

Transvaal Mine

SITE #050104

GC1TQFD

Written & Researched by Kathy Paulos

SITE IDENTIFICATION

Nearest Community: Logan Lake, V0K 1W0

Location/Parking: N 50°33.800'
W 121°00.949'

Geocache Location: N 50°33.867'
W 121°00.934'

Accuracy: 5 meters

Letterboxing Clues: Refer to letterboxing clues page

UTM: East 0640541;
North 5603273 10U

Geocache altitude: 1,771 m./5,811 ft.

Overall difficulty: 2

Terrain difficulty: 1.5
(1=easiest; 5=hardest)

Date Established: 1899

Ownership: Crown Land

Access: • Forestry Access Road

- Seasonal
- 4x4 Vehicle recommended.
- *Detailed access information on next page.*

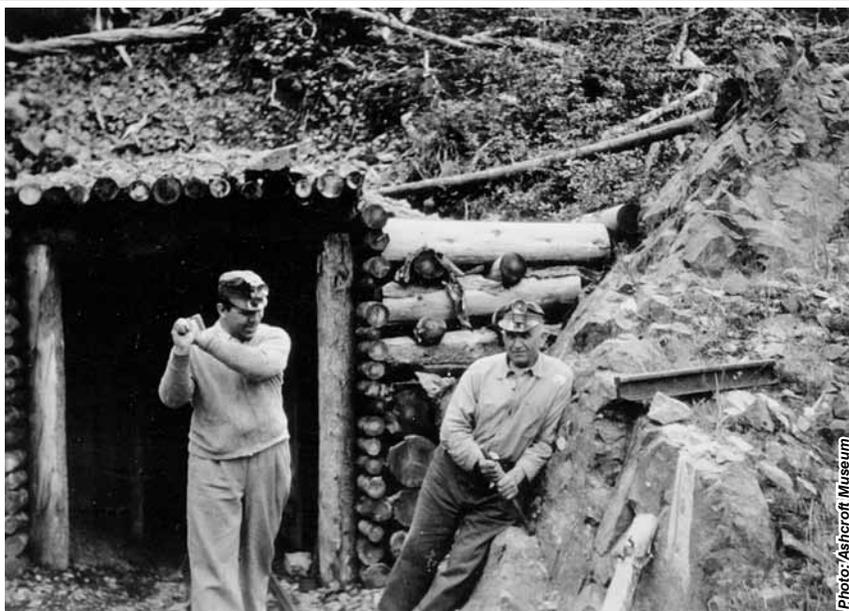
For more information or to report a problem with this site please contact:

Gold Country Communities Society
P.O. Box 933 Cache Creek, B.C. V0K 1H0
Tel: 1-877-453-9467

email: info@exploregoldcountry.com

For more site pages go to:
www.goldtrail.com or
www.GeoTourismCanada.com

Apply Sticker Here



George Novak (right) and the Transvaal Tunnel.

The 'Novak' cabin was built by pioneer miner George Novak while he worked at the Transvaal mine.

Northwest of the District of Logan Lake exists mountains rich with local mining history. Of the late Triassic and early Jurassic period, this Nicola volcanic rock is of the Guichon batholith, with Miocene basalt.

The batholith is a great irregular mass of coarse-grained igneous rock more than one hundred kilometres square. It is one of the most studied intrusions of country rock in the Canadian Cordillera. Rich in copper and molybdenum, it is the principal copper reserve for British Columbia.

Much of the area is covered by till, an unconsolidated sediment containing all sizes of rock fragments from clay to boulders. This sediment with the great boulders was deposited by alpine glacial action. These massive dull green-

black rocks are basaltic andesite.

The history of the Guichon batholith, in terms of mining, goes back to the turn of the twentieth century thanks to pioneers like George Novak.

Born in Ontario in 1862, George was the oldest child of a large family. George left home at the age of 16 and began his mining



George's niece Lillian Price with an ore car at the Transvaal Tunnel.



Photo: Ashcroft Museum

(above) George's cabin as it appeared in 1938.

(right) A photo of how it appears today.



career in Butte, Montana; a famous mining town. By 1895 George had followed other interested miners to the Kootenay region of British Columbia. He later came to Ashcroft, where he met a couple of fellows who wanted him to go north to the Cariboo after gold, but George never made the trip.

Samples of copper ore and rough sketches provided by local native Spence, beckoned George to the Highland Valley, where he spent the whole summer of 1898. Within a couple of years Novak had staked six claims, including the Transvaal, reportedly staked September 20, 1899. This group became known as the Highland claims. By 1902, with partners Hosking and Knight, he had opened up good sized bodies of ore on the Transvaal property.

Several other miners also staked claims in the Highland Valley; the ore was there along with the dream of something big to come. The ore was first moved by

pack horse and later by freight wagon, but uneven terrain and the steep grade made movement of the ore to the Canadian Pacific Railway loading docks in Ashcroft difficult at best. Although testing continued at various sites and better roads were considered there was never enough investment money to fulfill the potential of the Valley's ore.

During the 1920s and 1930s many of the claims were allowed to lapse, and the partners moved on to other ventures. But not so for George Novak who was described by the department of mines as "plucky". George continued to work the Transvaal tunnel from 1929 until 1945 out of his own pocket. It was during this time that George built his cabin; one side was used for living and the other side for his supplies.

George continued to work the mine sporadically until he retired at the age of 91. He died in Ashcroft, British Columbia in 1957 at the age of 94, just a few short years before the dreams of Highland Valley became a reality. George Novak is buried in the Ashcroft cemetery.



Photo: Ashcroft Museum

George Novak

Detailed access information:

- From Hwy #97C, access Cinder Hill forest service road.
- Be prepared for all conditions, back country access.
- There is no cellular service & vehicle with good clearance required for rain bars.
- Up-to-date maps are advised, as logging roads and cut blocks change landscapes.

BIBLIOGRAPHY & SOURCES

Alrae Engineering Ltd. (1969). *Department of Mining and Petroleum Assessment Report*. Vancouver, B.C.

Alrae Engineering Ltd. (1989). *Department of Mining and Petroleum Assessment Report*. Vancouver, B.C.

George Novak passes away. (1957, August 18). *The Ashcroft Journal*.

Hadn't seen his brother in 52 years. (1939, June 22). *The Ashcroft Journal*.

Howes, K. (1980, July). George Novak, Highland Valley Copper. *Nicola Valley Historical Quarterly Vol. 3 - No. 2 and 3*. Merritt, B.C.

Lean, P. (1980, July). Highland Valley Copper. *Nicola Valley Historical Quarterly Vol. 3 - No. 2 and 3*. Merritt, B.C.

Meredith-Jones, S. (2007). MINFILE No 092INW011. Retrieved May 5, 2009, from Ministry of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources Web site: <http://imperial.minfile.gov.bc.ca/Summary.aspx?minfilno=092INW011>

Press, F., & Siever, R. (1986). *Earth*. W.H.Freeman & Co.