

ELY'S MINING HERITAGE: CHANDLER MINE



Chandler Iron Mine, Ely, Minnesota, Archives and Special Collections, Kathryn A. Martin Library, University of Minnesota Duluth

In the late 1800's Ely, Minnesota entered the mining industry, eventually becoming home to five active iron mines which produced more than 86 million long tons of ore over a nearly 80 year period. The five mines, Chandler, Pioneer, Savoy, Zenith and Sibley, were all located within a one and a half mile ore body in the eastern Vermilion Iron Range. Today the history of these mines is told along the Trezona Trail, which circles Ely's Miners Lake, a recreational lake formed after the closing of the Pioneer Mine in 1967. The 3.65 mile trail is named after Charles Trezona, a former Ely mayor and mining superintendent, and passes by several of Ely's original mine sites, including the Pioneer Mine. In a five part series, Mine Reader will celebrate the history of each of Ely's five iron mines by highlighting the historical information found along the Trezona Trail. Below is a brief history about Ely's first mine, the Chandler Mine.

The history of Chandler Mine, initially referred to as "No. 1 Mine Pit," began in 1883 with the first discovery of iron ore in the area. Originally, the ore was mined by hand, transported by wheelbarrows and eventually lifted onto ore cars or stockpiles. This method was used to mine 650,000 tons of ore. Over time, as the ore body was recovered, the mine had to be transformed from an open pit to an underground mine. Over its life, Chandler had five mine shafts, or openings to the underground mine, and reached 833 feet deep. In 1888, Chandler became the first mine in Ely to transport ore by the Duluth and Iron Range Railroad. Chandler Mine operated from 1888 to 1942 and shipped nearly 12 million long tons of ore during its life.

Sources:

Ely Greenstone Public Art with the cooperation of the City of Ely obtained a grant for the commemorative signs which was made possible in part by an appropriation to the Minnesota Historical Society from the Minnesota Arts & Cultural Heritage Fund. Trezona Trail signage produced by the City of Ely and the Mineland Reclamation Division of the Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation Board.