

Smith, A.M., 1957

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RESOURCES REPORT

ELKO COUNTY

NEVADA

1957

Report in Elko Co. General File

The Office Of

George W. Malone

United States Senate

Nevada

Alfred Merritt Smith  
Administrative Assistant

mimeographed - 161 pages

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**Geology:** Paleozoic sediments cut by granodiorite and capped  
by tertiary lavas. Veins and placer gravels.

**Location:** Mountain City District and town are on the Owyhee  
River 90 miles from Elko over paved roads. It is  
in Townships 45 and 46 N., R. 53 E.

**History:** The district was discovered by Jesse Cope and others  
in 1869, according to Lincoln. A rush followed and  
the town soon had a population of over 1000, with one  
mill in operation and two more under construction to  
treat silver ore. Prior to 1881 over \$1,000,000 in  
silver was produced from shallow workings. A 50-ton  
flotation mill was built at the Nelson Mine in 1921,  
but silver mining operation was not profitable. In  
1923 Keeley and Hopkins had a 9-stamp amalgamating  
and concentrating mill in operation. There was some  
placer mining, estimated to have produced about  
\$150,000 in gold. The silver ore was rich but the  
deposits were shallow and soon exhausted.

An excellent tabulation by the Granger Report shows  
production of all metals and values from 1869 to 1949.

Notes from a report by Thomas B. Nolan. U. S. Geol. Survey 1932:

Silver and Gold. First discoveries were in 1869 by Jesse Cope and others. In the Seventies 3 small silver mills were operating. Production in silver up to 1881 is stated to have been over \$1,000,000, all from surface and shallow mining. During the late Eighties or early Nineties three gold mills were built, but none were running by 1908, and from then up to the time of Nolans report in 1932 there was essentially no mining. In 1921 a 50-ton mill was built on the old Nelson Mine, but production was negligible.

Copper. In November, 1931, S. F. Hunt discovered rich copper ore on the Rio Tinto claims. The story of the discovery is interesting and indicates the persistence and courage of this pioneer which led to fortune. A part of his profits were made available to the Mackay School of Mines of the University of Nevada. The property was examined by the writer, Alfred Merritt Smith and Carl Stoddard, for the Nevada State Bureau of Mines, and a brief description of the status of the mine was written by Smith for the Press, June 30, 1932.

In 1933, International Smelting and Refining Company, a subsidiary of Anaconda Copper Company secured control of the mine which was thereafter operated as the Mountain City Copper Company. Large scale development was inaugurated, a 3-compartment shaft sunk to the 300-foot level, a power line was built into the district by Idaho Power Company from Jarbidge, and the construction of a modern flotation mill was under way, and completed in August, 1936.

The mine was first put on a producing basis in 1935, when 15,566 tons of ore was shipped yielding 8,199,866 pounds of copper and 657 ounces of silver, with total gross value of \$353,738. The best ore shipped averaged about 25% copper.

The property at that time consisted of 43 mining claims covering some 470 acres. The company also owned adjacent ranch lands of 177.83 patented acres.

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After a phenomenal production of rich ore for some 10 years, the mine closed down in 1947 and the company was liquidated. Of the once thriving and well-built town and mill at Rio Tinto nothing now remains but waste dumps and the ghostly ruins of an abandoned mining camp.

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Uranium. Happy Joe Mine, near Mountain City is reported to have made a small production of uranium ore during 1956. There are said to be various undeveloped uranium prospects in the district. It is reported that the Continental Oil Company intends to drill on some of the prospects.

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The Mountain City Uranium Company consists of 12 claims northeast of Mountain City that have indications of uranium deposits. The company is incorporated, with the owners, J. E. Gregory, President and M. E. Ray, Secretary-Treasurer, both of Elko. Shares are offered for sale, and development work is in progress.

Mountain City

(Cope, Van Duzer, Rio Tinto)

Copper, Silver, Gold, Tungsten