

Mining for Tin



Valuable metals, such as tin, make up a very small percentage of the earth's crust. Even when they do occur, they are often not very accessible. They need to be concentrated by natural geological processes, such as in a granite formation.

This Celtic Region was blessed with just such a granite formation. Tin has been mined and traded here for over 2,000 years. Some legends say the ancient Phoenicians sailed to this Celtic land just to buy their tin.

Early tin mining was primarily confined to gathering the tin that had washed out of alluvial deposits. People would basically “pan” for the tin, much like the “49’ers” panned for gold in California. Eventually, technology developed that allowed these Celts to dig down beneath the surface.

This is when tin mining really took off. Tin miners were producing large quantities of the valuable metal and they became very important members of the community. In fact they even wrested special status for them king. They also pushed the technological envelop, designing new and very powerful steam engines, which helped drive the Industrial Revolution. They were also valued in other lands, because of their hard working ethic and technical skills. Many were encouraged to move to America, where they formed strong communities, especially in the mining areas of the western US.



Today, the tin mines have closed, as the lodes have dried up. But the history of the important industry, and the contributions of the men and women who undertook this dangerous work, are still remembered with pride.

Do you know what Celtic Region
had a rich history in tin mining? CORNWALL