

Arltunga Historical Reserve

The Great Western Mine Self Guided Walk



Following the discovery of reef gold at White Range in 1898, most of Arltunga's mining activity centred on this area. Over the following fifteen years, 90% of the gold processed at the Government Battery came from the White Range mines.

Use this leaflet as your guide as you explore one of the few remaining historic White Range mines. This 40-minute walk (600m return) also provides an opportunity to compare building styles over Arltunga's two peak mining periods.

1. Stone Building

This building is typical of the style of dwelling constructed by miners in Arltunga's early mining period (1887-1913). During this period wood was in short supply. Timber suitable for building was quickly used and the remainder was burnt for cooking, warmth, repairing or sharpening tools and running the Government battery. Rocks therefore provided a more ready source of building material for most miners.

The walls of this building were never higher than they are now. There was probably a timber pole at each end, which supported a horizontal timber, which in turn supported a canvas fly. Note that dry dirt was used as mortar due to the shortage of water.

2. Wooden Building and Forge

This is a very fragile site. Please be careful not to damage any part of it.

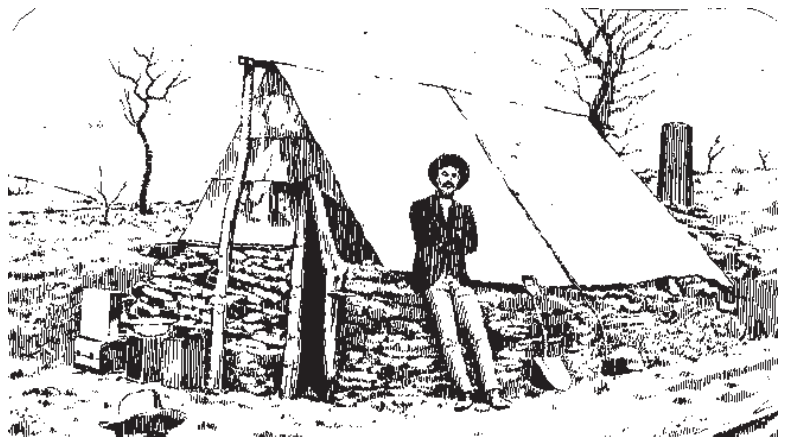
In the early 1930s Arltunga's second mining period commenced. Nearly 200 people were recorded to be living on the goldfield, and this building is believed to have been built during this time.

Today, only the wooden vertical timbers remain. The timber and brush construction would have comprised of two parallel rows of vertical timbers supporting brush in between. This dwelling provides an insight into the living conditions of the miners with even the bed-frame remaining. On the right hand side of the track, just before this site is a forge which was the focus of the daily task of sharpening tools and cooking.

3. Great Western Mine

This mine was worked for 11 years by partners W. Smith and A. Patterson from 1899, and was the second most productive mine on the field. 2000 tons of quartz rock was removed from the mine, of which 600 tons was processed to yield 600 ozs. (18.6kg) of gold. An oz. per ton was the average yield for the area and the mine followed the reef to produce these yields, hence the irregular mine caverns. The ore was then "dressed" outside which is the process of selecting the ore to be transported to the battery for crushing. Horse and cart then took the ore to the Government Works for processing. William Smith died in 1914 and is believed to be buried at the Crossroads Cemetery in the grave with the wooden fence.

An example of the type of dwelling typically built by miners.

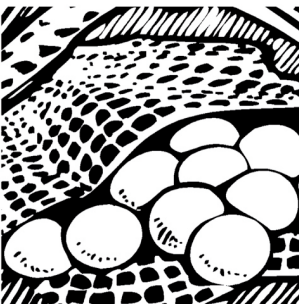


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