

Gunnison County

Crystal River District (aka Rock Creek District; aka Crystal District)

The Crystal River District was listed by Henderson (1926) as synonymous with the Rock Creek District. The original name was the Rock Creek District and was established by 1883, but the Crystal River District name was established by the late 1940's (Dunn, 2003). Dunn (Ibid) describes the district as the area around Eureka, Meadow and Galena mountains and Crystal Basin. The district is contiguous with and overlaps the **Sheep Mountain District** and will be considered in the same discussion.

Vanderwilt (1937) attributes the first discoveries in the area to the early 1870s. The first ore shipments came from the Eureka Mine on Treasury Mountain prior to 1876, then the Black Queen, followed by the North Pole and Lead King in 1900. The greatest production came from the Lead King (lead-zinc with some silver), followed by the Black Queen (silver) and the North Pole (copper-gold).

Ore deposits in the area are concentrated on the northeast side of the Treasury Mountain Dome in a zone of faulting from Sheep Mountain on the northwest to Galena Mountain on the Southeast - a zone eight miles long and one to three miles wide. Deposits include both mineralized veins and bedded replacements. Vanderwilt (Ibid) interpreted them as being associated with the granite porphyry of Treasury Mountain, a Miocene intrusion (Mutschler et al., 1981).

Vanderwilt (Ibid) related an interesting story. While early prospectors concentrated on conspicuous quartz veins, the best deposits ended up coming from the replacement deposits which were connected to their sources by small, inconspicuous conduits.

Streufert (1999) enumerated mineralization in several environments. One was upper Paleozoic to Cretaceous rocks in the Treasury Mountain Dome. A second is from Cretaceous quartzites on the flank of the Dome near Mineral Point. To the north are metamorphosed Cretaceous rocks at the edge of the Middle Tertiary granodiorite stock (Snowmass Pluton).

The 1937 Vanderwilt paper contains many excellent descriptions of individual mines (as noted in the mine list below.)

The short lived camp/town of Holland was established west of Marble when low grade ores were discovered in the 1880's (Dunn, 2003). The camp of Crystal City was established in the early 1880's and housed the Crystal Mill. Residents of Crystal City worked the Black Queen and Lead Queen Mines, and the Sheep Mountain Tunnel (Dunn, Ibid). The district also included Marble (incorporated in 1899) and the Marble railroad station. The camps of Rock Creek and Galena are probably included in the district (Dunn, Ibid). Marble is named for the Yule Marble, Colorado's state stone, used in creation of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and the Lincoln Memorial, as well as other buildings.

Mines listed in the district (mindat.org; Dunn, 2003; Vanderwilt, 1937)

- Ajax³
- Bear Mountain Tunnel¹
- Belle of Titusville¹ (Lead King Basin)
- Black Eagle¹ (Sheep Mountain area)
- Black Queen^{1,3} (Sheep Mountain area)
- Blue Jay Tunnel¹
- Brooklyn Tunnel¹
- Burnett Tunnel (Treasure Mountain area)
- Burt¹ (Lead King Basin)
- Carbonate^{2,3}
- [Chair Creek Tunnel](#)²
- [City of Detroit](#)²
- Contact^{2,3}
- Crystal Mountain Tunnel¹ (Crystal Mountain area)
- Daisy¹ (Lead King Basin)
- Evening Star¹ (Sheep Mountain area)
- Eureka (Treasure Mountain area)^{2,3}
- [Genter Mine](#)²
- Gold Pan vein¹ (Sheep Mountain area)
- Harris-Farlong Tunnel¹ (Crystal Mountain area)
- Hercules-Ajax¹ (Scofield Park)
- High Tide Vein Group¹ (Crystal Mountain area)
- Homestake Tunnel¹
- John Baroni Tunnel¹ (Scofield Park)
- Lizard Lake¹ (Sheep Mountain area)
- Inez Tunnel¹ (Sheep Mountain area)
- [Lacy Placer](#)²
- Lead Bullet¹ (Lead King Basin)
- Lead King^{1,2,3}
- Lucky Boy¹ (Sheep Mountain area)
- [Mammoth Occurrence \(2\)](#)²
- [Milwaukee](#)²
- Milwaukee-Undine Group¹ (Sheep Mountain area)
- Mexican Cut¹
- North Pole¹
- Pioneer (Warrior) tunnel¹ (Sheep Mountain area)
- [Rapid Creek Mine](#)²
- Rockett Tunnel¹
- Shakespeare Tunnel¹
- Sheep Mountain tunnel^{1,3} (Sheep Mountain area)
- Skyline¹ (Lead King Basin)
- [Tuscarora](#)²
- Whopper Lode¹ (Scofield Park)
- Yule Creek¹ (Lead King Basin)

Notes: ¹ denotes mines with detailed descriptions in Vanderwilt (1937).

² denotes listing on mindat.org.

³ denotes listing in Dunn (2003).

Mineral listed in the district (Vanderwilt, 1937; mindat.org) include:

Adularia	Copper	Pyrrhotite
Aragonite	Fluorite	Quartz
Argentite	Galena	Silver
Barite	Gold	Specular Hematite
Calcite	Hedenbergite	Sphalerite
Cerussite	Magnetite	Tetrahedrite
Chalcocite	Malachite	
Chalcopyrite	Molybdenite	
Chrysocolla	Pyrite	

References:

Dunn, Lisa. 2003. Colorado Mining Districts: A Reference. Colorado School of Mines, Golden, Colorado.

Henderson, C.W. 1926. Mining in Colorado, a history of discovery, development and production. U.S. Geological Survey Professional Paper 138.

Mutschler, F.E., Ernst, D.R., Caskill, D.C., Billings, P. 1981. Igneous Rocks of the Elk Mountains and Vicinity, Colorado - Chemistry and Related Ore Deposits *in* Epis, R. and Callender, J. 1981, Western Slope Colorado, New Mexico Geological Society 32nd Annual Conference Guidebook, University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Vanderwilt, J.W. 1938. Geology and Mineral Deposits of the Snowmass Mountain area, Gunnison County, Colorado. U.S. Geological Survey Bulletin 884.

Vanderwilt, J.W. 1947. Mineral Resources of Colorado. Colorado Mineral Resources Board, Denver, Colorado.

www.mindat.org, accessed in August 2015.