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Seven Things you Need to Know About Virginia City's History *Surprising Historical Tales from the Modern-Day Bonanza*

VIRGINIA CITY, Nev. (March 17, 2021)—Virginia City's historical significance dates back to the mid-1800s when the Comstock Lode was discovered. Virginia City quickly boomed to become the largest industrial city west of Denver. The Comstock heyday may be in the past, but Virginia City's historic tales remain. Read on to discover surprising facts from the past and how to experience living history in the Virginia City Historic District today.

1. Today's equivalent of \$600 million was extracted in silver and gold from the Comstock Lode

Between the years 1859 and 1981, seven million tons of ore was produced from the Comstock Lode, equating to more than \$600 million in both silver and gold in today's money. This silver and gold made Virginia City an iconic mining town and so much more. The money extracted from the Comstock Lode was used to help build San Francisco and finance the Union in the Civil War. Virginia City's mining boom also contributed greatly to Nevada's character and the country as a whole.

Today, visitors can experience where and how silver and gold were produced from the Comstock Lode. The Chollar Mine was one of the leading producers on the Comstock. Tours of the [Chollar Mine](#) reveal the original square-set timbering, silver ore, rock drills, as well as displays of old equipment. The two-stamp [Comstock Gold Mill](#) dates back to the 1860s and is the last fully operational stamp mill. Narrated tours with iconic Outlaw Dave reveal how gold was processed firsthand. In town, check out the Ponderosa Mine tour located inside the Ponderosa Saloon for a dive under the streets of the town.

2. It was said the only way to safely drink the water in Virginia City was to mix it with two parts gin

In 1873, the Virginia City Water Company made history with the engineering feat of tunneling water from Marlette Lake near Lake Tahoe to the Comstock District and Carson City, a project that involved nearly 22 miles of pipeline and over 45 miles of flume. Before then, it was said that the only way to safely drink the water in Virginia City was to mix it with two parts gin. This certainly isn't the case today but the fable is celebrated by Virginia City's official spirit, [Cemetery Gin](#). Cemetery Gin is all Nevada-made and produced and can be enjoyed throughout Virginia City's watering holes and beyond.

To wet your whistle as they did in the 1860s, visitors can visit [Virginia City's historic saloons](#). Saloons such as the Bucket of Blood, the Silver Queen and the Gold Hill Saloon have been serving 'em up from as early as 1859. Visitors are welcomed to pull up a stool at these establishments to enjoy famous concoctions and marvel at the authentic Old West atmosphere.

3. 55% of Virginia City's businesses are owned or managed by women

In celebration of Women's History Month, Virginia City is honoring its legacy of women-owned businesses and leadership with [Women of the Comstock](#). The women of Virginia City are a living legacy to the tenacity, hardworking and industrious character that was required to thrive in the mining boomtown.

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In Virginia City, 55% of businesses are owned or managed by women. Pull up a seat at one of the town's old West saloons and you'll likely be welcomed by a woman as 67% of the saloons are owned by females. When it's time to get your grub on, there's a good chance you'll be enjoying the home cooking of the town's 67% female-owned restaurants.

4. *Virginia City was an Old West melting pot*

Dreams of striking it rich drew ambitious folks from all over the world to Virginia City. As Virginia City became a permanent settlement, fraternal, civic and religious groups established burial yards on the windswept hillside of what would become the Silver Terrace Cemeteries. Very few of the adults buried in these cemeteries were born in Nevada. The birthplaces noted throughout the grounds provide a glimpse of the scope of immigration and the makeup of the settlement that supported the Comstock mining industry.

Today, visitors are encouraged to visit the historically significant [Silver Terrace Cemetery](#) and the carefully preserved Victorian burial places. The cemetery continues to be restored by a "Save America's Treasures" grant through the National Park Service. Self-guided and remote tours are brought to life with the [Cemetery Audio Tour](#).

5. *Virginia City is home to the last standing four-level school*

Four level schools were nearly all abandoned and destroyed across the U.S. due to fire danger, yet one remains in Virginia City. The Fourth Ward School is a four-storied state-of-the-art wooden school that preserves the real story of life in a booming Old West mining town. Built to accommodate more than 1,000 students, the sixteen classrooms retain original patina, desks, maps and books. The impressive Second Empire architectural structure can be seen from most points in Virginia City.

Virginia City's [Fourth Ward School](#) is the last of its kind and offers public tours from May to September. The museum and community cultural center feature events and exhibits on alumni, local history, letterpress printing and mining and has a comprehensive archive for research.

6. *Virginia City is home to Nevada's oldest continuously operating courthouse*

The Storey County Courthouse, built in 1876 after being destroyed in the great fire of 1875, is the state's oldest continuously operating courthouse. Built in the Italianate style, the two-story seat of government houses a two-tier jail, courtroom and large iron-lined record vaults. The exterior facade is brick with details of ornate iron. The Victorian-era courthouse boasts a Lady of Justice statue without her blindfold. The story is that the county chose to not blindfold her to express that here justice was and continues to be, not blind.

The [Storey County Courthouse](#) still handles all of the county's business operations and is open to visitors year-round. The Courthouse Slammer and County Museum documents the history of the county from its founding through today.

7. *Virginia City is not a movie set!*

It's no wonder that visitors think that Virginia City is a faux Old West movie set. From wooden boardwalks to 19th-century architecture, Virginia City seems too good to be true. Much of Virginia City's structures were rebuilt in 1876 after a fire destroyed about three quarters of the community. Buildings to the south of Taylor St. down to the Presbyterian Church were saved from the Great Fire and date from 1860 or 1862. Virginia City is also home to 1,200 proud full-time residents.

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Today's Virginia City is a quaint and welcoming historic mountain town where "everyone is a local." Virginia City has been carefully, proudly and authentically preserved so visitors can step back in time.

For more information on Virginia City, Nevada including overnight stays, visit visitvirginiacitynv.com or call the Visit Virginia City at 775-847-4500.

*A short 30-minute drive from the Reno-Tahoe International Airport takes visitors to one of the largest historic districts in the United States - **Virginia City, Nevada**. Come experience this mining "boomtown" as it was in the 1800s. Step back in time while visiting the numerous historic buildings, saloons, churches and museums, take a mine tour or even ride a real steam train. The Comstock Adventure Passes offer the best value with discounted attraction packages.*

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