Dredging Company operation from Oregon Metal Mines Handbook (Oregon State Department of Geology and Mineral Industries, 1939).

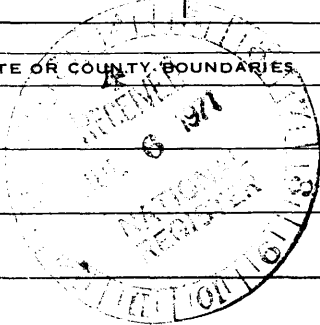
10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds	
NW	° ' "	° ' "		44 ° 44 ' 30 "	118 ° 12 ' 10 "	
NE	° ' "	° ' "				
SE	° ' "	° ' "				
SW	° ' "	° ' "				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 5 acres

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE



NO
UTM
HP

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: Elisabeth Walton, Park Historian

ORGANIZATION: Oregon State Highway Division DATE: June 1971

STREET AND NUMBER: State Highway Building

CITY OR TOWN: Salem STATE: Oregon 97310 CODE: 41

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 Local

Name: R. C. [Signature]

Title: State Highway Engineer

Date: June 30, 1971

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

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

[Signature]
 Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

OCT 26 1971

Date: _____

ATTEST:
[Signature]
 Keeper of The National Register

OCT 7 1971

Date: _____

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
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(Continuation Sheet)

STATE Oregon	
COUNTY Baker	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
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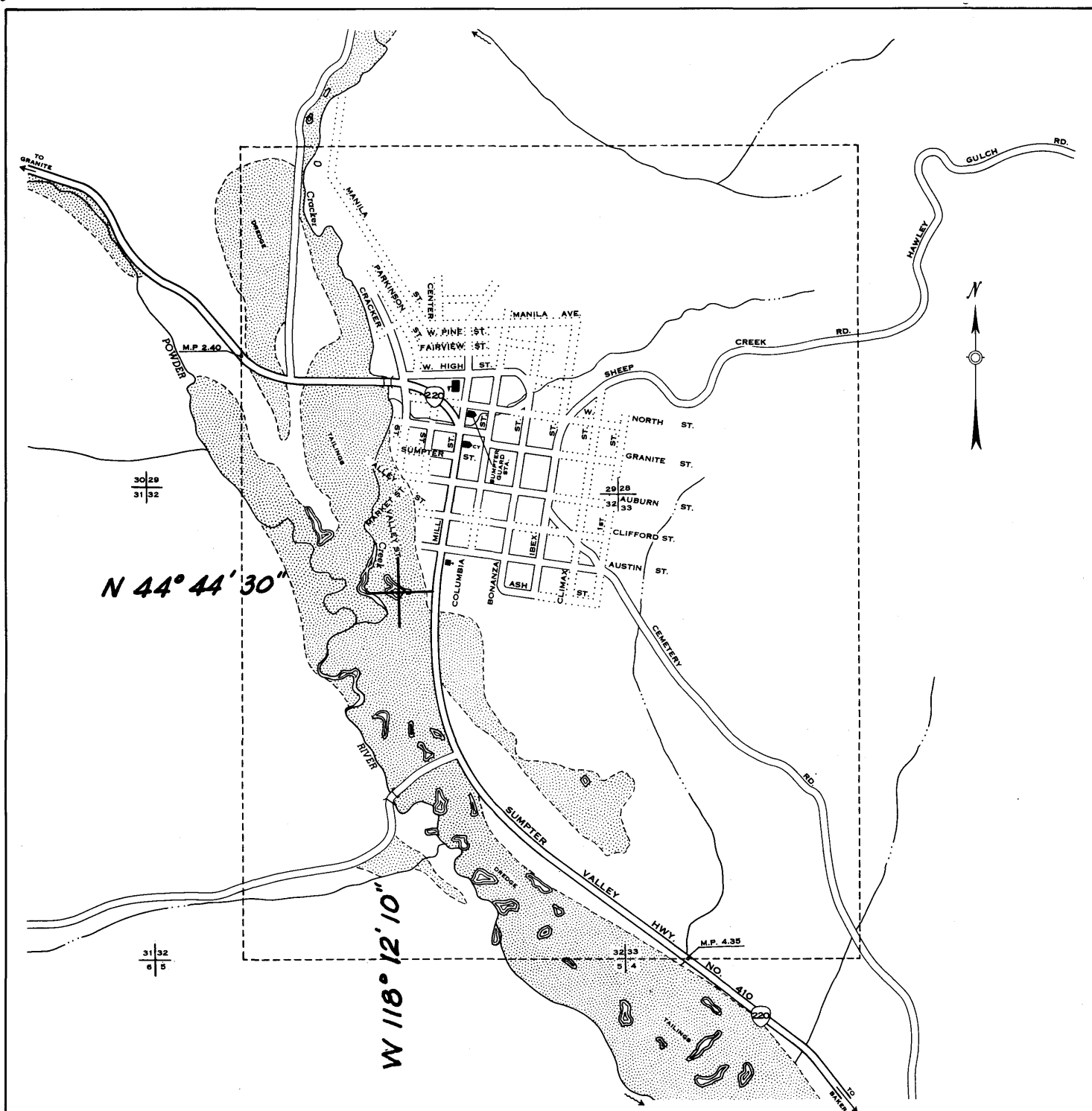
(Number all entries)

SUMPTER VALLEY GOLD DREDGE

8. Significance (Continued)

In 1954, its last year of operation, the dredge reworked old tailings. Operators made their way to the edge of Sumpter, reportedly with the idea of purchasing a portion of the townsite which was known to be a good source. The plan collapsed, however, when rumors led to the inflation of land prices. The dredge remains today where it was stopped, a singular vestige of the pervasive mining industry in the Blue Mountains of Eastern Oregon.








$N 44^{\circ} 44' 30''$

$W 118^{\circ} 12' 10''$












M.P. 2.40
30|29
31|32

M.P. 4.35
31|32
6|5

SIGNED ROUTES

- INTERSTATE 
- U.S. 
- ORE. 


LEGEND

-  Post Office
-  Public Bldg.
-  School
-  R. R. Depot
-  City Hall
-  Court House
-  Armory
-  Library
-  Street open for travel.
-  Street dedicated but not open.
-  City Limits.

SUMPTER

BAKER COUNTY, OREGON
PREPARED BY THE
OREGON STATE HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

IN COOPERATION WITH THE
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
BUREAU OF PUBLIC ROADS

Population 100
Scale in Feet


Revised April 1965