

## Gilpin County

### Eureka District

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 20<sup>th</sup> 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. 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 Eureka District was first organized in 1860 northwest of Nevadaville (Marshall, 1920). Most of the historic mining areas in this small county are considered either part of the **Central City** or **North Gilpin Districts** by various later reporters.

The Eureka District (considered by some to be part of the Central City District) lies west of Central City (Henderson, 1926) and the geology is essentially the same in both districts. Several of the major mineralized vein systems include the After Supper-Sleepy Hollow Vein that crosses North Clear Creek near Blackhawk. Bearing silicified wallrock and pyrite with later quartz-calcite-sphalerite-chalcopyrite +/- gold tellurides, the vein averages 2 ounces/ton gold and 10 ounces/ton silver, and reached as high as 34 ounces/ton gold and 492 ounces/ton silver. The "smelting ore" carried up to 20% lead and more than 5% copper. The Gunnel-Grand Army Vein was predominantly pyritic and ranged from 6 inches to 2 feet in width. The Mammoth vein was traced on the surface over 6000 feet, and was predominantly pyrite with some chalcopyrite-rich zones (Lovering and Goddard, 1950).

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

- [After Supper \(Banzai shaft\)](#)
- [Allbright](#)
- [Arlington](#)
- [Bates \(Becker - Bates\)](#)
- [Buell Shaft](#)
- [Central City; Cherokee; Carroll; Woodmire; Rara Avis](#)
- [Cherokee Mine](#)
- [Concrete](#)
- [Elizabeth](#)
- [Fagan](#)
- [Gilpin Eureka](#)
- [Gilpin Eureka Essex Group<sup>1</sup>](#)
- [Gold Collar](#)

- Grand Army (Gunnell)
- Gregory Mine
- Gunnell Hill
- Silent Friend
- Silver Dollar Mine
- Sleepy Hollow Mine
- Specie
- Spur Daisy
- Two Sisters Occurrence
- Vendome

Note: <sup>1</sup>More details in Lovering and Goddard (1950).

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

Calcite	Johannite	Sphalerite
Chalcocite	<i>Kasolite</i> ?	Tennantite
Covellite	Pyrite	Torbernite
Chalcopyrite	Quartz	Uraninite var: Pitchblende
Fluorite	Rhodochrosite	
Galena	Siderite	

#### References:

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

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.

Marshall, Thomas H. (ed.). 1920. *Early Records of Gilpin County, Colorado, 1859 - 1861*. W. F. Robinson Printing Company, Denver, Colorado. 313 p. in J.F. Willard (ed.) The University of Colorado Historical Collections Volume II, Boulder, Colorado.

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