

Georgia Department of Natural Resources

Historic Preservation Division

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Pine Mountain Gold Mine Listed in National Register

1826 discovery among the first gold rushes in the United States

ATLANTA (September 23, 2008) –Pine Mountain Gold Mine, located on Stockmar Road, Villa Rica vicinity, Douglas County, was listed in the National Register on August 28, 2008. The city of Villa Rica prepared the nomination materials. The Villa Rica Parks and Recreation Department sponsored the nomination.

In 1826, a year before the formation of Carroll County from Creek Indian territory, gold was discovered on Pine Mountain. Early mining on Pine Mountain was done in secret because Georgia had enacted a law that claimed all minerals found in the new territory to be the property of the state. The first miners used pans to mine the surface. Commercial mining operations from roughly 1830 to 1844 used sluice boxes and other equipment to process larger amounts of ore. Mining activity continued through the 19th-century. In 1915, T. H. Aldrich introduced cyanide processing in which hard-to-find gold in powder form was leached from crushed ore. The Pine Mountain Gold Mine was active until 1936.

Between 1949 and 1957, the Stockmar family operated the Flying S Dude Ranch, a public recreational club for fishing, golfing, horseback riding, tennis, and fishing, on Pine Mountain. In 2001, the City of Villa Rica received ownership of the property, which it plans to open to the public with a museum to interpret the history of Pine Mountain.

The Pine Mountain Gold Mine is significant in the area of settlement/exploration because it hastened white settlement on lands in west Georgia that had been part of the Creek Territory.

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The discovery of gold on Pine Mountain in 1826 preceded the well-known Dahlonega gold rush and was among the first gold rushes in the United States.

The Pine Mountain Gold Mine is significant in the area of industry because the equipment, trenches, and others materials from the gold mine represent the ore-mining industry from the second quarter of the 19th century through the mid-1930s.

Pine Mountain is a small mountain that rises 100 feet above Stockmar Road northeast of Villa Rica. Gold mining activity is evident across most of the wooded site. The earliest evidence of mining activity is a series of trenches that were used for panning gold. Later mines include two large pits where a majority of the gold found at the site came from. Established in the 1890s, the “Glory Hole,” as it is known, includes a 60-foot-long trench and a “man-way tunnel” through the top of the mountain that shortened the distance that ore had to be transported for processing. The property is laced with unpaved roads and covered with piles of discarded ore.

Structures on the site associated with the cyanide process include a 35,000-gallon reinforced-concrete reservoir, two reinforced-concrete cyanide dissolving tanks, two reinforced-concrete percolator/leaching tanks, a reinforced-concrete sump tank, a reinforced-concrete solution tank, and foundations for the laboratory/assay office, miners’ bunkhouse, processing building, ore stocking bins, and the steam engine.

The National Register is the federal government's official list of historic buildings, structures, sites, objects, and districts worthy of preservation. According to Richard Cloues, deputy state historic preservation officer, listing in the National Register recognizes a property's significance and ensures that the property will be taken into account in the planning of federally funded or licensed projects. In addition, owners of National Register properties may be eligible for rehabilitation tax incentives.

The Historic Preservation Division (HPD) of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources serves as Georgia’s state historic preservation office. Their mission is to promote the preservation and use of historic places for a better Georgia. HPD’s programs include archaeology protection and education, environmental review, grants, historic resource surveys, tax incentives, the National Register of Historic Places, community planning and technical assistance. For more information, call 404-656-2840 or visit their Web site at www.gashpo.org.