

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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New Mexico Bureau of Mines and
Mineral Resources
Open-File Report 148

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.

Acknowledgments - The writer wishes to thank the following people for their valuable assistance in the field: Lars (Skip) Skotte, Richard Chamberlin, JoAnne Osburn, Mary Ann Anderson, and Cheryl Kyllonen.

A special thanks is extended to Mr. William Chenoweth of the U.S. Department of Energy, both for his time in the field as well as the claim maps and A.E.C. mine production records he provided. Mr. John Blagbrough provided helpful information about the Chuska district. The editorial assistance of Wyatt Brewster and Lars (Skip) Skotte is gratefully acknowledged.

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.

SIERRA COUNTY

Quad: Caballo 7½'

1. NM-391-1-1

Page 1

Red Rock (Red Rock Claim 1)

Quad: Chise 7½'

1. NM-342-4-1

Page 3

Trujillo Lease (Chise)

Quad: Cuchillo 7½'

1. NM-367-1-1

Page 4

Mitchell Price Prospect

Quad: Garfield 7½'

1. NM-391-4-1

Page 5

Sierra (Sierra Mining)

Quad: Jaralosa Mountain 7½'

1. NM-342-1-1

Page 8

Glory and Empire Claims

Quad: Monticello 7½'

1. NM-343-2-1

Page 11

Pitchblende Strike (Terry Prospect)

Date visited 5/21/80

Mine name(s) Glory and Empire Claims County Sierra

Section 13 & 14 Twنش. 10 S R. 8 W

Quadrangle sheet Jaralosa Mountain 7½'

Mining district Iron Mountain

Elevation 7,500'

Nearest city and/or dwellings Double Arrow Ranch, 3½ miles southwest, Mr. Pat Garrett, Manager.

The claims are in section 13 primarily, but extend into section 14. The workings and claim markers found during this investigation lay in the NW¼ section 13. The access road crosses private land at several points and permission to travel it and key to locked gate must be obtained from Mr. or Mrs. Pat Garrett at the Double Arrow ranch which is located 3 miles north of Winston on the left side of the highway. (For correspondence their address is Winston, N.M. 87943).

One of the Empire claim markers was found in the NW¼ sec. 13, just 50' north of the road. It was the Empire #42, dated April, 1969; no nearby workings noted. A preliminary reconnaissance report in RME-160 (1970) stated that the Glory prospect lay immediately south of the Empire claims, so a southward traverse was made which led to the discovery of another claim marker. This one much more recent named the WRB #44, dated April 1979 (see photo a). Again, no nearby workings noted. A southward and westward traverse was continued, leading into the E½ of sec. 14 and the east-west road shown in photo (b) was found, with no workings nearby. The road continues westward to the Invincible Mine and other copper prospects in section 14. RME-160 (1970) also stated a 5' x 10' prospect pit, 3' deep was dug on the Glory claim in a silicified siltstone member of the Abo fm. A grayish siltstone member was noted in several localities, but no prospect pit was found.

The Empire Claims are discussed in DAO-4-TM-4 (Boyd, 1957). The claims were examined in late 1955, early 1956, and some trenching and bulldozing had been done at that time. Mineralization was listed as uranophane and beta-uranophane, plus a black uranium mineral, probably uraninite, which is associated with chalcocite. No claim markers were found that dated back to the initial discovery period of 1955-56.

The State Mine Inspector's Office records show a Glory prospect (Cu and U₃O₈) in section 12, 13 and 4? registered in January, 1958 by the Millite Mining and Development Corporation. An Empire Mine in sec. 13 was registered in June, 1955 as a uranium and copper property by R. R. Benedict Exploration.

A very small amount of uranium was produced from this property according to William Chenoweth (personal communication) who has informed us that production statistics are being made available in the form of U.S. Dept. of Energy Ore Production Reports-U.S. Government Contracts, 1948-1970.

- References: (1) U.S. AEC RME-160, 1970, Preliminary Reconnaissance for Uranium in New Mexico, 1950-1958; GJO/AEC; p. 178.
(2) Boyd, Fred S., Jr., 1957, Uranium Occurrences on the Empire Claims, Iron Mountain Mining District, Sierra Co., New Mex.; U.S. AEC, DAO-4-TM-4 (Raw Materials Office).

- (3) State Mine Inspector's Office, inactive uranium mine file.
- (4) Field notes, 5/21/80.



Photo (a) Looking northwestward on old Empire claim; 4" x 4" post at center marks a recent location by D. E. Schneider, called the WRB #44. The WRB #40 was found a short distance to north.



Photo (b) Looking west at remains of old prospecting road immediately south of old Empire claims, possibly on Glory claim.