

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

### 1. Name of Property

historic name Cape Nome Mining District Discovery Sites

other names/site number \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. Location

street & number \_\_\_\_\_  not for publication

city, town Nome  vicinity

state AK code 02 county Nome Division code 180 zip code 99762

### 3. Classification

#### Ownership of Property

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

#### Category of Property

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

#### Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
_____	_____ buildings
<u>4</u>	_____ sites
_____	_____ structures
_____	_____ objects
<u>4</u>	<u>0</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 3

### 4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.  See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

State or Federal agency and bureau \_\_\_\_\_

### 5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register.  
 See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register.  See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of the Keeper \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Action \_\_\_\_\_

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**6. Function or Use**

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Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Industry/Processing/ExtractionIndustry/Processing/Extraction--processing sites (mining)

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--processing sites (mining)

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**7. Description**

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Architectural Classification

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

(enter categories from instructions)

foundation \_\_\_\_\_

walls \_\_\_\_\_

roof \_\_\_\_\_

other tailings

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Other: placer claims

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Describe present and historic physical appearance.

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## ITEM 7. DESCRIPTION

The Cape Nome Mining District National Historic Landmark includes Discovery Claim on Anvil Creek, E.O. Lindbloom Placer Claim, and No. 1 on Snow Creek Placer Claim included in the Cape Nome Mining District Discovery Sites National Historic Landmark in 1978 and a portion of Nome Beach, nominated herein.

Discovery Claim on Anvil Creek

Discovery Claim on Anvil Creek is located four miles north of the city of Nome, Alaska on the Seward Peninsula. The site lies just upstream from the point where Anvil Creek leaves its valley in the highlands south of the Kigluaik Mountains and flows out onto the coastal plain to merge with the Snake River. The valley here is low and broad, approximately a mile-and-a-quarter from divide to divide, with Anvil Mountain to the east and Banner Peak to the west. A terrace two hundred feet wide and twenty to thirty feet above the creek bed extends along the stream and slopes gradually upward. The bedrock in Anvil Creek is a micaceous schist, silvery gray in color. The divides are composed of micaceous schist, quartz-schist, and limestone.

Anvil Creek was never glaciated. The creek floor gravels were all derived locally from within the basin, and were produced by weathering. They varied in thickness from two or three feet, and were usually covered by two to three feet of muck and clay. Gold was generally found throughout the thickness of the gravel; all of the gold bearing gravel was put through sluice boxes. From one to two feet of the underlying bedrock was found to contain gold and was also sluiced. The richest deposits were found at and in the bedrock. By 1900, the entire bed of Anvil Creek had been worked over at least once (Brooks et al 1901: 74).

**8. Statement of Significance**

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally     statewide     locally

Applicable National Register Criteria     A     B     C     D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions)     A     B     C     D     E     F     G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Industry  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Period of Significance

1898-1907  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Dates

1898, 1899  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Cultural Affiliation

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Significant Person

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Architect/Builder

N/A  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

ITEM 8. SIGNIFICANCE

Summary Paragraph:

The Nome gold rush of 1900 was one of the last great mining stampedes in the American West. Discovery Claim on Anvil Creek, E.O. Lindbloom Placer Claim, and No. 1 on Snow Creek, which the "three Lucky Swedes" located in 1898 and the site along the beach where miners discovered gold in the sand in 1899 are symbols of the end of an era in American history. The Nome strikes near the northwestern tip of North America marked the end of the American gold rush trail. Upwards of 20,000 gold hunters came to Nome in 1900. It was the scene of Alaska's largest gold rush. During the first ten years of intensive placer mining in northwestern Alaska, from 1898 to 1907, nearly 50 million dollars in gold was produced on the Seward Peninsula, and about 75% of the total came from streams in the Nome region.<sup>1</sup> Though the initial boom was over quickly, Nome remained for several years both the largest community in Alaska, and the center of the richest mining district in the north.

These three placer claims and the Nome Beach are exceptionally significant in the areas of Industry and Alaska History (Theme XXI). They represent the two major aspects of the culminating episode in the national gold rush phenomenon. They also represent the opening of northwest Alaska to white settlement and economic development; this great Nome stampede brought a

<sup>1</sup>U.S. Geological Survey, The Gold Placers of Parts of Seward Peninsula, Alaska, Bulletin 328, by A.J. Collier, Frank L. Hess, Philip S. Smith and A.H. Brooks, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1908), p. 12; U.S. Geological Survey, Mineral Resources of Alaska, 1909, Bulletin 442, "Mining In Seward Peninsula," by Fred F. Henshaw (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1910), p. 353.

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dimensions were approximately 12 by 12 feet. A trash scatter, largely of household goods, is concentrated in and around the structure. Items present include china sherds, a tin kerosene lamp base with a patent date of 1898 stamped on it, a wood burning stove lid, wire nails, window glass, fragments of canvas tarps, etc. The remains of the narrow gauge railroad track and a few trestles are located on the slope of Anvil Mountain to the east of the claim.

The few alterations that have taken place at Discovery Claim on Anvil Creek since the 1920s include the revegetation of the site and the creation of a road that runs along the top of the dredged tailings pile. Today, thickets of willow grow in the creek bottom on the islands between the channels, and alders and berry bushes cover the banks of the creek and its terraces interspered with patches of alpine tundra and grassy areas. The road is nothing more than a slightly graded path along the top of the bare dredged tailings.

Placer mining operations are still underway in the Anvil Creek area today. Water is being pumped from the claim (No. 1 Below Discovery, Mineral Survey No. 722) just downstream from the Discovery Claim on Anvil Creek, and some prospecting involving grading has recently been initiated on an adjoining claim to the east (No. 3 Below Goodluck, Mineral Survey No. 1368). A permit was issued in 1986 by the city of Nome for work at the Discovery Claim on Anvil Creek, although no work has since taken place at the claim.

The scattered remnants of old mining machinery, the wooden flumes, the tailing piles, and the collapsed building all reflect the placer mining that took place shortly after the turn of the century.

No. 1 on Snow Creek

Snow Creek joins Glacier Creek about three miles from the Snake River. Its source lies in a shallow basin, which is gravel-filled, while its lower course is through a rather sharply cut gorge (Snow Gulch). Snow Creek's total length is about one mile.

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A 1900 description of Snow Creek indicated that:

The bedrock near the mouth of Snow Gulch is chloritic schist, and the strikes are about at right angles to the course of the stream. Near its head some blue limestones are exposed. A quartz vein near the divide has been found to carry some gold. The gravels are 3 or 4 feet in thickness and are chiefly quartz and mica schist. (Brooks et al, 1900).

Historically reached by a wagon road from Banner Station on the Seward Peninsula Railroad, it is now accessible directly by road from Nome. No. 1 on Snow Creek Placer Claim is the claim directly above the confluence of the two creeks at the head of Snow Gulch.

Current mining activity has obscured any historical remains surviving on the No. 1 on Snow Gulch claim. The appearance of the site is nonetheless in keeping with its historical character. Large tailing piles line the banks of Snow Creek. White corner posts mark the boundaries of the claim. A tarpaper shack with vertical boards and no windows is of recent origin but deteriorating rapidly. A recent grave, believed to be that of Maurice Kelliher, who owned and began mining the site in the 1970s, is located on the side of the claim leading to the road which overlooks it.

E.O. Lindbloom Placer Claim

The E.O. Lindbloom Placer Claim is located on Mountain Creek near Mary Gulch. It is approximately three quarters of a mile northwest of Bonanza Hill and one mile northwest of Banner Peak. The placer workings constitute a series of mounds and resemble a ragged ridge running along the creek bank. Liches, moss, and other most tundra fauna have erased all physical evidence of human disturbance except for the piles of brush-covered tailings. The tailings extend along the bank until jaggging away from the creek at a 20 degree angle about three hundred feet from the northeast end of the claim. The placer workings abruptly vanish into the surrounding tundra. The claim's corner stakes are difficult to locate in the dense undergrowth.

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Nome Beach

The nominated section of the Nome Beach consists of a .6 mile-long stretch of sandy level beach on the eastern edge of the city of Nome. It is bounded on the north by the Nome-Council Road, on the west by the eastern end of the Nome seawall near Campbell Way, and on the east by East Limits Road.

The surface material of the beach is usually sand with occasional shingle and gravel. The beach sand consists largely of quartz, usually stained with iron, and mica- and chlorite-schist fragments. Reddish garnets form an important constituent and sometimes predominate. It was this characteristic that gave rise to the miners' term "ruby sands."

A theory popular with the miners at the time of the original beach strike in 1899 held that the beach gold was deposited by the ocean. However, the origin of the beach gold was the same as that of the creek gold, the bedrock of the region. It was washed down by rivers and then distributed along the shore by currents. The majority of the gold was deposited in a layer of fine sands and sometimes coarse gravels, 3 to 6 inches thick, that were laid down directly on a bed of blue clay found at a depth of 5 to 7 feet. This phenomenon, gold in beach sands, was unique, and the rich sands were easily worked by shovel and rocker.

During the gold rush of 1899 the Nome beach was covered with miners extracting gold with hand rockers and sluice boxes. White canvas wall tents for living and storage were perched on ridges between huge craters dug in the beach by miners.

Today the beach from the mouth of the Snake River to Campbell Way has been covered with a seawall built in 1949 to 1951 to protect Nome waterfront from flooding and erosion caused by the severe storms of the Bering Sea. The stretch of beach from Campbell Way at the eastern end of the seawall to East Limit Road is physically unchanged since the time of the original gold rush. The only alteration is the presence of the Nome-Council Road which traces the former edge of the tundra north of the beach. The setting of the original beach placer deposits has been

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preserved. Further, this stretch of the Nome beach is still mined occasionally. In the summer of 1986, several hand rockers were being operated in this area. The city of Nome has assembled a collection of historic mining equipment for an outdoor exhibit across the road from the beach at Rocker Gulch Park.

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substantial population into Alaska and, for the first time, truly focused the attention of the United States on this territory.

Historical Context:

The Nome gold rush followed quickly upon the heels of the gold rush to the Canadian Klondike. Four weeks after arrival of the first shipment of Klondike gold in San Francisco in 1897, an expedition set out for northwestern Alaska. Heading the group was David Libby, who led the Western Union survey party across the Seward Peninsula in 1866-1867. He had noted signs of gold along the route of the proposed telegraph and he intended to find the promising spot he had seen thirty years earlier. Libby and three partners, including his brother-in-law Louis Melsing, H.L. Baker and A.P. Mordaunt, discovered gold on the tributaries of the Fish River in the spring of 1898 and found the town of Council City, the first permanently settled gold mining town on the Seward Peninsula.<sup>2</sup>

The claims in the Council City Mining District attracted several hundred men to the region by the summer of 1898. Among these were Jafet Lindberg, Eric Lindblom, and John Brynteson, who became known to history as the "three Lucky Swedes." The chain of events which led up to their discovery of the Nome gold fields has never been totally clear. An article in the Nome Nugget on January 1, 1900 was headlined "Who Discovered Nome?" The newspaper could not decide which of the numerous conflicting accounts of the Nome strike were true, and so the paper decided to include several different versions of the origin of Nome and would let "future historians settle the dispute."<sup>3</sup>

The dispute has never been completely settled, and probably never will be, as almost every first hand account of the strike contradicts every other one in some fashion or another. Greed

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<sup>2</sup>Terrence M. Cole, "A History of the Nome Gold Rush: The Poor Man's Paradise," (Ph.D. diss., University of Washington, 1983), pp. 6-25.

<sup>3</sup>Nome Nugget, 1 January 1900.

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and race prejudice against the "Swedes" who struck it rich, as well as years of legal disputes over the ownership of the richest claims, have left a trail of contradictory evidence. It is certain that several individuals actually prospected in the Anvil Creek area before the "three Lucky Swedes" located the E.O. Lindblom Placer Claim on Mountain Creek on September 19, 1898, the No. 1 on Snow Creek Placer Claim on September 20, 1898, and the Discovery Claim on Anvil Creek on September 22, 1898. But the prospectors who had been on the creeks before the "lucky Swedes" failed to stake any claims, as they surely would have done had they realized the richness of the ground.<sup>4</sup> One of the best and probably most accurate accounts of the discovery is by Jafet Lindeberg, who described how he met Lindbloom and Brynteson in 1898, and told what subsequently happened in a letter he wrote to the U.S. Geological Survey.

We three men met by Chance at Council City in August, 1898, after prospecting around in that district for some time and staking claims, formed a prospecting companionship and decided to prospect over a wider range of territory. Even at this early date the Council City district was overrun by stampeders, and staked to the mountain tops; so we proceeded to Golofin [Golovin] Bay, and taking a large open boat and an outfit of provisions, on September 11, 1898, started up

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<sup>4</sup>Leland H. Carlson has made the most detailed study of the early events leading up to and following the discoveries at Nome. See especially his articles: "The Discovery of Gold at Nome, Alaska," Pacific Historical Review, May 1947, pp. 163-175; "Nome: From Mining Camp to Civilized Community," Pacific Northwest Quarterly, July 1947, pp. 233-242. The best account of the Nome discovery in a more general context is William R. Hunt, North of 53 (New York: Macmillan, 1974), pp. 95-128. H.L. Blake, one of Daniel Libby's partners, and one of the founders of Council City, claimed that he actually discovered Anvil Creek in late 1897 or 1898, but his claim seems highly suspect. Blake's "History of the Discovery at Cape Nome," (U.S. Senate, 56th Congress, 1st Session, Document No. 441), was published by the U.S. Senate during the debate over the alien claims before the passage of the Alaska Civil Code.

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the coast toward Port Clarence, stopping at the various rivers to prospect on the way, in which we found signs of gold but not in paying quantities, and finally arriving at what is now known as the town of Nome.

Lindeberg and his partners headed up the mouth of the Snake River, which they named, prospecting as they went along. They camped at the mouth of Glacier Creek. Lindeberg continued:

The first encouraging signs of gold we found on the banks of Snake River....[w]e proceeded to prospect along the tributaries of the Snake River, which tributaries we named as follows: Anvil Creek (taking the name from an anvil-shaped rock which stands on the mountain on the east side of the creek), Snow Gulch, Glacier Creek, Rock Creek, and Dry Creek, in all of which we found gold in paying quantities, and proceeded to locate claims, first on Anvil Creek, because we found better prospects in that creek than in the others, and where we located the "discovery claim" in the name of us three jointly. In addition to this, each man staked a separate claim in his own name on the creek.<sup>5</sup>

The naming and staking of the Anvil Creek and other tributaries of the Snake River by Lindeberg, Lindblom, and Brynteson in the fall of 1898 marked the beginning of the development of the Nome Mining District. As word spread of their discoveries, several hundred men, mostly from the Council City district, rushed to the scene. Many of the latecomers were convinced that the "Swedes" and their friends had illegally staked the richest claims and charged that they were aliens and therefore had no right to stake

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<sup>5</sup>Lindeberg to Frank L. Hess in U.S.G.S. Bulletin No. 328, pp. 16-18. This statement disagrees with the Record Book of the Cape Nome Mining District Organized October 15, 1898, in the files of the District Recorder, Nome. This document, on page six, records the Anvil Creek claim as located on September 22, 1898 and filed on October 17, 1898; on page sixty-four, records the Lindblom claim on Mountain Creek as located on September 19, 1898; and on pages seventy and seventy-one records the Snow Creek claim as located on September 20, 1898.

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mining ground on American soil. On this pretense most of the claims were re-staked by claim jumpers and speculators. The situation was even worse by the summer of 1899, as the number of prospectors in the camp had swelled to 3,000, and the U.S. Army had to restrain a mob which planned to declare all of the existing mining locations in the Nome district void and illegal and to reopen all of the creeks for staking.<sup>6</sup>

During this critical period in July 1899, gold was discovered in rich quantities in the sand on the Nome beach. All along the coast, perhaps for hundreds of miles, there was gold in the sand. No one knows for certain who first discovered gold in the beach sand, or where or when it happened, but it was this discovery which made Nome a national sensation during the winter of 1899-1900 and started the great gold rush of 1900.<sup>7</sup> The discovery of gold on a few creeks in the vicinity of Nome excited some interest, the Nome News explained in December 1899, "but it was the unparalleled discovery of gold in the sands of the beach that riveted the attention of multitudes on this section."<sup>8</sup>

The beach strike was a poor man's dream come true. No claims could be staked on the beach, there was no frozen ground to thaw, and there were no back-breaking holes to dig. Some men even believed that the gold actually came in with the tide, like seashells or driftwood, and with no more effort than putting sand in a bucket, they could dig out a fortune. Sam Dunham, who was reporting on conditions in Nome for the U.S. Department of Labor, left an eloquent description of conditions on the beach as they were in the fall of 1899, when more than a thousand golden

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<sup>6</sup>Cole, "A History of the Nome Gold Rush," pp. 47-60; Carlson, "The First Mining Season at Nome," pp. 163-175.

<sup>7</sup>There are numerous people who took credit, or were given credit, for the discovery of gold in the sand on the Nome beach. Several people may have made the discovery about the same time. See, Cole, "A History of the Nome Gold Rush," pp. 77-78.

<sup>8</sup>Nome News, 30 December 1899.

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beachcombers rocked about one million dollars in gold out of the sand on the shore of the Bering Sea. Dunham wrote:

No thoughtful man who walked along this golden street in the bright sunlight of last October will ever forget the picture presented there. For many miles along the beach double ranks of men were rocking, almost shoulder to shoulder, while their partners stripped the pay streak and supplied the rockers with water and pay dirt. Nearly all were working with an energy and dogged perseverance which suggested the husbandman shocking his sheaves and now and then casting anxious glances at the black cloud fast rising in the west. Others, seemingly less fearful of the future, were passing jokes or singing as they worked.<sup>9</sup>

The beach sands were not inexhaustible as many had hoped, and the gold did not come in with the tide, as some had theorized. Instead, the gold had been slowly washed out of the tundra by the waves and concentrated on the beach. By the summer of 1900 when some 20,000 people had landed on the "Golden Sands of Nome" most of the gold was already gone. Later, huge dredges were built to mine the golden sands, and almost every single one was a disastrous failure.<sup>10</sup> But even today, nearly every year, new efforts are still made to mine the beach sands at Nome, as promoters or inventors with new machines think that they have finally found a secret for digging gold out of the Bering Sea. Though the "golden sands" of Nome were never as commercially important as either the claims on the creeks or the ancient submerged beach lines, the Nome beach was the inspiration for Alaska's greatest gold rush.

Discovery Claim on Anvil Creek

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<sup>9</sup>U.S. Department of Labor, The Yukon and Nome Gold Regions, by Sam C. Dunham, Vol. 5, Bulletin No. 29, July 1900, p. 858.

<sup>10</sup>Terrence Cole, Nome: City of the Golden Beaches (Anchorage: Alaska Geographic Society, 1984), pp. 91-95. For the story of one particular dredge which failed, see Engineering and Mining Journal, 22 June 1901, pp. 85-786; 6 July 1901, p. 4.

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The single stream of Anvil Creek produced far more gold than was ever taken out of the beach. Anvil Creek was one of the richest placer gold streams discovered in the north. Out of the total gold production for the Seward Peninsula in 1900, \$4.7 million, Anvil Creek alone was the source of \$1,750,000 in gold. The output on Anvil Creek was one million dollars more than that of the next richest stream, Glacier Creek (and its rich tributary Snow Gulch), which produced a total of only \$750,000.<sup>11</sup> "Anvil Creek, which may be called the first parent of Nome, has already spread its name and fame over the length and breadth of the American continent," the Nome Semi-Weekly News reported in 1905. "By the discovery of the rich values contained on that stream, Seward Peninsula was opened to civilization and industry." In fact, the News claimed, "because of the effect which its discovery has had on the development of this immense territory of the Northland, it must take precedence [over] every other gold bearing stream north of California."<sup>12</sup> In 1908 the U.S. Geological Survey reported that in the last five years, Anvil Creek had produced \$5 million.<sup>13</sup>

The Discovery Claim on Anvil Creek was spectacularly rich: it was one of the single richest placer mining claims ever discovered.<sup>14</sup> In 1900 after one full season of mining, it was reported that Discovery Claim on Anvil had yielded \$100,000, while No. 1 Above and No. 1 Below Discovery on Anvil had yielded

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<sup>11</sup>U.S. Geological Survey, A Reconnaissance of the Cape Nome and Adjacent Gold Fields of Seward Peninsula, Alaska, in 1900, by Alfred H. Brooks, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1901), p. 69.

<sup>12</sup>Nome Semi-Weekly News, 13 October 1905.

<sup>13</sup>U.S.G.S. Bulletin No. 328, p. 188.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 188.

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\$100,000 and \$150,000 respectively.<sup>15</sup> Some of the nuggets dug out of Discovery Claim were the largest ever found. In September 1901, Jafet Lindeberg found a nugget on Discovery Claim which was six-and-a-half inches in diameter and weighed six pounds.<sup>16</sup> The richest stretch of the stream was the half-mile upstream and downstream from the Discovery Claim, which is located where the creek leaves the river valley and enters the coastal plain.<sup>17</sup>

The miners who toiled on Anvil Creek and the Discovery Claim, like miners who worked gold placer streams anywhere, were forced to gradually improve their methods of operation, to cut costs and increase production. The Pioneer Mining Company, the firm which Lindeberg, Lindblom, and Brynteson organized in the wake of their discoveries at Nome, was one of the leading mining companies in bringing new technology to work the gold fields of Nome.

The geological survey reported that the gold in the bed of Anvil Creek was "practically exhausted" by 1902, but with the discovery of a new channel and constant technological improvements the creek continued to produce.<sup>18</sup> The Pioneer Mining Company installed a steam shovel on the creek in 1904, and during the summer of 1905 the company had large gangs of men working Discovery Claim in addition to their other properties.<sup>19</sup> The Miocene Ditch Company finished driving a tunnel through Anvil Mountain to supply water for hydraulic mining; the ditch delivered more than 300 feet of water pressure to Discovery Claim. In 1905 the Miocene company installed "three huge

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<sup>15</sup>Nome and the Gold Fields of Alaska and Yukon Territory (N.A.T.&T. Co., 1899-1900), p. 78.

<sup>16</sup>Nome Nugget, 14 September 1901.

<sup>17</sup>U.S.G.S. Bulletin No. 328, p. 188.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 31.

<sup>19</sup>Nome Semi-Weekly News, 13 October 1905; U.S. Geological Survey, Alaska Mineral Resources in 1904, Bulletin 259, "Placer Mining in Alaska in 1904," by Alfred H. Brooks, p. 21.

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hydraulic lifts" on the upper part of Anvil, which were the "largest pieces of machinery ever seen on the creek."<sup>20</sup>

The U.S. Geological Survey report on the Alaskan mining industry in 1905 called attention to the working and re-working of the gravels on Anvil Creek. At that time it was surely the most intensively mined stretch of ground in Alaska. "Anvil Creek is probably the most noted gold-producing stream in Alaska," the U.S.G.S. stated. "It is the stream on which the first claims of the Nome region were staked, and since that time has always been in the first rank of producers. Discovery claim on Anvil Creek has already been worked over three times and the gravel on other claims has been moved twice."<sup>21</sup>

An article in the Alaska-Yukon Magazine in 1907 explained that Anvil Creek and Cleary Creek, the richest stream in the Fairbanks district, were the two most famous placer gold streams in Alaska. The article predicted that Anvil Creek, which had already added \$7 million to the world's gold supply, would continue to produce. "There is a great deal of value left in the ground which improved machinery and modern methods will extract at a later date."<sup>22</sup>

But Anvil Creek, like the city of Nome itself, had started to decline. In fact the peak year of gold production on the Seward Peninsula was in 1906, when it topped \$7 million. Afterwards it started a sharp decline, and by 1911 the annual production had

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<sup>20</sup>Ibid.; Edward S. Harrison, Nome and the Seward Peninsula (Seattle: Metropolitan Press, 1905), pp. 146-147.

<sup>21</sup>U.S. Geological Survey, Mineral Resources of Alaska in 1905, Bulletin 284, "Gold Mining on Seward Peninsula," by Fred H. Moffit, p. 135.

<sup>22</sup>"Anvil and Cleary Creeks," Alaska-Yukon Magazine, April 1907, p. 117.

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dropped to \$3.1 million.<sup>23</sup> Not until the resurgence of dredging in the 1920s would times start to improve, but never again would Nome be the same. The violent storm of 1913, which, according to the Nome Nugget, left the city looking like it had been "shelled by a hostile fleet," was a turning point in the history of Nome. Many residents left after the 1913 storm and never came back. Throughout the Territory of Alaska gold mining collapsed during World War I, and by the time of the 1920 census only 852 people remained in Nome.<sup>24</sup>

The mining industry in the Nome district came back strongly in the 1920s, as huge dredges started to mine the ground which previously had not been profitable to develop. The gravel along the entire length of Anvil Creek was also mined once again, perhaps for the fifth or sixth time, by a floating dredge, one of the most efficient gold mining machines ever invented. The dredge which mined Anvil Creek was known as the "Bangor Dredge." It had been built in 1914 for the mining company of Cole, Mitchell, and Brower, and originally operated until 1917 on Bangor Creek, another tributary of the Snake River, but shut down when gold mining collapsed in Alaska during World War I. The Bangor Dredging Company dismantled the dredge and reassembled it on Anvil Creek in 1922, where it operated profitably for nearly eight years.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup>U.S. Geological Survey, Geology of the Nome and Grand Central Quadrangles, Bulletin 533, by Fred H. Moffit, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1913), p. 65; U.S. Geological Survey, Notes on Mining in Seward Peninsula, Alaska, Bulletin 520-M, by Philip S. Smith, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1912), pp. 3-5.

<sup>24</sup>Cole, Nome: City of the Golden Beaches, pp. 128-135; Nome Nugget, 8 October 1913.

<sup>25</sup>Leonard Smith, "History of Dredges in Nome Placer Fields," prepared for Hammon Consolidated Gold Fields Co., March 1926, p. 3, in Reed Collection, Correspondence, University of Alaska Fairbanks, Archives.

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In an interview in 1925, Otto Olson and J.J. Cole of the Bangor Dredging Co., who were working at the time on Anvil Creek, said they planned to "dredge practically the entire stream." Olson admitted that the best claims on Anvil Creek had already been "worked over three or four times," but that they were in effect working new ground because previous miners had dug only about two feet down below bedrock, while their dredge enabled them to dig through four or five feet of bedrock.<sup>26</sup>

The Bangor Mining Company closed down its dredge on Anvil Creek early in the summer of 1929. "It is understood that the owners are negotiating for the removal of this dredge to a new locality," the U.S. Geological Survey reported in 1929, "but the site has not been made public."<sup>27</sup> Apparently the owners were unsuccessful as the abandoned dredge lies today near the head of Anvil Creek.

Beyond the fact that Anvil Creek was the first big producing gold placer stream in Alaska and was heavily mined from the early prospecting days in the 1890s to the dredging era of the late 1920s, the creek is also historically important because the Discovery Claim, as well as the other claims on Anvil Creek, lay at the center of one of the boldest judicial frauds and conspiracies in the history of the United States.

The mastermind behind a plot to rob the Swedes and other owners of the richest mining properties of Nome was Alexander McKenzie, Republican boss of North Dakota and founder of a bogus corporation, the Alaska Gold Mining Company. This company had purchased hundreds of worthless titles to mining properties in the Nome district from claim jumpers, who had moved in on the pretext that the "lucky Swedes" and other alleged aliens had no

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<sup>26</sup>Ibid., pp. 3-4; U.S. Geological Survey, Mineral Resources of Alaska in 1914, Bulletin 622, "Placer Mining in Seward Peninsula," by Henry M. Eakin, p. 367.

<sup>27</sup>U.S. Geological Survey, Mineral Industry of Alaska in 1929, Bulletin 824-A, by Philip S. Smith, p. 44.

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right to stake claims on American soil. Although without legal basis, this belief was widely perpetrated.<sup>28</sup>

Seeing opportunity in the lawless climate of Nome, McKenzie used his political clout to maneuver the appointment of Judge Arthur H. Noyes, who arrived in Nome in July, 1900. The plan was simple and effective. Within four days of Noyes' arrival, McKenzie was in control of a half dozen of the richest claims in Nome, including Discovery Claim on Anvil Creek.<sup>29</sup> McKenzie had the judge appoint him as receiver under the facade that he would operate the claim and protect the value of the property while the issue of ownership was being litigated.

The Discovery Claim was the centerpiece, then producing \$15,000 in gold per day.<sup>30</sup> Plaintiff Robert Chipps, who had jumped the claim in the summer of 1899, brought suit on the grounds that Brynteson, Lindblom, and Lindeberg were aliens, and therefore their location was illegal.<sup>31</sup> Although the Nome Daily News opined that Chipps had not a "ghost of a show," his lawyers had tied up the property "in a maze of legal thread," which could have taken months to unravel.<sup>32</sup>

The legal travesties ended in October of 1900 with the arrival of two U.S. Deputy Marshals. McKenzie was tried and convicted of contempt of court; Noyes was removed from his position and fined

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<sup>28</sup>Cole, "A History of the Nome Gold Rush," pp. 159-181. Leland H. Carlson's An Alaskan Gold Mine: The Story of No. 9 Above (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1951), describes in detail the legal fighting over another claim on Anvil Creek.

<sup>29</sup>Nome Gold Digger, 25 July 1900.

<sup>30</sup>Cole, "A History of the Nome Gold Rush," pp. 199-201.

<sup>31</sup>Nome Daily News, 26 July 1900.

<sup>32</sup>Nome Daily News, 25 July 1900.

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\$1,000.<sup>33</sup> These events have been immortalized in Rex Beach's famous novel, The Spoilers.

No. 1 on Snow Creek

No. 1 on Snow Creek did not share the exciting history of Discovery Claim on Anvil Creek after the first burst of mining activity. During that brief initial period, however, No. 1 on Snow Creek showed substantial promise and produced substantial profits. The promise was indicated when the "lucky Swedes" returned with others to the Snake River in October 1898 to organize a mining district and to work the claims they had located. Panning on Snow Creek produced \$76 worth of gold in one afternoon and led to two rockers being brought up from their schooner at the mouth of the Snake River. One was used on Snow Creek and the other on No. 8 on Anvil Creek. Together, the rockers produced over \$1,800 in gold in four or five days.<sup>34</sup>

When the miners returned to their claims in the spring of 1899, Lindblom, Lindeberg, and Brynteson acting as the Pioneer Mining Company took over \$300,000 in gold from No. 1 on Snow Creek. By comparison, only \$100,000 was taken from Discovery Claim on Anvil Creek at this time.<sup>35</sup> Snow Gulch, where No. 1 on Snow Creek is found, was characterized as "the richest ground yet opened in the district." Nuggets valued at \$150 were located and in one 24-hour period three men took out \$7,000. Predictions were that the

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<sup>33</sup>The best account of the McKenzie-Noyes conspiracy is Waldemar E. Lillo, "The Alaska Gold Mining Company and the Cape Nome Conspiracy," (Ph.D. diss., University of North Dakota, 1935).

<sup>34</sup>Report on the Cape Nome Mining Region, Senate Document No. 357, 56th Congress, 1st sess., p. 2.

<sup>35</sup>Trezona, C.E., ed., Cape Nome and the Northern Placer Mines, (Seattle: Denny-Coryell Co. for C.E. Trezona, 1900), p. 8; Nome and the Gold Fields of Alaska and Yukon Territory, North American Transportation and Trading (NAT&T) Co., 1899-1900, p. 78.

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four claims in Snow Gulch would produce \$1,000,000 apiece.<sup>36</sup> Expectations of the wealth to be produced at Snow Gulch were demonstrated in 1901 when the first segment of the Miocene Ditch was constructed over a five-and-one-half mile route from Glacier Creek to Snow Gulch. It supplied water for the first hydraulic work on the Seward Peninsula and resulted in the single biggest clean-up in the Nome gold fields during the 1901 season.<sup>37</sup>

By 1903, however, geologists were concluding that the placer claims in Snow Gulch were practically exhausted before 1903.<sup>38</sup> The uncertainties of mining were demonstrated when exploitation of No. 1 on Snow Creek began again in the 1970s and has continued to present.

E.O. Lindbloom Placer Claim

The E.O. Lindbloom Placer Claim rounds out the picture of the uncertainties of mining when compared with Discovery Claim on Anvil Creek and No. 1 on Snow Creek. Like those two claims, the Lindbloom Claim was among the first three filed prior to the Nome goldrush. Unlike those two claims, the Lindbloom Claim produced almost nothing. Nine years after discovery of the Lindbloom Claim on Mountain Creek, the U.S. Geological Survey reported that no mining had been done along the creek although a prospect well and preparations to work one claim had taken place in 1904. Between then and the present, there have been only two operations on the claim. In 1936 and again in 1938, leasees worked it for a short period and recovered only about six ounces of gold.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>36</sup>Dunham, 1900, p. 846; Schrader and Brooks, 1900, p. 32.

<sup>37</sup>Harrison, 1905, p. 146.

<sup>38</sup>U.S. Geological Survey, Bulletin 328, p. 193.

<sup>39</sup>U.S. Geological Survey, Bulletin No. 328, 1908; Alaska Gold Company, letter, to Alaska Division of Parks, in files of the Office of History and Archaeology, Alaska Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation, Anchorage.

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Conclusion

Over the years in Nome numerous floods and fires have taken their toll, and today only a few major buildings from the gold rush era are still standing in the community. Thus, the Discovery Claim on Anvil Creek, the E.O. Lindbloom Placer Claim, the No. 1 on Snow Creek Placer Claim, and the portion of the Nome beach which is not covered by the breakwater are especially important links to the past. The overgrown tailings on the placer claims and the stretches of the beach which are little changed from 1900 are unique sites for the interpretation of that period of American history, when the "golden sands of Nome" thrilled the entire country and started Alaska's greatest gold rush.

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Discovery Claim on Anvil Creek

Acreage: 18.796

Quadrangle name: Nome (C-1), Alaska, 1950 (Minor rev. 1970)  
Quadrangle scale: 1:63,360

UTM References:

A	03/479750/7158850	B	03/479750/7159400
C	03/480300/7159400	D	03/480300/7158850

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundaries of the Discovery Claim on Anvil Creek have been drawn to coincide with its original boundaries as shown in Mineral Survey No. 722.

Beginning at the point of beginning, corner no. 1 of the Anvil Creek Discovery Claim; thence N 66 degrees 11 minutes W and 641.7 feet to corner 2; thence 641.7 feet to corner No. 2; thence N 11 degrees 43 minutes east and 1321.1 feet to corner No. 3; thence S 64 degrees 27 minutes east and 655.9 feet to corner No. 4; thence S 25 degrees 09 minutes west and 171.9 feet to corner 5; thence S 70 degrees 03 minutes east and 42.0 feet to corner no. 6; thence S 11 degrees 26 minutes west and 683.1 feet to corner 7; thence N 63 degrees 28 minutes west and 64.0 feet to corner 8; thence S 5 degrees 44 minutes west and 461.6 feet to the point of beginning.

E.O. Lindblom Placer Claim

Acreage: 17.381

Quadrangle name: Nome (C-1), Alaska 1950, Minor Rev 1970  
Quadrangle scale: 1:63,360

UTM References

A	03/479400 7162100	B	03/479400 7162300
C	03/479900 7162200	D	03/479900 7162000

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Verbal Boundary Description

The boundaries of the E.O. Lindblom Placer Claim have been drawn to coincide with the original boundaries of the claim which is included in Mineral Survey No. 710.

Beginning at the point of beginning, corner no. 1 on E.O. Lindblom Placer Claim; thence N 72 degrees 35 minutes E 1267.7 feet to corner no. 2; thence N 21 degrees 58 minutes 336.6 feet to corner No. 3; thence 16 degrees 18 minutes E 326.9 feet to corner No. 4; thence S 56 degrees 34 minutes E 1312.8 feet to corner No. 5; thence S 23 degrees 40 minutes E 525.0 feet to corner No. 1, the point of beginning.

No. 1 on Snow Creek

Acreage: 19.519 acres

Quadrangle name: Nome (C-1), Alaska, 1950 (Minor rev. 1970)  
Quadrangle scale: 1:63,360

UTM References:

A	03/480500 7163600	B	03/480700 7163575
C	03/480950 7163200	D	03/480750 7163150

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundaries of the No. 1 on Snow Creek Claim have been drawn to coincide with its original boundaries as shown in Mineral Survey No. 715.

Beginning at the point of beginning, corner No. 1 on No. 1 on Snow Creek Claim; thence N 30 degrees 56 minutes W 1345.10 feet to corner No. 2; thence N 62 degrees 27 minutes E 634 feet to

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corner No. 3; thence S 31 degrees 55 minutes E 1295.50 feet to  
corner No. 4; thence S 57 degrees 59 minutes W 655.3 feet to  
corner No. 1, the point of beginning.

Nome Beach

Acreage: 12.3

Quadrangle name: Nome (B-1), Alaska  
Quadrangle scale: 1:63,3360

UTM References:

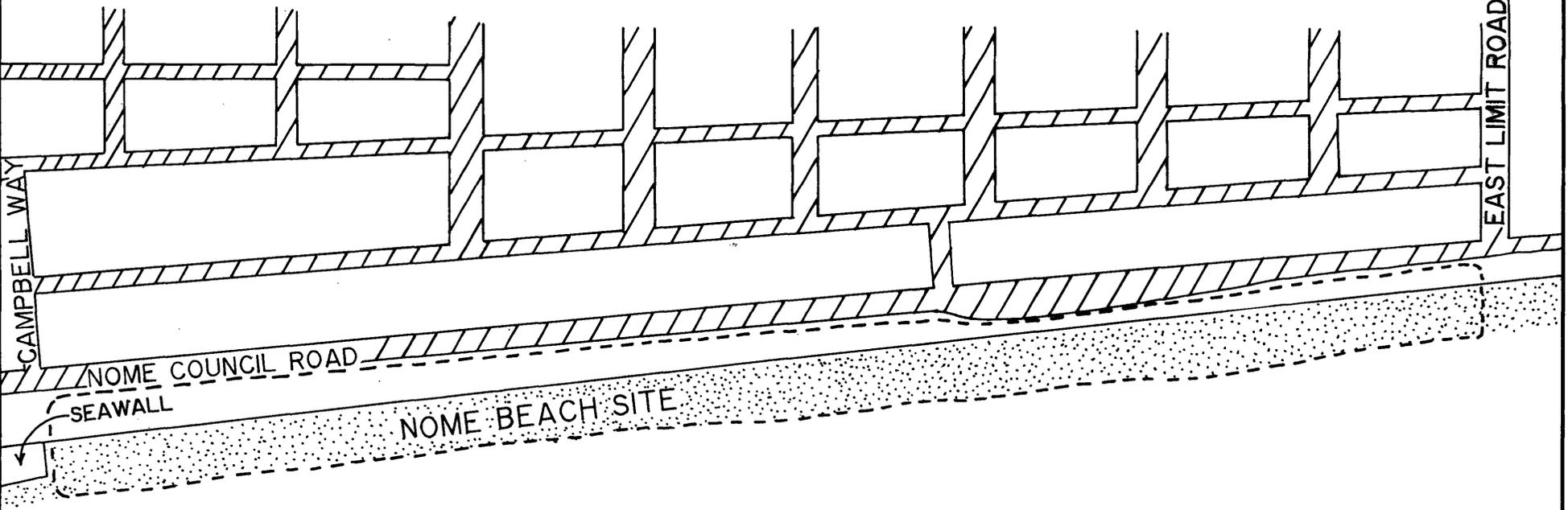
A	03/480650/7152250	B	03/480700/7152450
C	03/481200/7152250	D	03/481150/7152100

Verbal Boundary Description

The boundaries of the segment of the Nome Beach nominated herein include a portion of the historic beach which retains integrity. It is limited on the south by the Bering Sea, on the west by the Nome seawall, on the north by the Nome-Council Road, and on the east by a section of beach that also has historic integrity, but is beyond the limit of intense mining activity in front of Nome. East Limit Road bounds the historic city and this portion of the nomination.

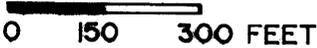
Beginning at the point of beginning, the point where the Nome-Council Road intersects Campbell Way; thence 108 degrees and 3060 feet along the southern edge of the Nome-Council Road to the western edge of East Limit Road; thence 198 degrees and 175 feet to the mean high tide line; thence 3060 feet and 288 degrees along the mean high tide line; thence 175 feet and 18 degrees to the point of beginning.

# NOME BEACH SITE



BERING SEA

----- SITE BOUNDARY



# ANVIL CREEK DISCOVERY CLAIM

