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RABBIT HOLE DISTRICT

LOCATION

The Rabbit Hole district is on the west side of the Kamma Mountains at the northern edge of Pershing County. The center of the district is about 8 miles south of Sulphur on the Lovelock-Sulphur road.

HISTORY

There are numerous accounts of the emigrants stopping at Rabbit Hole Springs to replenish their water supplies before crossing the Black Rock Desert to the west. According to Paher (1970) some of these travelers investigated the gold placer deposits as early as the 1850's but did not mine them. Placers were reportedly worked for the first time by the Chinese in the 1870's who recovered several thousand in gold (Vanderburg 1936, p. 154). Active mining started around 1911 but was intermittent until the 1930's (Johnson, 1977). From 1933-1942 the placers were worked continuously by hundreds of individuals using drywashers and by companies with dry concentrators and heavy equipment. By 1939 the Rio Seco Mining Co. was treating several hundred yards of gravel per day. Production of over 3000 oz/gold was reported for 1939 alone but no complete official records were possible with so many individuals included. Active placer mining was being conducted as late as 1984. Some lode claims were staked as early as the 1940's in the vicinity of Rabbit Hole Spring in Sec. 8, T33N, R29E. This portion of the district is underlain by metasediments and cut by quartz veins. The area is scarred by numerous dozer-cuts attempting to expose and explore the vein systems. Several small mines and prospects are also present in the same area but there is no record of any production.

GEOLOGIC SETTING

The main part of the district covers a basin of Tertiary sediments lying to the west of the Kamma Mountains. A small part of the district is along the flanks of the range while the southern boundary includes outcrops of metasediments of Triassic and Jurassic age. The metasediments are covered by a thick sequence of gravels and sediments of volcanic origin.

ORE DEPOSITS

The major gold placer deposits are in a large alluvial fan that extends westward from the flanks of the Kamma Range. Johnson (1977) relates a complex depositional history for the fan and describes placer gravels overlying a clay horizon that serves as a false bedrock underlying the entire placer area. This false bedrock forms a horizon separating the overlying gold-bearing gravels from the barren gravels beneath. The major placer activity was reported to be in gullies and canyons that dissected the fan, with the richest pay zones occurring near the head of the canyons. The gold was almost always found as flat nuggets and was commonly

associated with trace amounts of cinnabar, cassiterite and scheelite. On occasion, magnetite with up to 5% TiO was also present and caused difficulties by clogging the riffles (Beal, 1963).

SELECTED REFERENCES

- Beal, L. H. (1963) Investigations of Titanium occurrences in Nevada: NBMG Report 3.
- Johnson, M. G. (1977) Geology and Mineral Deposits of Pershing County, Nevada: NBMG Bull. 89.
- Paher, S. W. (1970) Nevada Ghost Town and Mining Camps: Howell-North, San Diego.
- Vanderburg, W. O. (1936) Placer mining in Nevada: NBMG Bull. 27.