

Beneficiation Factory Of The Ore Mill Alyaskitovskiy



This is a unique and rare photograph of beneficiation factory of the ore mill Alyaskitovskiy in Magadan, where I worked when I was in the camp.

This is a paper clip, sent by my friend, I do not know neither the name, nor the issue of the paper. This picture is precious to me.

Now neither factory nor mill exist, but there were times when 'peoples enemies' from maximum security camp Berlag (charged in accordance with article 58 of the Penal Code) worked there in double shifts, day and night, mining tungsten ore.

In 1948 I was arrested. I was blamed in foundation of the anti-Soviet circle and participation in its activity. In accordance with the article 58 I was charged with anti-soviet activity, they also added item 11, group actions.

I was sentenced to 10 years in the maximum security camp [Gulag], and I was bereft of rights for five years, i.e. exiled. I was also sentenced to hard physical labor as the most malicious criminal. I was sent to the maximum security camp Gulag, located 4000 km away from home.

I was sent to work on the automobile repair plant. I had not stayed there for a long time. Shortly I found out that I was included in the squad to be sent to Kolyma. Our squad was put in the crammed car for cattle and taken to the port of Vanino, where Kolyma camp was being formed.

Our squad came to Vanino Sea Port [port town in the Russian Far East, 4500 km to the North-East from Moscow]. There were the following zones at Vanino replacement depot: administration, decontamination zone, sanitary zone, hospital, where really feeble people were taken.

Our squad was taken to the sanitary zone, because our train was from the camp, wherein was the outbreak of some kind of epidemic. I worked there as medical assistant.

In some months I was sent to Kolyma to Berlag. I became a mediocre worker.

In 1951 I was transferred to the camp, to the north from Berlag. It was a huge working zone, where the foundation, walls and constructions of some secretive site were made. It must have been some plant.

In the previous camp I was mostly working in the workshop, where it was not so cold, but in frosty winter as of 1951-52 I was to work in the open. When it was 50 Celsius degrees below zero, we were sent to chisel the icy bottom of foundation pit.

We had an almost incessant labor for 10-12 hours per day. Our nutrition was very poor: oat gruel, rotten herring, underbaked bread. All that food was in skimpy portions.

In early spring 1952 I was sent to another place along with 300 convicts. We took the ferry boat across a rapid river Indigirka beyond Ust-Nera. At last we reached the final destination. It was the extreme point of Kolyma -Alyaskitovy.

That God-forsaken place was about 900 kilometers away from Magadan, far from the high way. There was ore mill in Alyaskitovy: the upper camp with tungsten ore mine with waste banks and mine, and the lower camp with beneficiation factory, sand banks and hydraulic rocks.

There were 2 zones: there were about 1500 convicts, who serviced the ore mine, and the other zone consisting of 500 convicts worked on the beneficiation factory.

I was sent to the factory crew, servicing assembly lines looking like metallic boxes the vibrating metallic nets inside. Toxic water was trickling down there, taking away the processed gob- white sand. On the photo it looks like it is a river or lake, but is a large puddle, contaminated by waste waters.

The dump is to the right. Our crew consisting of 10 people, was in a hurry to 'take off' the rocks to get to the tungsten concentrate, pouring out the upper layer to wooden tub. The work was exhausting. There was a cloud of dust.

No respirator helped, the convicts were afflicted with silicosis [chronic lung disease caused by inhaled dust for a long time. It is characterized by the developed pulmonary fibrosis], and died in the camp hospital.

My working place was damp. The clothes did not dry out after work. The frosts reached - 60°C. Wet sand was coming from the top freezing off immediately to the felt boots and the clothes. The mill fulfilled the plan and exceeded the target quarterly and annual plans yielding high profit.