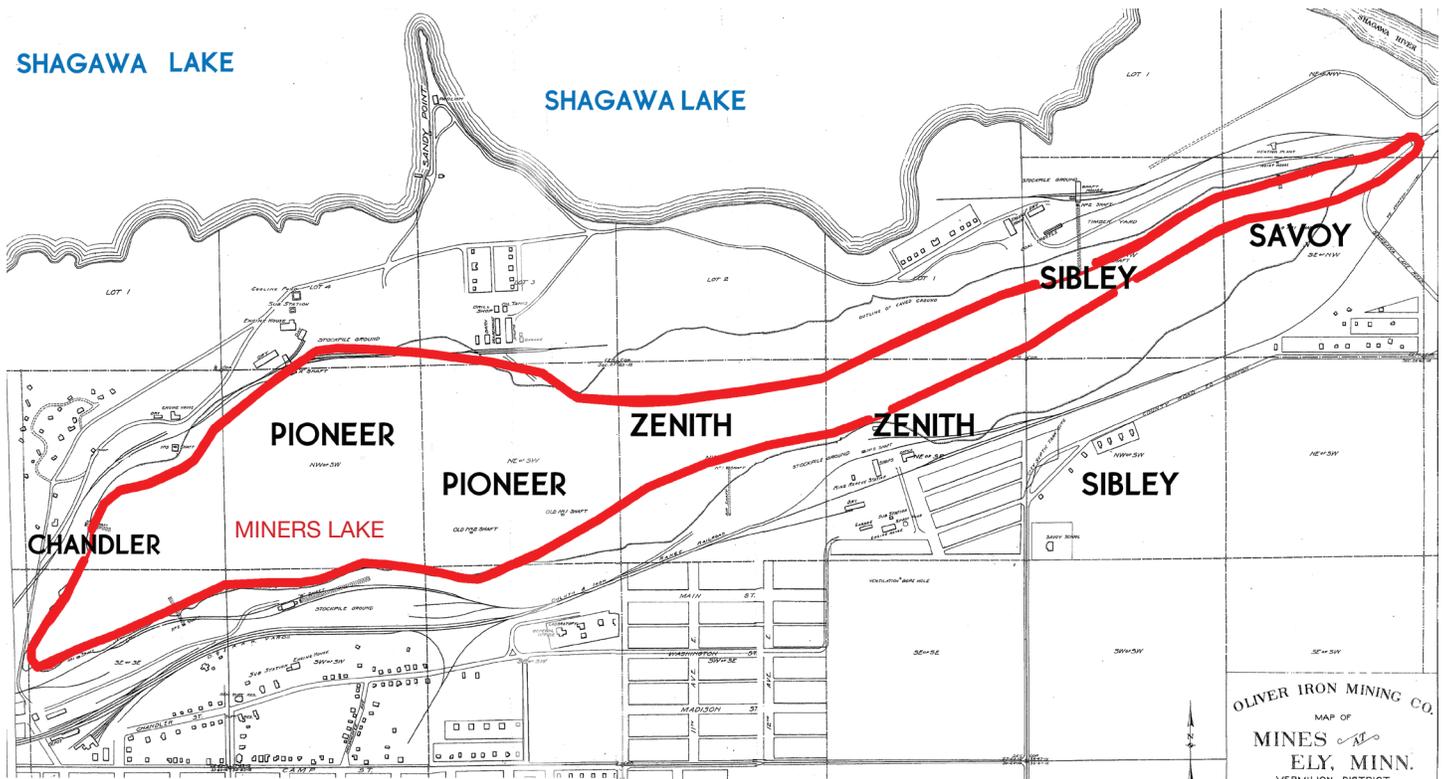


IT ALL BEGAN WITH MINING



ELY MINES

Five mines were opened on what proved to be an essentially continuous ore body about one-and-one-half miles long located in the eastern area of the Vermilion Iron Range. The mined iron ore was sent through the Great Lakes to steel mills in the east.

Ely's Chandler mine was opened in 1888, Pioneer Mine in 1889, Savoy Mine in 1889, Zenith Mine in 1892 and Sibley Mine in 1899. The last active mine, the Pioneer, closed in April 1967. **Total long tons Ely produced: 86,248,908.**

A long ton is 2,240 pounds as opposed to a U.S. short ton of 2,000 pounds.

Miners Lake was formed when the pumps used to keep the water out of the mines were shut off with the closing of Pioneer mine. The water continued to rise to the current level. It is now a stocked trout lake and the trail was built around it.

The Trezona Trail was completed in 1995. The historical markers were added in 2014.

PIONEER MINE WAS PLACED ON THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES

IN 1978 BY THE UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Mine photos are from the collection of Mike Krompotich and the Ely Echo newspaper. Savoy Mine photo courtesy of Ely-Winton Historical Society.

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Charles Trezona



TREZONA TRAIL

The trail covers 3.65 miles around Miners Lake, past several of Ely's original mining sites including the Pioneer Mine "A" shaft site where three buildings and head frame still stand today.

The trail is named after Charles Trezona who served as the mining captain of the Pioneer Mine from 1898 until 1900 when he was promoted to general superintendent of the Oliver Iron Mining Company interests on the Vermilion Range which extends from Ely to Tower. He was elected mayor of the City of Ely in 1913, later served on the city council and was again elected mayor in 1930.

The Trezona Trail is a joint project of the City of Ely and Mineland Reclamation Division of the Iron Range Resources and Rehabilitation Board.

BRIEF HISTORY OF ELY

While the City of Ely has a history since 1888, the rock, particularly greenstone and adjacent granite have been here two billion years. It was formed during the Archeozoic Era and is known now as the Precambrian Shield or Laurentian peneplain.

About 75,000 years ago, during the ice age, glaciers a mile thick scraped the rock as they moved and laid bare the Canadian Shield's rock cliffs and lakes gouged from the moving ice.

By 7,000 B.C., Indians roamed the land and hunted. Eventually tools were created from the copper found here. And by 1800, if not before, the original Sioux were replaced by the Ojibway/Chippewa Indians.

Voyageurs came through the area in the late-1600s, drawn by the plenitude of fur-bearing animals and bringing trade-goods to the Indians.

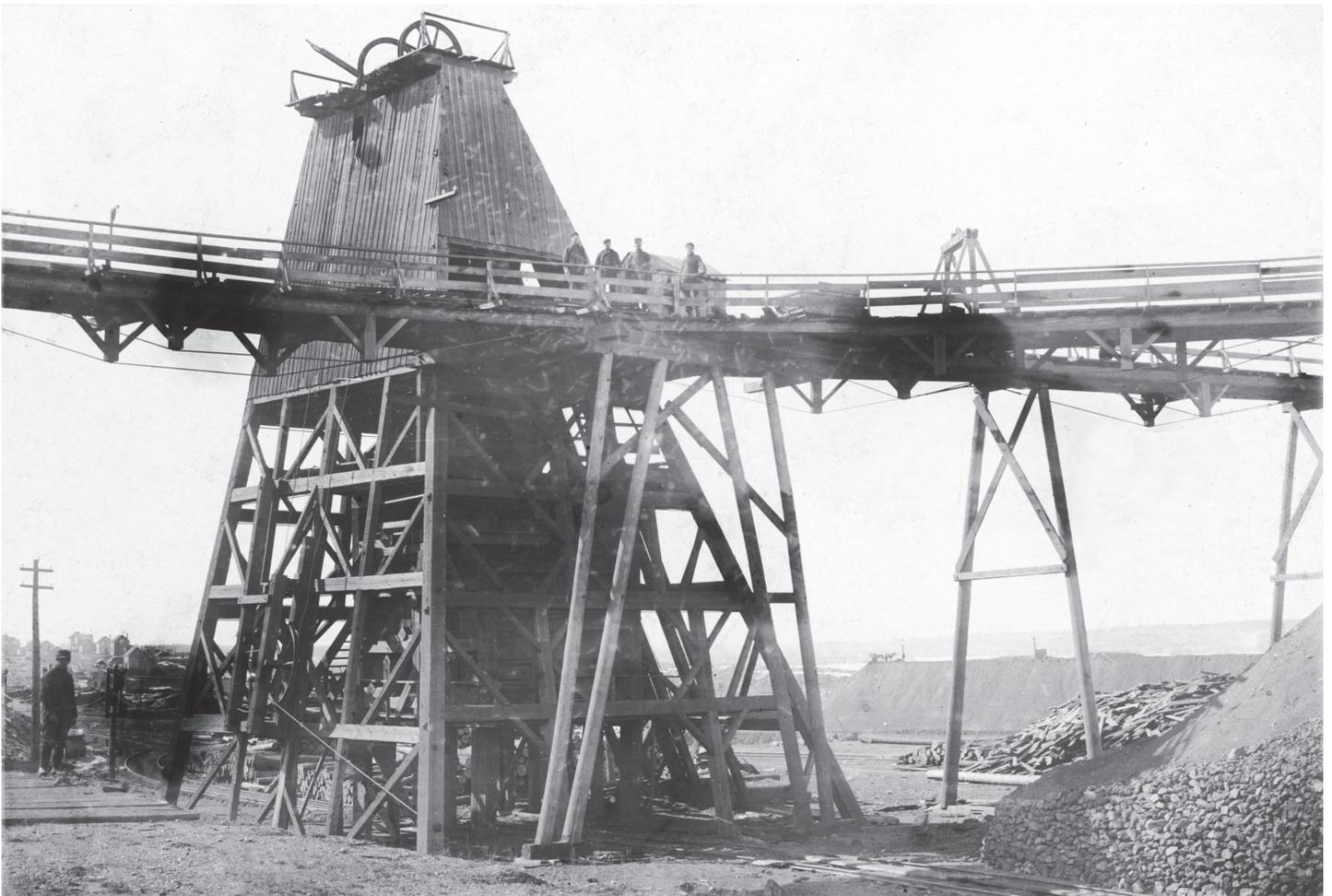
In the 1700s, there was acknowledgement that the land north of Lake Superior contained copper, silver and iron. Rumors also talked of gold being found and the rush was on, especially to Tower and the 84-mile Vermilion Trail was built to carry people and supplies from Duluth.

But it was iron ore which was to provide the livelihood for men and their families. After a railroad was built in 1882, iron ore was shipped to Lake Superior from Tower.

The railroad was continued to Ely in 1888 where 177 people were then living and the village of Ely, which had started as Florence, two miles northeast of present day Ely, was incorporated on April 23, 1888. The name Florence had been given to honor mining Captain John Pengilly's daughter, but Minnesota already had a town by that name.

By 1889, the village had a school with 112 students, a water works department and a fire department. By 1891 Ely had attained city status and 800,000 tons of ore had come out of Ely mines.

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CHANDLER MINE

The first outcropping of iron ore in Ely was discovered in 1883. The location became known as No. 1 pit mine. Ore was hand dug and wheel barrowed to a skipway where it was hoisted to the surface to waiting ore cars or to a stockpile in the winter. Ten men at wages \$1.50 to \$1.81 per day worked the ten hour shift. By this method 650,000 tons of ore was mined. The work was very dangerous. The Chandler mine paid investors \$100,000 per month for 20 years. As the ore body dipped, shafts for underground mining replaced open pit mining. Chandler mine had a total of 5 shafts during the life of the mine. Mine depth was 833 feet. In 1888 the Duluth and Iron Range Railroad began shipping the ore. Chandler Mine operated from 1888-1942 and shipped 11,900,913 long tons of ore.



PIONEER MINE A SHAFT

The Pioneer Mine began operation in 1888. Shafts No. 1 and No. 2 were abandoned and replaced by vertical A Shaft, which was sunk in 1909 and in 1943 an incline from 8th level to surface was completed. Men, timber for support and equipment were lowered in A Shaft. In 1924 electric hoists replaced steam hoist equipment. Surface and seepage water was pumped at a rate of 1,000,000 gallons per day. In 1962 new steel-making technology was introduced where oxygen was blown directly into the liquid steel through large ceramic lances. The heavily oxygenated Vermilion ore was no longer needed to make steel. When the mine closed in 1967 it operated to the 17th level at 1626 ft., employed 450 men and shipped a total 41,112,587 long tons of iron ore. The Captains Dry House is the name of the building on the left in the photo. The garages and Engine House are now gone.



PIONEER MINE B SHAFT

The B shaft, located on the south side of the ore body was installed in 1909 for hoisting ore from the mine to the surface where it was loaded on rail cars and shipped to Two Harbors. It was the tallest structure north of Duluth. The Pioneer Mine operated from 1888 to 1967. The Pioneer Mine shipped 289,316 tons of ore from January 1, 1967 until it closed April 1, 1967. The total long tons of ore mined at Pioneer was 41,112,287.

Although the B Shaft is long gone, the Pioneer Mine property on the north side of Miners Lake is operated as the Ely Arts & Heritage Center by Ely Greenstone Public Art. On the left in the distance in the photo, the Miners Dry House can be seen. It is a long, one-story, silver-colored building which still stands.



SAVOY MINE

The first shipment of iron ore from the Savoy Mine was in 1899. The mine operated until 1916. The ore body and shaft was later worked from the adjoining Sibley shaft until 1954 when the Sibley Mine closed. The total depth was 840 feet and 1,866,378 long tons of iron ore were shipped.

The city grew, attracting people from many nationalities - Slovenians, Finns, Italians, Scandinavians and Cousin Jacks (Brits). They lived in boarding houses mostly, often two to a bed or one each for a shift. Churches were built as were hotels, meat markets and saloons. By 1917, Ely had sold 52 liquor licenses at \$1,000 each. Clothiers, bakers, hospitals, banks and hardware stores which also were funeral parlors, flourished.

And while up to 1,200 men were working in the iron mines, the same number of men worked at 10 logging camps in the area. They provided timbers to brace mine walls as well as logs to feed the two sawmills in Winton which were each producing 130,000 - 150,000 feet of lumber daily.

Elyites embraced new ideas and innovations.

Cars and airplanes were adapted for travel. When World War I broke out, 59 Ely men left for battle and 1,500 more registered for the war draft. By 1923 Ely Junior College was established and in 1924, Ely Memorial High School was dedicated in memory of the war.

By 1930, Ely's population had grown to 6,151.

Over 1,580 Ely men were sent into military service in World War II, a number which did not include volunteer enlistments. They served in Europe, Africa, the South Pacific and Asia. Of those men, at least 50 died in action.

On the home front, Ely's mines produced much of the ore needed for the war effort and the skyscrapers which were built after the war.

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ZENITH MINE

Zenith Mining Company began operation in 1892.

The following companies operated the mine – Franklin Rockefeller, Oliver Iron Mining Company, Zenith Iron Company, Pickands Mather and Company, and North Range. Ore mined was high grade, hard, red-blue, non-Bessemer ore. No. 2 shaft had the structural head frame and was later used as an emergency exit and air intake. No. 3 shaft was drilled in 1938 as an air or vent shaft but was later used as a hoisting shaft. The mine ceased operation in 1964. Final depth was about 1800 ft.

Zenith produced 21,561,128 long tons of iron ore.



SIBLEY MINE

The Sibley Mine, owned by the Oliver Iron Mining Company, a subsidiary of U.S. Steel Corporation, began shipping ore in 1899 from No. 1 shaft. That shaft was later abandoned and operations continued in No. 2 shaft until 1954. The mine reached the depth of 1278 ft. Sibley shipped 9,808,202 long tons of iron ore.

But even in 1899, people recognized the value of the area for recreation, and tourism also became a draw for the area. People fished, canoed, camped and boated. Some forty years later they were staying at resorts throughout the Superior National Forest and 100,000 were visiting each year.

The Superior Roadless Primitive area of 1938 became the Boundary Waters Canoe Area in 1978, restricting snowmobiles and motorboats and banning all logging. The 1978 BWCA Bill also authorized the purchase of over 20 BWCA-edge resorts at a cost of over \$8 million.

By the mid-1970s it was said that there were

probably more people in the border lakes country than there had been in all the early years of Indian life, exploration, fur trade and logging combined.

Although the iron mines of the Ely area have been closed since 1967, Ely may see new life in the future as the potential of copper-nickel mines in the area are developed.

Visitors are welcomed to view the exhibits and photos on iron mining at the Pioneer Mine Shaft House, 401 North Pioneer Road, Ely, from Memorial Day through Labor Day on Tuesdays: 2-5 and Fridays: 3-6.