

## San Miguel County

### Telluride District (aka Upper San Miguel District)

The Telluride district was a former gold, silver, lead, zinc and copper mining district located in the western San Juan Mountains, in the Uncompahgre National Forest. Prospecting resulted in the district being discovered in 1875, specifically gold in the Sheridan and Smuggler veins (Dunn, 2003). Henderson (1926) lists the Upper San Miguel District, but places a Telluride District (aka Frying Pan District) in Eagle County. Vanderwilt (1947) referred to the district as the Upper San Miguel District. Fisher (1990) includes the Telluride District with the **Sneffels and Camp Bird Districts** as one district.

The district's principal mines were the Liberty Bell Mine, Smuggler (of Smuggler Union), and the Tomboy. These three produced much of the district's gold and silver, making it one of the 25 top leading gold producers in the U.S. The Tomboy and the Smuggler supported their own mining camps that housed hundreds of miners (Dunn, 2003). The Liberty Bell Mine closed in 1921, the Tomboy Mines in 1927, and the Smuggler-Union Mines in 1928. However, in 1940 the Tomboy and Smuggler-Union were consolidated and worked through the 1950s.

Mineralization is generally comprised of polymetallic veins. Controls for ore emplacement include the types of wall rock, vein intersections, character of fault movement, presence of intersecting dikes and faults, and abrupt changes in strike or dip. Local alteration is propylitic (caused by iron and magnesium bearing hydrothermal fluids, altering biotite or amphibole to epidote–chlorite–albite such that veining or fracture fill with the mineral assemblage along with pyrite). Volcanic rocks are propylitically altered with epidote, calcite, chlorite, pyrite, sericitic, argillic, and calc-silicate alteration near the veins; quartz-pyrite-sericite, kaolinite, and epidote-rich calc-silicate skarns. Local rocks within the district are comprised of Eocene pre-volcanic sedimentary rocks. Local geologic structures include a NW-trending swarm of dikes, fissures, and veins radiating from the Silverton Caldera, forming a belt of fracture zones, ring faults and dikes, cone sheets, and radial dike swarms.

The town of Telluride, which was originally called Columbia, was established in 1878 along the San Miguel River. The town of San Miguel City was established west of Telluride (about 1 mile down river) in the mid 1870's due to promising gold and silver discoveries, but by the early 1880's most of the inhabitants had moved to Telluride (Dunn, 2003). This was due to Telluride being located closer to the better producing mines (Eberhart, 1969). Eberhart (Ibid) provides a rich history of the town, including some of the notable people and union wars that occurred in the early 1900's. The district also included the camp of Savage Basin (Dunn, 2003).

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

- [Ajax](#)
- [Allegheny](#)
- [Alta](#)<sup>2</sup>
- [Andrus Mine \(Andrews Mine\)](#)
- [Argentine Mine \(Montana Mine; Belmont Mine\)](#)<sup>1,2</sup>
- [Atlanta tunnel](#)
- [Bay State tunnel](#)

- Black Bear Mine (Black Bear & Iona Mine)
- Bobtail Mine (Idarado Mine Telluride Side; Pandora)
- Bridal Veil Basin
  - Horatio Mine
- Bullion tunnel<sup>1,2</sup>
- Cascade tunnel
- Champion Mine
- Cimmaron<sup>1,2</sup>
- Cincinnati shaft
- Cleveland<sup>1,2</sup>
- Columbia tunnel<sup>1,2</sup>
- Croziers claims
- Dividend Mine
- Donald Mine
- Eldorado tunnel
- Estel crosscut
- Fortuna Mine
- Gold Block Mine
- Hermit Mine
- Hidden Treasure<sup>2</sup>
- Humboldt Mine
- Japan Mine (Japan - Flora)<sup>1,2</sup>
- Kibbe shaft
- La Junta Mine (Lajanta Mine Map Repo)
- Liberty Bell Mine<sup>1,2</sup>
- Little Mary Mine
- Lower Columbia Mine
- Lower White Bear Mine
- Mandota shaft
- Marshall Basin
- Mayflower Mine
- Medata<sup>2</sup>
- Meldrum tunnel
- Mendota tunnel
- Mikado tunnel
- Mill tunnel (Mill Level tunnel)
- Montana Mine
- Mountain Top tunnel
- N. W. H. Jr. Mine
- Old Kibbe shaft occurrence
- Old Tomboy Mine
- Ophir tunnel [2]
- Orient Mine
- Penn tunnel (Pennsylvania tunnel)
- Preston Moore Mine
- Royal Mine
- Savage Basin
  - Big Elephant Mine
- Savage Mine
- Shamrock Mine (Little Jimmy Mine)
- Sheridan Mine<sup>2</sup>
- Smuggler (Smuggler Union)<sup>1,2</sup>
- Stillwell tunnel
- Sulpherette Mine
- Summit Mine
- Telluride
- Telluride Mill tunnel
- Tomboy 2nd Level lease
- Tomboy Mine<sup>1,2</sup>
- Treasury tunnel (Tomboy; Argentine; Black Bear)
- Trust Rugby Mine
- Union Mine<sup>2</sup>
- Union Flag Mine
- Upper Chieftan Mine
- Upper White Bear Mine
- Valley View shaft
- Weller Mine

Notes: <sup>1</sup>Listed in Dunn (2003).

<sup>2</sup>Listed or discussed in Eberhart (1969).

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

Acanthite	Galena	var: Amethyst
Amphibole Supergroup	var: Argentiferous Galena	var: Milky Quartz
Bismutite	'Geode'	Rhodochrosite
Calcite	Gold	Silver
var: Manganoan Calcite	Ilmenite	Sphalerite
Cerussite	'K Feldspar var: Adularia'	Stephanite
Chalcanthite	Magnetite	Tangeite
Chalcopyrite	Pearceite	Tennantite
Chromite	Platinum	Tetrahedrite
Ferrimolybdate	Proustite	Zoisite
Fluorite	Pyrite	
Freibergite	Quartz	

#### References:

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