

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

FOR NPS USE ONLY	
RECEIVED	JUL 10 1978
DATE ENTERED	NOV 28 1978

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

1 NAME

HISTORIC

Pioneer Mine Buildings and "A" Headframe

AND/OR COMMON

Pioneer Headframe

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

at Shagawa Lake

SW, NW, Sec. 27, T63N, R12W

—NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

Ely

— VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

8th

STATE

Minnesota

CODE

22

COUNTY

St. Louis

CODE

137 ✓

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

- DISTRICT
- BUILDING(S)
- 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
- COMMERICAL
- EDUCATIONAL
- ENTERTAINMENT
- GOVERNMENT
- INDUSTRIAL
- MILITARY
- MUSEUM
- PARK
- PRIVATE RESIDENCE
- RELIGIOUS
- SCIENTIFIC
- TRANSPORTATION
- OTHER: vacant

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

City of Ely

STREET & NUMBER

CITY, TOWN

Ely

— VICINITY OF

STATE

Minnesota

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

St. Louis County Courthouse

STREET & NUMBER

5th Avenue West First

CITY, TOWN

Duluth

STATE

Minnesota

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

Minnesota Statewide Survey

DATE

1977

—FEDERAL STATE —COUNTY —LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

Minnesota Historical Society - Building 25, Fort Snelling

CITY, TOWN

St. Paul

STATE

Minnesota

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input 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 Pioneer Mine Buildings and "A" Headframe are centrally located on the Vermilion Iron Range in Ely, Minnesota. This mine, which opened in 1889, was the first mine in the Ely area. By the 1930s it was considered one of the largest underground mines in the world. It produced ore from two shafts with depths to 1,700 feet. There are four buildings and a structure on the site, in addition to the "A" headframe. There is a metal water tower, captain's dry house and smoke stack, engine or hoist house, workers dry house, and a shaft house.

The Pioneer headframe, which held the large pulleys carrying the cables used to lower or raise the crew elevators (cages) and the iron ore skips in the mine shaft, was built in 1943 and replaced an earlier steel headframe. Originally the headframe was a wooden structure powered by mules. Ore raised to the surface by the headframe was loaded in train cars for shipment to Two Harbors and then shipped by boat to lower lake ports. At the turn of the century, power for operating the headframe was generated in the power house with the hoisting mechanism located in the hoist house.

The Pioneer headframe is typical of the headframes built for the underground mining process and used at every mine on the Vermilion Range. It was constructed of riveted steel and was equipped with pulleys which lifted ore from depths of 1,700 feet. A hoistman operated from the hoist house the raising of the ore skips and the dumping of the ore into the waiting rail cars. The present headframe operated until 1967 when the mine closed due to the high cost of processing crude ore.

The captain's dry house and smoke stack and the water tower are the earliest building and structure remaining on the mine site. They date from the turn of the century. The captain's dry house and smoke stack are brick. The dry house, a place to change from work clothes, was originally the power plant when the mine operations were powered by steam. It was converted to a dry house when the mine was electrified.

Two other buildings on the site which date to the early 1900s are the workers' dry house and the engine house. The workers' dry house is a steel building; the engine house is constructed of brick. The engine house housed the furnace, boiler, compressor, hoist drum and hoist. None of the equipment remains in the building, although efforts are being made to salvage some that is now strewn around the site.

The shaft house dates to the construction of the headframe. It is a frame building sided with corrugated metal. It is located by the shaft. Concrete stairs lead to the shaft collar.

Presently the headframe and water tower are in stable condition, but in need of preservation. The brick dry house and smoke stack and engine house are in good condition. The steel dry house is in poor condition, as is the shaft house which needs a new roof.

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 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 checked="" 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

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Pioneer Mine buildings and "A" headframe are the last such structures remaining on the Vermilion Iron Range with the exception of the buildings and structures of the Soudan Iron Mine National Landmark at the south end of that iron range. At the Pioneer Mine the ore is soft and extends to great depth. At the time of closing the shaft was still at an underground level producing high quality ore.

Underground mining predominated on this iron range because the ore bodies of this region are irregularly shaped. All other headframes on the Vermilion Range, except the one at Soudan, were removed as the iron ore mines closed. Taconite processing, a less expensive way of supplying ore for smelting, succeeded the earlier underground mining process. The Pioneer Mine buildings and headframe are the last buildings and structures of a once common mining technique on the Vermilion Iron Range.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

American Iron Ore Association. Lake Superior Iron Ores. Cleveland: The Lake Superior Iron Ore Association. 1938.

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than 1 acre

UTM REFERENCES

A	1,5	58,51,6,0	5,30,69,4,0	B			
	ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING		ZONE	EASTING	NORTHING
C				D			

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

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

Liza Nagle/Survey Specialist

9 November 1978

ORGANIZATION

Minnesota Historical Society

DATE

(612) 726-1171

STREET & NUMBER

Ft. Snelling Branch, Bldg. 25

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

St. Paul, Minnesota

STATE

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.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

Russell W. Fridley

TITLE Russell W. Fridley
State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE 7/3/78

FOR NPS USE ONLY

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

Charles A. ...
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHITECTURE AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE 11-28-78

ATTEST *...*
KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE 11-20-78

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number _____ Page _____

**Note: These changes apply to
Pioneer Mine Buildings and
Headframe in St. Louis County,
Minnesota.**

REFERENCE NUMBER: 78003127

STATE: MINNESOTA

COUNTY: St. Louis

RESOURCE NAME (HISTORIC): Pioneer Mine Buildings and
A Headframe

CITY:

VICINITY OF:

ADDRESS: off Pioneer Rd.

CERTIFICATION DATE:

REMOVED DATE:

COMMENTS:

Nina M. Archabal

Nina M. Archabal
State Historic Preservation Officer

JUN 17 1988

Date