Gilpin County

Apex District

Vanderwilt (1947) consolidated the Apex District into the **Pine-Kingston-Apex District**. The Apex District is located within the **Northern Gilpin District**, which is a large area composed of a number of smaller mining districts that grew out of the 19th century gold boom. Made up of the significant gold-producing districts of **Pine-Kingston-Apex** and **Perigo**, the district also includes areas that have been called the **Illinois,** the **Gamble Gulch,** and the **Union** (or **Gold Dirt**), the **Independent**, the **South Boulder Districts** and the **Rollinsville Placers**. The **Phoenix** and the **Kansas Districts** are contiguous with the other North Gilpin districts and display the same geologic characteristics.

Gilpin is the second smallest county in Colorado, but has the second highest gold production. Several months after the big discovery on Clear Creek, gold was discovered by John Gregory near Blackhawk in 1859. A few months later, the placers and veins in Russell Gulch initiated a major rush into this mountainous area. Early lode mining was restricted to oxidized ore, which normally reached 40- to 100-feet below the surface. The construction of the Hill smelter in Blackhawk in 1868 enabled extraction of metals from the unoxidized sulfide ores. Later, the completion of the railroad from Denver to Blackhawk spurred production again. Mining diminished early in the 20th century and has proceeded only sporadically since 1909.

The first discoveries in the area occurred in Gamble Gulch in 1859 (Koschmann and Bergendahl, 1968). Stamp mills processed the oxidized ore and the level mining activity followed the same pattern as in Clear Creek County. Much placer activity occurred in the various gulches, especially near Rollinsville. Dunn (2003) describes the Apex District as being located in the area of T2S R73W. Eberhart (1969) described the town of Apex (also known as Pine Creek) as being in the center of the **Pine Creek District**. Gold and silver production with some copper, lead and zinc is reported, with production up to 1945.

The geology is much the same as in Clear Creek County, with Precambrian bedrock of the Idaho Springs Formation cut by Boulder Creek Granite with Tertiary intrusions of quartz monzonite and bostonite porphyries. Fissure fillings include pyritic gold that where unweathered is rather low grade, but has been enhanced by oxidation. The most remarkable ore deposit in the district is in the Evergreen Mine near Apex, which was worked chiefly for copper (Vanderwilt, 1947). Chalcopyrite and bornite were the copper ore minerals and were found in and adjacent to monzonite porphyry dikes. The shipped ore averaged about 3% copper (Vanderwilt, Ibid).

The Apex Stock is the location of the Nye (or Nye-Mathews) molybdenum prospect. Additional references include Lovering and Goddard (1950) and Bastin and Hill (1917). Bastin and Hill have detailed write-ups of several of the mines and tunnels in this district (noted in the list of mines below).

Mines listed in the district (mindat.org; Dunn, 2003) include:

- Alice
- Apex[1]
- Aurelia
- Belfast & Shamrock (Belfast)

- Bennett
- Black Hills Vein Occurrence
- Blaternick; Hill & Gold Tunnel Occurrence
- Buckeye; Golden Sun; Fairhaven; Mellet; Lone Star; Moon Gulch; Pionee Occurrence
- Caledonia Lode
- Chahuahua
- Charcoal Charlie Vein Occurrence
- Columbia
- Early Bird Occurrence
- Elliot Mine (Wealthy Lode Claim)
- Evergreen Mine (Gold Standard; Nancy Lee) [2]
- Fish
- Geiger Vein Occurrence
- Gold Chief Mine
- Gold Reserve[2]; Montana Hill[2]
- Golden Flint
- Grant No. 10; 11; 12
- Haywood
- Huberknocker[1]
- Ingram[2]
- Jess Lode
- Little Johnny; Little Mary
- Little Melvin Lode
- Lode Star Occurrence
- Mackey[2, 3]; Annie[2]; Fish[2]
- Melett
- Melrose Tunnel Occurrence
- Melvin Tungsten Mine
- Michigan Hill
  - Big Bertha
- Mountain Chief
- Nye - Mathews (Wilma Mine)
- Old Kentucky
- Pettibone
- Plateau[2]; Bullion
- Quincy Bart Altantic
- Reliance Lode
- Rooks County Occurrence
- Schultz Wonder Mine[1, 2]
- Snowden; Golden Rod Occurrence
- Stewart
- Tacoma Tunnel
- Velvet Valley Occurrence
- Yellow Medicine Mine[1]

Notes: [1] Listed in Dunn (2003).
[2] Mines discussed in Bastin and Hill (1917).
[3] Discussed in Eberhart (1969).

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

Almandine
Andradite
Augite
'Biotite'
Bornite
Calcite
Chalcocite
Chalcopyrite
Chrysocolla
Copper
Covellite
Enargite
Ferrimolybdite
Galena
Gold
Hematite
var: Specularite
'K Feldspar
var: Adularia'
Magnetite
Malachite
Molybdenite
Pyrite
Quartz
Silver
Sphalerite
Tetrahedrite
Titanite
Uraninite
var: Pitchblende
Wollastonite
Zircon

References:

Bastin, E.S. and Hill, J.M. 1917. Economic Geology of Gilpin County and Adjacent Parts of Clear Creek and Boulder Counties, Colorado. U.S. Geological Survey Professional Paper 94.

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Koschmann, A.H. and Bergendahl, M.H. 1968. Principal Gold-Producing Districts of the United States. U.S. Geological Survey Professional Paper 610.

Lovering, T.S. and Goddard, E.N. 1950. Geology and ore deposits of the Front Range, Colorado. U.S. Geological Survey Professional Paper 223.

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