

VAN DUZER DISTRICT

The Van Duzer District joins the Mountain City District on the north. Van Duzer Creek, which traverses the District, is a small stream that flows eastward and joins the north fork of the Owyhee about six miles south of Mountain City. Placer gold was discovered in the District in 1893 by Rutley M. Woodward. No accurate data are available on the production of placer gold here, but from information gathered from several sources it is estimated to have had a value of about \$100,000. Figure 21 is a view of hydraulicking operations in the District in 1894.

¹⁴Stretch, R. H., Biennial Report of the State Mineralogist, State of Nevada, 1875-1876, p. 25.

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Placer Mining in Nevada

Portions of the main fork of Van Duzer Creek, for a distance of several miles, have been washed for placer gold. Woodward is reported to have taken out gold to the value of \$50,000 in the years following the first discovery. The ground was sold subsequently to Alley Harris and others who worked it until 1910. Harris reported that the placer paid him an average of \$5 per linear foot of creek bed for a distance of 7,500 feet, a total of \$37,500. The first placer mining was done by hand shoveling into sluice boxes. Later, several hydraulic monitors were employed. Two small reservoirs were constructed in Van Duzer Creek and 10-inch steel pipe lines were laid to supply water for the monitors.

The alluvium is composed of fine gravel and subangular and well-rounded pebbles. The bedrock is presumably limestone. The gold varies from fine dust to nuggets weighing five or six ounces. The fineness of the gold averages about 820. The source of the gold is probably from the quartz veins at the head of the stream. Perhaps some of the gold was derived from the ancient fluvial gravels that cover large areas in northern Elko County. The average depth of the gravels is about 10 feet. Inasmuch as the best portions of the placer area have been worked, there has been only a small amount of placer activity in the District in recent years. In 1932, the placer ground was leased to a Los Angeles operator who employed four men. They shoveled the gravel onto a conveyor belt, which discharged into a trommel. The trommel oversize was rejected and the undersize diverted into a sluice. The amount of gold recovered from this work was small. The stream is perennial so that small-scale sluicing operations can be carried on continuously when the weather is favorable.

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