

Saguache County

Orient District

The Orient District lies along the west slope of the Sangre de Cristo Range in eastern Saguache County. The primary mine in the district is the Orient Mine, and it was a significant producer through its history. The mine is located less than 1 mile north of Valley View Hot Springs in Sec. 25, T. 46 N., R. 10 E (Cappa and Wallace, 2007). It was reviewed in several early works (Leith, 1906; Stone, 1934, and Harrer and Tesch, 1959). Vanderwilt (1947) attributed the mine with two million tons of iron ore, beginning in 1881 and lasting for 50 years. Several other locations - the Old Ironsides Mine and the Major Creek Mine appear in the records with the same type of deposits, connected with the Orient Mine.

The ore occurs in the lower part of the Leadville limestone, in apparent karst (dissolution) features. Cappa and Wallace (Ibid) provide information from an important thesis on the deposit by Balleweg (1990) including the history of the Orient mine, the geology of the area, and the specifics of the mineralization.

Eberhart (1969) provides a brief history of the town of Orient, arising in the late 1870s to service the mine and the miners, as it shipped 200 tons of ore a day to the Colorado Fuel and Iron (CF&I) Company plant in Pueblo. The total production of the Orient Mine was 1,736,000 tons of limonite ore (Balleweg, 1990).

Mines listed in the district (mindat.org; MRDS) include:

- Major Creek Mine
- [Old Ironsides Mine](#)
- [Orient Iron Mine](#) (aka Orient Mine; [Caesar](#); [Valley View](#); [Vivia B.](#); [Runaway](#); [Prospector](#); [Villa Grove](#))

Minerals listed in the district (mindat.org) include:

Ankerite	'Chert'	'Limonite'
Aragonite	Goethite	Quartz
Barite	Gold	Siderite
Calcite	Graphite	
Chalcopyrite	Hematite	

References:

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Eberhart, Perry. 1969. *Guide to Colorado Ghost Towns and Mining Camps*. Fourth, revised edition. Swallow Press, Athens, Ohio.

Harrer, C.M. and Tesch, W.J., Jr. 1959. Reconnaissance of Iron Occurrences in Colorado. U.S. Bureau of Mines Information Circular 7918.

Leith, C.K. 1906. Iron Ores of the Western United States and British Columbia. ; U.S. Geological Survey Bulletin 285.

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Stone, J.B. 1934. Limonite Deposits at the Orient Mine, Colorado. Economic Geology, Vol. 29, pp. 317-329.

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

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