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EPA

U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TEAM



Region - II

ROY F. WESTON, INC.
Spill Prevention & Emergency Response Division
In Association with Jacobs Engineering Group Inc. Tetra Tech Inc.
and ICF Incorporated

WESTON
DESIGNERS CONSULTANTS

PRELIMINARY SITE ASSESSMENT

VALENITE METALS CORP.

DEWITT, NEW YORK

SEPTEMBER, 1984

TDD #2-8409-10

TAT-02-F-01195

Prepared for:

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VALENITE METALS COMPANY
PRELIMINARY SITE ASSESSMENT

BACKGROUND:

Jacob Hafner owns adjoining properties at 311 and 315 Wavel Street in Dewitt, New York (see Figure #1). He leased them to Valenite Metals, a subsidiary of Valeron Corp. from 1961 to 1981. Valenite made carbide cutting tools at 315 Wavel, and used the adjoining property as an office and warehouse. The manufacture of these tools can generate dusts of cobalt, tungsten, tantalum, niobium, and titanium.

Valenite ceased operations on these properties in 1981. Since the closing, former emloyees have sued Valeron Corp. claiming that they are suffering from heavy metal disease. This activity has focused attention on this site. Dr. Gerald Abraham, a pathologist with the Upstate Medical Center, reported finding a considerable concentration of cobalt in the soil on this site. Craig A. Benedict, Assistant U.S. Attorney for Syracuse, requested that the U.S. EPA investigate these properties based on Dr. Abrahams' findings. The Region II Field Investigation Team (FIT) sampled the soil on the site in June, 1984 and the Response and Prevention Branch conducted a preliminary site assessment on September 20, 1984.

PERSONNEL REFERRED TO IN THIS REPORT:

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Michael E. Garey	Garey Machine Corp. 315 Wavel Street Syracuse, NY 13206 (315) 463-0210

Name	Affiliation
Charles Branagh	New York State Department of Environmental Conservation 100 Elwood Davis Road North Syracuse, NY 13213 (315) 473-8311
Daniel C. Abbott	Onondaga Health Department 4894 Onandaga Road Syracuse, NY 13215-0190 (315) 469-6955
Dr. Gerald Abraham	Upstate Medical Center 750 East Adams Street Syracuse, NY 13206 (315) 473-4750

SITUATION:

U.S. EPA representative, Bruce Sprague, Technical Assistance Team member Christopher Marlowe, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation representative, Charles Branagh and Onandaga County Health Department representative, Daniel C. Abbott entered 315 Wavel Street at 1130 hrs. on September 20, 1984. They conferred with Michael Garey, President of Garey Machine, current lessors of the building.

Garey Interview:

Since Mr. Garey is in a related trade, and he has been a customer of Valenite Metals, he was able to describe their operations. This plant was a small specialty job shop. Valenite closed this operation for financial reasons in 1981. Valenite continues to operate from their Headquarters in Madison Heights, Michigan. The DeWitt plant was "clean for a cutting tool plant". Cobalt is so expensive that even floor sweepings are normally recycled rather than dumped. When Garey took the building over in 1983, he felt it was "fairly clean". Mr. Garey has found no signs of exhaust duct work or floor drains in the building. The pile in which Dr. Abraham found 13,000 milligrams of cobalt per kilogram, which was mostly gypsum wallboard, has since been removed.

SITE OBSERVATIONS:

The team began their preliminary inspection at 1200 hrs. The site is approximately 150' X 350' (see Figure #2). It is flat and most of it is covered with loose gravel. Mr. Garey allows the residents of a neighboring trailer park to maintain two small gardens on the southern edge of the property. This unfenced property is bounded on the north by Wavel Street, on the east and west by other industrial operations, and on the south by Poznan Street. The trailer park is located across Poznan Street. The team observed neither large piles of unknown material, nor containers or drums on site.

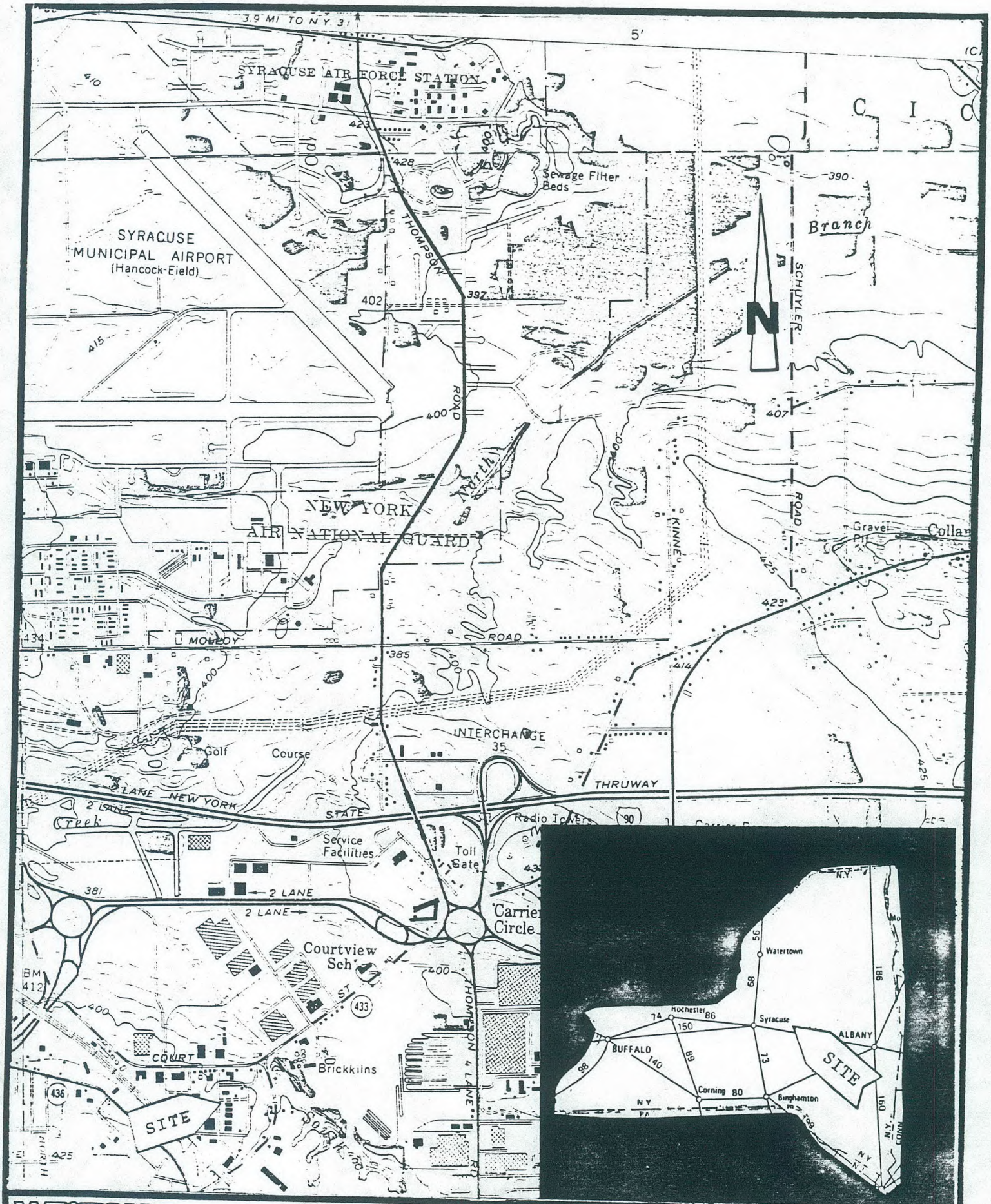
There have been no cleanup efforts at this site. The team found only one pile of refuse on the site, about 1/2 cubic yard of muddy looking soil. The team left the site at 1230 hrs. Photographs of the site are included as Appendix A.

DISCUSSION:

Cobalt is the most toxic of the materials that Valenite used in its process. In June of 1984, the Region II Field Investigation Team (FIT) collected 13 samples of soil on the site (see Table #1). Their preliminary report listed no sample containing cobalt above 336 mg/kg (in a drainage ditch). The highest concentration in soil that an individual could expect to contact was 174 mg/kg. FIT sampled the small refuse pile, which contains 138 mg/kg of cobalt.

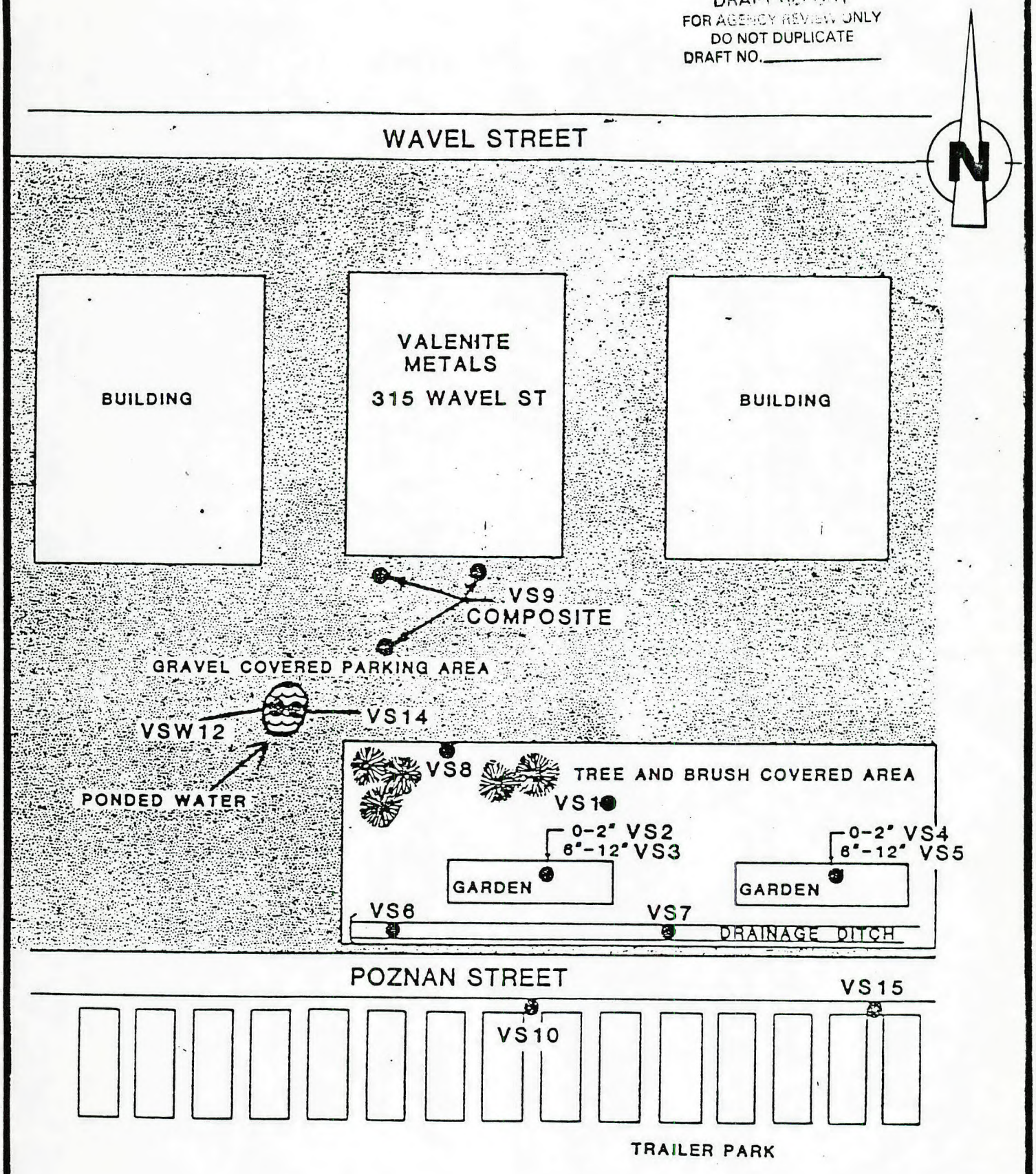
Cobalt is not listed as a hazardous substance under CERCLA, TSCA or RCRA. The American Conference of Governmental Industrial Hygienists Threshold Limit Value for cobalt is 50 ug/m3. The team determined that neither this concentration, nor one close to it could occur at this site.

Based on the concentrations found during FIT sampling, and information to date, the team determined that this site does not meet the criteria for immediate removal under Section 40 CFR 300.65(a) of the National Oil and Hazardous Substances Contingency Plan.



WESTON SPILL PREVENTION & EMERGENCY RESPONSE DIVISION	EPA PM Bruce Sprague	Figure #1 Valenite Metals
In association with ICF, Inc., Jacobs Engineering, Inc., & Tetra Tech, Inc.	TAT PM Chris Marlowe	

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WESTON	SPILL PREVENTION & EMERGENCY RESPONSE DIVISION	EPA PM Bruce Sprague	Figure #2
In association with ICF, Inc., Jacobs Engineering, Inc., & Tetra Tech, Inc.		TAT PM Chris Marlowe	Valenite Metals not to scale

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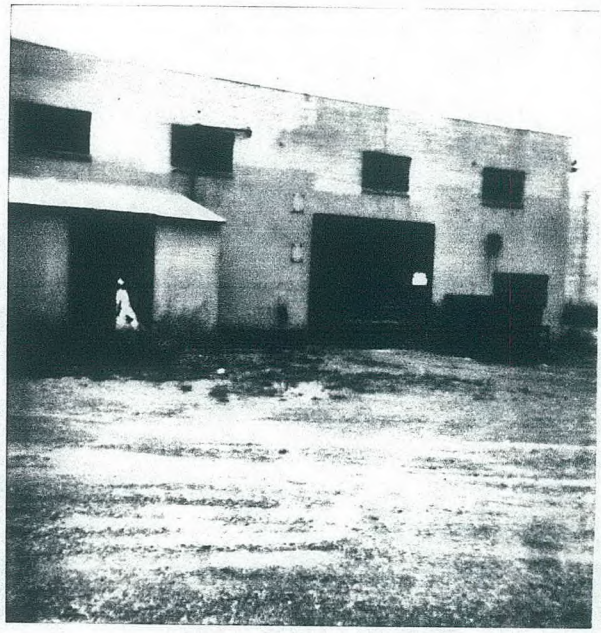
TABLE I

Sample No.	Location	Cobalt mg/kg
VS1	Brush covered area	98
VS2	West garden (shallow)	10
VS3	West garden (12" deep)	14
VS4	East garden (shallow)	5
VS5	East garden (12" deep)	7
VS6	Drainage ditch sediment	170
VS7	Drainage ditch sediment	336
VS8	Mound of black earthy material	128
VS9	Composite of gravel area	174
VS10	Trailer park side of Poznan St.	14
VS11	Analytical blank	ND[1]
VSW12	Water in puddle on gravel	0.072
VSW13	Analytical blank	ND
VS14	Water puddle sediment	73
VS15	Trailer park side of Poznan St.	12
	Average concentration in earth's crust[2]	10

[1]None detected.

[2]Patty's Industrial Hygiene, p. 1605.

1. Rear of Valenite Metals building showing loading door and waste container.



2. Rear of Valenite Metals building with gravel area and weeds in foreground



3. Puddle on gravel, weeds, and trailer park on Poznan Street side of Valenite property



4. Rear of 311 Wavel Street. Note that the building is painted the same color as 315. The containers in the background are on adjoining properties.

