

Gilpin County

Gold Dirt District (aka **Union District**), part of **Independent District**

The Gold Dirt District is located within the **North Gilpin District**, described in Bastin and Hill (1917) and Lovering and Goddard (1950) as a large area (approximately 35 square miles) stretching from North Clear Creek to the Boulder County line, east from Mammoth Gulch and Kingston Peak to the Eastern border of the Central City Quadrangle. The North Gilpin District is composed of a number of smaller mining districts that grew out of the 19th century gold boom. It is made up of the significant gold-producing districts of **Pine-Kingston-Apex** and **Perigo**, along with areas that have been called the **Illinois**, **Gamble Gulch**, Union (or Gold Dirt), **South Boulder** and the **Rollinsville Placers**. The **Wisconsin**, **Phoenix** and **Kansas Districts** are contiguous with the other North Gilpin districts and display the same geologic characteristics. Henderson (1926) lists a Gold Dirt District in Clear Creek County, but he listed the Union District in Gilpin County.

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 settlement of Gold Dirt was established in the winter of 1860-1861 by John Q. Rollins. Rollins erected a stamp mill for the local production and bought out most of the miners. The town was a mile down the gulch from the town of Perigo and actually produced more gold although the town was not as successful (Eberhart, 1969).

Bastin and Hill (1917) describe the Gold Dirt Mine as one of the first mines discovered in the area in 1860. The mine supported six mills at one point in its early years.

Mines listed in the district Bastin and Hill (1917) include:

- Gold Dirt Mine

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.

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

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.

Parker, Ben H. Jr, 1974, Gold Placers of Colorado; Colorado School of Mines Quarterly 69 (3).