

# Women in Mining

Women living in the Silver Peak Mining District fulfilled traditional roles as teachers, nurses, and cooks, but they were also entrepreneurs, business owners, and even miners. One example of such a woman was Ann Gavin. Born in Ireland in 1840, she immigrated to America in 1854. As the wife of a miner, Ann moved with her family frequently from one mining boom to another.

## Credits

- Mineral Ridge Gold, LLC, managed by Scorpio Gold (US) Corporation
- Bureau of Land Management, Tonopah Field Office
- Nevada State Historic Preservation Office
- Designed and produced by Kautz Environmental Consultants, Inc.

Historic photographs courtesy of the Central Nevada Museum, Tonopah, Nevada and the Nevada Historical Society, Reno, Nevada.

# Silver Peak

## A Mining District in Flux



The Gavins lived and mined in Virginia City, Nevada, and Butte, Montana, before settling in Esmeralda County. By 1907 and 1908, Ann Gavin owned several mining claims in the Silver Peak Mining District and was living as a widow outside of Goldfield with her youngest son and his family. It appears that Ann made her living buying and selling claims, rather than working them. As mining was the family business, her sons Frank and James also owned and mined claims in Esmeralda and Nye Counties.

## NEVADA





Mary Mine, 1930s

The focus of mining activity in the District was the Mary mine. First established in 1883, the Mary tapped into the Crowning Glory and Drinkwater ore veins through underground tunnels, fueling the most productive mining episodes in the District's history. During the first decades of the 20th Century, the District experienced some of its most intensive production. This era witnessed a blossoming of

infrastructure, capital investment, and accompanying population numbers in the towns of Silver Peak and Blair. But as the highest-grade ores were extracted, production began to plummet. New technologies were needed to make extraction of the lower-grade ores profitable. That need was fulfilled in 1936, when the prominent capitalist E.L. Cord (producer of the famous Cord automobile) funded construction of the state-of-the-art Cord Mill facility. As a result, production during this period increased sharply.

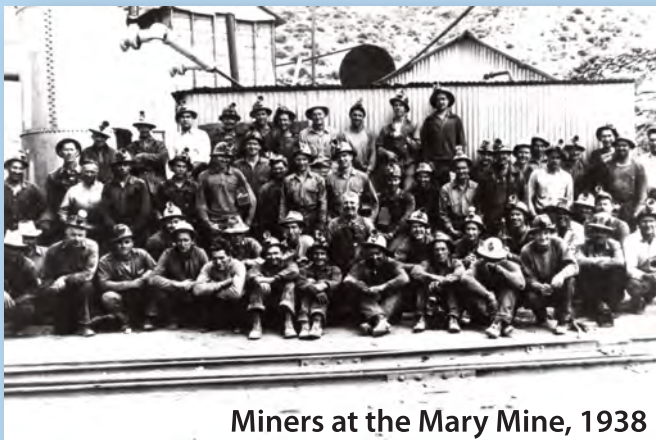
## *Living in the District*

The town of Silver Peak was originally settled in 1865. Referred to by locals as 'The Peak,' it became the main population hub for miners and their families who made a living in the District. By 1868, the town boasted two stores, three boarding houses, three saloons, and a population of about 150. The town was nearly abandoned between the 1870s and 1890s, but the population rebounded when interest in mining surged locally due to the bonanzas at Tonopah and Goldfield. By the early 1900s, the town boasted a newspaper, a school, a post office, a hospital, and even a baseball diamond, where the Silver Peak girls' softball team played. Celebrations, dances, and sporting events were common.

In order to avoid the rising property costs at Silver Peak, the Pittsburg-Silver Peak Gold Mining Company formed the nearby town of Blair in 1906. The Blair Mill was built shortly thereafter. Blair was all but abandoned by 1916, after the Blair Mill closed due to lack of profitability. While most of Silver Peak was destroyed by a fire in 1948, a small population still lives there.

## *Mining in the District*

Inspired by discoveries of rich gold deposits on the Comstock Lode, prospectors fanned out across Nevada hoping to find the next bonanza. In the early 1860s miners discovered gold and silver bearing ores in the mountains of the Silver Peak Range. The Silver Peak Mining District was formed, ushering in an era of boom and bust cycles that have continued to the present day. Today, gold is extracted through open pit mining.



Miners at the Mary Mine, 1938



E. L. Cord Mill, 1930s



Silver Peak, 1930s

# Where in Nevada?

Silver Peak, Nevada, is located in Esmeralda County, west of Tonopah and Goldfield. The best access to Silver Peak is on State Route 265, which intersects with Highway 95 approximately 34 miles west of Tonopah.



From Silver Peak, 4-wheel drive vehicles can traverse the Silver Peak Range via the Coyote Road, driving near modern mining operations at Mineral Ridge. This route ends at Highway 6, west of Coaldale Junction.



Base Map Copyright: © 2014 Esri, Sources: Esri, USGS, NOAA

