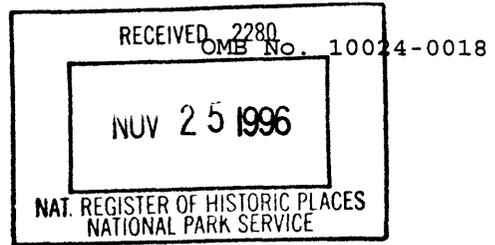


NPS Form 10-900
(Oct. 1990)



United States Department of Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form* (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900A). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Name of Property

historic name Potosi Badger Huts Site

other names/site number 47Gt479

2. Location

street & number .5 mi SW of 133 & U junct not for publication

city or town Potosi vicinity

state Wisconsin code WI county Grant code 043 zip code 53820

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, 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. I recommend that this property be considered significant nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

Potosi Badger Huts Site

Grant County, WI

Name of Property

County and State

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

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

Edson H. Beall

12-27-96

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (check as many boxes as apply) Category of Property (Check only one box)

Number of Resources within Property (Do not include listed resources within the count)

- private, public-local, public-state, public-federal, building(s), district, site, structure, object

Contributing Noncontributing

1 0 Total

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

N/A

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions) (Enter categories from instructions)

INDUSTRY/PROCESSING/EXTRACTION/extractive facility

AGRICULTURE/SUBSISTENCE/agricultural field/pasture

DOMESTIC/camp

7. Description

Architectural Classification

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

(Enter categories from instructions)

N/A

foundation N/A

walls N/A

roof N/A

other

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Potosi Badger Huts Site
Name of Property

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria
(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the
criteria qualifying the property for the
National Register listing.)

- A Property is associated with events
that have made a significant
contribution to the broad patterns of
our history.
- B Property is associated with the lives
of persons significant in our past.
- C Property embodies the distinctive
characteristics of a type, period, or
method of construction or represents
the work of a master, or possesses
high artistic values, or represents a
significant and distinguishable entity
whose components lack individual
distinction.
- D Property has yielded, or is likely to
yield, information important in
prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations
(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A owned by a religious institution or
used for religious purposes.
- B removed from its original location.
- C a birthplace or grave.
- D a cemetery.
- E a reconstructed building, object, or
structure.
- F a commemorative property.
- G less than 50 years of age achieved
significance within the past 50 years.

Narrative Statement of Significance

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographic References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from
instructions)

EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT

INDUSTRY

ARCHEOLOGY/HISTORIC-

NON-ABORIGINAL

Period of Significance

1830 - 1850

Significant Dates

N/A

Significant Person

(Complete if Criterion B is
marked above)

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

EURO-AMERICAN

Architect/Builder

N/A

Potosi Badger Huts Site
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Previous Documentation on File (NPS):
 preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
 previously listed in the National Register
 previously determined eligible by the National Register
 designated a National Historic Landmark
 recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
 recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:
 State Historic Preservation Office
 Other State Agency
 Federal Agency
 Local government
 University
 Other
Name of repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 9.75 acres

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

1	<u>1/5</u> Zone	<u>6/8/7/4/1/0</u> Easting	<u>4/7/2/8/2/8/0</u> Northing	3	<u>/</u> Zone	<u>/ / / / /</u> Easting	<u>/ / / / / / /</u> Northing
2	<u>/</u> Zone	<u>/ / / / / / /</u> Easting	<u>/ / / / / / /</u> Northing	4	<u>/</u> Zone	<u>/ / / / / / /</u> Easting	<u>/ / / / / / /</u> Northing

____ see continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Diane Young Holliday
organization State Historical Society of WI date 9/23/96
street & number 816 State Street telephone 608-2646494
city or town Madison state WI zip code 53706

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional Items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Potosi Badger Huts Site
Name of Property

Grant County, WI
County and State

Property Owner

Complete this item at the request of SHPO or FPO.)

name Frances Kieler
street & number P.O. Box 254 telephone _____
city or town Kieler state WI zip code 53812

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Projects, (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Potosi Badger Huts Site
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SITE DESCRIPTION

The Potosi Badger Huts Site, 47Gt479, is an early 19th century lead mining site located in the center of the southern half of Section 34, Town of Potosi. The site consists of the remains of two structures, over 100 "diggings", shafts, and a possible adit (Fig.1). The site dates to at least the early 1830s and was probably abandoned by the late 1840s, when the initial lead boom ended. Covering approximately 10 acres, the site is located on the top and sides of a southwest to northeast bearing ridge that overlooks the village of Potosi. The site is directly across the "hollow" from the St. John Mine (aka "Snake Cave"), a lead mine listed on the National Register in 1979.

The remains of the two structures, commonly referred to as "badger huts", consist of low walls of loose rocks. Structure A, located close to the top of the ridge, is roughly square, with sides measuring 4.4 and 4.3 meters (see Fig.1). The walls are 1.5 meters wide and ca 1.0 meters high. The doorway to this structure measures 0.5 meters wide and faces southwest. Structure B is located on the north slope of the ridge (see Fig. 1) and appears to have been subject to more erosion. The walls of Structure B are lower and are not as well defined as those of Structure A. These walls are also about 1.5 meters wide but are only 20 to 30 cm in height. Structure B measures 4.6 meters long by ca 4.3 meters wide. The doorway of this structure, ca one meter in width, also faces southwest.

As will be discussed in Section 8, these structures are rare if not unique. The Potosi badger huts were initially recorded in the Wisconsin Architecture History Inventory in the 1970s. No similar structures have been reported in this data base or in the Archaeological Sites Inventory since that time. Although no artifacts have yet been recovered to assign these structures to the early lead mining era, the appearance of the rock walls suggest some antiquity. The stones are moss-covered and the spaces between the stones have filled with dirt. Long-term Potosi residents also regard them as the remains of early miners' (a.k.a. badgers) huts. The evidence, admittedly, remains circumstantial.

The predominant features at this site represent early efforts to extract lead. A possible adit is located on the north slope of the ridge in the center of the site (see Fig.1). The current opening measures 8.5 meters by 5 meters, is 1.5 meters deep, and is surrounded by a large ring of

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backdirt. Adits are horizontal mining entrances, excavated into the side of the slope to intersect veins of lead.

Most of the "diggings" that are visible today are only one to two meters in diameter and are shallow, ranging from 0.10 to 1.8 meters in depth. In the north central portion of the site, there is a series of pits in a distinct line that suggest the miners were following a vein of ore. However, this line of pits does not follow the veins of lead as later mapped by geologists (Hall 1862; Heyl et al. 1959). The miners may have just paralleled the ridge in their search for lead. Although there appears to be considerably less order or pattern in the placement of the other pits, these holes cluster in two groups and bear northwest to southeast, matching the bearing of the ore deposits as mapped by Hall (1862) and Heyl et al. (1959). These pits also follow a pattern noted by McKay (1988:4) in the Mines of Spain lead district in northeastern Iowa: diggings "most commonly occur along the upper slopes and ridge tops where miners anticipated locating lead veins above the water table."

Archaeological investigations at the Badger Huts site have been limited to surface survey, mapping, and shovel tests near the structures. Archaeologists excavated 15 shovel tests in the area of Structure A, including two inside the structure itself, and 13 in the area of Structure B, including one inside the structure (Kreisa 1991). None of these shovel tests produced any artifacts. Given the transitory nature of early miners, however, this is not surprising.

Historic records suggest that the site dates to at least the 1830s, if not the late 1820s. The original land survey (*Federal Land Survey Plat Books, Series 698*), completed in 1833, shows "diggings" already present across this southwest to northeast bearing ridge. The nature of the numerous pits also suggest an early date. The initial mining efforts in the Upper Mississippi lead region have been characterized as somewhat ephemeral, exploiting the most easily obtained surface deposits; deposits that were essentially "worked out" by the 1840s (Fatzinger 1971). These shallow excavations did not require much capital or expertise. Wright (1966:10) described early mining as extensive rather than intensive; "they would range a wide area...constantly sinking test pits, taking the easily removed surface ore and then moving to another location". Owen (1844), a geologist who visited the region in 1839, described these

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early efforts:

When a miner sets out in search of lead ore, he usually begins by what is called "prospecting"; that is, on those spots where surface or other indications lead him to expect a discovery of ore, he commences digging holes or sinking shafts, usually on the summit or the declivity of a hill. Should he fail in the first attempt to reach gravel mineral, or come upon any signs of neighborhood to a fissure, he soon abandons the spot, and begins to dig elsewhere. The ground, in many portions of the lead district, is found riddled with such pits, called, in the language of the Wisconsin miner, "prospect holes" (Owen 1844:40-41).

This description aptly characterizes the Badger Huts Site, and this site, in turn, vividly illustrates this early chapter in Wisconsin's history. Further, the Potosi Badger Huts Site has the potential to provide information to enhance our understanding of this chapter of Wisconsin's past.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Potosi Badger Huts Site is eligible for the National Register at the local level under Criterion A, for its association with the early lead mining industry and the subsequent Euroamerican settlement of southwestern Wisconsin. As noted in *Cultural Resource Management in Wisconsin*, the lead deposits in this part of the state "proved more magnetic than either the fur trade or frontier farming in luring a steady stream of settlers northward up the Mississippi and Fever (now Galena) Rivers" (Fay et al. 1986:3-1). The Potosi Badger Huts Site exemplifies the early 19th century exploration, exploitation, and settlement of southwestern Wisconsin. It is also proposed that this site is eligible under Criterion D, at the local level. Although material remains are not expected to be abundant at early mining sites, the Potosi Badger Huts Site has the potential to yield significant information on early lead miners and the beginnings of the Potosi community.

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HISTORIC CONTEXT

The Resource

The Upper Mississippi River Valley lead district encompasses approximately 3,000 square miles, roughly corresponding to the southern portion of the Driftless Area of southwestern Wisconsin, northeastern Iowa and northwestern Illinois. The lead is derived from galena, a lead sulphide, containing 86% lead by weight. Typically, the ore was found in crevices, occurring as thin vertical sheets, or larger pods or horizontal sheets. The richest deposits were found in Galena dolomite, an Ordovician formation fortuitously located near the surface in Driftless Area. Where this formation was near or at surface, pieces of galena could be found in the soil or resting on the bedrock. The Euroamerican miners called this "float". Owen (1844) noted that it would have been more accurate to call it "drop" because the ore had dropped from its original position when the encasing limestone had eroded.

The lead bearing veins were not continuous in southwest Wisconsin but, where they did occur, they commonly occurred in groups, often running parallel to one another (Hall 1862; Heyl et al. 1959). Schafer (1932:93) reported that these veins usually ran "nearly east and west, with occasional north and souths and fewer...ten o'clocks or four o'clocks". The miners called groups of related veins "ranges"; a network of ranges in a particular locality was called a "diggings". Maps of the lead deposits in the Potosi area, including the Badger Huts Site, indicate that the ore lay in parallel veins, bearing northwest to southeast (Hall 1862; Heyl et al. 1959).

History of Use

Native American groups had used galena for thousands of years, although apparently in limited contexts and in limited amounts (Kuhm 1951; Walthall 1981). More intensive exploitation, by groups such as the Mesquakie, Sauk, and Ho-Chunk, did not begin until the arrival of Europeans, their new weapons, and the subsequent increased demand for lead. Schoolcraft (1855) and Meeker (1908) both provided descriptions of work at early 19th century "Indian diggings". Women and old men did the work, digging holes "till they are arrested by solid rock...there are no shafts...the windlass and bucket are unknown to them" (Schoolcraft 1855:172-173). It is not known if Native Americans worked the Potosi Badger Huts Site prior to the arrival of Europeans and Euroamericans.

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Potosi Badger Huts Site
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By the mid 17th century, French explorers had learned of the mineral resources in the Upper Mississippi Valley and were extracting and processing large amounts of lead by the end of the 18th century (Thwaites 1895). Julien Dubuque dominated this trade in the late 18th/early 19th century. Working with the Mesquakie, from 1788 to his death in 1810, Dubuque mined the rich deposits of the Mines of Spain, located along the Mississippi River near present-day Dubuque, Iowa. Following Julien Dubuque's death, the Mesquakie and Sauk dominated the Upper Mississippi Valley lead trade into the 1820s.

Between 1804 and 1832, the U.S. government acquired title to the lands within the Upper Mississippi lead district and in 1822, began leasing rights to mining claims in the Fever River District (now Galena, Illinois). To control and profit from the lead trade, the U.S. government initially did not sell mineral-bearing lands but only leased them, asking for 1/10 of the product. Mining claims were limited to 300 square yards and 1/4 acre for farming. Mining was of such importance that permission to farm was only granted if it didn't interfere with mining (Fatzinger 1971:34). In the early 1830s, the land in the Wisconsin's lead district was surveyed and non-mineral bearing lands were for sale in 1834. Generally, the sale of mineral-bearing lands was not allowed until 1846.

The first permanent Euroamerican settlement in the Upper Mississippi lead district was in Galena (originally called La Pointe), beginning as early as 1819 (Fatzinger 1971:14). Miners soon spread northward and camps, such as Hardscabble (Hazel Green), were established by 1824 in what is now southern Wisconsin (Meeker 1908). In the mid and late 1820s, miners continued to press northward into Ho-Chunk territory despite initial efforts by the federal government to keep them out. By 1828, the Ho-Chunk were expelled, opening the lead lands east of the Mississippi to Euroamerican miners (Abbot 1988).

The Euroamerican population in the lead district exploded in the latter half of the 1820s. Gregory (1932:38) (using information from Chandler's 1829 map of the region), stated that in 1825, there were 200 immigrants; three years later, there were an estimated 10,000 immigrants. This spread of miners led directly to the region's settlement. By 1829, there were so many settlers in the lead district, the territory south of the Wisconsin River, then all a part of

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Potosi Badger Huts Site
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Crawford County, was detached into a separate county, named Iowa County. By 1836, Wisconsin Territory was separated from the state of Michigan, and Iowa County was further subdivided into Iowa and Grant Counties. In that year, the census indicates that almost half of Wisconsin's Euroamerican inhabitants lived in Iowa County.

The Potosi Community

It is difficult to definitively state when Euroamericans first arrived in Potosi. St. John Mine ("Snake Cave") a natural cave exploited for lead, and located immediately north of the Badger Huts Site, is thought to be one of, if not *the*, earliest mine to have been worked by Euroamericans in Wisconsin. It may have been mined by the French as early as 1700. Thwaites (1895:274), citing LeSueur's reporter and companion, Penicant, reported that LeSueur, while traveling in southwest Wisconsin between the Grant and Platte Rivers, found a lead mine and supplied himself, "supposed to be what afterwards came to be known as Snake Diggings, near Potosi". According to Butterfield (1881:759), Euroamerican hunters first discovered "float" galena in Potosi in 1829. The "float" was reportedly discovered amid the roots of a fallen tree. He also reported that in that same year Thomas Hymer built a hut at the mouth of Snake Hollow (later renamed Potosi) but soon left because of "Indian troubles".

Donath (1978) suggested that Willis St. John may have first visited "Snake Cave" sometime between the Winnebago War and Black Hawk's uprising. Murphy (1932:425) stated that Willis St. John found the Snake Cave mine in the spring of 1831. He also reported that Samuel Driver arrived in Snake Hollow in April of 1832 and "found quite a number of miners at work and considerable ore being raised". Baumann (1939) and Donath (1978) concluded that Willis St. John and Isaac Whitaker began mining in Snake Cave after the end of the Black Hawk War (August, 1832). All agree that the development of Potosi only began in earnest at the end of this war. Within a short time, "the bluffs and ravines of the district were pocked with succor (sic) holes and more extensive mines" (Donath 1978). Baumann (1939) reported that a group of English miners from Galena arrived around this time and formed a camp in Snake Hollow. In 1836, four families lived in the valley but most cabins were occupied by men, usually "two in each hut" and were "mostly hard drinkers and profane swearers" (Davies 1904:165-166). By 1840, there were approximately 400 residents in Potosi (Read 1941:90).

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In the 1830s and early 1840s, ore production rose rapidly. Southwest Wisconsin produced 4,281,876 pounds of lead in 1832; 25,044,950 pounds in 1839 and 54,494,850 pounds in 1845, the peak year of production (Taylor 1985). Potosi, with its mines and advantageous location near the Mississippi River, thrived and rivaled Galena and Dubuque. By 1841, Potosi was one of the first two towns in Grant County to become incorporated. By 1843, four smelters were running day and night (Taylor 1985:85-86). By 1845, in addition to these four smelters, there were eight general stores, six saloons, four cabinet makers, four blacksmiths, three hotels, three shoe shops, three churches, two drug stores, two livery stables, a hardware store, a clothing store, and a tanning yard (Baumann 1939:46). There was heavy river traffic at the nearby Grant Slough landing and heavy road traffic to Galena.

This economic boom soon went bust and after 1845, production dropped. Surface deposits were depleted and there was little to capital to pursue other options. Potosi's near-death blow came in 1849 with the California gold rush. As eloquently described by Butterfield (1881:765):

When the news reached Potosi of the existence of these rich deposits, it found a population made up of promiscuous nationalities and characteristics. The largest proportion of them had been identified with mining and mining interests almost from their birth, and with the announcement that hidden wealth accessible to the quality of skill which furnished a comfortable living here awaited their undertakings, a panic was created in the Potosi mines, the like of which cannot be conceived. Age forgot its crutch, labor its task, and all who were able to buckle on their sandals preparatory to flight thither did so, and left.

The Potosi Badger Huts Site

Certainly, the Badger Huts Site was being worked by 1833, if not some years earlier. The original land survey, conducted in 1833, recorded numerous diggings in this particular area of Section 34, Town of Potosi. It may be impossible to determine who first explored and mined the deposits at the Badger Huts Site. Certainly, Native American involvement can not be ruled out. The federal leasing records, which might have provided information on the first Euroamerican miners, are of little use. These records consist of miners' names entered into a ledger but are not tied to particular parcels of land (Wolf 1996). The General Land

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Office records with initial landowner information simply states that Section 34 "Belongs to the Town of Potosi" (*General Land Office, Local Tract Book, Series 1673, Vol.80*). Land in adjacent sections, presumably non mineral-bearing, was sold to private individuals as early as 1837.

However, there is information that indicates mineral-bearing lands were in fact being bought and sold in Potosi in the late 1830s and early 1840s. According to *Senate Documents*, in May of 1842, the Superintendent of U.S. Lead Mines, John Flanagan, issued a notice to miners, announcing a schedule of meetings in several towns at which miners could receive applications for mining leases. The meeting in Potosi was scheduled for June 4, 1842. In apparent response, the President and trustees of the Town of Potosi wrote to the Commission on Public Lands on June 25, 1842. Noting that since they "had been left to ourselves since 1835", they had assumed that the federal government "never again intended to exercise jurisdiction over them" (*Senate Documents, 27th Congress, doc 331, series 398, pp 23-24.*) Further, the town President George Madina noted:

mineral lots since then [1835] have been viewed as property and so regarded by all classes of the community, bought and sold as such, and thousands of dollars expended in building on the same, under the fond hope of getting a pre-emption to their mineral lands. (*Senate Documents, 27th Congress, doc 331, series 398, pp 23-24.*)

In 1844, Section 34 of the Town of Potosi, including much of the village as well as the Badger Huts Site, was donated to the Wisconsin Territory by an Act of Congress (*Public Statutes at Large of the United States of America, Vol. V, pp. 663-664*). The law stated that the land was to be surveyed and divided into lots and sold, provided that the pre-emption rights would be granted to the actual occupants already residing on these lots. Fair prices were to be set by three "disinterested" commissioners. According to Butterfield (1881:756), the land was surveyed into lots of two sizes: 2 1/2 acres and others (along Potosi's main street) that measured 66 feet frontage by 120 feet deep. This survey was completed and filed with the Grant County Register of Deeds in June, 1845.

An examination of this 1845 plat indicates that the Badger Huts Site would have certainly been

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encompassed by the following lots: 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 215, 216, 217, 218, and 219. According to the Grant County volumes of deeds for the years 1837-1852 and 1852-1858, none of these particular lots were sold.

Although most of the individual components of the Potosi Badger Huts Site lack distinction, collectively they convey the significance of this property. The number and nature of the "diggings" and the crude structures vividly illustrate the earliest Euroamerican chapter of Potosi's history. As stated in *National Register Bulletin 42*, mining landscapes can clearly "evoke images of time, place, and historical patterns" (Noble and Spude 1992:13). The pock-marked surface of the Badger Huts Site typifies the early Euroamerican lead mining industry in southwestern Wisconsin.

Early miners worked surface deposits that required little investment in either equipment or technological expertise. They often began work near "old Indian diggings" (Meeker 1908:293) and/or identified potentially promising crevice deposits by shallow depressions or areas with excessive vegetation (Fatzinger 1971). These early efforts produced thousands of pits across the lead mining district as all likely areas were explored. The Potosi Badger Huts Site clearly illustrates these early lead mining techniques, consisting of numerous shallow holes following veins of lead across the landscape, typically on ridges and upper slopes (see Fig.1). Only as surface deposits were depleted, did miners invest money and labor into deeper mines. Murphy (1932:406) remarked that "all mines up to 1829 were of the "sucker hole" or shallow type" and that deeper mines did not appear until after 1836.

Although lead diggings and shafts once covered tens of thousands of acres of southwestern Wisconsin these visual reminders of Wisconsin's past have come under heavy pressure since the mid 19th century. As noted by Salkin (1993:70-71) many mining features have been destroyed, and, in fact, this destruction has been promoted by various agencies. For example, a United States Bureau of Mines contract produced a report entitled "*A Study of the Hazards Presented by Abandoned Mine Shafts in the Southwest Wisconsin Lead and Zinc Mining District*" (Gronbeck n.d.). Not surprisingly, the report recommended filling shafts with rock or capping them with reinforced concrete. Broughton (1996), compiler of the *Wisconsin Mineral Development Atlas*, estimates that about 70% of the lead mining features in Wisconsin

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have been lost, primarily through reclamation by farmers.

The rarest features at the Potosi Badger Huts Site are the structures. Although not dated by archaeological data, local tradition and their appearance suggests antiquity. As noted by Richards et al. (1995:43), the first Euroamerican settlement system in this region is represented by a pattern of temporary seasonal occupations. Certainly, the appearance of these badger huts suggests short term, seasonal stays. As noted, no similar structures have been recorded in the inventories maintained by the State Historical Society. Broughton, in his extensive travels across southwest Wisconsin, knows the locations of only two other *possible* early miner structures and one of these is no longer extant (Broughton 1996).

There is also little recorded about early miner housing in historic accounts. Gregory (1932:51) cited an 1847 publication, "Sketches of the West, or the Home of the Badgers":

the taste in building will appear novel...the miner does not reckon on a permanent home and he chooses the ravine where he finds protection from the prairie wind...many are well built...others are so frail that to be safe they should be tied to a post when the wind blows.

Johnson (1977:10) described early miners' shelters as "crude and uncomfortable, little more than windbreaks at times". Citing late 19th century Galena newspaper accounts, Johnson describes huts made with willow frames and grass thatching. Murphy (1932:405) reported that in 1828, John Hood, a Mineral Point resident, initially built a house of poles, covered with bark and then later constructed a sod and cave house. Baumann (1939:47-48) also noted the makeshift nature of early structures. Miners lived in "dugouts in the hillsides...and rude cabins of sod, logs, or stone".

The limited archaeological testing in and around these structures has not yet produced artifacts. However, given the transitory nature of early mining sites, and the probable economic status of early miners, this is not surprising. Archaeologists who surveyed the Mines of Spain Archaeological District in northeastern Iowa found almost no cultural material at these types of exploratory sites (McKay 1988). However, the potential to yield data remains. The

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evidence of early mining activities at this site was not erased by later more intensive mining. Nor has this land been plowed or disturbed by more recent developments. The Potosi Badger Huts Site may offer the best opportunity to explore the nature of an early short term extractive site and the "domestic" life of the early miners. Indeed, archaeological data may finally confirm that the structures are "badger huts".

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

The boundaries are depicted on Fig. 1, "Map of the Potosi Badger Huts Site, Grant County, WI". The western and southern edges of this property are defined by the lowest contour line depicted on the map. The northern boundary is a fence line. The eastern boundary is formed by a north to south line and the easternmost drainage on the map.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION

The boundaries were drawn to encompass the concentration of historic lead mining features at the southwestern end of this prominent ridge overlooking the town of Potosi. The eastern boundary marks the point where modern intrusions are notable.

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Mr. Francis Kieler
P.O. Box 254
Kieler, WI
53812

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Photograph 1

View of Badger Hut A, facing northeast.
April 18, 1996
Diane Y. Holliday

Photograph 2

View of mining pit, facing southeast.
September 11, 1996
Diane Y. Holliday

Negatives on file at the Office of the State Archaeologist, Division of Historic Preservation,
State Historical Society, 816 State Street, Madison, WI, 53706.

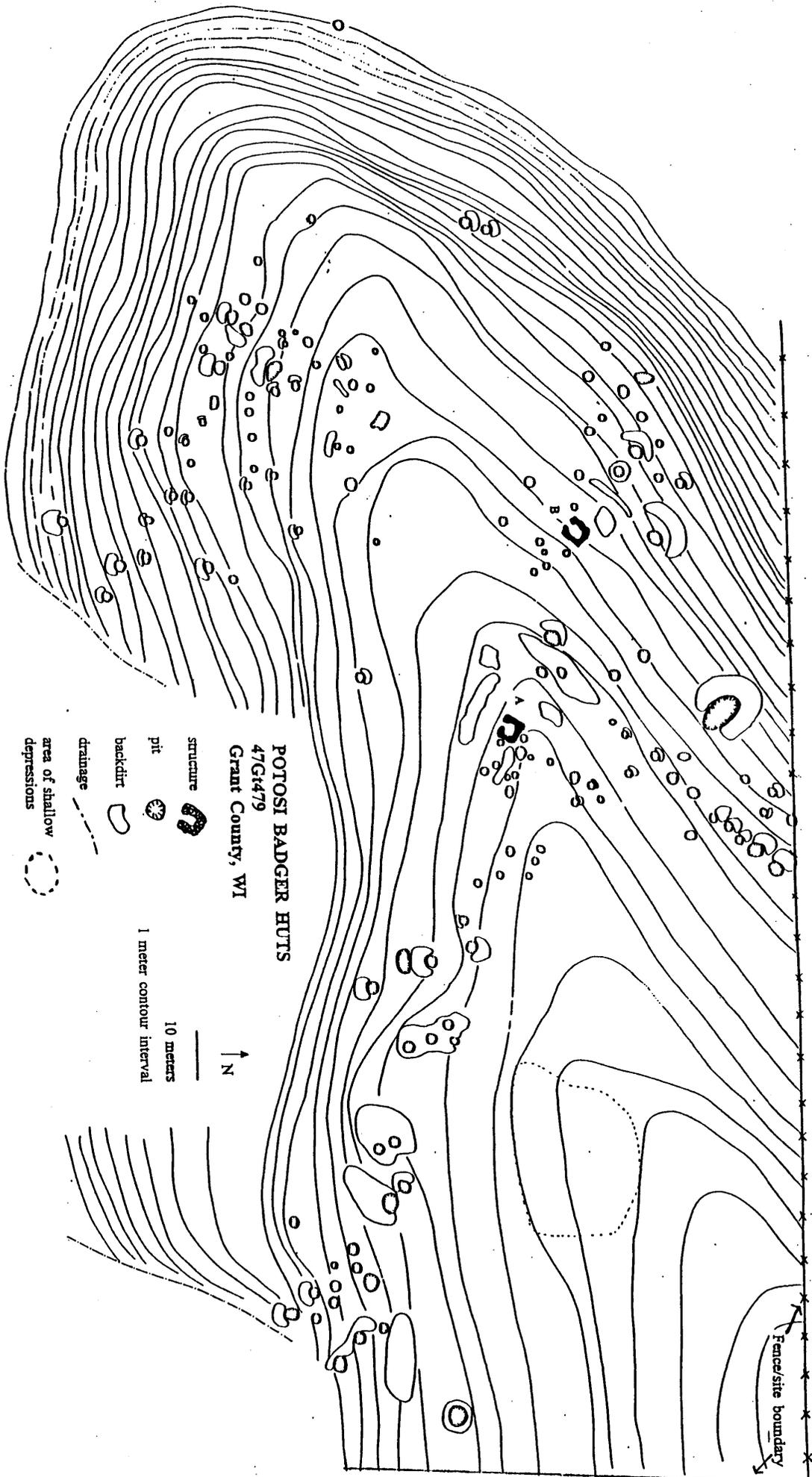


Fig. 1 Map of the Potosi Badger Huts Site, Grant County, WI