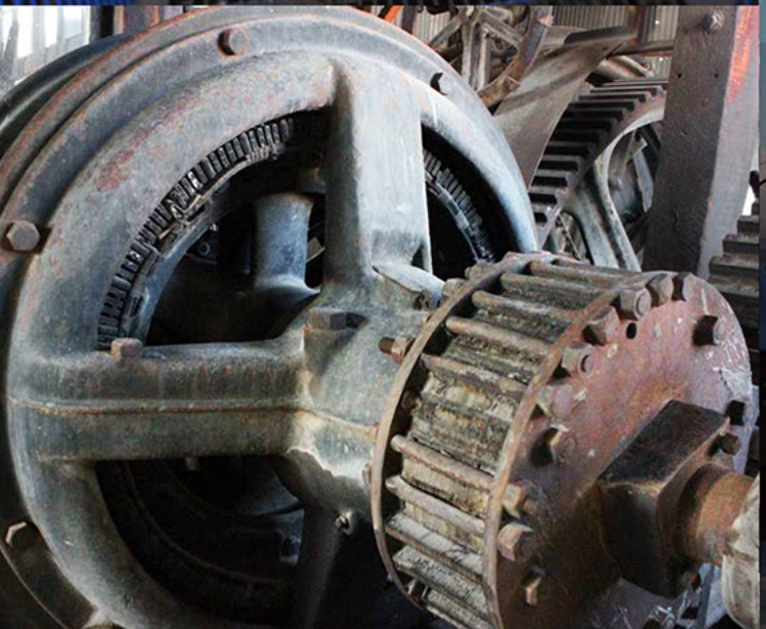
Tonopah Historic Mining Park



“Queen of the Silver Camps”

The Tonopah Historic Mining Park is located on the site of the original mining claims that started the rush to Tonopah, making it the “Queen of the Silver Camps.” It was Jim and Belle Butler’s original discovery at Tonopah that started the second largest silver strike in Nevada’s history.

Tonopah’s mining history is brought to life through preserved and restored mining equipment, buildings, indoor museum exhibits, and a gift shop. Our self-guided walking tour begins with a video presentation of the history of Tonopah and its mines in our on-site theater. Guided tours are available in our Polaris off-road vehicle. Some of the buildings located on the property are open for visitors to enjoy and experience what it was like to work in a turn-of-the-century mine. The park covers more than 100 acres (40 hectares) so be sure to give yourself plenty of time to look around. Improvements to the park are ongoing, making the Park a perfect place to revisit in the future.

Welcome to the **Tonopah Historic Mining Park!**

The Tonopah Historic Mining Park sits on a portion of Jim Butler's original mining claims, staked by Jim and his wife Belle in 1900. In late 1900, Butler accepted the first lease on his claims with nothing more than a handshake. In June 1901, Butler sold his claims to the newly formed Tonopah Mining Company of Nevada, a Delaware company formed by a group of Philadelphia businessmen. As a condition of the sale, Butler made sure that the current leasers of these claims could continue working them until midnight on December 31, 1901, to honor his agreements with the leasers. The Tonopah Mining Company started development of the claims in 1902 and successfully worked them up to 1930 when the mines were shut down due to the low price of silver. Later that same year, they were reopened again in the same fashion that they began—under the leasing system. This lasted until 1948, when the Tonopah Mining Company could no longer make a profit on these mines and they were shut down for good. Shortly afterwards, the Tonopah Mining Company went bankrupt and ceased to exist. Twenty years later, in 1968, these same mining claims were sold to Howard Hughes and the Hughes Tool Company. Then, after changing ownership several times, Echo Bay Exploration, Inc. deeded these patented mining claims to Nye County in 1992, who then transferred them to the Town of Tonopah in 1993. Over the years, the Tonopah Historic Mining Park has become the one-of-a-kind tourist destination that it is today.

Self-Guided Walking Tour

Many other sites and attractions exist in the park and are marked with informative signs. Please stay on the trails, and for your safety, stay out of fenced areas. The Tonopah Historic Mining Park is at an approximate elevation of 6,200 feet (1,890 meters) above sea-level, so please pace yourself accordingly. It is recommended you wear walking shoes or hiking boots, apply sunscreen, bring drinking water, and check local weather reports to dress appropriately.

Visitor Center

Please check in at the Visitor Center first before viewing the Park. The Visitor Center features a gift shop, theater, indoor museum displays, and restrooms. At the Visitor Center you may watch a video on the history of Tonopah's mines, view indoor museum displays, and pay for your self-guided walking tours or guided Polaris tours of the Park. The Visitor Center was originally built in 1903, enlarged in 1905, and used as the Tonopah Mining Company's power substation and telephone exchange. In the 1970's it was remodeled as an assay office by Summa Corporation (Howard Hughes) who then owned the property.

1 The Tonopah Mining Company Office Site

The stones located here are from the original office building which was destroyed by fire in the 1960s. The stones were hand cut from a quarry on the side of Mt. Brougher near the "T" painted on the mountain. This was also the spur where the private railroad car of the Tonopah Mining Company executives was parked when in Tonopah. Currently featured at the site are a 5-stamp mill from the Manhattan War Eagle mine and a ball mill, along with other ore processing equipment.

2 Silver Top Mine: Orehouse

Referred to today as "the Grizzly," this orehouse was built in 1907. Miners would hand-tram the ore in mine cars from the Silver Top shaft across an elevated trestle, dumping the ore against the grizzly screens in the orehouse. The oversize materials were gravity fed to the ore-sorting tables below, where miners hand-sorted the ore. Waste was thrown into a mine car on a track nearby, and the good ore was scraped through holes in the floor to the flat-bottomed ore bins below. Once the bin was full, the ore would be transferred to the railroad car using the loading chutes below to discharge the ore. The bin had a capacity of approximately 450 tons (408 metric tons) of material.

3 Silver Top Mine: Hoist House and Headframe

This hoist house and headframe (called gallows frame by the early day miners) were both built in 1906. The originals were torn down to make way for more substantial structures as the Silver Top shaft was sunk deeper into the ground. The Silver Top is the only historic mine in the state of Nevada with most of its original features remaining including the hoist house, headframe, orehouse, and the track bed of the Tonopah & Goldfield Railroad's Silver Top Spur. In 2019, major restoration of the headframe, which was in danger of total collapse, was completed.

4 Stope Bridge

Built in 2000, the stope bridge allows visitors to walk directly over the original 500-foot (152-meter) stope, an underground excavation from which ore has been extracted.

5 Burro Tunnel

This tunnel is one of Jim Butler's original discovery sites and the only tunnel on the property. Tour the mine tunnel and at the end, step onto a steel viewing cage, suspended over a 500-foot (152-meter) mine stope. In mining terms, this tunnel is actually called an adit. An adit is a horizontal passage from the surface into a mine (in contrast to a shaft, which is a vertical passage) while a tunnel is an underground passage. An adit could be used for ventilation, haulage, drainage, or other purposes.

6 Mizpah Mine: Hoist House and Headframe

This mine was by far the richest of Tonopah's many mines. The metal headframe was one of the first steel hoisting works built in the country. The restoration of the collar was completed in 2015 and visitors are invited to stand on a grate over the lighted mine shaft, and stare down to the 600-foot (183-meter) level of the shaft. In the hoist house, an impressive array of machinery awaits you, including a complete set of hoisting works and large air compressors still in their original positions.

7 Rope Shed

According to Tonopah Mining Company records, this building was used as a rope shed in 1914. Wire ropes would have been stored in this building for use in the mines. Later, it was also used as a storehouse.

8 Storehouse

This storehouse was built in 1906 and used by the Tonopah Mining Company's supply department. It served as a storage facility for all of the mining company's equipment. Today, it houses a replica of a mine office.

9 Carpenter Shop

This building was also built in 1906, and moved the Carpenter Shop out of the Machine and Blacksmith Shops that were located in the Mizpah Hoist House at the time. The Carpenter Shop was equipped with a power-driven crosscut saw that was operated by a 15-horsepower motor. All timber that was used in the mining operations was cut to size here after being unloaded from railroad cars on the bank behind the building. Today, this building also houses a replica of an early-day tent house, complete with furnishings, as well as mining equipment.

10 Powder Magazine

Used in the early days of the mines, this powder magazine or "dug-out" was built into a slope with only the front façade visible. This building was used for the storage of dynamite, fuse and blasting caps used in the mines, and still contains its original shelving.

11 Tonopah & Goldfield Railroad: Trestle

Used from 1905 through the early 1940's, this is the last surviving structure of the T&G RR on the property. The railroad ran from Mina to Goldfield. Three different spurs ran through the mining park to load ore from the mines.

12 Verdi Lumber Company: Coal House

Built circa 1908, this building housed coal for the Verdi Lumber Company, which was unloaded from the Tonopah & Goldfield Railroad. The bin was moved to the Park from another location in Tonopah.

13 Overlook of the Glory Hole

This pit is the result of a cave-in of a large square-set mine stope on the 200-foot (60-meter) level of the Mizpah Mine in 1922. The original assay office once sat where this hole is today.

14 Barbara Graham House

Born Barbara Elaine Ford in Oakland, CA, she achieved notoriety in California as one of only four women who received the death penalty in the gas chamber. Local lore states that Barbara stayed in the cabin during her time spent in Tonopah. This cabin was donated and moved here when the Park first opened.

15 Montana-Tonopah Mine and Mill Site

This trail loop takes visitors through the extensive mill ruins and mine site of the Montana-Tonopah Mining Company. The upper part of the loop passes by the company's concrete bullion vault and dynamite storage house.

16 Open Trails

A number of open trails exist in this area and visitors are welcome to wander here as long as they remember to stay out of any fenced-in areas (for safety reasons), and leave all artifacts they encounter for others to enjoy.

17 Desert Queen Mine: Hoist House, Headframe and Ore Bin

This is the first claim located by Jim Butler in 1900. The Desert Queen mine shaft was used as the rescue shaft during the Tonopah-Belmont mine fire, which killed 17 miners in 1911. Local hero, Big Bill Murphy, lost his life in this fire while saving his fellow miners.

18 North Star Mine

Located high on Mount Oddie, the North Star trail is only for the hearty hiker. However, those who venture up here better bring their camera as the view of Tonopah and beyond is absolutely spectacular.

NOTE:
Buildings may appear slightly different than rendered on this map.

Tour the Mining Park in comfort any time of the year. Our enclosed Polaris has heating and air conditioning. Advance scheduling recommended.

The Park is located on the side of Mt. Oddie and has trails at an elevation between 6,046 feet (1,843 meters) and 6,380 feet (1,945 meters).

Self-Guided Walking Tour

Centrally located between Reno (228 miles) and Las Vegas (211 miles)

Entrance to Park is located behind the Mizpah Hotel

Tonopah Historic Mining Park
110 Burro Avenue, Tonopah, NV 89049

Mailing Address
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Phone/Email
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tonopahminingpark@gmail.com

Website/Facebook
tonopahminingpark.com
facebook.com/TonopahHMP

Business Hours
Open 7 days a week, closed holidays
Summer: 9am-5pm, Winter: 8am-4pm*
*Daylight Savings Time

Entrance Fees
Visitor Center: FREE, Walking Tour: Adults: $5
Senior Citizens, Children & Locals: $3
Children (7 & under), Disabled,
Military, & Veterans: FREE
Guided Polaris Tours: $12-$35 (1 to 5 people)
Contact us for group & school rates

Check out our website for upcoming events—including our **Blacksmithing Classes!**

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