

Arltunga Historical Reserve



The MacDonnell Range Reef Mine Self Guided Walk

The MacDonnell Range Reef Mine provides an outstanding insight into the hardships endured by Arltunga miners. Imagine the appalling working conditions of these dust-filled tunnels - conditions that were endured every day by the miners.

Use this leaflet as your guide on this 40 minute return walk.

CAUTION: Supervise children very closely as the mines have vertical shafts.

1. Christmas Reef Mine

The first mine you come to was short lived. From 1896 Frederick Messau owned and worked this claim until he moved to White Range in 1898. It is thought that the mine was abandoned at this time. Between 1890 and 1908 Messau had signed at least fifteen petitions on the goldfield embracing a wide range of issues. Messau was a native of Berlin, Germany and lived in Australia for about 27 years. He died in 1913 from lung and throat disease near the Glencoe Hotel at the Crossroads, aged 60.

2. MacDonnell Range Reef Mines

These mines are situated at the top of the climb.

MacDonnell Range Reef was worked as early as 1892 and was owned in 1895 by Mr Henry Luce in partnership with Mr Michael Vikson. These two men asked for a subsidy to sink a shaft to a depth of 100

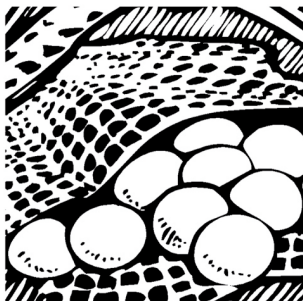
or 150 feet deep. The Minister approved this, but it was not taken up because Luce and Vikson realised that the subsidy might have to be paid back, as it was not an outright grant.

In January 1896, six men were working in the mines, but it may have been abandoned in 1898. Luce at this time worked three claims in the White Range area. The mines were then mentioned again in 1903 reports. Up until 1908 it produced 248 oz. (7.7kg) of gold from 353 tons of ore, a yield of 0.7oz/ton.

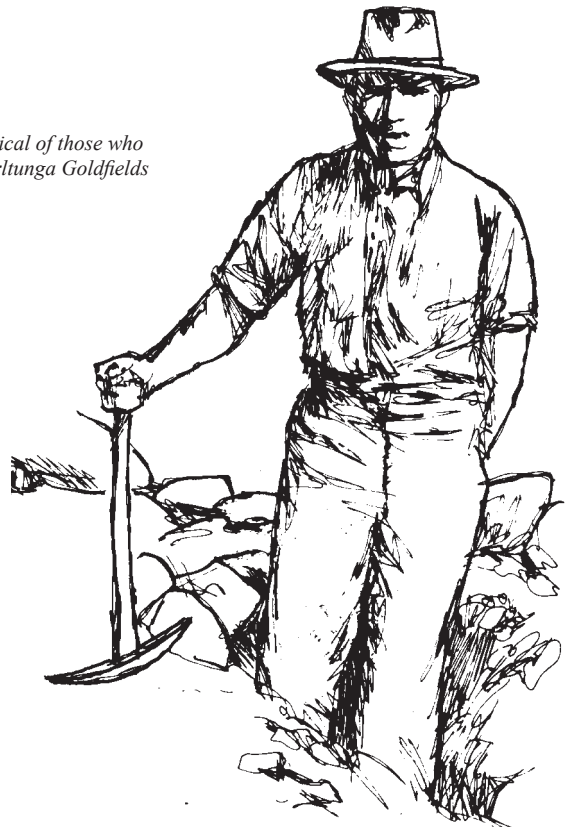
Before the Government Battery and Cyanide Works were built in 1898, Luce and Vikson owned and operated the most successful crushing plant on the field. The 40 ton Huntingdon Mill was the main crushing mill for the area.

The remains of this machine can be seen in the outdoor display at the Visitor Centre.

Henry Luce died in 1903 from dropsy (an illness in which watery fluid collects in body tissue or in a body cavity) at age 39, and is buried at the White Range Cemetery. He was the most successful miner on the field, but was not considered wealthy at the time of his death. He was also very active in trying to gain better conditions on the field for the workers.



A miner - typical of those who worked the Arltunga Goldfields



Parks & Wildlife Commission of the Northern Territory

Arltunga Ranger Station
Ph: (08) 8956 9770

www.nt.gov.au/parks

Regional Office - Arid Zone Research Institute
South Stuart Highway ALICE SPRINGS NT 0870
PO Box 1120 ALICE SPRINGS NT 0871
Ph: (08) 8951 8250 Fax: (08) 8951 8290



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