

Gilpin County

Rollinsville Placers

The Rollinsville Placers District is located within the **North Gilpin District**. The North Gilpin District was described by 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. It is 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.

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.

In the South Boulder Creek drainage, placer mining was carried out in Lump, Moon and Gamble Gulches. The latter was significant enough to warrant recognition as the Gamble Gulch District. Also at the north end of Gilpin County, the Pactolus and Rollinsville Placers are underlain by outwash gravels and, according to Parker (1974), the most productive gravels were rather fine and lying on Precambrian bedrock. Dunn (2003) indicates that the source of the Rollinsville Placer was the nearby Gamble and Moon Gulches. The principal placer area in Gamble Gulch was about 1.5 miles long and 500 feet wide at the widest point. The Rollinsville Placer was slightly larger (Parker, Ibid). Placer activity occurred in nearly all the gulches within the existing districts of Gilpin County.

The Rollinsville District lies along South Boulder Creek upstream of the town of Rollinsville. Parker (1974) places the district upstream from Rollinsville to the mouth of Moon Gulch - 1 3/4 miles long and 650 feet wide at its widest. Presumably the source of the gold is the rather low-grade veins that criss-cross the gulches upstream of the placers.

Mindat.org includes the Manchester Mine in the Rollinsville District. This mine is characterized by ferberite - a tungsten ore, and so the Rollinsville District would be considered to be the southern end of the Boulder Tungsten District - obviously a lode mine rather than placer.

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

- [Manchester Mine \(Nugget\)](#)
- [Portland-Dow Mining Company 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.

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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.

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

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