

Summit County

Breckenridge District

The Breckenridge District covers a large area, defined by Ransome (1911) as all the territory drained by the Blue River and its tributaries above the confluence with the Snake River and Tenmile Creek near Dillon. Vanderwilt (1947) seems to refer to it alternatively as the **Bevan District**. On our map, we break out the smaller districts, including placers, along the Swan River. Those districts include the following:

- Jo Davis
- Delaware Flats (placer)
- Union (placer)
- Illinois Gulch (placer)
- French Gulch (placer)
- Lincoln (aka Avalanche)
- Avalanche (Bald Mountain)
- Swan River
- South Swan River
- Middle Swan River
- Congers

The Breckenridge District is primarily known as a gold-producing district, although some silver was found. As was usually the case, the earliest activity was placer, but then lodes were found and hard-rock mining activity picked up. Lead-silver lodes produced early, and notably the Wellington Mine yielded ore until 1929. Lode gold and silver were mined until 1942.

The Breckenridge District includes the well-known Farncomb Hill, where some of the largest discoveries were made in Summit County, and the famous Wire Patch Mine. In 1879, lode deposits were first discovered on the northeast side of Farncomb Hill. These lode deposits probably supplied French Gulch (on the south side of Farncomb Hill) and the American Gulch placers (on the north side of Farncomb Hill).

Precambrian schist, gneiss and granite and sedimentary rocks ranging in age from Proterozoic to Cretaceous are intruded by early Tertiary monzonite and quartz monzonite porphyries (Vanderwilt, 1947). Most ore occurs in small veins in the monzonite or in Dakota Quartzite, although veins can be found in all the bedrock types. As noted, placers were most important, but contact metamorphic deposits and stockworks are also found.

Extensive detailed histories of both mining and settlement can be found in Ransome (1911), Eberhart (1969) and Gilliland (2006).

The Breckenridge District grew where the first miners pushed across the Continental Divide in Colorado in 1859 from South Park (Tarryall). Rich placers were first discovered on Farncomb Hill. For some time,

activity was concentrated on the north slope of that feature. Ransome (Ibid) quotes an early report that Georgia Gulch alone produced \$3 million in gold by 1862. Vanderwilt (1947) estimated some 750 million ounces were recovered by the mid-twentieth century. It wasn't long, however, until intrepid prospectors branched out and found significant gold on the French Creek side of Farncomb Hill and other production opened up.

Early in its history, a small fort was erected because of rumors of hostile Ute Indians. The fort was deserted and a town founded soon after (with the fascinating story told by Gilliland, Ibid). The town was named Breckinridge for political reasons (named for the Vice President of the US). When that politician announced for the southern cause in the Civil War, however, the first "i" was changed to an "e" and the town of Breckenridge was born.

Additional references include Henderson (1926) and Lovering (1934).

Mines in this district (mindat.org and others) include:

- Alice A Tunnel
- Australia Gulch Placers
- Barney Ford Hill
- Big Sally Barber F7T
- Blue River Placers
- Bon Ton Occurrence
- Bowery Tunnel
- Brewery Hill Breccia No. 2 Mine
- Brooks - Snider (Brooks - Snyder)
- Brown Gulch
 - Brown Gulch Placer
- Browns Gulch
- Bullion King
- Cally Mine
- Carbonate Mine (Carbonate Group; Carbonite)
- Commodore Placer
- Como Claims
- Country Boy Mine
- Delaware Flats Placer
- Detroit - Hicks (Standard)
- Dewey
- Dry Gulch Placers
- Dunkin; Juniata; Puzzle; Ouray; Gold Dust; Washington
 - Gallagher tunnel
 - Gold Dust
- Railroad tunnel
- Red Wing tunnel
- Edna
- Emperor Tunnel
- Erueka Shaft Mine
- Excelsior
- Farncomb Hill Placers
- Finding Shaft (Deep Shaft)
- Fox Lake Mine
- Fremont - Vineta Group
- French Gulch
 - Farncomb Hill
 - American Gulch placers
 - Boss Mine No.2
 - Gold Flake Mine
 - Ontario; Key West; Boss; Gold Flake; Fair Fountain; Bondholder
 - Wapiti Mine (Wapiti Claims)
 - Wire Patch Mine
 - Elephant Tunnel
 - French Gulch Placers
- Galena Gulch placers
- Georgia Gulch
- Germania
- Gibson Gulch Placers
- Gibson Hill

- Gold Bell; Gold Edge (Golden Edge)
- Gold Cord Tunnel
- Gold Nugget Placer
- Gold Run Gulch Placers
- Goose Pasture Placers
- Hamilton
- Harrison Tunnel
- Hellen Mine
- Hendrix Gold Mining Property
- I.X.L. (Royal Tiger; Cashier)
- Iron Mask Occurrence
- Jeff Davis Patch Placers
- Jessie Mine (B and B Mines Inc)
- Joe Glidden Occurrence (Joe Gliddon)
- Johannesburg Tunnel (New York Claims)
- Jumbo Occurrence
- Juventa Occurrence (Juventa Mine Shaft; McLeod Tunnel)
- Kellogg Mine
- Leona
- Little Corporal Mine
- Little Sally Barber
- Lone Bug
- Louis D Shaft
- Maxwell
- Mayo Gulch Placers
- Middlesex Mine
- Mineral Hill
 - Cincinatti mine
 - Ella mine
 - Lucky mine
 - Minnie mine
- Minnesota (McBarnes; Bevan)
- Monitor
- Mount Guyot (Mount Gugot)
- Mountain Pride; Laurium (Larium; Blue Flag)
- Naperville Tunnel
- Nebraska
- New York Mine (New York Claims; New York Tunnel)
- Nickel Plate
- Nigger Placer (Lillian Vale)
- Old Ironsides mine
- Pacific - Gold Dust
- Player
- Puzzle Ouray
- Rose of Breckinridge
- Royal Tiger Group
- Sallie Barber Mine
- Siam Mountain
- Silence
- South Barton Gulch Placers
- Standard No. 1
- Streng
- Sultana Mine
- Tommy Mine
- Washington mine (Dunkin; Juniata; Puzzle; Ouray; Gold Dust)
- Weber Gulch Placers
- Wellington Mine (Siam Tunnel; Old Oro Tunnel; Mill Tunnel; Liberty Tunnel; Extenuate Tunnel; Wellington Tunnel; Abundance Tunnel; New Tunnel; Oro Shaft)
- Willard
- Wire Patch Placer

Minerals listed in this district (mindat.org) contains entries from the region specified including sub-localities:

Acanthite
 Albite var: Andesine
 'Allanite'
 Amphibole Supergroup
 Andradite

Anglesite
 Ankerite
 Augite
 Azurite
 Baryte

Bismuth
 Bismuthinite
 Calcite
 Cerussite
 Chalcopyrite

Chlorargyrite	Jarosite	Rhodochrosite
'Chlorite Group'	Kaolinite	Siderite
Chrysocolla	Lead	Silver
Epidote	'Limonite'	Smithsonite
Fluorite	Magnetite	Sphalerite
Galena	Malachite	Sulphur
'Garnet'	Marcasite	Tetrahedrite
Goethite	Microcline	Titanite
Gold	Muscovite var: Sericite	Vanadinite
Gypsum	Orthoclase	'Wad'
Hematite	Platinum	Wulfenite
'Hypersthene'	Pyrite	Zircon
Iridium	Quartz var: Jasper	

References:

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Gilliland, Mary Ellen. 2006. *Summit: A Gold Rush History of Summit County, Colorado*. Alpenrose Press, Silverthorne, Colorado.

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

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Ransome, F.L. 1911. *Geology and ore deposits of the Breckenridge district, Colorado*. U.S. Geological Survey Professional Paper 75, 187 p.

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www.mindat.org, accessed July 2015. <http://www.mindat.org/loc-3689.html>.