

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

For NPS use only

National Register of Historic Places
Inventory—Nomination Form

received

date entered

See instructions in *How to Complete National Register Forms*
Type all entries—complete applicable sections

1. Name

historic York Iron Company Mine

and/or common

2. Location

street & number North of Green Valley Road between Jefferson and
Seven Valleys

not for publication

city, town North Codorus Township vicinity of

state PA code 42 county York code 133

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other: open land for recreation

4. Owner of Property

name See attached list

street & number

city, town vicinity of state

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. York County Courthouse

street & number 28 East Market Street

city, town York, state PA

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

title Historic Sites Survey of York Co. has this property been determined eligible? yes no

date 1981 federal state county local

depository for survey records PHMC, Bureau for Historic Preservation

city, town Harrisburg state PA

7. Description

Condition

excellent
 good
 fair

deteriorated
 ruins
 unexposed

Check one

unaltered
 altered

Check one

original site
 moved date _____

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

The York Iron Company mine site is located on a predominately northeast-southwest trending ridge approximately 2.5 miles southwest of Seven Valleys and 0.5 miles north of Strickhouser, York County, Pennsylvania (lat. 39° 50' 38"N, long. 76° 48' 46" W). The center of the area lies 0.3 miles west of Hoff Road and 0.4 miles north of Green Valley Road in a densely wooded oak forest. "Strickhouser's Ravine" cuts through the ridge with a relief of about 90 feet from the pinnacle to the creek.

Amidst dense overgrowth and thickly wooded forest, the mine site exists today much as it appeared in its heyday nearly 100 years ago. The original opening (#1) made by John Musselman in 1854 is still accessible today. The opening measures approximately 25 feet wide and 15 feet high. The horizontal adit, or passage to the mines, extends about 110 feet into the hillside. About 75 feet into the hill, the tunnel branches and the left branch extends to the NE about 50 feet.

The smaller shaft which branches off to the right narrows to a vertical tunnel after just a few feet. This tunnel connected the open pit on the surface with the main shaft within the hillside. The ore was probably blasted through this tunnel into rail cars which transported it out of the main shaft. It is possible that the tracks are still in place within the shaft but their existence is indeterminate because of a build up of dirt and debris on the floor of the adit.

Adit #2, believed dug in 1876-77, is presently covered over, although on close examination the hanging wall can be seen. It is believed that the adit is water-filled but may still extend 35' into the hill.

Two shafts were in operation on the west side of the creek. Adit #4, also dug in 1876-77, is still accessible, but recent rockfalls have partly blocked the entrance. This tunnel is 65 feet long, 15 feet wide, and on an average is 30 feet high. Adit #3, located northwest of #4 collapsed several years ago. Presently, no indication of an adit can be seen as a talus pile now occupies the back (west) wall of the trench.

The open pits vary in size from 15 feet in diameter to 370 feet in length. Several of the trenches have been used for garbage pits, but generally still are in good condition. Standing on the pinnacle (photo #4), one finds quick respect for the amount of work and dedication that was needed to produce these open cuts using various hand tools and blasting caps. Evidence of the hand drills, indentations and pick marks can still be seen in some of the rock walls in the open cuts and adits. (Photos #9,10,11)

The railroad used to haul the ore from the mines to the main branch of the Hanover Branch Railroad is a distance of 0.75 miles to the south. This spur, running parallel to the creek, intersected the main railroad near Strickhouser Road, south of Green Valley Road. On Persifer Frazer's 1876 map of the iron mines in York County, the tracks run along the east side of the creek and end in the area of adit #1 and the large open cut to the north. With the addition of adits #3 and #4 on the west side of the creek, another spur was added with the aid of a bridge. A section of a track still protrudes from the west bank of the stream, (Photo #14) Also on the western bank, a stone platform still stands, allowing the cars to be loaded for transport down the valley. This platform, now overgrown, is approximately 3.5 feet wide, 10 feet wide and 15 feet long. Apparently, the channel of the creek has changed somewhat in the last 100 years. Evidence for this can be

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found south of the mine area when tracing the railroad bed. Presently, the stream is cutting into the eastern hillside. At this point, a distinct, level, slightly elevated mound believed to be the railroad bed is found on the west side of the stream. Further south where the stream leaves the "gorge", emptying out onto a wider valley, the stream meanders back to the middle of the valley, and the railroad bed is again located on the east bank of the stream. No iron tracks nor wooden ties have been found on this bed, due to either area flooding or the removal of the tracks after the mining operations ceased.

A pump was needed for the western adits (#3 & #4) since they were not as far above water level as those in the east bank. A foundation of the pump-house is located about 10 feet west of the present-day stream and approximately 50 feet east of the trench that contains adit #3. The pumphouse was built on an embankment and was three-sided with a coal-driven pump situated on the middle. Today a portion of the stone foundation is still visible. (Photo #13) From the existing evidence, the pumphouse measured approximately 15 feet x 15 feet with a 15 foot deep hole in the center of the building, measuring about 12 feet in diameter. Pieces of coal, dust and bricks cover the ground immediately south of the pumphouse foundation, probably marking the location of their stockpile of coal used to drive the pump engine.

Approximately 60 feet north of the pumphouse, the stream bifurcates. An old stone foundation, measuring 27 feet long, 20 feet wide, and 7 feet high is located 75 feet north of the stream fork. (Photo #15) The foundation is still in good condition with very little slumping of the walls. Material used for the wall are rocks native to the area. It was reported by a local resident, Mr. Amos Hoff, that this building was used for a station house and sleeping quarters for the employees during mining periods. After the mines ceased around 1888-89, the house was occupied until 1910. Some artifacts are lying on the surface around the foundation, possibly from the last occupancy of the house. Preliminary observations suggest that the front of the house faced to the west since the land steeply slopes to the east. A slightly sunken pit located between the house and creek to the east possibly could have been an outdoor toilet.

Geologically, the ridge that this mine lies on runs from 4 miles east of Hanover to Jacobus, a distance of 12 miles, is underlain by the Harpers Formation. The majority of the formation consists of a quartzose phyllite, a metamorphic rock intermediate between slate and schist containing quartz and clay minerals. The magnetic ore, a mineral called magnetite, occurs throughout this rock. When weathered, the magnetite exhibits iridescent color, giving the rock a spectacular luster. The second type of ore found here is a mineral called hematite (or specularite). It occurs as shiny, grayish plates in the quartz veins throughout the phyllite. Mining was done along at least three parallel zones of the magnetite - bearing specularite, each up to at least 80 feet thick. The elongation of these open cuts and adits is the result of following these "veins". The zones of high-grade specularite have been traced along strike (parallel to the ridge) by outcrop and float for about 3,000 feet.

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This iron-ore ridge, which stands out brilliantly on the aero-magnetic map (a map of the region showing magnetic areas picked up by a magnetometer mounted on an aircraft) of the area is one of the County's leading prospective areas for future iron production. Up until 20 years ago, the Bethlehem Steel Corporation and the Alan Wood Steel Company conducted test drill borings in this vicinity for possible economic value.

KNOTWELL'S MINE (OPENING)

Located about 1600 feet a little west of due north is a small wooded area containing a large open cut. (Photo #16) The stream that flows through "Strickhouser's Ravine" originate just north of this area. A small dump is located on the northwest side of the open cut. According to Persifor Frazer in 1876 on the Iron Ore Belts of York and Adams Counties, "The opening is about 200 feet long, running from the mouth in a south-east direction, and is hauled out of the mine on mule carts." (probably along the primitive road to the east of the site.)

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 checked="" 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/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates

Builder/Architect

Statement of Significance (in one paragraph)

The York Iron Company mine site is important as the only remaining visual reminder of an industry that influenced the economic and social activities of southwestern York County between 1854 to 1888. The documented quality and quantity of the ore mined in Strickhouser's Ravine enhance the significance of the site and the numerous physical remains of the iron company's operations elucidate the region's mining techniques and practices. Iron ore was first discovered at Strickhouser's Station on the Hanover Junction Railroad in 1854. Ore operators and engineers scoured the Seven Valleys Basin and Jefferson Valley (Green Valley) digging hundreds of test holes. Refusing to sell their lands, wise farmers in the area leased them to the operators on a royalty basis of one dollar per ton. The discovery of iron ore in York and Adams Counties had the same boom effect on the town and villages of the area as the discovery of gold had on mining towns throughout the west.

Soon after the iron ore discovery, the building of large scale rail facilities commenced to handle the anticipated freight. Large rail yards were constructed at Hanover Junction, Seven Valleys, Glatfelter Station, and Strickhouser's Station. Within a few years, hundreds of miners arrived from England and Wales bringing advanced mining techniques with them. These foreigners effected the settlement patterns of the area both sociologically and architecturally.

At the height of the industry, fifteen mines were worked simultaneously in the Seven Valleys Basin. The most extensive operations were those along the steep banks of Strickhouser's Ravine. The York Iron Company's mine was not only one of the seven largest but also the most widely known bank in York County. Its high quality ore was familiar to iron masters under the name of "Codus Ore". With the discovery of iron ore in Illinois and other plains states that was much cheaper to mine, the iron ore industry in York County stopped as quickly as it had started. Rising land prices and the prohibitive extracting costs led all local companies to close their mines by 1888.

The best description of the history of this site comes from a report conducted by the Second Pennsylvania Geologic Survey in 1876 entitled, "Iron Ore Belts of York & Adams Counties", by Persifor Frazer (Report C).

The 'Codus', 'Strickhouser', and York Iron Company's mine was originally opened in 1854 by John Musselman, later purchased by the York Iron Company, and worked continuously up to 1876. The ore consists of a hard, compact slate, highly charged with micaceous and some magnetic ore.

From 10 to 20 tons are mined per diem, but this amount might be increased almost indefinitely owing to the unusually convenient situation for mining. The workmen mine by open cuts above water level, or shaft and drift on the vein, with the minimum amount of timbering. About ten to twenty-five miners are employed at this

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work, the number varying with the demand for the ore. No machinery is necessary as the ore is mined in an open cut above water level. The ore is transported in cars 0.75 miles to the Hanover Branch Railroad, over the company's own sidings, down an incline of 75 feet in height. It costs, at present, fifty cents to transport an eight wheel car back to the mine. The only hauling necessary is that of the cars to the mine and some minor work about the cut. Chemical analyses of the 'Codus Ore' show as high as 46% metallic iron, making this ore one of the purest in York and Adams Counties.

From 1854 to 1876, most of the mining took place in the large open cut and the largest adit (#1) on the east side of the creek. In 1876-77, a 35-foot adit was sunk into another vein of magnetic ore (#2) and was worked until 1888. At the same time, another adit was sunk into the hillside on the west of the creek (#3), and was worked until 1887. No information on the second adit (#4) on the west side of the creek has been found.

Although 116 mines existed in York County in the 19th century, the York Iron Company mine site contains the only visible shafts left. All other mines have been bulldozed or filled. This land remains virtually as it was when mining operations ceased in 1888. With the foundations of the pumphouse, station house, and railroad bed, the site maintains its physical integrity. Drill holes, chisel marks at the entrances to the mines, and the shaft configurations provide comprehensive and tangible evidence of 19th century mining practices and techniques. Although geological surveys of the area provide excellent information on this site and discuss mining operations in great detail, further archival and archeological investigation of this site, would yield an additional appreciation of the tedious process of extracting iron ore by hand.

The York Iron Company Mine site may be threatened by the establishment of a chemical waste dump. In the past, the area has also been the site of several uranium test drillings by both the Bethlehem Steel Corporation and the Alan Wood Steel Company. Drilling or excavation might irreparably damage the site, destroy historical evidence, and compromise the site's integrity.

9. Major Bibliographical References

See attached sheet

10. Geographical Data

Acreege of nominated property 71.5 acres

Quadrangle name Seven Valleys

Quadrangle scale 1:24,000

UTM References

A	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

B	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

C	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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D	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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E	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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F	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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G	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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H	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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Verbal boundary description and justification

See attached sheet

List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
-------	------	--------	------

state	code	county	code
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11. Form Prepared By

name/title Lisa Jensen, Jeri Jones, Mike Fenton, Mary Jo Dorko

organization Historic York, Inc.

date October 15, 1983

street & number P.O. Box 2312

telephone (717) 843-0320

city or town York

state PA 17405

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

title _____ date _____

For NPS use only

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

date _____

Keeper of the National Register

Attest:

date _____

Chief of Registration

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National Park Service

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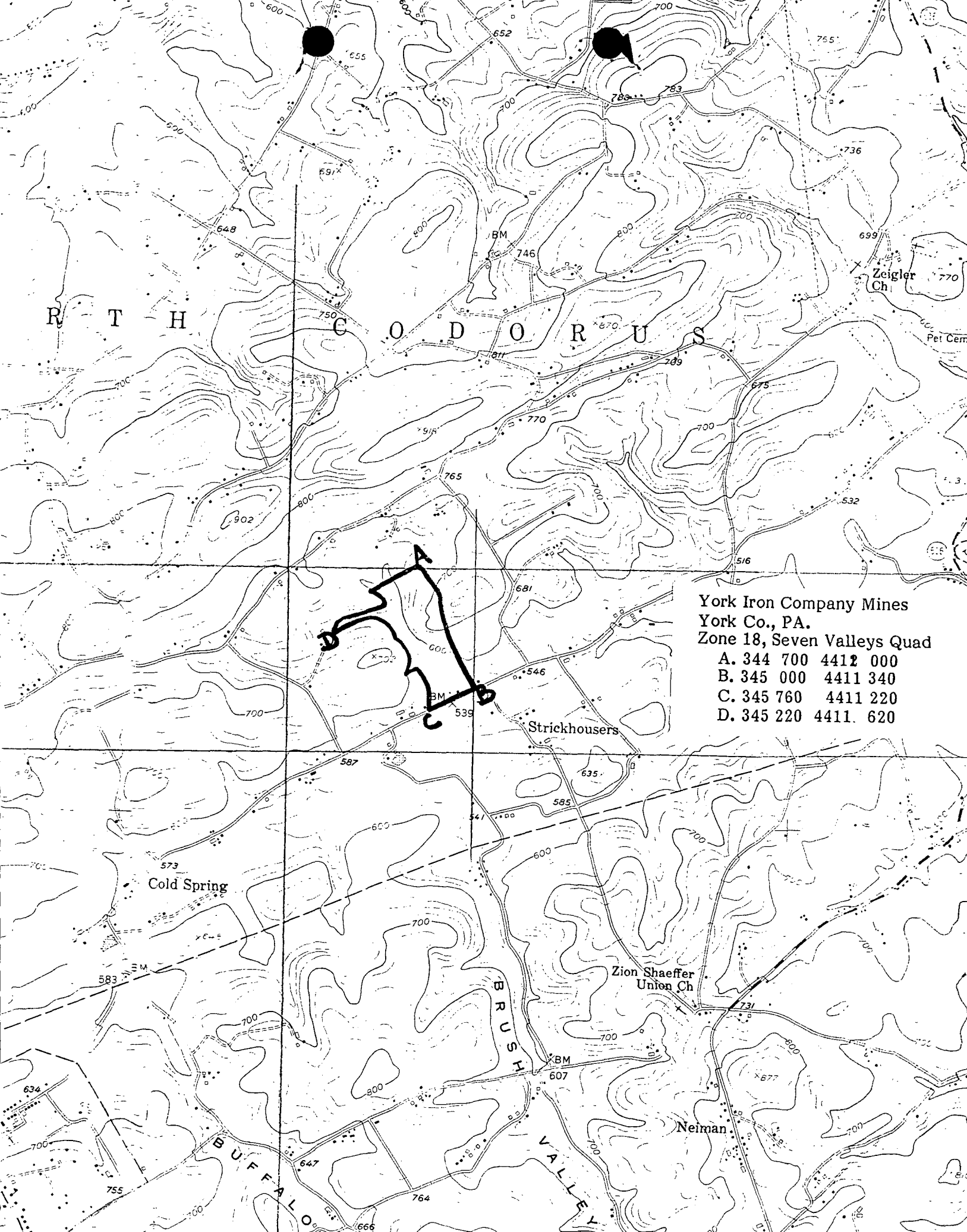
received

date entered

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Major Bibliographical References

- Frazer, Persifor, Jr. Report of Progress in the District of York and Adams Counties: Iron Ore Belts and Individual Mines. Harrisburg, PA: Pennsylvania Geological Survey, 2nd series, 1874, Report C, 1876, pp. 29-32.
- Geyer, Alan R., Robert C. Smith, II, and John H. Barnes. Mineral Collecting in Pennsylvania. Harrisburg, PA: Pennsylvania Geologic Survey, 4th series, General Geologic Report 33, 1976, pp. 229-231.
- Gladfelter, Armand. The People of Seven Valleys: Das Siebenthal Revisited. York, PA: Mehl Ad Associates, 1981, pp 82-89.
- Jones, Jeri L. Geologic Guide of York County, Pennsylvania. York, PA: York Rock and Mineral Club, Spec. Pub. 2, 1981, pp. 16-18.
- Socolow, Arthur A. Geologic Interpretation of Aeromagnetic Maps of Southeastern Pennsylvania. Harrisburg, PA: Pennsylvania Geologic Survey, 4th series, Information Circular 77, 1974, pp. 80-83.
- Stose, A. I. and G.W. Stose. Geology of the Hanover-York District, Pennsylvania. U.S. Geologic Survey Prof. Paper 204, 1944.



York Iron Company Mines
York Co., PA.
Zone 18, Seven Valleys Quad
A. 344 700 4412 000
B. 345 000 4411 340
C. 345 760 4411 220
D. 345 220 4411 620