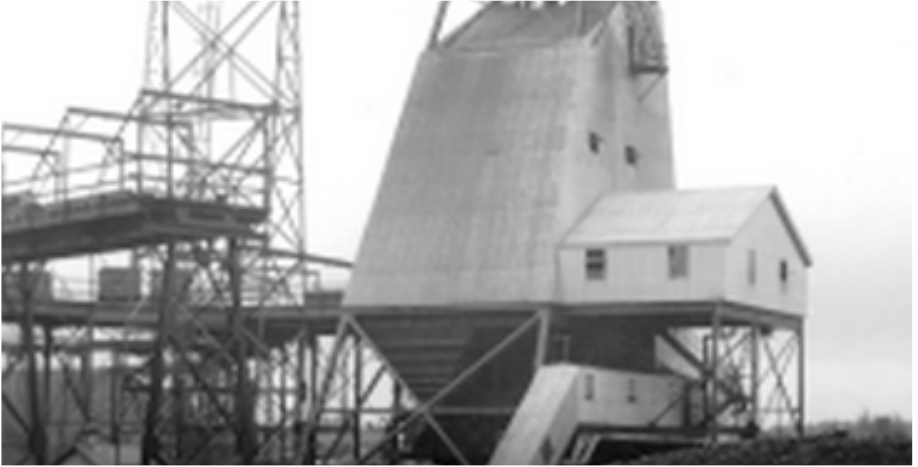


ELY'S MINING HERITAGE: ZENITH MINE



Headframe No. 3 Shaft, Zenith Mine, Pickands, Mather and Company, Ely, Minnesota, United States Department of Labor

In a five part series, Mine Reader is exploring Ely's mining heritage by recounting the history of the five iron ore mines which were actively mined for nearly 80 years and included: Chandler, Pioneer, Savoy, Sibley and Zenith Mines. These mines all resided within a one and a half mile radius in the eastern Vermilion Iron Range located in Ely, Minnesota. 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. In this second installment of the series we will explore the story of Ely's Zenith Mine.

Originally, Zenith Mine was owned by the Minnesota Iron Company which was purchased by Henry H. Porter, a Chicago railroad owner, who had bought 25,000 acres of land in northern Minnesota. Porter was responsible for building the Chandler, Pioneer, Zenith, Savoy and

Sibley mines between 1889 and 1899. The Zenith Mine began shipping iron ore in 1892. The mining firms of Franklin Rockefeller, Oliver Iron Mining Company, Zenith Iron Company, Pickands Mather and Company, and North Range all operated the mine during its 72-year life. The iron ore mined from Zenith was high grade, hard, red-blue, non-Bessemer ore. Zenith Mine ceased operation in 1964 with its final depth reaching 1,800 feet. During its life, Zenith produced more than 21.5 million long tons of iron ore.

Sources:

*The commemorative mine signs were made possible by the Ely Greenstone Public Art, with the cooperation of the City of Ely, who obtained a grant for the signs. The grant was made possible in part by an appropriation to the Minnesota Historical Society from the Minnesota Arts & Cultural Heritage Fund. The Trezona Trail signage was produced by the City of Ely and the Mineland Reclamation Division of the Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation Board.
Zenith City Archive, <http://zenithcity.com/zenith-city-history-archives/minnesotas-arrowhead/history-of-minnesotas-vermillion-iron-range/>
Mining Artifacts, <http://www.miningartifacts.org/Minnesota-MInes.html>*