

Kennecott, Alaska

Ghost Town

By: Nicole Lehman, Grade 11

"The Alaskan abandoned mining camp is eerie and beautiful," said Ian Harvey. The Kennecott mines in Kennecott Alaska became a National Historic Landmark in 1986.

When a group of prospectors with the McClellan party, spotted "a green patch far above them in an improbable location for a grass-green meadow." The green was malachite (a copper carbonate hydroxide mineral) located with Chalcocite which is an important copper ore mineral.

That meant that there was copper there and Stephen Birch had the financial backing to start the business. So once he dealt with all of the financial issues he began mapping and planning the mine.

This mine eventually collected \$30 million dollars it was to be used for constructing a railway, a steamship line, and development of the mines. In 1916, the peak year for production, the mines produced copper ore valued at \$32.4 million.

It closed temporarily in 1932 it had produced 4.6 million tons of ore that contained 1.183 billion pounds of copper mainly from three ore bodies: Bonanza, Jumbo and Mother Lode. Clarence Warren, Jack Smith, and Arthur Spencer were lucky enough to find the richest concentration of copper ever discovered.

The Kennecott mines were suggested to be preserved as a National Park in 1938 by Alaska's governor, Ernest Henry. Kennecott was deserted except for a family of three who

served as the watchmen until about 1952.

There was an attempt in the late 1960s to reprocess the tailings but in doing so it would be unprofitable. The company with land rights ordered the destruction of the town to rid them of liability for potential accidents.

There have been reports that the tombstones of the ones who lost their lives in the mines have vanished. People also say they see men walking on the railroad tracks.

