

Conejos County

Decatur District (aka Decatur West District, aka Stunner District, aka Gilmore District)

The Decatur District is also known as the Stunner District, and was located along the Alamosa River. Mindat.org refers to the Decatur District as the Decatur West District (Stunner District). The district also included the Gilmore District located just south of the Stunner District (Patton, 1917). Henderson (1926) referred to the Decatur District as also being known as the **Summit District** and as occupying both Conejos and Rio Grande Counties. Here we have separated the Summit (Summitville) District due to being located in a separate county and having ores of different genesis and age (Steven and Ratte, 1960).

The camp of Stunner was said to have been opened in the early 1880's, some ten years after ore was first discovered at Summitville, and grew rapidly until in 1890 it contained a population of about 300 (Patton, 1917). The Stunner camp was originally named Conejos Camp, then Loynton, before becoming Stunner in 1887 (Eberhart, 1969). One or two very promising mines were developed and a large number of claims staked out, and worked to a greater or less extent. Extremely rich silver ore seems to have been shipped from several of the properties, but the rich ore soon gave out, and the low-grade ores could not be worked with profit owing to the remoteness of the camp (Patton, 1917).

In October 1912, gold telluride was discovered on the west slope of Klondyke Mountain on a claim owned by Mr. Gilmore. The Gilmore claim was located about three and a half miles almost directly west of Platoro on the very steep northwestern slope of Klondyke Mountain, overlooking the Alamosa valley. It was two miles from the town of Stunner, located in this same valley. The gold telluride was reportedly much darker in color than is the case with the Cripple Creek tellurides. The crystals were usually invisible although they occurred disseminated through the quartz gangue and gave the ore a characteristic dark color. The rich gold telluride ore was worked by means of an open cut and found to continue for 10 or more feet. However, the ground became broken below this point and the ore ceased entirely and could not be found again because only barren quartz veins were encountered (Patton, 1917).

The geology of the area is igneous in origin. This district lies in the eastern part of the San Juan volcanic field and the late Oligocene-aged Platoro and nested Summitville calderas constitute a composite collapse structure of about 20 kilometers in diameter (Lipman, 1974; Steven & Lipman, 1976). Ore was found in mineralized epithermal quartz-latite veins that extended over long distances. Major commodities in this district were silver and gold, with minor to trace antimony, copper, iron, lead, molybdenum, and zinc.

The rock formation on the Alamosa slope of Klondyke Mountain consists entirely of monzonite with a very small area of monzonite porphyry. Andesite appears on the summit of the ridge above the Gilmore claim and from there extends eastward over the whole flat-topped summit of the mountain (Patton, 1917). The ore veins lie mainly in the Treasure Mountain latite and in part apparently in the overlying andesite.

The mines were primarily developed in quartz fissure veins. At the Eurydice Mine the quartz fissure vein contained streaks of pyrite and chalcopyrite, which carried sulfides and tellurides of gold and silver. The outcrop of the vein could readily be traced for several hundred yards up the gulch and was from two to four feet wide. It was stained brown by the oxidation of the iron sulfides. This mine had the distinction of producing shipping ore, but was not worked after 1893 (Patton, 1917).

The town of Stunner in the summer of 1913 had a half dozen or more houses in good condition and supported a store and U.S. Post Office (Patton, 1917). Gilmore was a brief camp founded in 1913 (Eberhart, 1969).

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

- Alum Creek Occurrence
- Apex Tunnel Occurrence (Watrous Claims)
- Asiatic Mine (Brooklyn; Alabama; Kearsarge; Merrimac; Oregon; Montgomery; Olimpia)
- Emma Mine (Patented Claim: Emma)
- Eurydice Mine (No. 10; Orpheus; Louisa; Patented Claims: Eurydice)
- Globe Occurrence
- Pass Me By Mine (Upper Ten; Cleora; Homestake; Vivian; Arla)
- Trill Bird Deposit

Minerals listed in the district (mindat.org):

Alunite	Goethite	Pyrite
Calcite	Gold	Quartz
Chalcopyrite	Molybdenite	Stibnite
Galena	Petzite	Tetrahedrite

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