

Visitor Center/Manager's House

Begin your tour of the Independence Mine camp at the Mine Manager's House. Built in 1939 to accommodate mine general manager Walter W. Stoll and his family, it has been renovated and is now the park Visitor Center.

Mine Office and Commissary

Daily decisions regarding mine operations, payroll and purchasing were made in the Mine Office. Gold awaiting shipment to the U.S. Assay Office in Seattle was stored in a safe in mine general manager Walter W. Stoll's private office. This building also housed the camp commissary, post office and original engineering office.

Apartment House

In July 1937, this was one of the first buildings constructed on site, beginning the transformation from a tent camp into a permanent year-round camp. It had four identical apartments that were the living quarters for married supervisors and their families.

Mill Complex

Ore from the mine was transported by aerial tram or train to the Course-Ore Storage Bin to be stockpiled. Ore was then conveyed to the Ore Sorting Plant where barren waste rock was discarded and the valuable gold-bearing quartz ore was screened, washed and crushed. The gold-bearing ore was sent to the ball mills for reduction. Pulverized rock exited the ball mills in the form of a "slurry" flowing onto amalgamation plates that trapped the gold. Fine particles of gold not recovered by milling and amalgamation continued on to flotation cells for further processing.

"New" Cookhouse and Mess Hall

As mining operations expanded at the Independence, camp population increased. In 1941, this larger Cookhouse replaced the original one. The second floor had two supervisors' apartments and quarters for the kitchen help.

Pipe, Sheet Metal and Electric Shops

This line of shops was elaborately equipped with all the necessary tools and materials needed to handle fabrication and repairs.

Mine Shops

This series of mine shops included a blacksmith shop, welding shop and a drill steel sharpening area.

Powerhouse

Inside the Powerhouse, several diesel generators produced power for the mine, mill and camp.

Interpretative Shelter

Site of the original Cookhouse and Bunkhouse, shelter with park benches, spotting scopes and interpretive panels.

Mine Train

The Mine Train was first used at the Independence in 1940, during the development of the Water Tunnel. The train dramatically improved access to the mine for men and equipment while expediting the removal of ore and waste rock. On display are two battery-powered locomotives, ore cars, flat cars and a mucking machine.

Water Tunnel Portal

The Water Tunnel is an extension of an old adit that a stream of water flowed from year-round. With the development of the Water Tunnel in 1940-41, it became the main route for transporting ore and materials. Today, a short section of the Water Tunnel is open for viewing. See and feel the cool, damp, dark conditions underground.

Assay Office/Museum

Two critical jobs were performed in the Assay Office: daily testing of ore samples and retorting. Today, the restored Assay Office houses a museum with displays explaining the assaying process and various mining techniques.

No. 1 Bunkhouse

Built in 1938, this was the first "real" bunkhouse at the Independence camp. It was heated, plumbed and had electricity. It was considered the best accommodations among the many mines and prospects in the Willow Creek Mining District.

Engineering Office and Warehouse

The Engineering Office was equipped with drafting tables, calculators, a map duplicating machine and other engineering tools. This was the finest facility of its kind in the Willow Creek Mining District. Adjacent to the Engineering Office, the Warehouse portion of the building provided dry storage for hardware, canned goods, dried foods and various equipment. On the second and third floors there were bunkrooms and, for a short time, a room on the second floor housed a territorial school.

No. 2 Bunkhouse

During the late 1930's and early 1940's, as the Independence Mine prospered, the mining camp was expanded. This bunkhouse was built in 1940 to house an additional 50 men on the two upper floors. The first floor had a drying room for wet work clothes, a washroom, first-aid room and movie theater.

Framing Shop

Timber frames for supporting the underground workings in the mine were cut here, as were heavy timbers needed for camp construction projects.



Restrooms

Handicap Parking

Visitor Parking

Boomtown

To accommodate the married men working at the Independence Mine, management allowed them to build small, privately-owned, houses on company mining claims. By 1941 Boomtown, or Independence Village, had grown to over 20 houses. To view the Boomtown site, walk 1/8-mile down the upper parking lot road, northeast of the Visitor Center.