

Independent Mine

These stones and bolts are the remains of the Independent Shaft hoisting works. The depression to your right marks the location of the 710-foot sealed shaft, the most northerly mine entry on the Mt. Diablo Coal Field. The boiler attached to the bolts exploded in 1873, killing two men and blowing parts of the boiler more than a quarter of a mile.

The Independent Shaft was sunk in 1865. By 1867 the company had failed and the shaft became inactive except as a means of pumping water from the neighboring Eureka Mine. Pittsburg Mining Company eventually purchased the property and returned the shaft to service as a working entry around 1900.

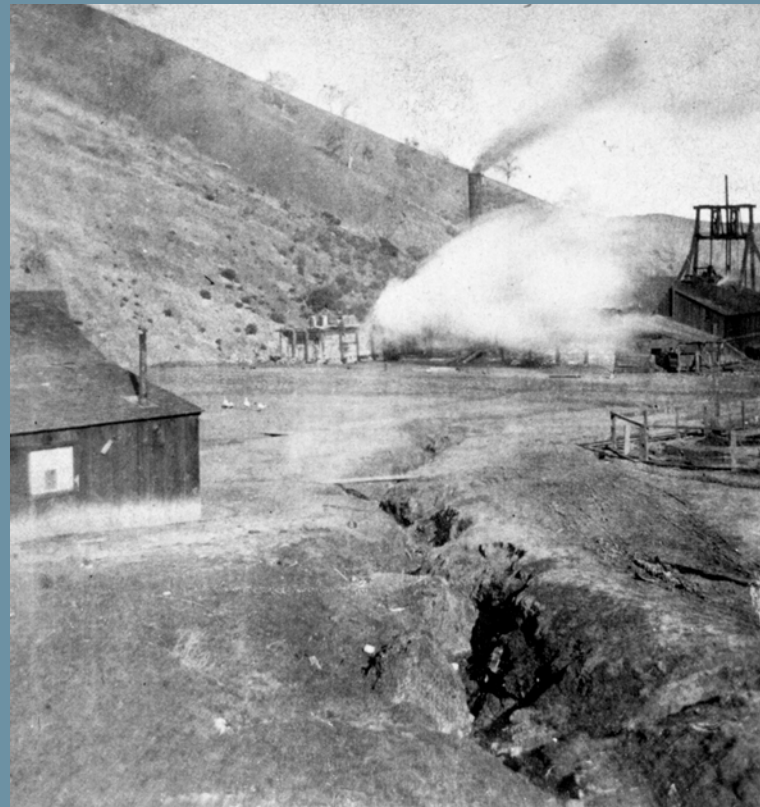
Within a short time—probably no more than a year—the shaft was permanently abandoned as high production costs, the availability of higher quality coal from Washington Territory, and the advent of oil as an industrial power source ended mining on the coal field.



Pittsburg Railroad, Somersville, circa 1875
Black Diamond Mines Regional Preserve, EBRPD, Dan McKellips/James E. Boynton Collection



Fourth of July parade near Independent Shaft, Somersville, 1897
Black Diamond Mines Regional Preserve, EBRPD, George Vivian Collection



Independent Mine, Somersville, (date unknown)
Black Diamond Mines Regional Preserve, EBRPD collection