

ABANDONED OR INACTIVE URANIUM  
MINES IN NEW MEXICO

A report of investigation carried out  
between August 1979 and May 1980 under  
contract with the New Mexico Energy and  
Minerals Department.

by

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## INTRODUCTION

During the course of this investigation approximately 200 uranium mine sites were visited. Although these sites are distributed throughout 20 counties the majority are in McKinley, San Juan, and Valencia Counties, along the western and southern margin of the San Juan Basin. Other counties with an appreciable number of sites are Grant, Rio Arriba, Sandoval, Sierra, and Socorro.

Field work commenced in August, 1979 and extended although not continuously, into May, 1980. Information obtained during the on-site visits included location, type and size of mine, condition of mine, host formation, dimensions of remaining structures, proximity to residences or villages, water quality data, and radiation levels, although a gamma ray scintillometer was not obtained for the project until October 20, 1979. An effort was made to contact landowners whenever and wherever possible, however, no systematic attempt was made to determine land and mineral ownership during this phase of the investigation.

Mine operation data has been included where available. This consists of information on ore grades, production history mineralogy, and mine operator. Old publications of the U.S. AEC and the State Mine Inspectors office were helpful in this area.

The mine reports are arranged alphabetically by county with each county having its own index. A NM- or AZ-mine identification number is given with each mine name in the index. It is an AML numbering system devised by Don Baker, Jr. The first part of this

identification number is based on a U.S. Soil Conservation Service numbering system of 15' quadrangles beginning with 1 in the northwest corner of the state to 24 in the northeast corner, then returning to the western border to start a new tier. The second part refers to a 7½' quad within the 15' quad; these are numbered counterclockwise from 1 in the NE quadrant to 4 in the SE. The last part of the number refers to a particular mine within the 7½' quad. An AZ- prefix indicates the 15' quadrangle is an Arizona quad that overlaps the New Mexico state boundary.

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The help and cooperation of the Navajo Tribe Office in Window Rock, Arizona permitted a statewide investigation to be completed; a note of thanks goes to Mr. R. Zaman and Mr. William Armstrong of that office.

VALENCIA COUNTY

Quad: Dos Lomas 7½'

- |     |   |         |
|-----|---|---------|
| 26. | NM-149-4-26                                       | Page 1  |
|     | Double Jerry (Vallejo)                            |         |
| 27. | NM-149-4-27                                       | Page 4  |
|     | Christmas Day                                     |         |
| 28. | NM-149-4-28                                       | Page 8  |
|     | Red Bluff Claims 1,2,3,4,5,9                      |         |
| 29. | NM-149-4-29                                       | Page 15 |
|     | Black Hawk, Bunney, Gay Eagle, Red Bluff, and UDC |         |
| 30. | NM-149-4-30                                       | Page 28 |
|     | Last Chance                                       |         |
| 31. | NM-149-4-31                                       | Page 31 |
|     | Section Nine                                      |         |
| 32. | NM-149-4-32                                       | Page 39 |
|     | Taffy (Bonanza)                                   |         |
| 33. | NM-149-4-33                                       | Page 41 |
|     | La Jara   |         |
| 34. | NM-149-4-34                                       | Page 45 |
|     | Zia   |         |
| 35. | NM-149-4-35                                       | Page 52 |
|     | Linear Prospecting Trenches                       |         |

Quad: Dough Mountain 7½'

- |    |                            |         |
|----|----------------------------|---------|
| 1. | NM-199-1-1                 | Page 54 |
|    | Sandy (South Laguna Mines) |         |

Date visited 3/20/80

Mine name(s) Last Chance County Valencia

Section NE $\frac{1}{4}$ , NE $\frac{1}{4}$ , 8 Twنش. 12 N R. 9 W

Quadrangle sheet Dos Lomas 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ '

Mining district Mt. Taylor

Elevation 7,050'

Nearest city and/or dwellings Roundy Ranch, 3/4 miles southwest but not continuously inhabited.

The Last Chance in the NE $\frac{1}{4}$  NE $\frac{1}{4}$  of sec. 8 is essentially a continuation of the workings in the adjoining sec. 9 Mine. It may be reached by taking the Roundy Ranch road which leads eastward off of highway no. 53 7.3 miles north of Milan (at U.S. no. 66 junction). Follow the ranch road northeastward for about 2 miles to base of cliff in sec. 8. Jeep trail up cliff or mesa face is no longer navigable and last  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile must be made on foot. Alternatively, continue driving north to sec. 4 and then ascend the mesa and drive back south into sec. 9, where a road to west leads to the Last Chance Mine.

The workings consist of open pits and trenches spread over an area of about 300' x 400' (see photos a through c). One south trending trench breaks through the mesa edge (photo a); the others are less well defined with much lower high walls, (photo b & c). The highest waste dump on the site is about 12' (photo d), and consists largely of unconsolidated overburden. Revegetation has been slow.

The deposit is an irregular mineralized zone in Todilto limestone (Hilpert, 1969). Maximum scintillometer readings were in 2000-2500 cps range. Secondary uranium mineralization is apparent in muck piles, waste piles, and on rock faces. Some ore was produced in the 1952-1956 period (Hilpert, 1969).

The State Mine Inspector's Office last registered the mine in June, 1956; the operator was listed as "Broaddus."

- References: (1) Hilpert, L., 1969, Uranium Resources of NW New Mexico, U.S.G.S., Prof. Paper 603, p. 59.  
(2) N.M. State Mine Inspector's Office, inactive uranium mine file.  
(3) Field notes, 3/20/80.

Addendum: Claim marker with cannister at the site shows claims were staked here October, 1977 by B. J. Bottoms.



Photo (a) Looking southward at Last Chance Mine, showing 10'-12' deep trench that breaks through mesa edge.



Photo (b) Looking north at cluster of small cuts several hundred feet in from the mesa edge shown in photo (a). This cut produced the highest scintillometer readings at the site-2500 cps.



Photo (c) Looking northwestward at extensively bulldozed area at western edge of mine site.



Photo (d) Looking eastward at waste dump on east edge of mine site; waste pile is about 12' at highest point.