

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

PHO 30058 DATA SHEET

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	OCT 24 1975
DATE ENTERED	JAN 1 1976

**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  Ohio-Colorado Smelting and Refining Company Smokestack  
AND/OR COMMON  Smelertertown Smokestack

**2 LOCATION**

STREET & NUMBER *1000 of Salida*  
Convergence of County Roads 150 & 152 —NOT FOR PUBLICATION  
CITY, TOWN \_\_\_\_\_ CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT \_\_\_\_\_  
STATE Salida VICINITY OF Number Three  
COLORADO CODE \_\_\_\_\_ COUNTY Chaffee CODE \_\_\_\_\_

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	PRESENT USE
<input type="checkbox"/> DISTRICT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PUBLIC	<input type="checkbox"/> OCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MUSEUM
<input type="checkbox"/> BUILDING(S)	<input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE	<input type="checkbox"/> UNOCCUPIED	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCIAL <input type="checkbox"/> PARK
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> STRUCTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> BOTH	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> WORK IN PROGRESS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EDUCATIONAL <input type="checkbox"/> PRIVATE RESIDENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> SITE	<b>PUBLIC ACQUISITION</b>	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> ENTERTAINMENT <input type="checkbox"/> RELIGIOUS
<input type="checkbox"/> OBJECT	<input type="checkbox"/> IN PROCESS	<input type="checkbox"/> YES: RESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> GOVERNMENT <input type="checkbox"/> SCIENTIFIC
	<input type="checkbox"/> BEING CONSIDERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES: UNRESTRICTED	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRIAL <input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
		<input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER:

**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME Salida Museum Association  
STREET & NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_  
1401 J Street  
CITY, TOWN \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_  
Salida VICINITY OF \_\_\_\_\_ Colorado

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC. Chaffee County Courthouse  
STREET & NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_  
Crestone Avenue and Park Place  
CITY, TOWN \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_  
Salida Colorado

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE Certified Land Survey  
DATE October 2, 1973 — FEDERAL — STATE — COUNTY  LOCAL  
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS Biglow Land Survey  
CITY, TOWN \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_  
Salida Colorado

# 7 DESCRIPTION

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

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

The Smelertown Smokestack was built for the Ohio-Colorado Smelting and Refining Company. Commenced in 1916 and finished in 1917, this majestic brick and tile structure stands 365 feet into the air, 35 feet taller than the famous Daniels and Fisher Tower in Denver, twice as high as the 179 foot Leaning Tower of Pisa. The concrete foundation, 40 feet wide, extends downward 30 feet into the ground to solid granite. Upright standard gauge railroad rails were placed in the concrete foundation to give strength; steel rods run throughout to the top of the structure, which is capped by a wide, flat, circular collar of steel, bolted onto the upright rods. The octagonal base rises approximately 70 feet above ground and is of pressed, glazed brick; the walls here are six feet thick. Above this base rises the circular upper part of the stack; it is constructed of a special tile. Here the walls taper in thickness from six feet, to three and one-half feet at the top. The top, with its flat steel collar, measures seventeen feet in diameter. Two hundred sixty four standard gauge carloads of brick and tile went into the structure. Construction cost was \$43,000. It is estimated that at today's construction costs, a similar stack would cost over a million dollars.

The smokestack is located in a plain one mile west of Salida and one-quarter mile north of the Arkansas River. Colorado highway 291 lies approximately one-quarter mile north of the smokestack. To the south and east is the community that long has been referred to as Smelertown. Twenty miles to the west towers the Continental Divide, traversed here by 11,300 foot Monarch Pass, and rising to peaks such as picturesque 14,253 foot Mount Shavano. To the south is Methodist Mountain and the Sangre de Cristo Range. Lying east are Jack Hall and Cameron Mountains. Some thirty miles to the north are Buffalo Peaks and the Park Range. The site of the smelter was an ideal one, including three mesas, affording every facility and advantage for handling ores and dumping slag. One-half acre of land is included in the current deed.

The structure is remarkably well preserved for its 58 years of standing in all kinds of weather. Only a few superficial bricks are missing, due to lightning strikes during a time when the stack was not grounded. The connecting flue chamber is remarkable also in the span of its arched roof, made in radiating voussoirs without trusses. Attesting to the excellence of construction is the fact that vibration from rock crushing machinery during most of these years has not visibly impaired either the smokestack or the adjoining flue chamber.

# 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 checked="" 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 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 type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES *1917*

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Smelertown Smokestack is a highly visible monument to the industry of mining, an industry vital to the settlement of Colorado. Hundreds of people from the first great influx of miners in the years following the Colorado Gold Rush of 1859 stayed on as ranchers, merchants, and railroaders, becoming the citizens of the towns and communities along the Upper Arkansas River Valley. Early gold pans, long toms, sluices, and rockers gave way to smelters such as those at Leadville and Salida.

At the time of its completion in 1917, the 365 foot tall Smelertown Smokestack was called the tallest structure of its kind west of the Mississippi, and among the tallest in the world. In today's Colorado it is exceeded in height only by the cement and steel smokestack at the Public Service Company's Comanche Plant at Pueblo.

Smelertown, the community for which the smokestack was named, has looked out upon mining history since 1902 when the community was christened Kortz, after J.C. Kortz, president of the Ohio-Colorado Smelting and Refining Company. Incorporated in 1902 for three million dollars, the company spent over one million immediately for buildings, stacks, and machinery. The value of ores treated in 1903 was \$1,355,455. The average tonnage treated in 1904 was 1,000 tons per day. At one time the plant had a capacity of handling 1,500 tons of ore daily with 24 hour operation. Ore and coal were shoveled by hand from the narrow-gauge cars to the smelter's wide-gauge cars. Horses were used to pull the slag pots to the slag dump 24 hours daily. At night the molten mass, at white heat, poured over the bank along the Arkansas River, a most impressive sight.

Advantages to the community were many; the smelter employed over 300 men during its construction and about that many during its operation. Workers were paid from \$2.50 to \$4.00 per day and the monthly payroll ran as high as \$34,000. High ore and coal tonnage and the need for transportation developed business for railroads. The community of Smelertown was composed of working people who bought milk, beef and vegetables from local farmers. Large amounts of hay, straw and grain were purchased from local farmers as feed and bedding for the smelter's workhorses. Money was made at home and stayed at home. Wages or farm produce were obtained at reasonable prices and many people became prosperous.

Two shorter smokestacks, predecessors to the present one, were not satisfactory for dispersing the fumes from the large amounts of

(Please see continuation)

**9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

George G. Everett & Dr. Wendell F. Hutchinson, Under the Angel of Shavano. Golden Bell Press, Denver, Colorado., 1963.  
Mines Handbook, 1922  
Denver Times, Denver, Colo., Aug. 10, 1902.  
Denver Post, Denver, Colo., Dec. 12, 1902. Herald Democrat, Leadville, 1902  
Salida Mail, Salida, Jan. 31, 1902, June 24, 1902, June 27, 1902.

**10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY one half acre

UTM REFERENCES

410-800 350

A	13	409620	42167150	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

150' east west by 145' north south whose center point is:

LATITUDE: 38° 33' 08"  
 LONGITUDE: 106° 01' 25"

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

Wendell F. Hutchinson, President and Kenneth E. Waddell, Sec.-Tres.

ORGANIZATION

Save Our Stack Committee

DATE

March 31, 1975

STREET & NUMBER

8975 County Road 166

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

Salida

STATE

Colorado

**12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION**

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL

STATE

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.

FEDERAL REPRESENTATIVE SIGNATURE

*Stephen W. Hart*

TITLE

Colo State Hist Pres Officer

DATE

8/6/75

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

Acting

*James R. [Signature]*

DATE

1/11/96

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

ATTEST:

*Charles [Signature]*

DATE

1-9-76

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

Acting

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
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ore being roasted. The Smelertown Smokestack was built because of lawsuits filed by stockmen and farmers whose livestock was slowly being poisoned from arsenic in the ore roasting fumes, and whose crops of grain and hay were being stunted by the fumes. Today's ecologist might be proud of the people who erected this towering stack in an effort to disperse the pollutants high above the plain, where usually they would be borne away on winds aloft.

The Mines Handbook for the year 1922 carried the following data: "The Salida smelter (has a capacity) of 12,000 tons monthly . . . doing a general custom business. It includes a 300 ton sintering plant, sampling mill, four lead blast furnaces . . . and handles mainly silver-lead ores. The only copper treated is that bought with lead ores, which is concentrated to 40% tenor. Company reports show 95,305 tons of Colorado ores treated in 1918, yielding 12,460 ounces of gold, 1,454,597 ounces of silver, 9,603,089 pounds of lead, and 1,241,353 pounds of copper." Cryptically, the report ended with the statement, "The smelter was closed indefinitely in February, 1920."

Indeed, despite the seemingly well-based optimism of an article appearing on March 16, 1920 in "The Salida Mail", the famous smelter was destined to remain closed. In spite of its fine equipment and up-to-date facilities, the smelter was not a profitable venture. The Ohio-Colorado Smelting and Refining Company became indebted to the American Metals Company and granted the latter a two-year lease. The American Metals Company forfeited the lease; in quick succession it was announced that Morse Brothers and the Utah Leasing Company had purchased the property, then that a group of Salida businessmen called the Commercial Club would attempt to interest outside capital to finance the smelter and the Rawley Mine. However, the September 28, 1920 issue of "The Salida Mail" related that the smelter would be sold by Sheriff Joseph M. Hutchinson at the Chaffee County Courthouse (then located at Buena Vista) to satisfy the mortgage of \$1,030,000, held by the Denver National Bank as trustee for the bondholders. The property has changed ownership five times in the intervening years. One of these exchanges was marked by rather colorful events, highlighted by the formation in 1973 of a group, originally, of 27 local citizens called the "S.O.S. (Save Our Stack) Committee". The committee grew to include more than 50 people as court battle was joined with proponents of the destruction of the strong old sentinel. The purposes of the S.O.S. Group were to prevent the proposed imminent demolition of the Smelertown Smokestack, and to assure its availability to the public for a richer environment by means of a visible continuity with the past. It is as a result of these recent events that this Nomination to the National Register of Historic Places occurs.

(Please see continuation)

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The familiar landmark serves as a monument to those earlier men who worked at the smelter. Here they came - from Austria, from Greece, from Ireland, from Italy. Many of these families still reside in the Salida area and are counted among its finest citizens. The list is long but a sampling will include names such as Argys, Gentile, Glivar, Melavic, Michlich, O'Conner, Porco, Predovich, Shine, Struna, Tancik, Tarlip, Theotokatos. Proud men, proud families.