

17) "Ma" Erickson's House



Axel Erickson came to prospect on Christal Creek in 1919 and he and his partner, Tom McKay, were the first stakers on Keno Hill. Caroline ("Ma") Erikson ran a boarding house and lavishly entertained the senior mine staff with food and drink. "Ma" was a bootlegger, although she was never caught. She had a very good relationship with the RCMP and used to call them out to investigate her competition. After Axel died and Ma left town, her house was used as a stable. Frank and Willie Tvetter completed the last renovations on the building.

18) Royal Canadian Mounted Police Post



The RCMP Station operated as a detachment in Keno City from 1923 to 1937, and a sub-detachment from 1937 until 1961. The building had two lock-up cells with bars made of 2x4s. In 1925, a young Constable Gordon "G. I." Cameron was sent from Vancouver to the Mayo/Keno region as an undercover officer. His duty was to investigate prostitution and the illegal sale of liquor. After two weeks on the job, he broke cover and brought a number of charges against hotels and individuals. Court appearances were held in Keno City.

Keno City



Walking Tour

The Swedish born John August Kinman stamped north during the 1898 Klondike gold rush. He prospected for gold in this area and staked some claims in 1908 and 1909. In 1919, Kinman found silver ore on the trail above Lightning Creek, staked some claims, and built a cabin on the site where Keno City sits now.

When Louis Bouvette staked a rich silver ore deposit on Keno Hill in 1919, Kinman's yard soon became the staging area for the teamsters bringing ore out of the Keno Hill area mines. Logs from old buildings on Duncan Creek were reused to build a boom-town at the staging yard. By 1920, Keno City was a busy community with cabins, a stable and a hotel.

Teamsters hauled the silver ore to the paddlewheelers at Mayo Landing, on the Stewart River. The first road between the towns was completed in 1921 and Keno City became the centre of a thriving mining district. A record shipment of 12,000 tons of ore was stockpiled at Mayo in 1922. Between 1945 and 1989, the mine at nearby Elsa produced 150 million ounces of silver, 490 million pounds of lead, and 370 million pounds of zinc, and was the top silver producer in Canada.

Today, Keno City is home to a small population of artists, miners and oldtimers. There is a special place in the heart of Yukoners for this unique village. Feel free to hike the trails through the historic mining areas and enjoy the scenic valleys and alpine meadows. Please leave historic objects and mining relics in place for others to enjoy.

1) Tolmie Cabin



Dan Tolmie built this cabin in the early 1900s. Originally from Ontario, Tolmie owned a hotel in Dawson and became Charlie Brefalt's partner in the development of the Elsa and No Cash claims. A few prostitutes arrived from Dawson City around 1950 and among them was a "Madam" named Margaret Vera Dorval, or "Bombay Peggy" as she was better known, who ran her business from the cabin.

2) Grant Cabin



Victor Grant built this cabin in 1922 while he was the Territorial Agent in Keno City. It has had various owners and tenants over the years including a liquor vendor, a schoolteacher, miners, hippies and even a bootlegger. The floor has been replaced, but the rest of the cabin remains as it was built.

15) Catholic Church and Rectory



Father Henk Huijbers has celebrated mass in this cabin with anywhere from 8 to 14 persons in attendance. Father Huijbers was born in Holland and was active with the Dutch Resistance during WWII. He received the Silver Resistance Remembrance Cross from the Dutch Council General in 1982. The Father came to Mayo in 1948 to assist the Bishop for one year and stayed in the Mayo-Keno area for more than forty years. The church was sold in the early seventies after it had been abandoned for some time.

16) Keno City Mining Museum – Outdoor Exhibits



This enclosed garage houses some interesting vintage equipment and vehicles. The Keystone Drill was part of a government program to expand Yukon mineral development. The diamond drill was brought into the Beaver River country by the Cominco mining company in 1929. The drill was abandoned about 90 miles away from Keno City and the museum brought it out and restored it. A complete set of associated tools and parts are on display.

13) Miller Cabin



Oscar Miller was a sailor before he came into the country in 1912. He started mining on Duncan Creek and built this log cabin. Miller staked several good mining claims, including a fraction that cut into the Calumet and mined on Clear and Haggart creeks. In 1945 he used his seaman's skills to repair the tramline cables for United Keno Hill Mines. A frame addition was added later to the cabin and the original structure became the bedroom.

14) Butjer Cabin



Nels Bjornson was a miner who lived in this cabin in the early 1920s and he may have built it. The most famous resident was Matt Butjer who lived here in the late 1950s. When Butjer lived in a cabin on Erikson Gulch, he staked a claim on Keno Hill and drove a 213 m (700 foot) tunnel into the permafrost using only hand tools. He also dug a 366 m (1200 foot) tunnel into bedrock by himself, using only hand steel and a wooden-wheeled wheelbarrow. In the early 1950s, Butjer was mauled by a black bear near his cabin on Erikson Gulch. He managed to wrap his torn scalp and travel to Keno City for help. Butjer lived his last years in Keno City and died there sometime in the 1960s.

3) White House



Frank White owned this cabin. White was an American shipwright who helped to build the *S. S. Keno* for the British Yukon Navigation Co., the River Division of White Pass & Yukon Route. The *Keno*, a sternwheeler riverboat, was built in Whitehorse in 1922 and was specially designed for the shifting navigation channels and prolonged periods of low water in the Stewart River. Frank White "worked himself into a grave" in 1958 and his ghost lingers in the Keno City Hotel. He appears by the pool table and can be recognized by his wide-brimmed hat and a coat with tails.

4) Alteration Annie's Cabin



A prostitute named Anne Janice, or "Alteration Annie", ran a legitimate business as a seamstress out of this cabin. It was common in the early days of the Yukon for prostitutes to run small cigar shops or to take in laundry and sewing. Annie ran a business in Whitehorse before she arrived in Keno City in the 1940s.

5) The Duplex



Ernest Joseph Corp came to the Klondike in 1897-8 overland following the Mackenzie and Hess rivers to the Stewart River. He made a fortune on the Anderson Concession at Hunker Creek in the Klondike and did well on the Onek vein at Keno. He prospected with Dave Ryan and ran the post office in Keno for many years. Corp and Ryan were friends but they built this double log cabin in case they "had a falling out". Corp was a member of the Yukon Council for the Mayo district from 1934 to 1939 and he retired to White Rock, B.C. in the early 1960s.

6) Beer Bottle House



Geordie Dobson moved this house from Calumet, an abandoned mining town nearby, in the late 1960s. Dobson was a

merchant marine seaman who heard about a northern silver mine and moved here in 1952. He purchased the Keno City Hotel before there was a refund for glass bottles. Thinking there must be some insulation value in the glass, after all the oldtimers used stacked bottles instead of window panes, Dobson started to layer bottles around his house. He started the project in 1966 and took four years and used 32,000 "stubby" beer bottles to complete the job. The house is very warm, probably helped by 60cm (2 feet) of mortar. In 1992 Dobson received an Exemplary Service Medal in recognition of his 25 years as a volunteer fireman.

11) Hawthorne Cabin



Jack Hawthorne came to the Yukon around 1922 to work as a teamster on the Keno-Mayo haul and he built this cabin in Keno City. Hawthorne was a partner with Ruth Ferguson who grubstaked him to work her interest in Sourdough Hill. Ferguson, Hawthorne and Alverson were partners in the Silver King vein on the Web Foot claim. Jack Alverson was the original staker on that claim. In 1929 they struck an ore offshoot from the Silver King vein and sold the claim to Treadwell Yukon. Hawthorne held hardrock claims in the Keno City area until his death in 1981.

12) Holmstrom Cabin



This cabin originally belonged to "Tommy" McKay, a cousin of Louis Bouvette, who came to the region around 1900 to mine and prospect. "Windy John" Holmstrom bought the cabin from McKay's estate. Holmstrom was born in Finland and went to sea when he was a young man. He came to Canada in 1927 to learn English and worked on the gold dredges near Dawson City in 1938. He moved to Keno City in 1948 and worked as a carpenter for the United Keno Hill Mines. Holmstrom was also a prospector and held over 20 claims in the region, continuing to mine into his 80s.

9) All Saints Anglican Church

The Anglican congregation started in Keno City in 1954 and began to convert a hut obtained from the United Keno Hill Mines into a church. Charlie Mills who was the Minister's Warden, George Pavlovich and Rolph Johanson helped Rev. R. Alcock. The All Saints Church was consecrated in 1956. Ann Zawalsky, the local school teacher, and George

Esterer, who worked in the mine's Assay Lab., were the first couple to be married in the church. The building has been used as a library for a number of years.



7) Keno City Café

The café was built in the early 1920s as a stable with living quarters on the second floor. Massa Sakata renovated it and operated a popular restaurant in 1949 during a silver boom. Sakata was well known in the area having operated restaurants and barbershops in Dawson City, Keno City and Mayo. Joe Rabb operated the café in 1965 and Helen Hofer remembers the blisters on her fingers from washing so many dishes. Luigi and Gina Cambiotti bought the café in the mid-1960s. Luigi was also the local taxi driver. Drago and Anna Kokanov bought the café from Luigi and ran a successful business for several years until they sold it to Geordie Dobson.



8) Keno City Hotel

The Keno City Hotel was built in 1920 and was first operated by Bob Palmer and then Robert Bruce Greaves. Greaves owned the Red Feather Saloon in Dawson City and served in WWI with George Black's contingent before he moved to Keno City. Geordie Dobson bought the hotel in 1960 and worked long hours at the mine while rebuilding the hotel. He reopened the business in 1963, just a few years before the mine closed. Frank White's ghost haunts the bar while the ghost of another hotel owner sits in Room #12. "Story has it" that this man shot himself after he returned home to find his business burned and his wife and sons dead.



10) Jackson Hall / Keno City Mining Museum

The Jackson Hall was originally a hotel in Dawson City. The building was re-built in Keno City in the early 1920s and was a community centre for dances, movies and social gatherings. The Keno City Mining Museum was established in 1979. Terry J. Levicki, a geologist for the United Keno Hill Mines Ltd. in Elsa, was instrumental in the early development of the museum. Visit the museum to see tools, equipment and memorabilia and photographs of life in an isolated mining town. Open daily from June to September. There is an Apline Interpretive Centre in the little building next door and the enclosed garage across the street houses larger equipment.



Keno City Historical Buildings

Walking Tour

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 Tolmie Cabin | 12 Holmstrom Cabin |
| 2 Grant Cabin | 13 Miller Cabin |
| 3 White House | 14 Butjer Cabin |
| 4 Alteration Annie's Cabin | 15 Catholic Church and Rectory |
| 5 The Duplex | 16 Keno City Mining Museum - Outdoor Exhibits |
| 6 Beer Bottle House | 17 "Ma" Erickson's House |
| 7 Keno City Café | 18 Royal Canadian Mounted Police Post |
| 8 Keno City Hotel | 19 Keno Community Club - Recreation Hall |
| 9 All Saints Anglican Church | 20 Keno Hill Signpost |
| 10 Jackson Hall / Keno City Mining Museum | |
| 11 Hawthorne Cabin | |

