

**Miscellaneous Documentary Research
on the
Hepworth Mine,
Rural Aley, Scott County, Illinois**

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On 6 July 2005, Fever River Research personnel went to the Winchester-Alsey area in Scott County, Illinois, to conduct archival research and a drive-by assessment of the proposed Hepworth Mine project area (Figure 1). Resources at the Winchester Public Library, Scott County Historical Society, and the Scott County Courthouse were examined. The only document of relevance was a 1936 plat map (in poor condition and from an unknown source) of Scott County at the Winchester Public Library. Two additional sources used for the following summary are the *Scott County Bicentennial Book* (1976, Bluff Times and Winchester Times) and the corporate website of the Alsey Refractories Company (<http://www.alsey.com/>).

Louis S. Goltermann III, president of the Alsey Refractories Company (formerly Alsey Brick and Tile Company), was contacted by phone from the Alsey plant at the corporate office in St. Louis. Mr. Goltermann and his father, Louis S. Goltermann, Jr., compiled the information and historical photographs available on the company website under the section on company history. He was unaware that the Hepworth Mine may have served as a source of coal and clay for the Alsey Brick and Tile Company during part of the time that the firm was in operation under the ownership of H. T. McLaughlin (1911-1959). Some historical photographs of the facility (a few of which can be viewed on the Alsey Refractories Company website) were acquired when Louis S. Goltermann, Sr., and Louis S. Goltermann, Jr., purchased the company in 1971. Aside from these photographs, Mr. Goltermann said the company had no other documents in their possession from the earlier (pre-1960) period of operation. While essentially nothing remains of the earlier structures at the brick and tile plant (Figure 2) due to various fires and modernization/upgrading through the years, other components of the business are still quite visible in Alsey. The two-story brick residence of former owner H. T. McLaughlin (see website for image) and the 22-house planned community of one-story brick cottages (Figure 3) [variously known as “Checkertown” (see website) and “Brick Town” (*Scott County Bicentennial Book*)] built in 1917 for company employees and their families, still prominently occupy a large area of the southwest portion of Alsey (Figure 4).

The Hepworth Mine project area location, as shown on the project map supplied by IDNR, is Section 14, Township 13 North, Range 12 West (Figure 1). The Illinois State Geological Survey (ISGS) *Directory of Coal Mines in Illinois* for Scott County gives the location of Hepworth Mine (Index No. 3440) as Section 15 of the same township, and indicates that it was a slope mine in operation from 1934-1942. The accompanying ISGS Illinois Coal Mines map for Scott County shows the Hepworth Mine in the SE¼ of Section 15 and also indicates that it is an abandoned slope mine (Figure 5). The 1936 and 1945 (W.W. Hixson and Company, Rockford, Illinois) plat maps indicate that the 40-acre parcel on which the mine is located was owned by Jacob Hepworth who also owned another 40-acre parcel directly south across Clay Pit Road (Figure 6). Due east of Hepworth’s two 40-acre parcels, and coinciding with a portion of the proposed project area, is a 40-acre parcel that was owned by E. Hoots; L. Hoots owned a 110-acre parcel directly south of Hepworth’s two 40-acre parcels. Matthias Hoots was the founder and owner of the Alsey Brick and Tile Company from 1906-1911. The relationships of E. Hoots and L. Hoots to Mathias Hoots are unknown. In 1911, Matthias Hoots sold his company to H. T. McLaughlin, operator of McLaughlin Mining Company, who combined the two operations. Previously, in 1905-1906 McLaughlin had obtained the mineral rights under 905 acres in and around Alsey. The 1936 plat map shows H. T. McLaughlin as owning a 40-acre parcel diagonally southeast of

the southern of Hepworth's two 40-acre parcels (parcel is owned by J.A. Bell in 1945; Figure 6). This parcel is just south of the boundary of the proposed Hepworth Mine project area. The 1926 USGS Winchester 15' quadrangle map indicates a mine just to the north of the proposed project area on the east side of the unnamed stream (Figure 7). The 1983 USGS Alsey 7.5' quadrangle map shows two small ponds in this location that may reflect a modification of the drainage pattern as a result of mining activities (Figure 1).

In 1906, Hoots and McLaughlin agreed to use the same railroad right-of-way for switching. Presumably, this shared use is at the site of the Alsey Brick and Tile Company's plant, although dual use of railroad right-of-way at adjacent mining operations away from the factory, one for coal and the other for clay, is also a possibility. The ISGS *Illinois Coal Mines* map for Scott County shows an abandoned shaft mine (Index No. 3442) at the location of the Alsey Brick and Tile Company plant on the south side of the railroad in the town of Alsey (Figure 5). The company website also mentions a company-owned shaft mine in an unspecified location, but gives the impression that this mine is on or adjacent to the brick and tile works. A circa 1910 photograph of the Alsey Brick and Tile Company plant (Fig. 2) shows what looks like a mine shaft and tipple complex immediately adjacent to the company's beehive kilns. The ISGS *Directory of Coal Mines in Illinois* for Scott County gives only a date of 1958 for the operation of this mine. This is perhaps a date for the closing of the mine. However, the Alsey Refractories Company website states that the company-owned shaft mine was closed and sealed in 1956. In 1918, the Alsey Brick and Tile Company converted its twelve beehive kilns from wood to coal; a conversion from coal to natural gas was completed in 1951. Thus, firing operations at the plant would have been dependant upon coal as a fuel from 1918 through 1951. This information fits with the closing of the on-site shaft mine in the 1950s (in 1956 as noted in the website, or 1958 as noted in the ISGS *Directory*). The sharing of railroad right-of-way for switching (i.e., an industrial spur track?) prior to the 1918 conversion to coal suggests that either McLaughlin owned the shaft mine adjacent to the plant or he was supplying Hoots with clay from another location. A rail spur is visible on a 1941 aerial photograph of the area. The track enters the plant site from the east/southeast and serves the south side of the factory complex. The company website also indicates that the Alsey Brick and Tile Company began strip mining for coal in the surrounding Illinois area following the closing of the shaft mine in the 1950s and also began leasing clay reserves in central Missouri. As the kilns became gas-fired in 1951, the continued need for coal is questionable. However, as coal seams often overlie the shale clays used for brick and tile production, removal of the coal would be necessary to extract the clay; the coal so obtained could just be sold as a by-product of the strip mining operation.

In summary, coal and clay mining operations seem inextricably linked in the Alsey area. In some instances, because clay suitable for brick and tile manufacture is found immediately beneath the coal seam, a single underground mine probably produced both products. Based on the available data, both coal and shale clay were mined in the general area of the proposed project. Based on the ISGS data, the documented location of the Hepworth Mine (entrance?) is west/northwest of the project area as indicated by the IDNR project maps. The name of the east-west road running up to the west boundary of the project area is Clay Pit Road. Apparently, a significant clay mine operation of some duration existed in this general vicinity to warrant designating the road in this fashion. The proposed project area as indicated on the 1983 USGS 7.5' quadrangle is primarily creek bottom and lower side slopes of the valley (Figure 1). Two

small ponds in the creek bottom portion of the project area suggest landscape modification associated with mining activities on the slopes adjacent to the stream. However, several large underground pipelines cross the stream valley just to the south of the proposed project area (Figures 1 and 8) and the observed modifications to the natural drainage pattern of the stream may also be associated with the installation of these pipelines.

No specific documentary evidence was found to clarify the nature of specific historical landscape-modifying activities within the proposed project area. Additionally, no information was found that definitively links the Hepworth Mine with the Alsey Brick and Tile Company.

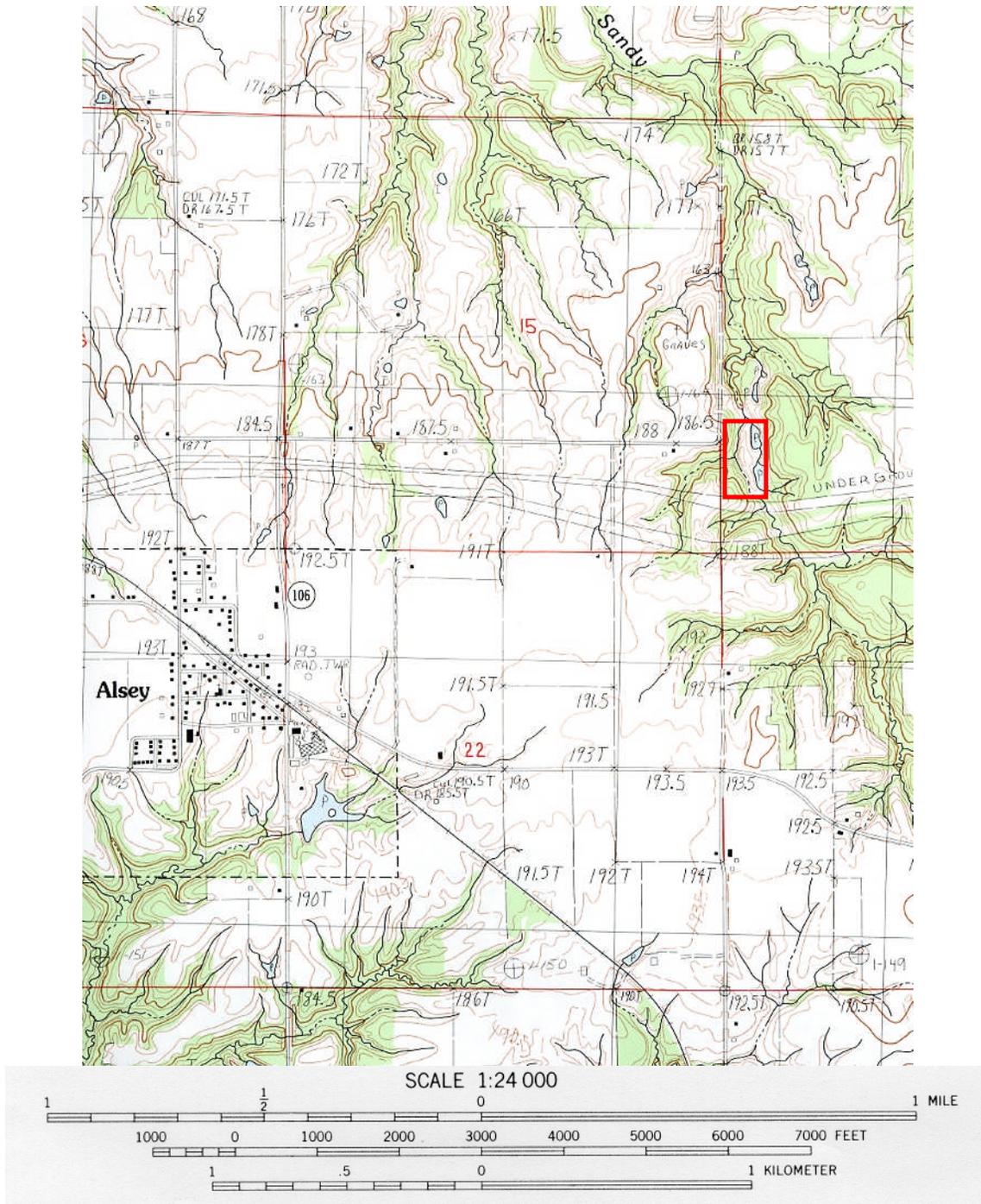


Figure 1. Location of the proposed Hepworth project area in rural Scott County, Illinois (Section 14, Township 13 North, Range 12 West) (Winchester 7.5-Minute Topographic Quadrangle Map, United States Geologic Survey, 1983). The project area is outlined in red. Note the four underground pipelines just south of the proposed project area.

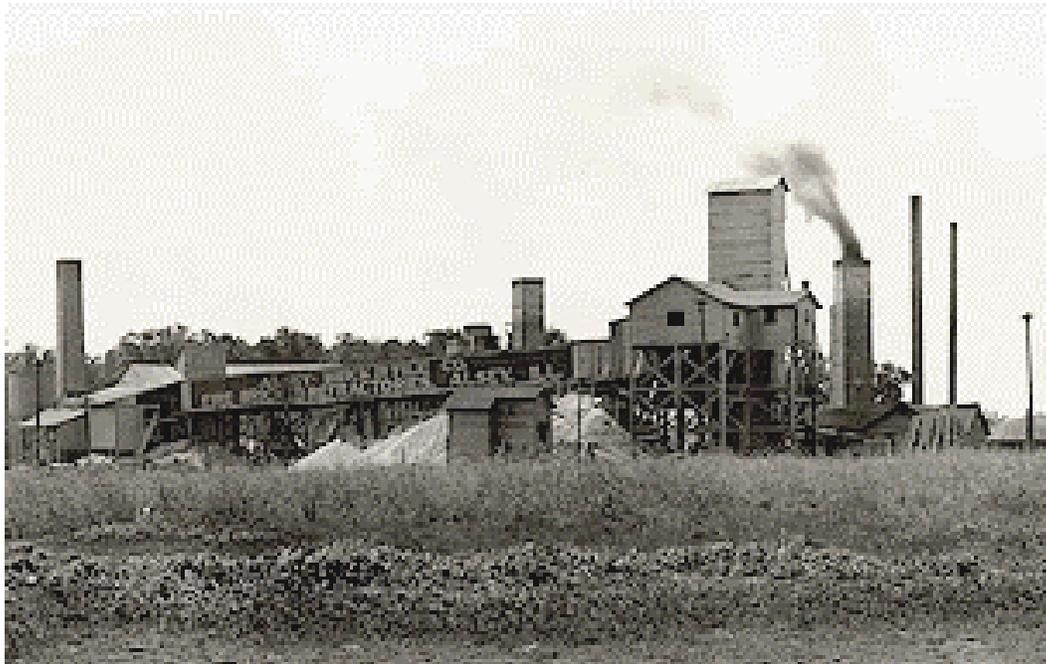


Figure 2. Circa 1910 photograph of the Alsey Brick and Tile Company on the southeast edge of Alsey, Illinois (Alsey Refractories Company website, July 2005 [http://www.alsey.com/history_06-49.htm]). Among the various structures visible in this image are several beehive kilns, primarily visible by their chimneys, and what appears to be a mineshaft and tipple complex.



Figure 3. View from northeast of several brick cottages in “Checkertown” or “Brick Town”, the 22-house planned community built for the workers of the Alsey Brick and Tile Company in 1917 and constructed of bricks produced in the factory. “Checkertown” is located on the southwest corner of Alsey. The road running off to the right (west) in the image is Clay Street (Fever River Research image, July 2005).



Figure 4. A 1941 aerial photograph of Aley, Illinois. The Aley Brick and Tile Company manufacturing plant is outlined in red; the beehive kilns are quite visible. The twenty-two house planned community for the plant workers and their families is outlined in blue. The residence of H. T. McLaughlin, owner of the company from 1911-1959, is outlined in green.

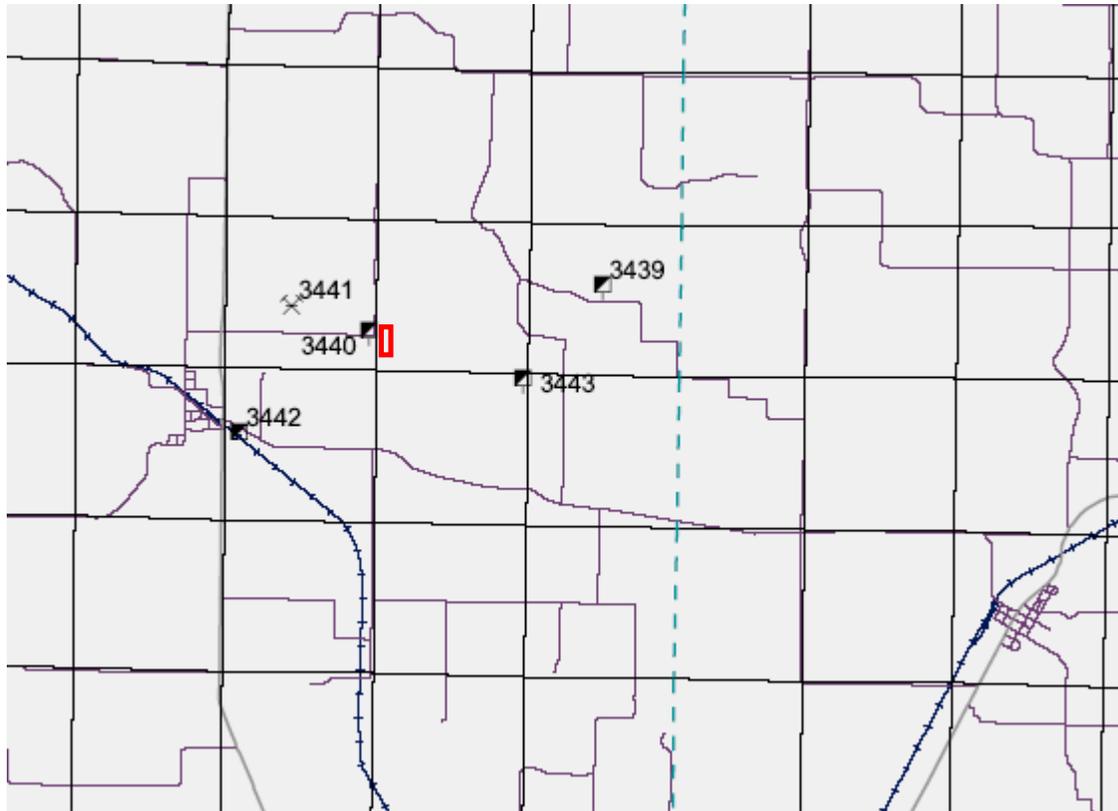


Figure 5. A portion of Illinois State Geologic Survey Illinois Coal Mines map for Scott County showing the reported locations of the Hepworth Mine (Index No. 3440) and the Aley Brick and Tile Company mine (Index No. 3442). The latter mine is located on the site of the Aley Refractories Company manufacturing plant in the southeast corner of the town of Aley, Illinois. The approximate project area is outlined in red. The town in the southeast corner of the map is Manchester, Illinois.

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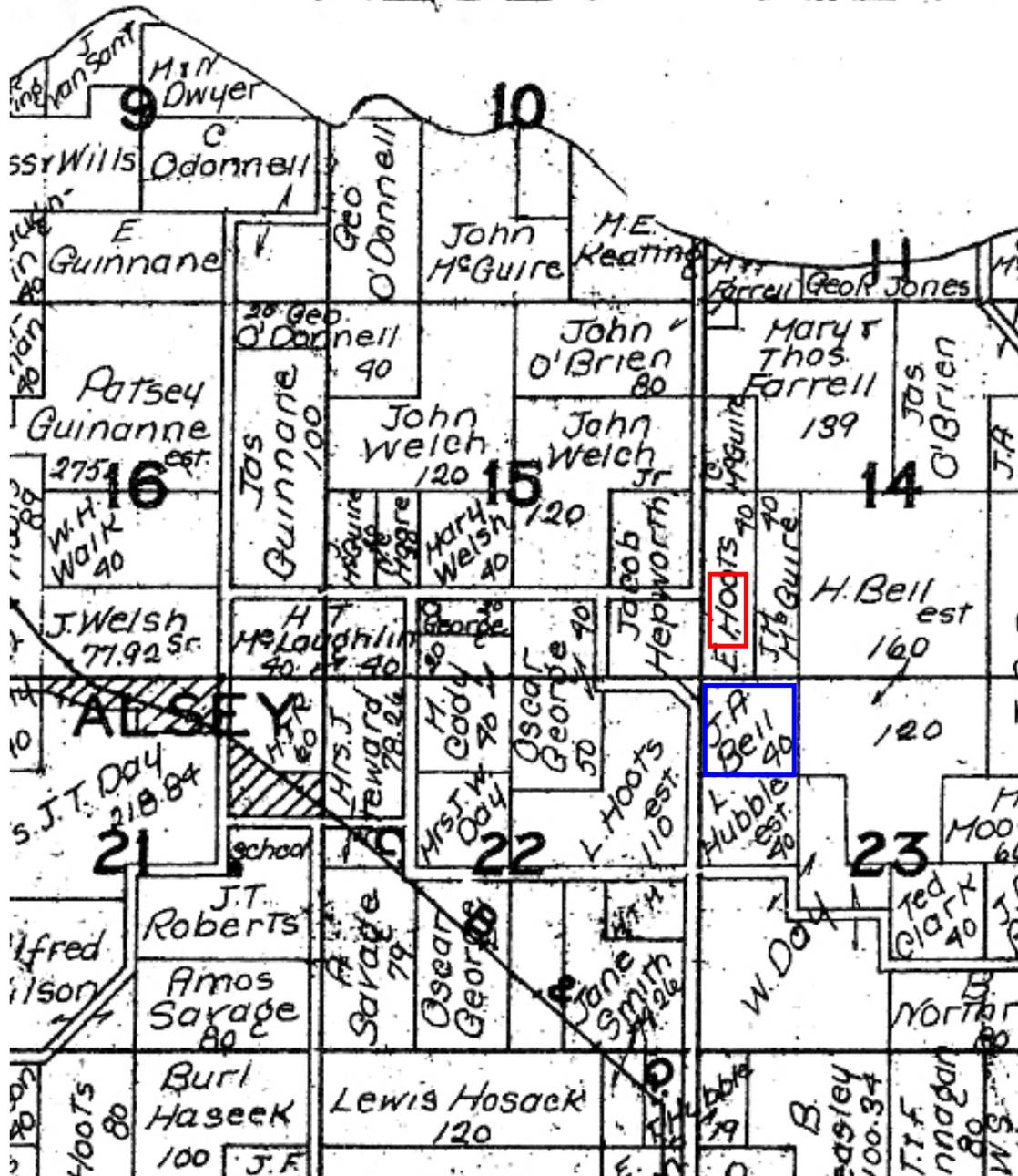


Figure 6. A portion of the Township of Alsey, Township 13 North, Range 12 West, as shown in the 1945 plat book of Scott County, Illinois (W. W. Hixson and Company, Rockford, Illinois). The approximate project area is outlined in red. The 40-acre parcel owned by H. T. McLaughlin as shown on the 1936 plat map of Scott County is outlined in blue. The 1926 U.S.G.S. topographic map (see next image) indicates the presence of a potential mine (or clay pit?) immediately north of the project area and on the E. Hoots land.

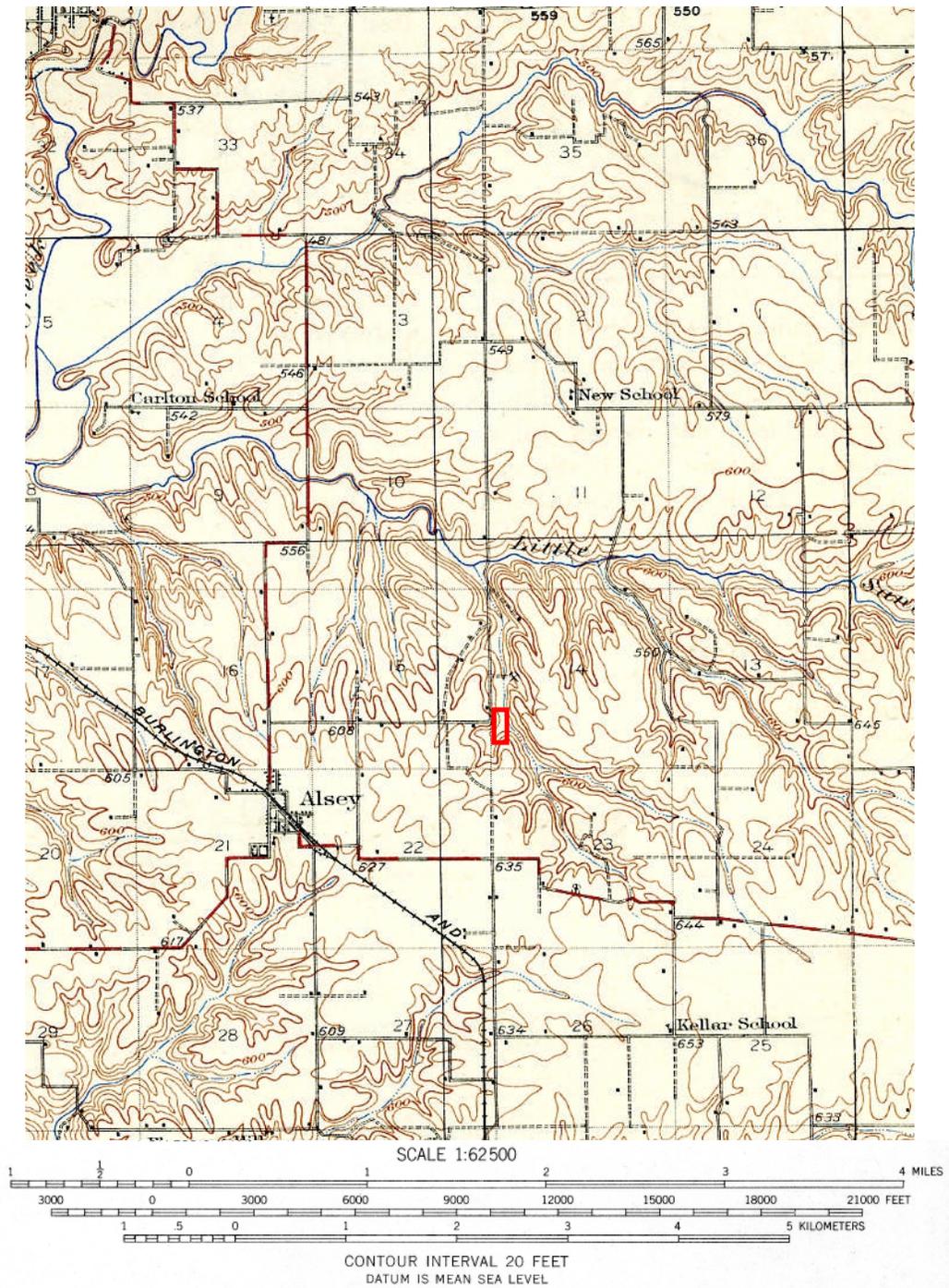


Figure 7. Location of the proposed Hepworth project area in rural Scott County, Illinois (Section 14, Township 13 North, Range 12 West) (Winchester 15-Minute Topographic Quadrangle Map, United States Geologic Survey, 1926). The project area is outlined in red. Note the mine (or clay pit?) immediately north of the proposed project area on the east side of the drainage.



Figure 8. A 1941 aerial photograph showing the proposed project area northeast of Alsey, Illinois, outlined in red. The scars on the landscape from the installation of underground pipelines are extremely evident just south of the project area. Landscape modifications due to mining activities are difficult to discern because of the heavy vegetation in the creek bottom and valley side slopes. Clay Pit Road runs west from the west edge of the project area.