

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

PH0687073

FOR NPS USE ONLY  
RECEIVED OCT 24 1978  
DATE ENTERED DEC 27 1978

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Smuggler-Union Hydroelectric Power Plant

AND/OR COMMON

Bridal Veil Powerhouse

2 LOCATION

SE of Telluride

STREET & NUMBER Atop Bridal Veil Falls at the mouth of Bridal Veil Basin

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Telluride

in VICINITY OF Black Bear Road

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

3rd

STATE

Colorado

CODE 08

COUNTY San Miguel

CODE 113

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

- DISTRICT
- BUILDINGS
- STRUCTURE
- SITE
- OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

- PUBLIC
- PRIVATE
- BOTH
- PUBLIC ACQUISITION**
- IN PROCESS
- BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

- OCCUPIED
- UNOCCUPIED
- WORK IN PROGRESS
- ACCESSIBLE**
- YES: RESTRICTED
- YES: UNRESTRICTED
- NO

PRESENT USE

- AGRICULTURE
- COMMERCIAL
- EDUCATIONAL
- ENTERTAINMENT
- GOVERNMENT
- INDUSTRIAL
- MILITARY
- MUSEUM
- PARK
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- RELIGIOUS
- SCIENTIFIC
- TRANSPORTATION
- OTHER: abandoned

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Icarado Mining Company

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Ouray

VICINITY OF

STATE

Colorado

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

San Miguel County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Telluride

STATE

Colorado

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Colorado Inventory of Historic Sites (57/06/0030)

DATE

Ongoing

FEDERAL STATE COUNTY LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

Colorado Historical Society

1300 Broadway

CITY, TOWN

Denver

STATE

Colorado

80203

# 7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED      DATE _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

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## DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

Located alongside the top of Bridal Veil Falls whose waters plunge over the edge of a 400-foot cliff, the Bridal Veil Powerhouse is a tripartite structure consisting of a two and one-half story generator and transformer plant, a one story cookhouse, and a one and one-half story residence. The shape of the building is irregular, the main facade has ten bays, and the structure is made of concrete and wood. The side of the generator and transformer plant has two bays along the side plus a gable with a single window; a brick chimney projects through the apex of the roof; the semi-polygonal projection on the main facade has a semi-conical roof. The residential structure is basically rectangular in shape with a hipped roof, two dormers, and a chimney. Between these two larger structures is the third building which is quite small, rectangular, and houses a hallway and two small rooms. The entire structure is anchored to the rock by a poured-concrete foundation.

The generator and transformer plant is the most distinctive part of the structure. The top one and one-half stories rest on a high concrete foundation. The foundation walls with the five tall, semi-circular fan windows house the generating room and give the structure much of its distinctive appearance. The exterior walls above are finished in shiplap cedar which has weathered well. The pitched roof and conical spire have tar shingles. The tower projection on the front, the building's most distinctive feature, comprises half the facade of this portion of the building and has been imitated by architects designing new houses in Telluride.

The interior of the entire structure, while partially vandalized and in disrepair, remains covered with expensive tongue-and-groove hardwood paneling. The generator itself, however, once laboriously dragged to the site with horses and block-and-tackle, has been ruined by vandals.

Nearby the structure lie several small outbuildings, flumes, and bridges. Among the outbuildings are the tool shed and the equipment and material warehouses as well as the ruins of an ore crushing mill operated by waterpower. Also remaining are the waterfall sluice gates which once diverted summer stream water into the turbine and created a second waterfall as the water left the generator.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY) Scenic
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES 1907-1953 BUILDER/ARCHITECT Unknown

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Bridal Veil Powerhouse is significant for its association with the mining industry of Colorado, particularly the Smuggler-Union Mining Company, one of the state's most important producers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; for its association with important figures in the mining industry, such as James B. Grant, Nathaniel P. Hill, Richard Pearce, Anton Eilers, Bulkeley Wells, and Henry Lee Higginson, all of whom at one time owned part of the company and participated in its finance or management; for its unusual architectural features and spectacular setting which serves as a mecca for photographers, artists, and tourists; and for its pioneering role in the development of hydroelectric power used for industrial purposes in the United States.

Telluride was an important mining community in Colorado, and the Smuggler-Union Mining Company one of the most important producers in the area. The enterprise emerged from the combination of several claims located in the late 1880s, the most important properties being the Smuggler and the Union. Management found good veins of ore to exploit, investment capital flowed in to open the mines and build ancillary structures; and several groups of entrepreneurs alternately bought and sold control of the firm until it was finally purchased by the Idarado Mining Company, today a subsidiary of Newmont Mining Company, one of the world's largest producers of minerals.

The Bridal Veil Powerhouse owed its origin to the need of the Smuggler-Union Company for electric power. Bulkeley Wells, local manager at the time, initiated the project, convinced higher levels of management of the utility, and pushed construction through to completion. When opened in 1907, the plant housed a generator which provided the first alternating current (AC current) used for industrial purposes in the United States--in this particular case, for lighting mines and running mills. At least a portion of the water needed was flumed to the facility from Blue Lake, 3000 feet above and four miles away; then power was transmitted to the mines 2000 feet below. The plant operated year round, but as the road to it was impassible during the winter, the enterprise built an aerial tramway (now destroyed) to haul men and supplies up the precipice. The powerhouse remained in operation until 1953 when the Idarado Mining Company found it cheaper to purchase electricity from the coal-fired plants of the San Miguel Association. The only part of the plant in use today is the sluice and pipe system which still brings water down from Blue Lake to provide water for the Idarado

# 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

- David Lavendar, The Rockies (New York: Harper & Row, 1968).  
 Robert Livermore, Bostonians and Bullion (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1968).  
 Rose Weber, A Quick History of Telluride (Colorado Springs, CO: Little London Press).

# 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 1/2 acre

QUADRANGLE NAME Telluride QUADRANGLE SCALE 1:24000

UTM REFERENCES

A	<u>13</u>	<u>254600</u>	<u>4,200,025,0</u>	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			
E				F			
G				H			

## VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Bridal Veil Basin Road to cliffs of Ballard Peak, Including Bridal Veil River and all land to the cliff edge.

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

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

# 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE Roger Neville Williams

ORGANIZATION San Miguel Historical Society DATE December 7, 1977

STREET & NUMBER Telluride, Colorado TELEPHONE (303) 728-4191

CITY OR TOWN STATE

# 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL      STATE X LOCAL     

As the designated State Historic Preservation 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.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE *Arthur C. [Signature]*

TITLE State Historic Preservation Officer DATE October 13, 1978

**FOR NPS USE ONLY**

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

*Charles A. [Signature]* DATE 12-27-78  
 KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

ATTEST: *William H. [Signature]* DATE 12-26-78  
 CHIEF OF REGISTRATION

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Ore Reduction Mill. The Powerhouse is also the last vestige of the old Smuggler-Union Company; all other structures have been destroyed.

Because it lies above the magnificent Bridal Veil Falls, the Powerhouse has become important for photographers and artists. The distinctive architectural features enhanced by the cliffs below and the mountains above provide one of the most spectacular vistas in Colorado.