

The **Sutro Tunnel** is a drainage tunnel connected to the [Comstock Lode](#) in Northern [Nevada](#). It begins at [Dayton, Nevada](#), and connects 3.88 miles (6.24 km) Northwest to the Savage mine in [Virginia City, Nevada](#). The Sutro Tunnel pioneered the excavation of large drainage and access tunnels in the US.

The tunnel was proposed by [Adolph Sutro](#), a Prussian Jewish mining entrepreneur, in 1860.^[2] He promoted the [drainage tunnel](#) to allow access to deeper mineral exploration in the Comstock. Flooding and inadequate pumps had inhibited some exploration until that time.

By 1865, Sutro's idea had gained the approval of the state and US federal governments. The mining interests of the Comstock initially supported the project, but later opposed the idea. They feared that an alternate access point to the Comstock minerals would threaten their monopoly on the mining and milling of gold and silver in the Comstock.

Nonetheless, Sutro formed the Sutro Tunnel Company, selling [stock certificates](#) to raise funds for its construction, which began in 1869. Financing also came from local miners motivated by the prospect of improved mine safety. This motivation was further advocated by Sutro after the [Yellowjacket mine disaster](#) where dozens of miners were burned to death because they could not escape.

[Arthur De Wint Foote](#) worked on the tunnel in 1873, but was fired in 1874, having struck a flood of water in Shaft No. 2.^[3]

The main tunnel connected to the Savage Mine in 1878, the North and South branches were completed in 1879. Water was released from the mines on June 30 of 1879. Upon completion, Adolph Sutro sold his interest in the tunnel company. However, he stayed on as a board member and moved to [San Francisco](#), later becoming mayor, building the [Sutro Baths](#) and much more. Adolph's brother Theodore Sutro then took over control of the Sutro Tunnel Company until 1894 when he then sold it to Franklin Leonard Sr.