

Underground Implements Audio Tour

Chapter 8, Stop 7

2:13

The drill is an example of the compressed air drills that were used underground. The miners used it to drill holes in the ore, so they could pack the holes with explosives, which were hauled to the area on the Supply Truck. During shift changes or lunch breaks the rock was blasted into smaller pieces. Prior to the compressed air, the miners had steam-powered drills and before that they did the drilling by hand.

Once the rock was blasted apart, it was the job of the tugger operator to move the rock down holes in the floor called raises. The tugger/scrapper was also used to move waste rock around the stope or work area. This helped to level the floor and raise it up, so the drills could reach the ceiling or “Back” as the miners called it. Prior to the tugger/scrapper, the job would have been done by hand.

After the rock was sent down the raises, it needed to be loaded into the ore cars. This was originally the job of the “Muckers”. They moved the rock by hand from the raise to the ore car. The mine eventually got the Eimco loader, which took the place of the muckers. They now were able to use the machine to load, move, and unload the ore.

If you take a look at the Soudan car and the Granby car, you will notice some differences. The Soudan car, which was made right here at Soudan, was used on some of the earlier levels. It could hold 4 ton of ore. The earlier drifts were set up so the drifts or tunnels ran perpendicular to the shaft. This meant the Soudan car would back up and dump the ore directly into the ore skip. In later years the technology changed, so the drifts paralleled the shaft. At this point the Granby Car was brought in. The Granby Car was a side dump car, so the ore dumped into chutes that led to the awaiting ore skip. It could hold 6 ton of ore, which is what the ore skip could hold. When you go on the underground historic tour you will see many of these implements in various locations throughout the mine.

The drills were by far the equipment that took the most abuse. The drill bits would need to be sharpened constantly, which is why they built the drill shop.