From 1869 to the present, the only mining activity has been sporadic prospecting operations. Over the last 35 years mineral-production statistics show several small shipments of silver ore. In April 1939 the district was inactive. Fluorite was discovered there in 1939.

La Plata Mine

A group of unpatented claims, comprising the old La Plata mine and mill-site, was relocated in January 1939 by F. J. Sur, Lewis Barr, and J. C. Stewart of Fallon, Nev.

Development consists of an incline shaft, several adits, and other workings, totaling approximately several thousand feet. Some of the workings are caved and inaccessible.

The prevailing formation is shale intruded by granite. The La Plata vein, as exposed in a small stope open at the surface, is in granite. The vein strikes E. and W. and dips 60° N. Other quartz veins, either in the granite or in the shale outcrop in the vicinity, have been prospected superficially by open-cuts. The economic mineral is silver.

Michigan Claim

The Michigan claim was located by Mark Harris and Fred T. Pine, of Westgate, Nev., in the early part of 1939 as a fluorspar prospect. The claim is in the lower part of La Plata Canyon about 2 miles below the old La Plata townsite. Only location work had been done on the claim to April 1939.

Limestone intruded by rhyolite is the prevailing formation. Fluorspar occurs in a series of small fractures in the limestone striking about east-west and traceable on the surface for several hundred feet. From surface showings, the fluorite veins are too small to be commercially important.

LEETE DISTRICT

The Leete district is in northwest Churchill County at Leeteville on the Southern Pacific R. R. 18 miles east of Wadsworth in Washoe County. In former years the Playa lake from which salt was produced was known as the Eagle salt marsh, while that which produced borax was called Hot Springs borax marsh. Salt was first produced here in 1870 by a man named Leete, who discovered the deposit and organized the Eagle salt works. Large quantities of salt were produced annually for many years to supply the silver mills on the Comstock and later for dairy and domestic use. This deposit, because of better transportation facilities, supplied salt to the Comstock mills in competition with other sources of supply, particularly Sand Springs Marsh. (The Central Pacific, now the Southern Pacific R. R., was completed May 10, 1869.) The Eagle salt works continued to produce salt intermittently until 1915, when operations ceased. A small amount of borax was produced from the salines in 1871, but the venture was unsuccessful. From 1879 to 1884 the production of salt amounted to 334,000 tons, and the total production probably has exceeded 500,000 tons.

The Playa lake in which the salt and borax occur is a desert mud plain of recent age covered during the summer months with a white saline efflorescence. The salt was recovered by solar evaporation. The saturated brine occurring about 20 feet below the surface was pumped into shallow excavated vats enclosed by low embankments. The vats were 50 feet wide and about 100 feet long and covered a considerable area. The saturated salt solution crystallized on the sides and bottoms of the vats, and, by successive evaporations, a layer of salt was formed that was thick enough to be hoed into piles and shipped without further refining. One acre of vats produced 10 tons of salt daily during good weather. The season lasted from June to October.

SAND SPRINGS DISTRICT

The Sand Springs district is 25 to 30 miles southeast of Fallon, the nearest railroad point. The Sand Springs salt marsh in this area is a playa lake covering nearly 40 square miles in Salt Springs Valley, known in the early days as Alkali Valley and recently as Four-Mile and Eight-Mile Flats. Salt production began in 1863; previous to 1870 considerable quantities of salt for the reduction of silver ores on the Comstock were produced. After 1870, salt for metallurgical purposes could be obtained more cheaply from the deposits in the Leete district because of better transportation facilities; therefore salt production at Sand Springs was discontinued temporarily. In recent years the Sand Springs salt field has been worked by small companies and individuals to supply salt for local dairy and table purposes.

Borax was discovered in the Sand Springs salt marsh about 1869, and the American Borax Co. erected a plant, which operated for several years.

The gold deposits of the Dan Tucker property and vicinity were first prospected in 1905 by C. W. Kinney. The production of metals, chiefly gold, has been about $30,000, most of which was from the Dan Tucker mine.

Dan Tucker Mine

The Dan Tucker mine comprises a group of 5 unpatented claims situated near the Lincoln Highway 31 miles southeast of Fallon, Nev., the nearest railroad station and supply center. Although the property was prospected by C. W. Kinney in 1905, very little work was done until 1912, when Leslie L. Leonard and C. W. Kinney sank a 100-foot shaft. The first production was made in 1919 by lessees, who shipped three carloads of ore yielding $215 to $300 per ton. The Dan Tucker Mining Co. was organized in 1925, and in the following year it leased the mine to Smith, Towle, and Young, who in 1927 erected a small amalgamation mill at Sand Springs in which 1,000 tons of ore was treated. In 1931 the property was acquired by another company, and in 1938 it was awarded to E. E. Tailleur, Fred Tailleur, and Dick Kemp on a labor lien. The owners proceeded to work the mine and shipped 10 carloads of rich ore. In the fall of the same year those connected with the Bralorne Mines, Ltd., of British Columbia, obtained a lease and bond and organized the Summit King Mines, Ltd., a subsidiary, to operate the Dan Tucker and other properties in the vicinity. In April 1939 the company had 12 men on development. Production from the Dan Tucker mine is reported to have been about $30,000, mostly shipping ore.