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Quicksilver Deposits In Nevada

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Opalite type =

Volcanic type =

TUSCARORA DISTRICT

The Tuscarora mining district lies on the east slope of the Tuscarora Range, near the town of Tuscarora, about 40 miles northwest of Elko. Late in the nineteenth century it was a placer gold camp and a lode silver-gold camp, and the presence of cinnabar in the district has been known since the early days. In 1940 several quicksilver claims were located, and, although very little quicksilver has yet been produced, it may become an important quicksilver district. All of the known deposits are of the volcanic type with cinnabar, pyrite or marcasite, and, to a lesser extent, native mercury filling steep fracture zones in altered andesite.

BERRY CREEK GROUP

Location.....Sec. 7, T. 39 N., R. 51 E.
Ownership.....J. W. Gainey.
Discovery.....1941 by Gainey.
Production.....None.
Geologic type.....Volcanic.

The Berry Creek group of seven claims is on Berry Creek one mile west of its junction with McCan Creek, about three miles southwest of Tuscarora. The property was developed by J. W. Gainey in 1942 and taken under lease and option by the Cordero Mining Company in July 1943. In the latter part of 1943 it was being actively developed by the Cordero Company.

The underground workings in August 1943 consisted of a single adit and drift a little over 100 feet long driven in altered andesite to explore a shear zone which strikes N. 32° E. and dips 70° southeasterly. On the surface about 40 feet above the adit the same shear zone is exposed by trenches for over 150 feet along its strike. In a broad valley about 400 feet to the west, along the strike of the shear zone, pannings from the surface and shallow pits indicate a continuation of the mineralized zone.

The only ore mineral seen was cinnabar which occurred along the shear zone in veins up to an inch in thickness and as disseminated crystals and small veinlets in the walls. Pyrite, and possibly marcasite, is fairly abundant in the ore, but it appears to be somewhat older than the cinnabar and accompanying chalcedony, quartz, and barite.

RED BIRD GROUP

Location.....Sec. 26, T. 40 N., R. 51 E.
Ownership.....Fred C. Bacon of Twin Falls, Idaho.
Discovery.....1940 by J. W. Gainey.

Production.....Very small.
Geologic type.....Volcanic.

The Red Bird group, consisting of 14 claims, is about a mile north of Tuscarora. The property was bought by M. H. Horn from the original locator in 1940. In 1941 it was leased to the Cardinal Mining Company who did development work, installed a 2-pipe retort, and probably produced a little quicksilver. In 1942 the property reverted to Mr. Horn and was later sold to the present owner.

The workings consist of two short adits, one about 18 feet above the other, and a shaft which was being driven in 1943 to a depth of 60–70 feet. These workings explore a sheared contact which strikes N. 78° W. and dips steeply southward; the footwall is an altered hornblende-biotite andesite whereas the hanging wall is a somewhat more acid tuff. All of the rocks are argillized and contain disseminated pyrite and possibly marcasite, but in the vicinity of the shear the mineralization has been the most intense.

The ore occurs in a zone along the footwall side of the shear where cinnabar, native mercury, and pyrite are disseminated through the altered andesite. Some cinnabar in more definite veinlets occurs in small fractures which lie in the footwall and strike at right angles to the main shear. Small amounts of quartz accompany and are later than the cinnabar. The width of the mineralized zone exposed in August 1943 was about five feet, but its lateral and downward extent had not been delimited.