

Vidette Lake Gold Mines

SITE #100103

GC1TTY2

Written & Researched by Doug Smith

SITE IDENTIFICATION

Nearest Community: Savona, V0K 2J0
 Parking: N 51°09.885'
 W 120°53.974'
 Geocache Location: N 51°09.887'
 W 120°53.929'
 Accuracy: 9 meters
 Letterboxing Clues: Refer to letterboxing clues page
 UTM: East 0646909;
 North 5670249 10U
 Geocache altitude: 886 m./2,907 ft.
 Overall difficulty: 1.5
 Terrain difficulty: 1.5
 (1=easiest; 5=hardest)
 Date Established: 1931
 Ownership: BC Provincial Park
 Access: • Gravel Road
 • Year-round
 • Vehicle accessible
 • *Detailed access information on next page.*



Vidette Lake lies at the northern end of the Deadman Valley, about 50 km from the Trans Canada Highway. The source of the Deadman River is high up on the Bonaparte Plateau. The river flows west for 23 kilometres before plunging over Deadman Falls and feeding into the Deadman Valley Lakes.

The valley was likely used as a transportation corridor for Aboriginal peoples for hunting, fishing and trading. The Hudson Bay Company passed through this area on its Brigade Trails from Fort Kamloops to Fort Alexandria at 100 Mile House in the 1840s. The Vidette Lake area was considered as the halfway point along the route. Later, packers used the valley as a route over to the Cariboo Wagon Road from the Okanagan-Thompson areas.

Following the gold rushes in the Fraser River and in the Cariboo, there was a flurry of exploration and gold panning throughout

the area, with activity at nearby Tranquille Creek starting in 1858. Hydraulic mining continued there through the 1890s.

As early as 1898 gold had been found in the Deadman area, but it was not until the winter of 1931 when more extensive surveying was done by an American geologist. He employed seven men at Vidette Lake and confirmed the presence of gold-bearing quartz veins. Equipment and supplies were shipped to Vidette in 1932 and a portable sawmill was set up to provide lumber for above and below ground construction. Provincial mining reports in 1932 talked about the need for further development and the need to construct a road into the valley. Shares of Vidette Mines Ltd. were sold on the market by 1933 with public announcements that once the road was built concentrates would be shipped. Eventually the company upgraded the road to haul status and the Province maintained it.

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

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View inside the mineshaft.

By 1934, a town site with log huts surrounded the mine site, which consisted of a two-storey bunkhouse with electric lights, flush toilets and showers, a cookhouse and a portable sawmill. Over 125 men were employed and with their families, the town site grew quickly to a village. The payroll at the mine alone was about \$75,000, in 1934 dollars and during the Great Depression, which made a significant economic impact on the region.

Nearby claims seemed to have been abandoned early but the Vidette Mine carried on for a few years. At that time, workers were paid about \$0.50 per hour and worked 8 hours days, for 6 days each week. Workers could stay and be fed at the company-owned bunkhouse for \$1.25 per day. Medical plans and dentistry were available to workers. The village continued to develop over the 6 years that the mine ran in full operation. During those years the mine covered 5 miles of tunnels, including one under the lake. The company built 17 km of roads and about 28,000 ounces of gold was extracted and shipped. Mine operations reduced capacity in 1938 and with the onset of World War II in 1939 and dwindling ores, the mine closed down and the surrounding village was abandoned over time.

Supplies, equipment and manpower came from Savona and Kamloops and *The Sentinel* newspaper in 1933 reported a boost in business for the area. Other stakes were laid near the Vidette Mine in 1934, with the Tuleric, Savona Gold and Hamilton Creek stakes attracting investments from afar.

Financing for the Vidette Mine is not known now, but it was rumoured that a Canadian Senator, General McRae was a major shareholder. *The Sentinel* reported that he was there to see the first shipment of ore bound for the smelter at Trail.

Detailed access information:

- Located off Hwy #1, 50 km north on Deadman Vidette Rd.
- Vidette Lake Gold Mine Resort is a privately owned resort for paid clientele.
- Parking is available at the Forestry Rec Site or at the lake access before the resort.
- Please pull well off the road as it is frequently travelled spring through fall.

BIBLIOGRAPHY & SOURCES

French, E. Retrieved March 10, 2009, from Vidette Lake Gold Mine Resort Web site:
<http://www.videttelake.com/pages/1HomeHistory.html>

McMillan, R. (2001). MINFILE No 092P086. Retrieved May 5, 2009, from Ministry of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources Web site: <http://imperial.minfile.gov.bc.ca/Summary.aspx?minfilno=092P++086>

Mobbs, L. (Undated). *Vidette Lake Gold Mines*. In Kamloops Museum and Archives.