

TERRITORY OF ALASKA
DEPARTMENT OF MINES
COLLEGE, ALASKA
7 December 1950

MEMORANDUM REPORT

TO: Leo H. Saarela, Commissioner of Mines, Juneau, Alaska

FROM: James A. Williams, Associate Mining Engineer, College, Alaska

SUBJECT: Mining Operations in the Otter Recording Precinct, Fourth Division

On the 9th, 10th, and 11th of September 1950, the writer visited mining operations in the Otter Precinct for the purpose of gathering information and data on the mining industry in that district.

Ten operations were found to be active and all but one of them were visited. A total of fifty-nine men were actively engaged in the mines of that district. A detailed list of the operations is on a separate sheet included with this report. A tabulation of the operations by type follows:

<u>Operation</u>	<u>No. of Opns.</u>	<u>No. of Men</u>
Gold Dredge	1	16
Dragline-Bulldozer-	4	31
Hydraulic		
Bulldozer-Hydraulic	2	6
Hydraulic	<u>3</u>	<u>6</u>
TOTALS	10	59

There was no lode activity or prospecting in the district in the past season.

The placer mines of the Otter Precinct were hampered by the shortage of water this year, but not to the extent that mines in some of the other districts were. The overall production was probably affected only slightly by the dry season.

The general mining industry of the district seems to be slowly diminishing. The chief difference between the seasons of 1949 and 1950 was that the Ave Mining Company left Chicken Creek for another part of the country. There were several less operations there than in 1941, however, and the mining will probably continue to decrease, unless economic conditions change.

13-1
A recent news release stated that the owners of the Riley Dredge on Otter Creek, long inactive, hoped to resume operations with it next year. If they succeed, it will boost the mining in the vicinity considerably, but it is very doubtful in the writer's mind, knowing the conditions, that the venture will be successful.

A large portion of the mining employees in the Otter Precinct are old-timers. Therefore, the approaching manpower difficulties should not affect the district as much as most other mining areas.

Roads from the town of Flat take one to, or very close to, all the Otter operations but one--the operation on Prince Creek.

13-9
The only active dredge in the district is operated by the North American Gold Dredging Company. Alec Matheson is the manager. They are dredging on Otter Creek below Flat on a paystreak approximately five hundred feet wide. They strip with hydraulic giants and thaw the frozen gravel with cold water points. The thawing is about three years ahead of the dredging, which is quite an advantage in times of labor shortages. The gravel is small and there are no boulders--a sharp contrast to the Miscovich ground about two miles upstream where there are huge boulders that seriously impeded former dredging. The gravel near bedrock contains a gummy white to light blue material which creates somewhat of a washing problem. The gold is fine, is distributed at various depths through the gravel, but is not found in bedrock.

Pat Savage was found mining on Flat Creek with two D-8 bulldozers, a dragline, and a crew of ten men. He had been mining on Willow Creek earlier in the season. The ground on Flat Creek is about mined out, and the remainder is marginal. Mr. Savage planned mining there for a maximum of one more season, and perhaps less.

13-1
Gus Backstrom was found mining high on the side of the ridge between Flat Creek and Happy Creek on the Flat Creek side. The deposit is thirty-five feet deep and is composed of sand, gravel, and huge boulders with the gold all the way from bedrock to grass roots. The material is so tightly packed that it can hardly be scratched with a pick. Every bit of it must be blasted loose. Then the boulders must be worked out of the way with a small hand hoist or wheeled on a specially constructed heavy duty wheelbarrow that Backstrom made for the purpose. A giant washes the small material into the boxes which have sixty feet of riffles and ninety feet of tailing flume. This is a back-breaking operation, but Backstrom is a hardy oldtimer and proud of his strength. The pay is apparently sufficient for his needs. The ice in the cut holds him up until mid-July each year, and the water is scarce at that elevation, but he is satisfied with the accomplishment of mining three or four thousand bedrock feet per season.

On the other side of the above-mentioned ridge, near the top, Jules Stuver is mining a shallow residual deposit with a hydraulic outfit. The bedrock is a monzonite or granite. The gold is both fine and coarse and does not go into bedrock. Stuver mines about 20,000 bedrock feet per season and has ground for twelve or thirteen years. His water is usually sufficient for mining only in April, August, and September. Cinnabar and scheelite are found in his concentrates. 12-13-31

John Bouquier was mining by himself with a bulldozer and hydraulic outfit on Happy Creek. He is known as one of the hardest working miners in the district. On Happy Creek he has been mining the side pay left behind by earlier miners, but is not making much profit. He will probably have to move from his present location before long.

The partnership of Hatten and Turner were found mining in a series of different spots on Willow Creek. The Olsen brothers own the ground and formerly mined there, and Hatten and Turner were jumping from one place to another in an attempt to mine various spots that the Olsens had missed. Their operations have been largely marginal, and they were rather discouraged. They have a bench which they think would pay well if they could mine it, but they cannot because it cannot be washed with the means available. They were all set up on this bench and started to sluice, but found that they could not break up the clayey material in the gravel there, so they had to give it up and move elsewhere. A solution to this problem would probably aid them greatly. 12-13-31

Harry Agoff was reported mining on Prince Creek with a bulldozer-hydraulic outfit and a crew of five men. 12-13-31

The Awe Mining Company were not active on Chicken Creek this year. 12-13-31

Under the company name of Pete Miscovich and Sons, Andrew and Howard Miscovich were found mining on the original Discovery Claim on Otter Creek. The creek grade here is quite flat, and they did not have drainage for their open cut, so they were using a hydraulic elevator to lift the gravel into the sluiceboxes. They use a trenchhoe (two yard) for tearing up bedrock, but there are many large boulders in the gravel and they have to do a large amount of handwork in cleaning up around and underneath these boulders. The most noteworthy thing about this deposit is that it was first drifted, then dredged, and now they are mining it for the third time by open-cutting it and are still finding good pay. The operators were very well satisfied with the recovery. They will probably be mining there for many years as they have many claims and the ground is good. Their camp is well-equipped in machinery, parts, housing, etc. They even have a water-turbine that furnishes them with plenty of electric power. It is the best equipped small camp the writer has seen. The placer concentrate there contains many large nuggets of cinnabar and scheelite. 12-13-31

The Uotila and Ogriz operation on Slate Creek is managed by John Ogriz. The ground here is very poor and the project has apparently been losing money for several seasons. The operation runs smoothly and they move a large amount of ground, (about 280,000 bedrock feet per season) but the values are not sufficient for even a marginal proposition. It will probably not continue for another season. They have a gumbo-washing problem there also.

The last property visited was that of Harry Leov on Malemute Pup. He owns the ground with his wife. It is on the hillside above the valley floor, but is a water-laid deposit. The water was a problem, there only being enough for two or three one-hour splashes a day. About five hundred feet of tail sluice was used to carry the tailings down the hill. The pay is fairly good and Leov is following it up the hill, not determining the side limits. He plans on doing some prospect drilling, if possible, to find the probable limits on the deposit.

Fred Lusher formerly owned the Malemute Pup property and had several lode claims on outcrops nearby. He is reported to have sent in quartz samples for assay over a period of fifteen years up to 1947. Leov wants the results of those assays, but no records of them have been found in the College Assay Office thus far. Any information that can be obtained from the Juneau Office would be appreciated.

Travel within the district was made partly on foot and partly by truck transportation arranged for with Joe Parker of Flat. Travel to and from the district was with Alaska Airlines.

James A. Williams
JAMES A. WILLIAMS
Associate Mining Engineer

MINING OPERATIONS FOURTH DIVISION

OTTER PRECINCT

1950

<u>Name and Address of Operator</u>	<u>Name and Location of Mine</u>	<u>Type of Operation</u>	<u>Crew</u>
Agoff, Harry, Flat ¹³⁻³	Prince Creek	Bulldozer-Hydraulic	5
Packstrom, Gus, Flat ¹³⁻⁷	Head of Flat Creek	Hydraulic	3
Bouquier, John, Flat	Happy Creek	Bulldozer-Hydraulic	1
Hatten and Turner, Flat ¹³⁻¹⁵ ₁₃₋₁₆	Willow Creek	Dragline-Bulldozer- Hydraulic	5
Leov, Harry, Flat ¹³⁻²¹	Malemute Pup, trib. to Otter Creek	Hydraulic	2
Miscovich, P. and Sons, Flat ¹³⁻²³	Otter Creek	Dragline-Bulldozer- Hydraulic	10
North American Dredging Company, Flat ¹³⁻⁴	Otter Creek	Gold Dredge	16
Savage, Patrick, Flat	Flat Creek and Willow Creek	Dragline-Bulldozer- Hydraulic	10
Stuver, Jules, Flat ¹³⁻³¹	Head of Happy Creek	Hydraulic	1
Uotila, Gus and Ogriz, John, Flat	Slate Creek	Dragline-Bulldozer- Hydraulic	6