

Dry House Surface Audio Tour

Chapter 2, stop 1

2:24

As you walk through the Dry House, you will need to use your imagination to understand what it looked like. Picture a rather wide-open room with a high-pitched open ceiling (you could see the rafters). The floor was concrete, which made it easier to clean. Each miner had a locker where they kept their “street” clothes. At the beginning of the shift, they would lower their mining clothes from the rafter area and get dressed. As they headed out to the headframe, they picked up their battery-operated headlamps. They wore these head lamps attached to a belt. They also connected their lamp cord and light to their protective hard hat.

At the end of the day, the miners returned their battery-operated headlamps to the charger, so it was ready to go the next day. They would remove their dirty, possibly wet, mining clothes and then they washed up. They would change into their “street” clothes and raise their work clothes to the rafters to dry. So why did they raise them up to the rafters? The heat of the building rises, so the warmest location was in the rafters. This is why the building is called the Dry House.

The Mine Superintendent had his offices in the Dry House, which made it easier for him to keep a handle on the mining operation.

The original structure dates back to around 1924. It has had a couple upgrades, since then, giving us the current layout you see today. When the mine opened for tours, the Dry House was converted to our visitor center. It currently houses our staff locker room, an office, the ticket counter, theatre, restroom facilities, hardhat room, and our exhibit hall. The exhibit hall has information on the geology of the area, history of mining at Soudan, information on the research being conducted in the mine, and natural history information. There are rotating exhibits; too, so make sure you check it out.

The nature store is also housed in the Dry House. It has a variety of mementos from rocks and books to shirts and postcards. All proceeds from the nature store support interpretive and resource activities throughout the Minnesota State Park system, including the formation of this audio tour. Thank you for your support.

Prior to going underground, the mine operated as an open pit mine. After viewing the pits, you will understand one reason they went underground.