

PH0086398

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: <b>California</b>	
COUNTY: <b>Stanislaus</b>	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER <b>71.12.06.0081</b>	DATE <b>12/16/71</b>

1. NAME

COMMON:  
**Gold Dredge (LA GRANGE)**

AND/OR HISTORIC:  
**Tuolumne Gold Dredging Company Dredge**

2. LOCATION

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**Located in the N.W. one-fourth of Section 31, T. 3S., R. 14 E.**

CITY OR TOWN:  
**La Grange**

STATE <b>California</b>	CODE <b>06</b>	COUNTY: <b>Stanislaus</b>	CODE <b>099</b>
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3. CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Object <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Structure	<input type="checkbox"/> Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Restricted <input type="checkbox"/> Unrestricted <input type="checkbox"/> No
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 type="checkbox"/> Government <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input 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. OWNER OF PROPERTY

OWNER'S NAME:  
**Dale Soule'**

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:  
**Susanville**

STATE: <b>California</b>	CODE <b>06</b>
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5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:  
**Clerk-Recorder**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**1100 Eye Street, Room 122**

CITY OR TOWN:  
**Modesto**

STATE: <b>California</b>	CODE <b>06</b>
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6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE OF SURVEY:  
**Supplemental plot of Sec. 31, T. 3.S., R. 14 E., M.D.M.**

DATE OF SURVEY:  
 Federal  State  County  Local

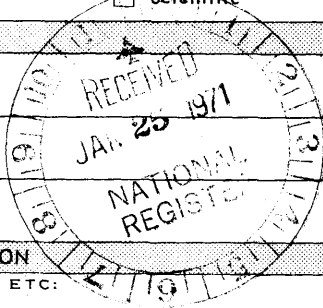
DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:  
**Bureau of Land Management, Sacramento, California**

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:  
**Sacramento,**

STATE: <b>California</b>	CODE <b>06</b>
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SEE INSTRUCTIONS



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7. DESCRIPTION

CONDITION	(Check One)					
	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> Good	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fair	<input type="checkbox"/> Deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> Ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> Unexposed
	(Check One)			(Check One)		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Altered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Unaltered		<input type="checkbox"/> Moved	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Original Site	

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Tuolumne Gold Dredging Company, originally was incorporated as the La Grange Gold Mines, Inc., on papers filed June 3, 1933. The name was changed on October 30, 1935. The company obtained a Reconstruction Finance Corporation loan of \$600,000 and the dredge, designed by Engineer Walter W. Johnson of San Francisco, was built in 1937. The scheme of the new company was to leave the flowing river bed and head inland, to search for gold left in channels the river had abandoned.

To do this, the dredge had to move its own pond with it, dredging it ahead of itself and leaving it filled with tailings behind. The derelict stands now in the pond which it made, and which still holds water.

The machine displaced some 3,600 tons, digging to a depth of 75 feet with a 92-ton bucket chain using 12-cubic-foot buckets, and anchoring itself with a 72-ton spud. The dredge worked in a semi-circle, revolving around the spud anchor, which was at the stern. After the full available radius had been dredged, the great spud was lifted, the machine inched forward a yard or two, and the spud was dropped again. Then the digging, which continued day and night, except for brief maintenance shutdowns, continued.

The Tuolumne dredge met misfortune about a year after it began dredging when it flipped on its side in its pond. A number of photographs of the accident have been preserved, but the machine was righted and continued working until 1949. On another occasion, the machine dug too close to a former mine tunnel, and its portable pond drained away. The pond was restored with a dike.

Inside, the dredge was a gold refinery. The gold-laden soil and rocks were first washed down in a revolving drum called a "trommel". This separated the large materials from the fine, and the fine then were sifted over a drain board. The gold eventually was extracted by the addition of mercury, and the residue rock and soil was conveyed out the back into rows of tailing heaps which still occupy much of the river bottom.

In 1942 the War Production Board ordered a halt to gold dredging, but the Tuolumne Company gained permission to continue on one shift per day. That did not prove enough to be profitable and eventually Walter W. Johnson, the engineer, was able to purchase the machine he had built for a low price.

Walter W. Johnson sold the dredge to I. L. Brooks, a San Francisco stockbroker, who was asking \$100,000 for the machine at the time of his death in 1967. His widow sold the machine for \$15,000 to Dale Soule, a Susanville lumberman, and others. They expressed hopes that the price of gold would be raised, and also talked of moving the dredge to gold fields in South America or in Canada. More recently, the owners have advertised the dredge for sale for \$100,000.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

**3. SIGNIFICANCE**

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- Pre-Columbian |  16th Century |  18th Century |  20th Century  
 15th Century |  17th Century |  19th Century

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known)

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic                | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Industry    | <input type="checkbox"/> Science             | <b>Gold Rush History</b>                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture             | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention              | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture           | <i>(MINES)</i>                                      |
| <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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> Conservation |   |  | _____   |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The La Grange gold dredge is a significant remnant of the final days of the California gold ~~rush~~ and of the worldwide gold dredging industry. Together with the nearby towns of La Grange, Knights Ferry, Coulterville, Mariposa, Jamestown, Sonora and Columbia, the dredge is an integral part of California's "southern mine" heritage.

Particular note should be taken of the nearby New Don Pedro Dam and reservoir and the authorized and under construction New Melones Dam and reservoir on the Stanislaus River to the north. These man-made features have been proposed for a future Mother Lode National Recreation Area by Representative John J. McFall of the 15th Congressional District. The recreation area would incorporate many of the historic gold rush towns and mines, and the Tuolumne Tableland - a geologic feature of Statewide significance.

Toward this ultimate goal, the preservation of the La Grange Dredge is appropriate and necessary, for the machine stands in the midst of landscape changes which are the result of 100 years of gold mining. Mining, by hand, was started at French Bar, forerunner to La Grange and progressed through the hydraulic mining phase and into mechanized gold dredging, beginning almost simultaneously with the start of such dredging at Oroville in 1905.

Bizarre eroded hillsides, strange stone walls, and other signs of the hydraulic mining era, including remnants of a seventeen-mile-long ditch to La Grange from the Tuolumne River, built by the labor of 1,500 men, are evident within walking distance of the dredge.

Earlier dredges on the Tuolumne River at La Grange used electrical power generated by the hydraulic mining system, after some conversion. Later, the dredges purchased their power from the Turlock Irrigation District - the first irrigation district in California becoming a major electrical power customer and helping to prove what today seems the inevitable, that electricity was here to stay.

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

News Accounts

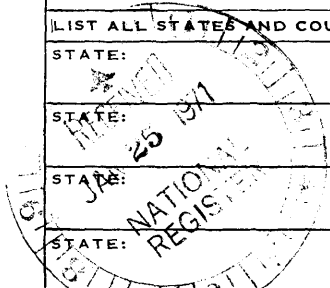
10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

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				
	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds	Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	°	'	"	°	'	"	37°	38'	00"
NE	°	'	"	°	'	"	120°	28'	35"
SE	°	'	"	°	'	"			
SW	°	'	"	°	'	"			

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: 2.5 A. ±

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

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE



NO  
UTM  
CD

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

11. FORM PREPARED BY

NAME AND TITLE:  
**Paul R. Morrisson, Park Director**

ORGANIZATION: **County of Stanislaus** DATE: **6-30-70**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**1100 Eye Street, Room 300**

CITY OR TOWN: **Modesto** STATE: **California** CODE: **05**

12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION

As the designated State Liaison 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. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National  State  Local

Name: [Signature]

Title: State Liaison Officer

Date: October 16, 1970

NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION

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

[Signature]  
Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

**DEC 16 1971**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

ATTEST:  
[Signature]  
Keeper of The National Register

Date: **DEC 7 1971**

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STATE	
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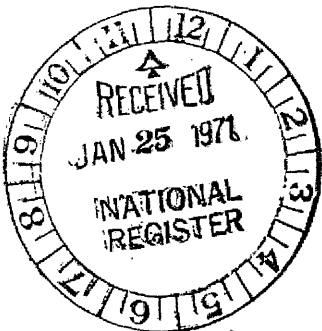
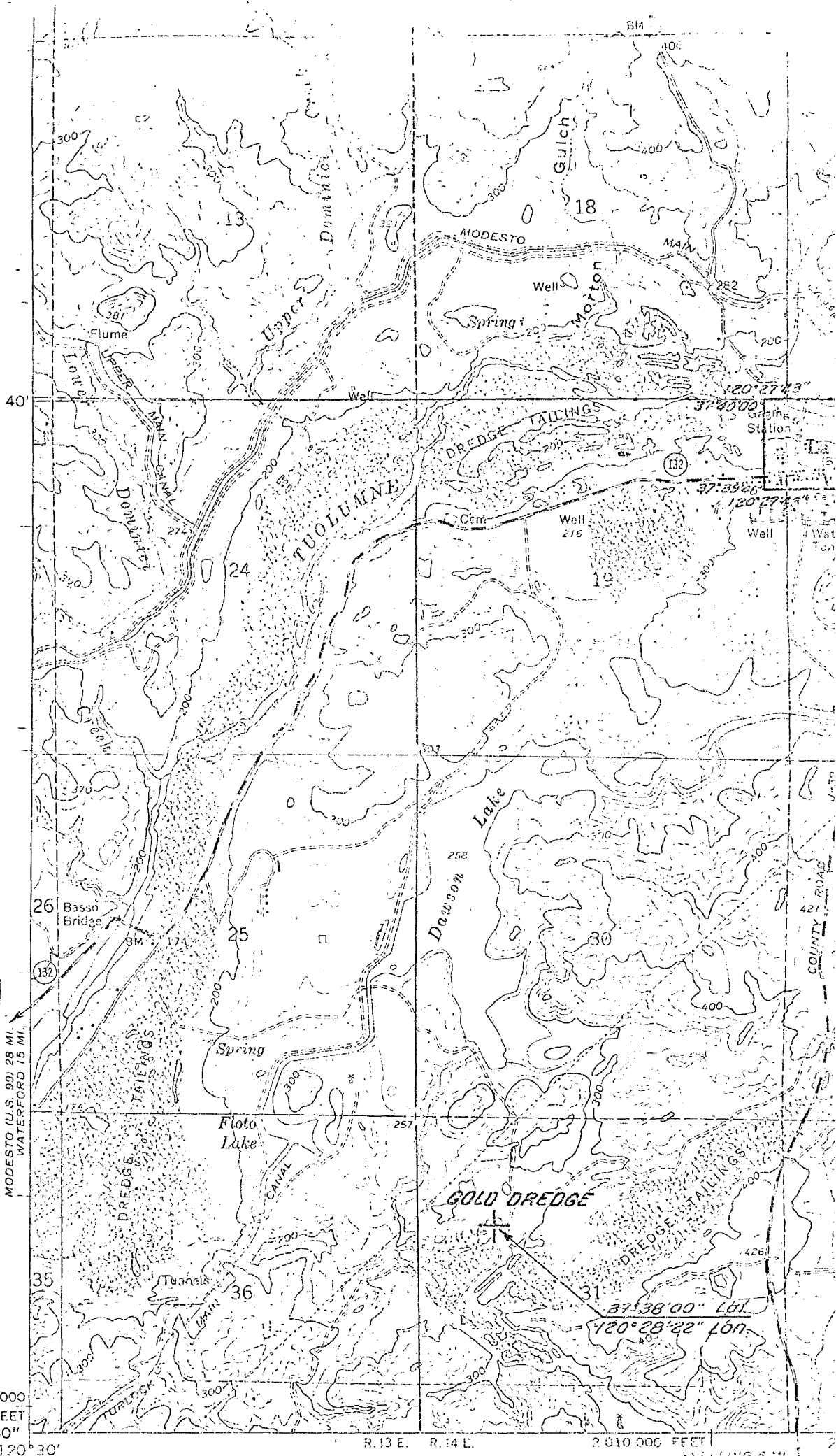
8. Significance

(Continuation Sheet)

(Number all entries)

The dredges desecrated, for many years, miles and miles of stone tailing piles and landscape, particularly in the river bottoms. Slowly, the tailings have been used for gravel, and in the past four years, miles of tailings have been taken for the construction of New Don Pedro Dam. Some tailing piles remain near the dredge and should be preserved from gravel operations to complete the historical setting.

The dredge stands two stories high, plus a control house, and is mainly intact, although neglected. For years, there has been talk of making the structure a museum, but funds have not been available locally. The structure would make an ideal gold rush museum of southern mine history.



TURLOCK LAKE

Mapped, edited, and published by the Geological Survey in cooperation with California Department of Water Resources

Control by USGS and USC&GS

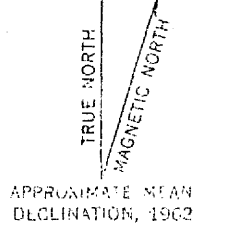
Topography by photogrammetric methods from aerial photographs taken 1959. Field checked 1962  
Underwater contours by Turlock Irrigation District

Polyconic projection. 1927 North American datum  
10,000-foot grid based on California coordinate system, zone 3  
1000-meter Universal Transverse Mercator grid ticks, zone 10, shown in blue

Fine red dashed lines indicate selected fence lines

410 000 FEET  
37° 37' 30"  
120° 30'

R. 13 E. R. 14 E. 2 610 000 FEET  
SNELLING 8 MI  
MERCED (U.S. 9) 35 MI



**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**  
**PROPERTY MAP FORM**

(Type all entries - attach to or enclose with map)

STATE <b>California</b>	
COUNTY <b>Stanislaus</b>	
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ENTRY NUMBER <b>71.12.06.0081</b>	DATE <b>12/16/71</b>

SEE INSTRUCTIONS

<b>1. NAME</b>			
COMMON: <b>Gold Dredge</b>			
AND/OR HISTORIC: <b>Gold Dredge</b>			
<b>2. LOCATION</b>			
STREET AND NUMBER: <b>Located in the N.W. one-fourth of Section 31, T. 3S., R. 14 E.</b>			
CITY OR TOWN:			
STATE: <b>California</b>	CODE <b>06</b>	COUNTY: <b>Stanislaus</b>	CODE <b>099</b>
<b>3. MAP REFERENCE</b>			
SOURCE: <b>U. S. G. S. (La Grange Quadrangle) California 7.5 Minute Series (topographic)</b>			
SCALE: <b>1:24000</b>			
DATE: <b>1962</b>			
<b>4. REQUIREMENTS</b>			
TO BE INCLUDED ON ALL MAPS			
1. Property boundaries where required.			
2. North arrow.			
3. Latitude and longitude reference.			

