

## San Miguel County

### Lower San Miguel District (aka Placerville District; aka Sawpit District)

Henderson (1926) lists the district as being located at T. 44 N., R. 11 W. and T. 43 N., R. 10 W. of the New Mexico principal meridian. Vanderwilt (1947) and mindat.org refer to the Lower San Miguel District as including the Placerville, Sawpit, and **Newmire Districts**, having commodities of silver, gold, lead, copper and vanadium. Mindat.org also has a separate listing for the Placerville District. Placerville is located 14 miles northwest of Telluride, and Sawpit and Newmire Districts are located between the two along the San Miguel River valley (Vanderwilt, 1947). Heyl (1964) reports that the Placerville District was centered near Sawpit along the San Miguel River.

The Sawpit mineralization is located along an 8-foot bed of limestone. Commodities included silver and gold with lead. Gold placering along the river consisted of small sluicing operations which yielded relatively little gold, due to the fine gold being widely distributed (Vanderwilt, 1947). Parker (1968, 1974) indicates that the placering extended nine miles downstream from Sawpit and that Placerville was at the center of this area.

Most of the Placerville area is underlain by nearly horizontal sedimentary beds of Permian to Cretaceous age, which have been intruded by Tertiary igneous rocks and cut by numerous faults (Fischer, 1968). The district is located west/northwest of the Silverton Caldera (Vhay, 1962). In the Placerville Quadrangle, the Entrada sandstone of Late Jurassic age contains tabular deposits of vanadium with subordinate uranium, and the Pony Express limestone member of the Wanakah formation contains bedded replacement deposits of gold- and silver-bearing pyrite. Fischer (1968) provides a map with roughly north/northwest trending chrome- and vanadium-bearing belts in and around Placerville and Sawpit. Copper-bearing veins, containing varying amounts of "hydrocarbon" (solid members of the petroleum group), follow northwestward-trending normal faults; in places some of the hydrocarbon is uranium bearing. Sporadic attempts have been made to produce both copper and uranium from these deposits (Bush et al., 1959). Gold-bearing placer deposits are present along the bottom of the San Miguel River valley and in elevated terrace gravels as much as 200 feet above the present stream level (Parker, 1968). Some gold was produced from the placers late in the 19th century and early in the 20<sup>th</sup> (Bush et al., Ibid).

Towns in the district include Placerville (named for the placering operations), and Sawpit (named for the nearby creek). The city of Placerville was originally located about 1.5 miles away, and was platted with cabins in 1877. However, a young fellow built a general store and saloon at the current location and the first settlers pulled up their stakes and buildings to relocate around the store and saloon. Much of the business section of Placerville burned in 1919, but was rapidly rebuilt. Placerville boomed after ranching came into its own and it is a top livestock shipping point in western Colorado (Eberhart, 1969).

Sawpit came into being as a result of a blacksmith who located good ore in 1895. He named his mineral claim the Champion Belle and mined it for gold and silver. Small quantities of smithsonite were found in its deeply oxidized ores (Heyl, 1964). The town was laid out in 1895 and several wood frame buildings were built (Eberhart, Ibid).

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

- A1
- Alpha and Gamma Occurrence
- Bear Creek Mine
- Beaver - Perkin Placers
- Belle Champion Mine (Unpatented Claims: Belle Champion; Golden Era)
- Belvidere
- Benice; Scott and McDonal Occurrence
- Big Mack
- Binkley - Sawpit Project (Republic)
- Blue Bird Mine (Blue Bell Nos. 1-6; Lake View; Unpatented Claims: Blue Bird Nos. 1-17; Lake View Nos. 1-7; Trout Lake)
- Boston; Enterprise; and Peoria Placers (Peoria Placer; Enterprise Placer; Patented Claim: Boston Placer)
- Brazier Brothers Drilling
- Carpenter Mine
- Crescent City
- Crucible Mine (Patented Claim: Crucible No. 1)
- Deep Creek Placer (Deep Creek Placer Limestone Quarry; Patented Claim: Deep Creek Placer)
- Donegan Lease
- Donegan Placer (Donovan Placer)
- E Bar Placer
- Evans Claims
- Fall Creek Mine
- Fall Creek Quarry
- Fayette Occurrence (Wells; Egan Placer)
- Fighting Chance Mine
- Flagstone Nos. 1 and 2 Claims
- Frazier Mine
- General De Wet Placer (Patented Claim: General De Wet)
- Gill Edge Occurrence (Gold Bug Placer)
- Gold Ledge Placer
- Golden Era
- Granger Placer
- Gripe (Sunnyside Claims)
- Grumwald Mine
- Idaho Occurrence (Meadow Brook)
- Iron Crown (Blue Bird Group)
- Ironside Occurrence
- Jo Dandy Mine (Lone Wolf; Edward; Unpatented Claims: Joe Dandy; Wesley; Nifty)
- Laen Occurrence (Oak Leaf; East; Bra.)
- Leopard Vanadium Mine
- Lizzie G. Mine
- Lone Tree
- Lone Wolf
- Major Occurrence (South Fork; Mary E)
- Manhattan Occurrence (Keystone; Boste)
- Mineral Mine
- Montana Placer (Patented Claims: Montana Placer; Old Channel Placer; Idaho Placer; Dump Placer)
- Northern Ohio
- Nugget Nos. 1; 2; 3 (Horseshoes Nos. 1; 2; 3; 4; 5; Nugget)
- Ohio (Virginia; Arthur)
- OK (Elder Occurrence)
- Old Man Mine
- Omega Mine (Patented Claim: Omega)
- Placerville
  - Sunnyside Claims
  - Black King Mine (Black King No. 4; Black King No. 5; Black King No. 5 Claim; Unpatented Claims: Black King No. 1; Evans Claims; Weatherly Claims)
  - New Discovery (Barbara Jo Claim; White Spur; White Spar)
  - Robinson Property
- Pocahontas Mine
- Polaris
- Pretty Blue
- Primos
- Providence
- Rare Metals
- Rattlesnake Claims

- Rosemary Placer (Patented Claim: Rosemary Placer)
- San Miguel River
- Silver Slipper
- Single Jack
- Stella
- Sunup
- UnawEEP
- Unnamed Placer Mine (Lawn Placer; Patented Claims: Placer Mining Claim No. 1)
- Wave Bar (Smug; Homestead)
- Wells and Egan Placer (Patented Claim: Wells and Egan Placer)
- Wheeler Bars (E. Placer; Patented Claims: A Placer)
- White Crow
- White Spar and Black King Occurrence
- White Spar Mine (New Discovery; Patented Claims: White Spar)
- Willow Creek Bar (Patented Claim: Willow Placer; Willow Creek Place)
- Wilson and Chambers
- Yellow Girl

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

Annabergite	Gold	'Pyrobitumen' <sup>1</sup>
Autunite <sup>1</sup>	'Illite-1M' <sup>1</sup>	var: Thucholite <sup>1</sup>
Azurite <sup>1</sup>	'Ilsemannite' <sup>1</sup>	Quartz
Baryte	Jordisite <sup>1</sup>	Roscoelite
Bornite	'Limonite'	Sherwoodite
Calcite	Malachite <sup>1</sup>	Silver <sup>1</sup>
Carnotite	Metatorbernite <sup>1</sup>	Skutterudite
Cerussite	Minium	'Smectite Group'
Chalcocite	Molybdenite <sup>1</sup>	Smithsonite
Chalcopyrite	Montroseite	Sphalerite
Clausthalite	Muscovite	Tetrahedrite <sup>1</sup>
Coffinite	var: Fuchsite	Tyuyamunite <sup>1</sup>
Dolomite	var: Illite	Uraninite var: Pitchblende
Erythrite <sup>1</sup>	var: Mariposite <sup>1</sup>	Uranophane <sup>1</sup>
Ferrimolybdenite <sup>1</sup>	Pascoite	
Galena	Pyrite <sup>1</sup>	

Note: <sup>1</sup> Indicates listed in the Placerville District on mindat.org.

#### References:

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