

Chaffee County

Free Gold District

The Free Gold District lies just east of the Arkansas River. Based on reports by Keller, et al (2004) deposits typical of the district extend from Hop Gulch and McGee Gulch (sec. 3, T 14S, R. 78W and sec 6, T. 14S, R77W respectively), around the present-day Collegiate Peaks scenic overlook, to several small mines near Trout Creek, south of Highway 285. The terrain there is Proterozoic Granodiorite of the Mosquito Range. On-site investigation shows that the target of mining activity appears to have been small veins, possibly pegmatitic judging by the material in the mine dumps. The size of the dumps indicates the excavations were not deep - perhaps 30 to 40 feet - probably the extent of the oxidized zone. Discussions with personnel involved in mine closures and clean-ups with the Abandoned Mines Group of the Colorado Division of Minerals and Geology indicate that only one mine - the Nellie Bly Mine - showed evidence of some copper mineralization.

References:

[Mineral Resource Data System \(MRDS\) - Online Spatial Data - Free Gold District](#)

Vanderwilt (1947) comments that the Free Gold District was characterized by silver in small veins in Precambrian granite. Production records indicate some placer gold in 1932 and a few tons of low-grade gold ore in 1933.

Aldrich (1992) points out that a small camp and stamp mill existed near the Nellie Bly Mine called the Free Gold Camp, with a post office, general store, saloon and about 150 residents.

Aldrich, John K., 1992, *Ghosts of Chaffee County*; Centennial Graphics, Lakewood CO.

Keller, John W., McCalpin, James P., and Lowry, Benjamin W, 2004, *Geologic Map of the Buena Vista East Quadrangle, Chaffee County, CO*; Colorado Geological Survey Open File Report 04-4.

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



Overview of the terrain in the Free Gold District, Chaffee County.