

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM  
FOR FEDERAL PROPERTIES**

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: <b>Texas</b>
COUNTY: <b>Brewster</b>
FOR NPS USE ONLY
ENTRY DATE <b>SEP 13 1974</b>

**1. NAME**

COMMON:  
**MARISCAL MINE**

AND/OR HISTORIC:  
**Mariscal Mine (Lindsey Mine, Ellis Mine)**

**2. LOCATION**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
(See continuation sheet) **River Road**

CITY OR TOWN:  
**Big Bend National Park**

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:  
**16th District - Texas**

STATE: **Texas** CODE: **48** COUNTY: **Brewster** CODE: **043**

**3. CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Comments _____

**4. AGENCY**

**U. S. Government, National Park Service, Department of the Interior**

REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS: (If applicable)  
**Southwest Regional Office**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**P. O. Box 728**

CITY OR TOWN:  
**Santa Fe.**

STATE:  
**New Mexico** CODE: **35**

**5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:  
**Brewster County Courthouse**

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:  
**Alpine**

STATE:  
**Texas** CODE: **48**

**6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE OF SURVEY:  
**Historic American Buildings Survey Inventory**

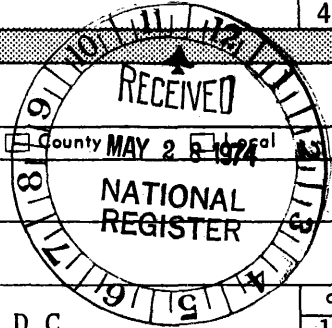
DATE OF SURVEY:  Federal     State     County **MAY 28 1974**

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:  
**Library of Congress**

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:  
**Washington**

STATE:  
**D.C.** CODE: **11**



SEE INSTRUCTIONS

STATE: Texas  
COUNTY: Brewster  
ENTRY NUMBER: **SEP 13 1974**  
DATE: \_\_\_\_\_  
FOR NPS USE ONLY

## 7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site		
DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE						
<p><u>Original Appearance:</u> At the time the Mariscal Mining Company took over the work and operation of the Mariscal Mine the plant consisted of a four compartment ore bin which fed directly into three small no-revolving retorts. During the latter part of 1919, and in the year 1920, the Mariscal Mining Company constructed a more extensive plant which consisted of the following structures: well up the hillside, and not more than 100 feet from the entrance to the main shaft of the mine, a large ore bin which was fed from the top by rail ore cars operating directly from the mouth of the main shaft. At the bottom of the ore bin there were chutes with doors which permitted the ore to empty by gravity into ore cars which in turn delivered the ore down the hill, likewise by gravity, to secondary ore bins which emptied directly into a 45-ton Scott Furnace, which was constructed by the Mariscal Mining Company after they took over the operation and control of the mine. The Scott Furnace was constructed of bricks, which were burned locally at a brick kiln some two miles away on the west side of the north end of Mariscal Mountain. Closely related and just above the Scott Furnace there was constructed a series of concrete condenser chambers which were connected to the furnace by large ceramic tile tubes. In turn the condenser chambers were connected by four smaller ceramic tile tubes or pipes to a large rock chimney about 100 yards up the hillside.</p> <p>In addition to the concrete condenser chambers, in an effort to reduce the amount of stack loss of refined ore, the company had put in two large red-wood tanks through which all fumes were directed on their way from the main condensers to the chimneys outlet. Along the lower side and at the bottom of the main condenser chambers there were openings out of which the condensed quicksilver ore same preparatory to being bottled into flasks for shipment to the market. Some 100 yards down the hill from the Scott Furnace there was constructed a stone building which served as a combined commissary store and office. This building was just below the original ore bins and retort which had been used by Ellis in his operations. In addition to the above mentioned structures, there was at the foot of the cliff and in close relationship to the main mine shaft a blacksmith shop. Then near the main shaft and on the opposite side from the blacksmith shop there was a large concrete platform to which was anchored the engine and hoisting equipment which was used to lift and lower the baskets from the main shaft of the mine.</p> <p>Following a period of almost twenty years of inactivity, due to a heavy drop in the price of quicksilver, in 1942 the newly organized Vivianna Mining Company, under the direction and management of W. D. Burcham, reopened the Mariscal Mine. The Vivianna Mining Company installed a 30-ton capacity Gould-type rotary furnace just below the main ore bin up near the main shaft of the mine. In addition, the Vivianna Company added a considerable amount of new mining equipment, including two small hoisting plants, numerous miscellaneous mining tools, a single-stage air compressor, and a caterpillar 100-kva diesel-electric generator.</p>						

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**5. SIGNIFICANCE**

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |                                       |                                       |  |
|--|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 18th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century  | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 19th Century |  |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) 1900-1944

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 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

Quicksilver, or mercury, is a metallic element with the unique property of being the only metal which remains in a liquid state at ordinary temperatures, becoming solid only about 40°F below zero. The unique properties of this material make it useful in a wide range of products, such as insecticides, paint, pharmaceuticals, electrical apparatus, etc., and was used extensively in explosives, particularly during WWI.

The ore from which quicksilver is obtained is called cinnabar. Cinnabar deposits are caused only by certain types of volcanic activity and are therefore somewhat rare. The only major cinnabar mines in the United States are in California and in Brewster and Presidio Counties, Texas.

One of the less productive of the cinnabar mining ventures in Texas, the Mariscal Mines were not a financial success. Cinnabar was first discovered in the Mariscal area in 1900 by Martin Solis. D. E. Lindsey was the first to actively mine the area, however, extracting enough ore to only produce about 50 flasks of quicksilver. The ore was transported by burros to Terlingua for refining. W. K. Ellis was the one who really began the development of the area with the construction of storage bins and a retort. Between 1917 and 1919 the Ellis Mine "produced and shipped 894 flasks of refined quicksilver."<sup>1</sup> Purchased in 1919 the Mariscal Mining Company, considerable effort and expense were used in the construction of a new refining plant, Ellis' requiring too high a grade of ore to be economical. The bulk of the structures remaining in the area date to this period of development. However, with the end of WWI, a drastic drop in the price of quicksilver, coupled with the development expenses the company had incurred, made the venture an economic failure, and the mines were closed in 1923. One last attempt to operate the mine was made by the Viviana Mining Co. in 1942. It added some new equipment and constructed several new buildings, but this effort also ended in financial failure in 1944.

Cinnabar mining was one of the major industries leading to the development of the Big Bend area. Although the Mariscal Mine was not a financial success, other such developments in the area were successful. The Mariscal Mine is typical enough of these early mining enterprises to tell the story of this industry's contribution to the history of the area.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

<sup>1</sup> Clifford B. Casey, "Soldiers, Ranches, and Miners in the Big Bend," p.228

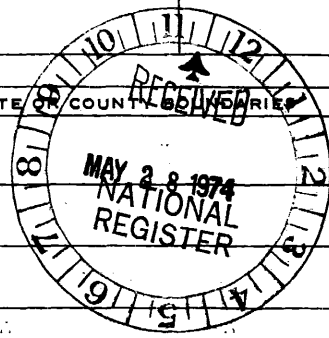
9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Brown, William E. and Wauer, Roland H., Historic Resources Management Plan, Big Bend National Park, U.S. Department of the Interior, 1968.

Casey, Clifford B., Soldiers, Ranchers, and Miners in the Big Bend, National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, 1969.

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			OR	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	29° 06' 7.5"	103° 11' 25"				
NE	20° 06' 7.5"	103° 10' 30"				
SE	29° 05' 15"	103° 10' 30"				
SW	29° 05' 15"	103° 11' 25"				
APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 640						
LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES						
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:		CODE		
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:		CODE		
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:		CODE		
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:		CODE		



NO UTM CD

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE: **David G. Battle, Historical Architect** DATE: **February 1974**

BUSINESS ADDRESS: **National Park Service, Southwest Regional Office**

STREET AND NUMBER: **P. O. Box 728** PHONE: **(505) 988-6501**

CITY OR TOWN: **Santa Fe, New Mexico** STATE: **New Mexico** CODE: **35**

12. CERTIFICATION OF NOMINATION

State Liaison Officer recommendation:

Yes  
 No  
 None

*Paul O. Shuck*  
 State Liaison Officer Signature

In compliance with Executive Order 11593, I hereby nominate this property to the National Register, certifying that the State Liaison Officer has been allowed 90 days in which to present the nomination to the State Review Board and to evaluate its significance. The recommended level of significance is  National  State  Local

*Paul O. Shuck* 5/8/74  
 Federal Representative Signature Date  
 REGIONAL DIRECTOR  
 Title

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

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

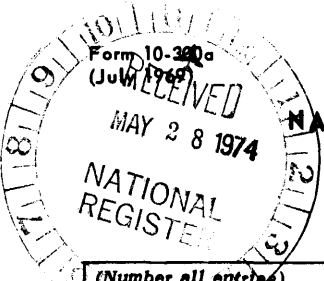
*W. R. Wood*  
 Director, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

DATE: 9/13/74

ATTEST:

*W. R. Wood*  
 Keeper of The National Register

DATE: 9.13.74



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Continuation Sheet)

STATE	TEXAS	
COUNTY	BREWSTER	
FOR NPS USE ONLY		
ENTRY NUMBER		DATE
		SEP 13 1974

(Number all entries)

2. Location: The Mariscal Mine is situated in the southeastern part of Big Bend National Park along what is known as the "River Road." Located at the northern terminus of an anvil-shaped mountain known appropriately enough as "Mariscal Mountain," it is approximately 25 miles ~~west~~ <sup>east</sup> of Rio Grande Village and 30 miles ~~west~~ <sup>east</sup> of Castalon.

7. Description: (Original Appearance continued): Housing for the workmen and the foreman of the mine were, as previously mentioned, all located on Section 34 along the hillside and out in the flats below the mine. The foreman's home was a six-room frame stucco house with a garage nearby and was constructed by the Mariscal Mining Company. On the other hand, the twenty or more stone or rock buildings occupied by the workmen and scattered along the foot of the hillside and the flats, were all constructed by the workmen themselves, since the company assumed no responsibility for housing the workmen. As the workmen came onto the job they often lived in brush shelters for a few weeks or months. During this period they would, after working hours, construct their small stone or rock houses. Some of the older workmen, who did only part-time work, aided by the women, often cultivated small gardens along the nearby creeks in which they produced melons and vegetables to augment their food supply which was purchased from the company commissary. During the period of operation of the Vivianna Mining Company, 1942-43, an additional ten or more concrete and stucco houses were constructed by the company to house additional workmen.<sup>1</sup>

Recent Appearance: The Mariscal mine structures are today in a state of ruins -- no structure remains intact. In the late 1940's and early 1950's the mining machinery and equipment was sold and removed from the site, and no doubt this operation caused much of the damage to the processing structures. The rest is mostly the work of nature or vandals.

Those structures constructed of concrete or stone masonry remain in the best condition, with walls intact, but roof, doors, windows, etc., long since gone. Less substantial structures such as those constructed of adobe or frame and stucco are little more than rubble heaps today. Of the main plant, the holding bins, condensing chambers, and the stack still remain, along with miscellaneous other structures, but such items as the ceramic tile tubes have been broken or removed. The furnace, while much of it still remains, is disintegrating rapidly. In addition to the structures just mentioned, the area abounds with mine shafts, many of them as yet unprotected.

Recommended Treatment: Preservation.

Estimated Cost: Not available.

<sup>1</sup> Clifford B. Casey, "Soldiers, Ranchers, and Miners in the Big Bend," pp.234-237