The process for the recovery of borates from the saline deposits was simple; the cotton balls were either picked by hand from the shallow excavations in the mud, or the richest portion of the boraciferous mud was shoveled from the surface, and the material thus collected was hauled to semicircular iron pans set on a foundation of brick and fired from beneath with sagebrush or pinion. The pans were charged with water and crude borates and stirred with poles until the soluble salts dissolved, after which the liquor was drawn off into crystallizing vats wherein the borax was crystallized out on wires. In deposits where the soluble carbonates were not present in excess, sodium carbonate was added in the firing pans to break up the lime and boric acid as found in ulexite. The borax obtained by crystallization was again refined by a second crystallization in the same manner.

SHADY RUN DISTRICT

The Shady Run district is on the western slope of the Stillwater Range 30 miles northeast of Stillwater and 40 miles southeast of Lovelock, the nearest railroad connection. It embraces an area lying between Fondaway Canyon on the north and Mill Canyon on the south. The I.X.L. district adjoins it on the south and the White Cloud district on the north. Although a number of gold and silver-lead prospects were worked in this area in the early days, no deposits of commercial importance were found and there is no record of any production. A small custom mill was erected in Mill Canyon in the eighties by a group of miners from Virginia City, including John Fondaway, G. W. Humphrey, and Isaac Zintmeyer, but it was unsuccessful. Probably the last work in the district was done about 1916 by D. G. Zinn and associates on a gold prospect on the north side of Fondaway Canyon. Here the vein is in quartzite near a quartz-porphyry intrusive. In Shady Run Canyon, south of Fondaway Canyon, are several gold prospects in quartzite. According to John T. Reid of Lovelock, a short distance south of the mouth of Fondaway Canyon near the summit of a small butte, isolated from the main range, is a flat vein that in former years was prospected for gold by K. B. Jenkins and associates.

SODA LAKES DISTRICT

The Soda Lakes are on the edge of the Carson Sink 2 miles northeast of the former site of Ragtown - an emigrant station on the Overland Route to California - 7 miles northwest of Fallon. The occurrence of soda in Little Soda Lake was discovered by Asa L. Kenyon in 1855, and in the late sixties borax was discovered in the brine of Big Soda Lake by William Troup. In 1868 Kenyon sold Little Soda Lake to a San Francisco group, which organized a company and began the production of soda. This was the first production of soda in Nevada and probably the first of any importance in the West. The production of soda from Big Soda Lake was begun in 1875 and continued until 1893. The combined annual yield from both places ranged between 300 and 800 tons of soda between 1868 and 1893. About 1869 William Troup and associates attempted to produce borax from Big Soda Lake, but this venture was unsuccessful.