

## Summit County

### French Gulch District

Vanderwilt (1947) included the French Gulch District as part of the larger **Breckenridge District**.

French Gulch empties into the Blue River just north of the main town of Breckenridge, running twelve miles from French Pass, with tributaries Gibson, Negro, and Corkscrew Gulches. This was also originally a placer district, although it runs past the famous Farncomb Hill and its lode mines, including the famous Wire Patch Mine. While miners diligently panned and sluiced the gulch, Harry Farncomb noted vein gold on Farncomb Hill and began buying up land. In the early 1860s, however, his secret leaked out when he plopped a large sack of gold onto a counter in a Denver bank. This precipitated a land war called the "Ten Years War," over the land ownership, a story which is skillfully related in both Eberhart (1969) and Gilliland (2006).

The Wire Patch Mine is described as a metallized breccia zone (Ransome, 1911) where a quartz monzonite porphyry intruded a dark shale that forms the Farncomb Hill. The veins on Farncomb Hill were notably narrow, seldom exceeding a half inch in width. The Wire Patch has long been famous among mineral collectors for its fantastic crystallized gold. Samples are still bought and sold among collectors and populate the better mineral collections at museums around the world.

Mines listed in this district (mindat.org; Dunn, 2003; Eberhart, 1969) include:

- 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](#)
- Wellington
- Minnie
- Country Boy
- Cincinnati
- American Union
- Governor King
- Queen of the Forest
- Bismarck
- Little Morgan
- Triangle
- Emperor
- Frederick
- Great Lode

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

[Ankerite?](#)  
[Bismuthinite](#)  
[Chalcopyrite](#)  
[Fluorite](#)

[Galena](#)  
[Gold](#)  
[Kaolinite](#)  
[Pyrite](#)

[Quartz](#)  
[Rhodochrosite](#)  
[Sphalerite](#)

References:

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

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

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

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

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

[www.mindat.org](http://www.mindat.org), accessed July 2015.