

# **HISTORIC PRESERVATION IN THE CERRILLOS MINING DISTRICT**

**By the New Mexico Abandoned  
Mine Land Program (AML)**

**John A. Kretzmann and Lloyd A. Moiola**



Cerrillos Hills and Town

# Cerrillos Mining District History

- **Pueblo Indians mined Turquoise beginning A.D. 700-900 and lead for pottery glazes by 1300**
- **Spanish Colonial mining from 1598 to 1821**
- **Mexican Period mines operated from 1821 to 1846**
- **American Territorial Period Mining Boom in 1880s**



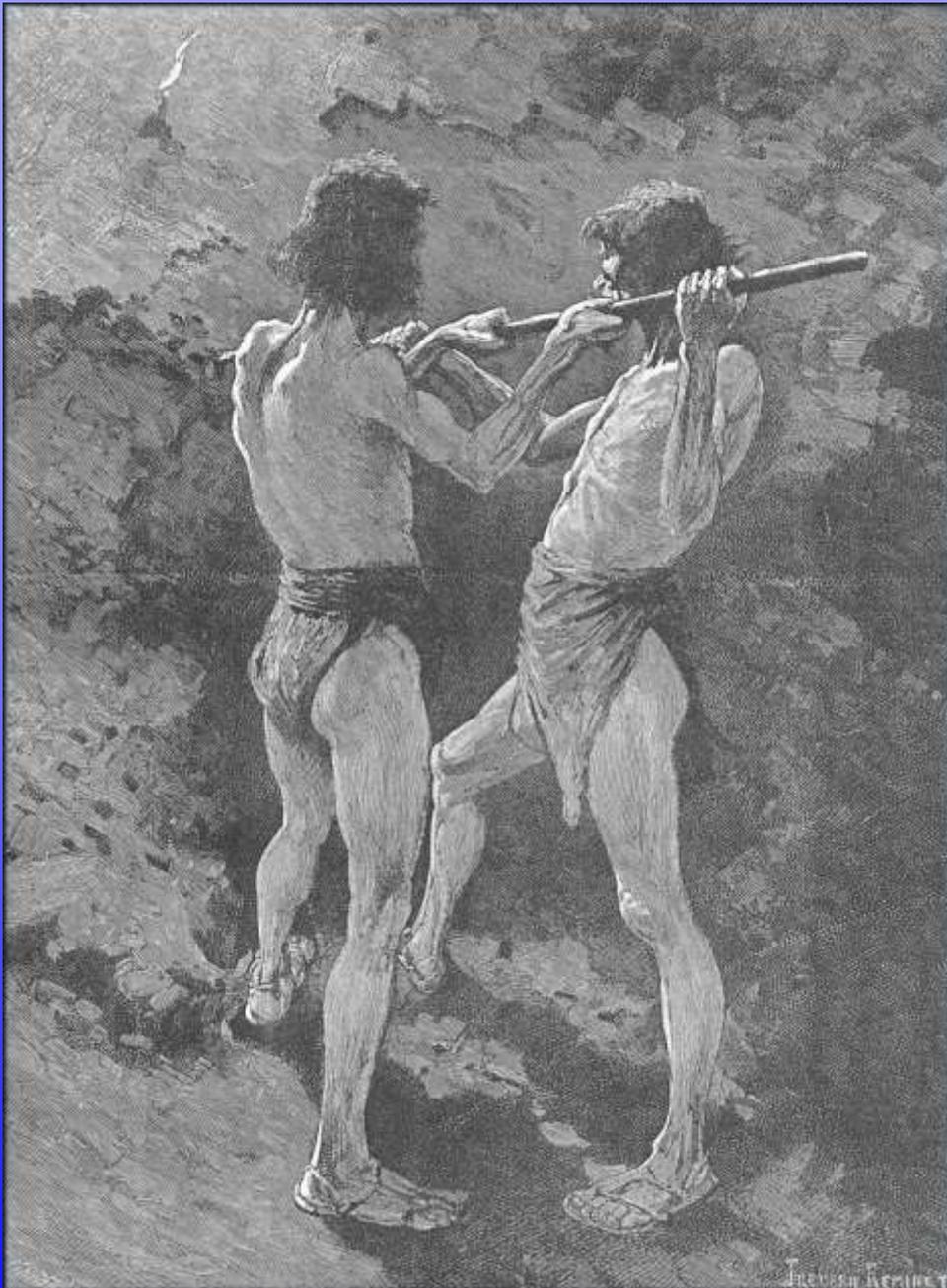
Cerrillos Turquoise



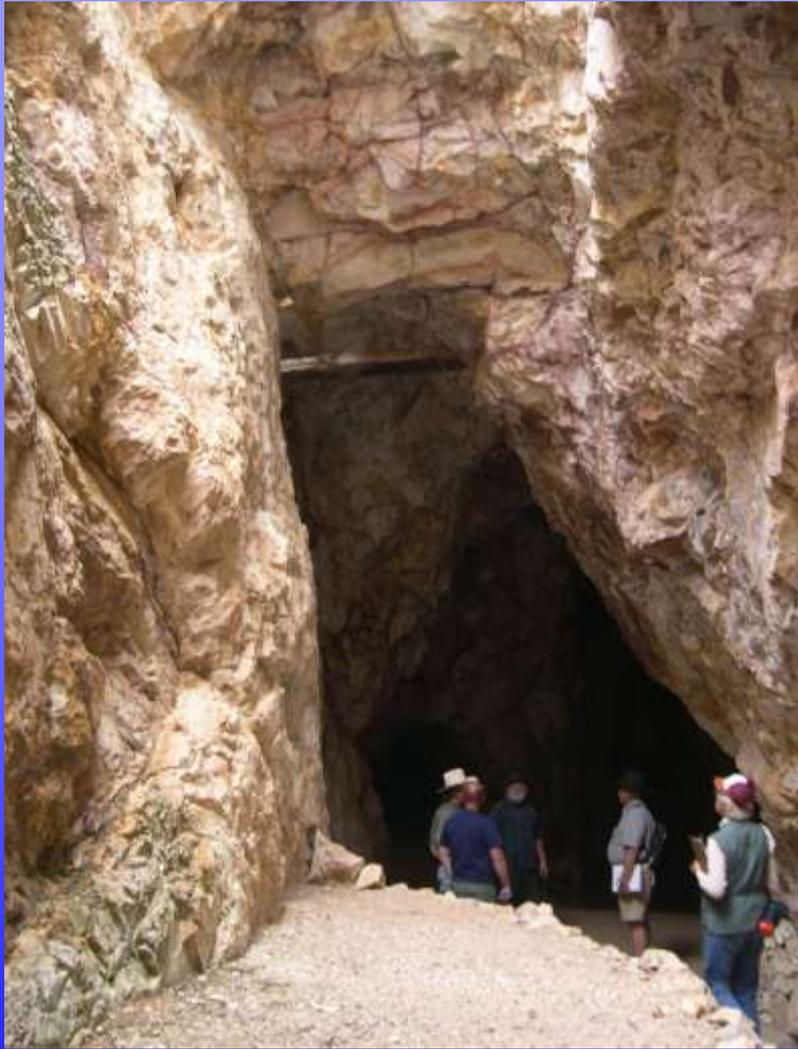


Prehistoric Turquoise Pit on Mt. Chalchihuitl

# Mt. Chalchihuitl Turquoise Mine



Remington  
Sketch of Native  
American miners



Tiffany Turquoise Mine



Castilian Mine,  
Turquoise Hill





**Bethsheba Mine in the Cerrillos Hills**



Mauls from  
Bethsheba  
Mine

# Spanish Colonial Mining

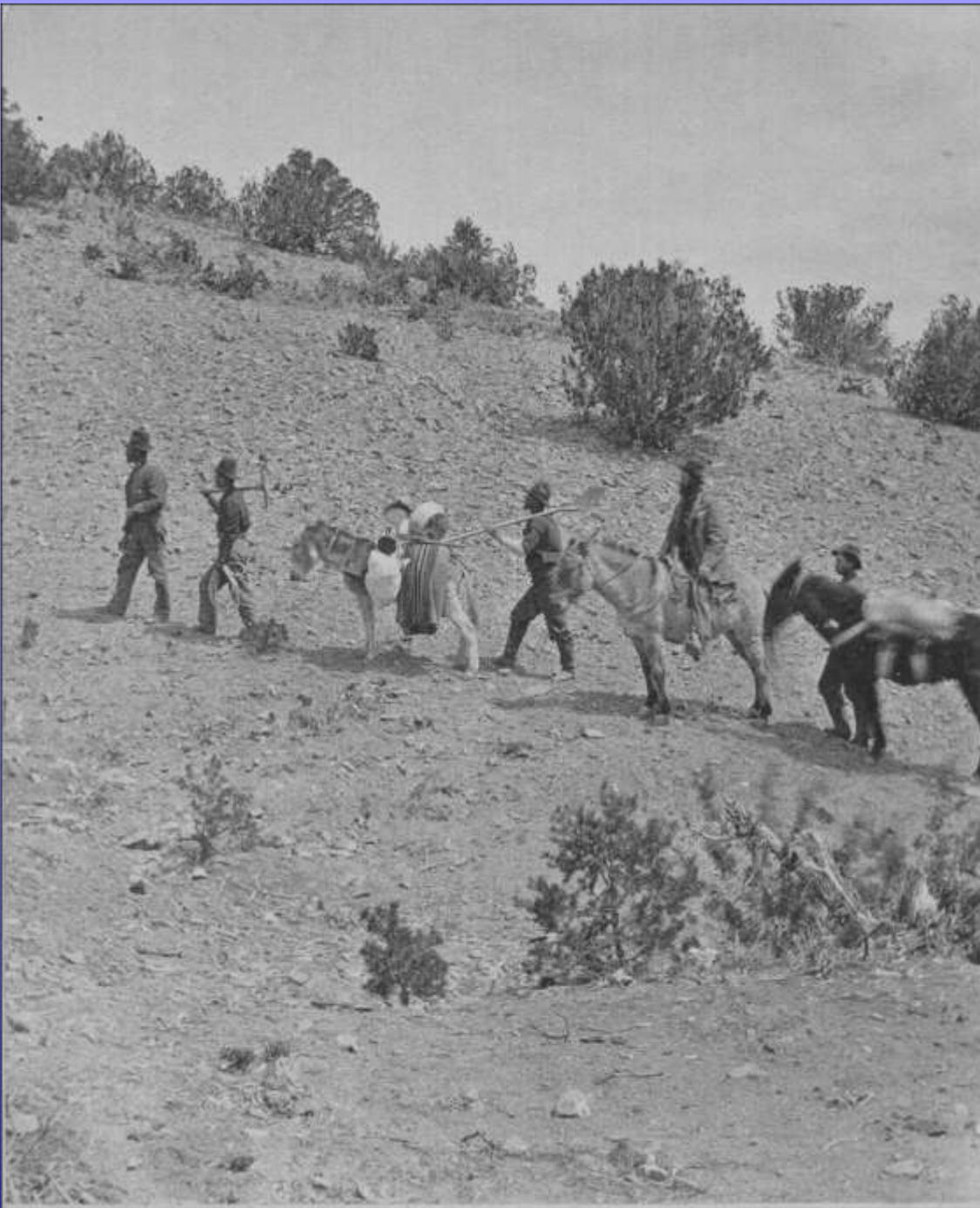
- **In 1581, the Rodriguez-Chamuscado Expedition identified Cerrillos silver-lead deposits**
- **By 1600, Spaniards are refining lead/silver ores**
- **Mina del Tiro and Bethsheba Mines are the most notable mines worked by the Spanish during the 1600s and 1700s**

# 1880s Mining Boom



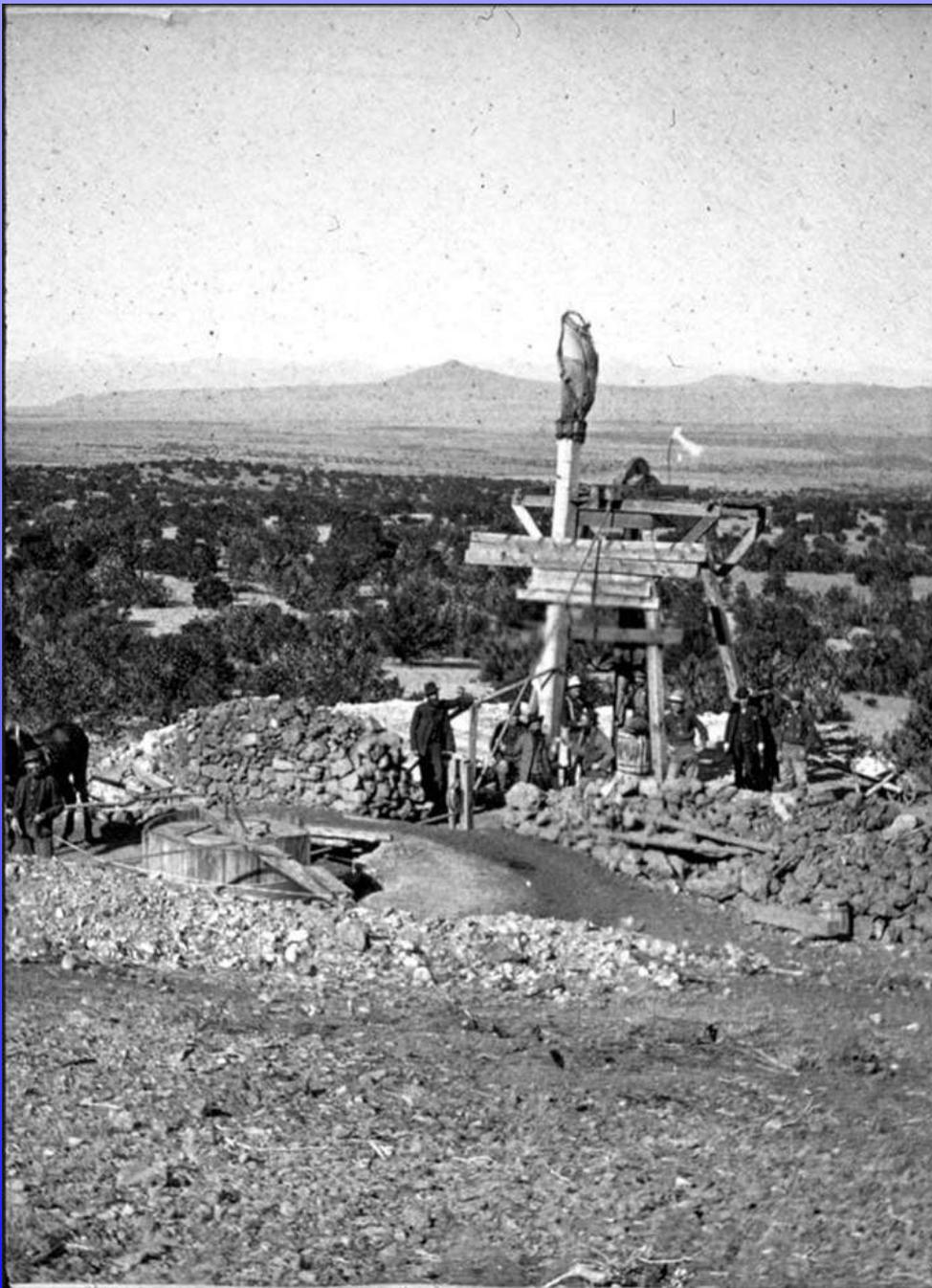
**Our Georgie Silver Mine, Cerrillos Hills, 1880**

(New Mexico Bureau Geology & Mineral Resources, Historic Photograph Collection)



## Miners in the Cerrillos Hills, 1880

(New Mexico Bureau  
Geology & Mineral  
Resources, Historic  
Photograph Collection)



## Capitol Mine in Cerrillos, 1880

(New Mexico Bureau Geology  
& Mineral Resources, Historic  
Photograph Collection)



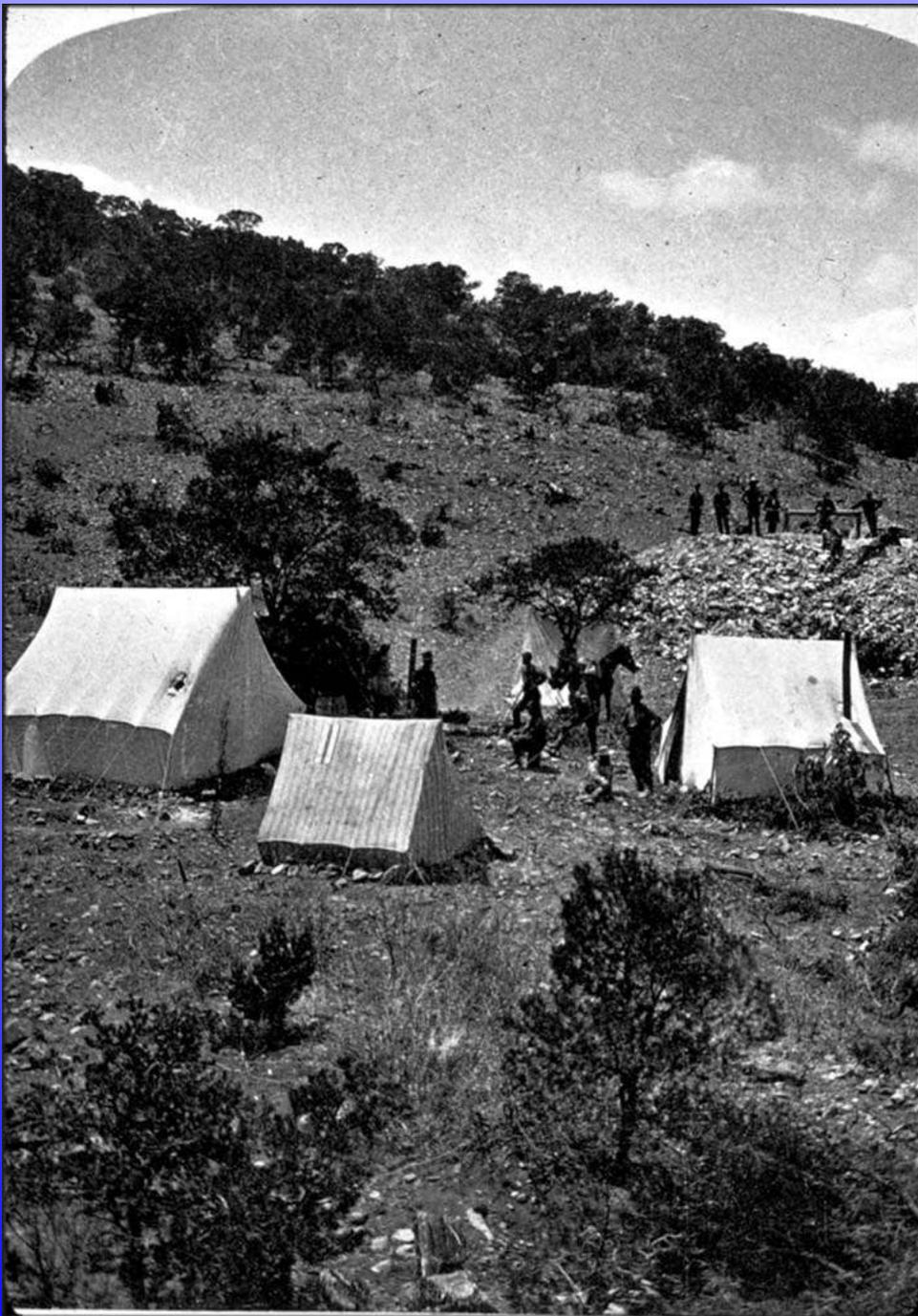
# Prospecting Cabin in the Cerrillos Hills, 1880

(New Mexico Bureau  
Geology & Mineral  
Resources, Historic  
Photograph Collection)



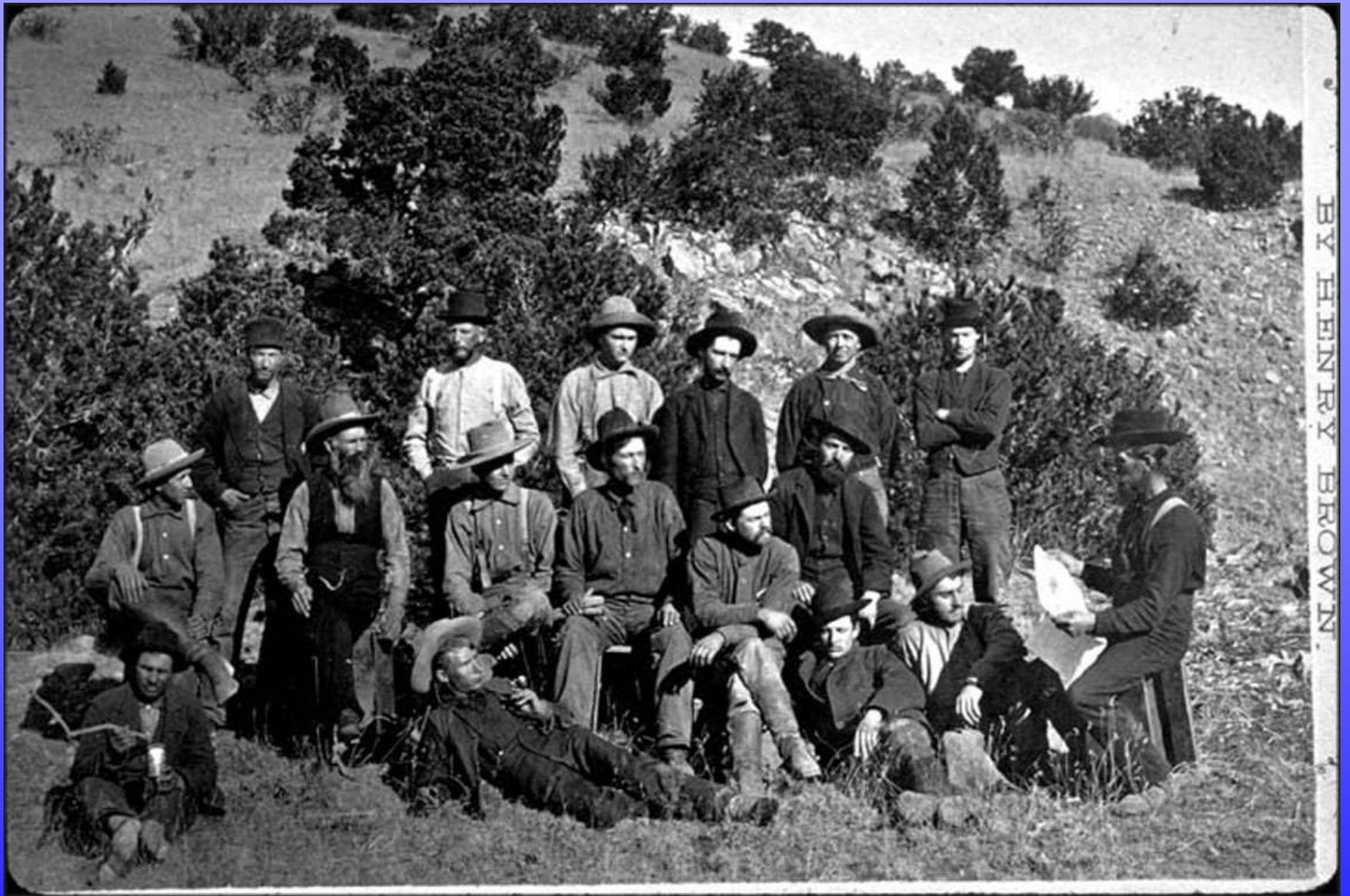
# Cerrillos Prospectors, 1880

(New Mexico Bureau  
Geology & Mineral  
Resources, Historic  
Photograph Collection)



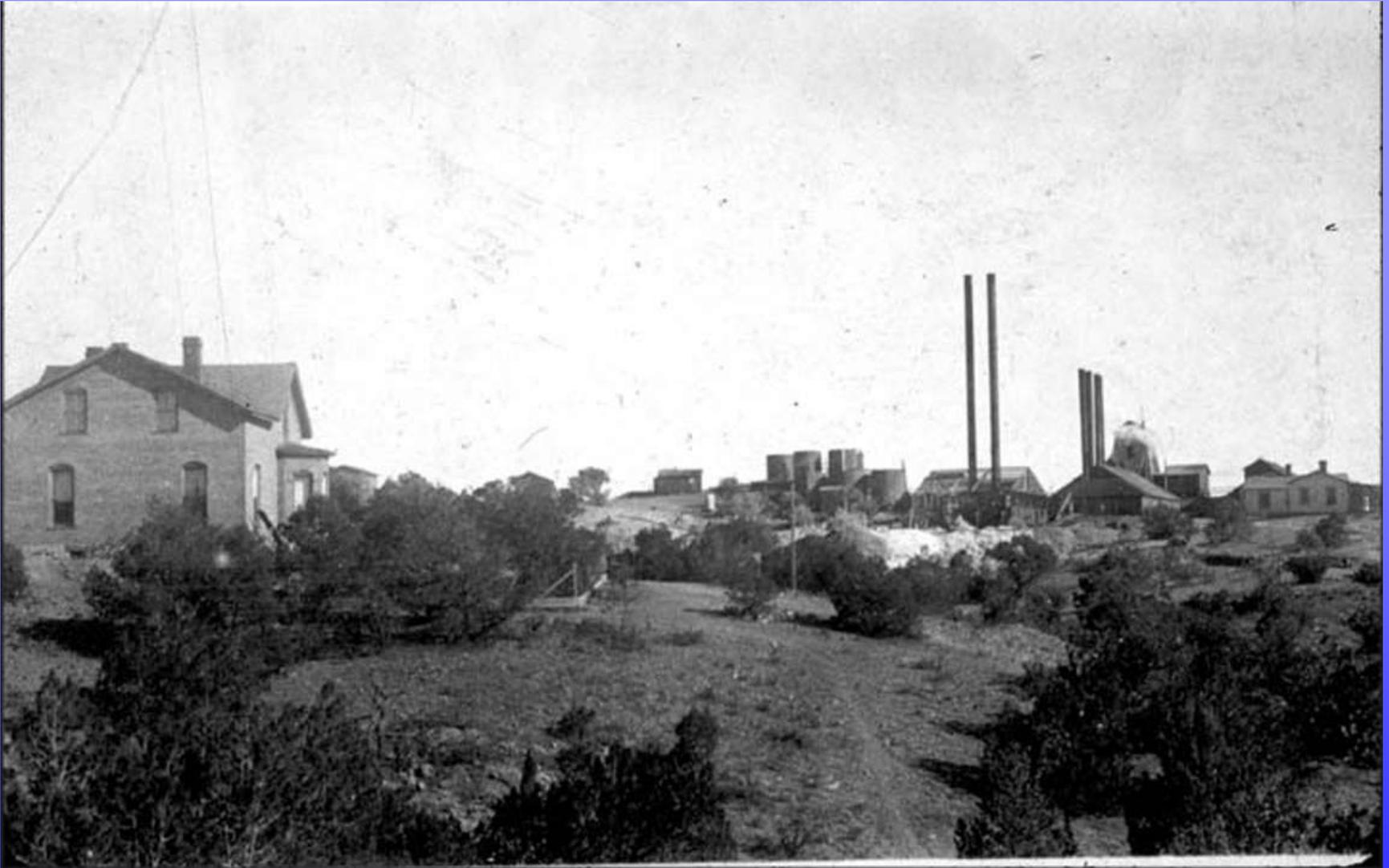
## Ruelina Camp and Shaft, 1880

(New Mexico Bureau Geology &  
Mineral Resources, Historic  
Photograph Collection)



## Cerrillos Miners, 1880

(New Mexico Bureau Geology & Mineral Resources, Historic Photograph Collection)

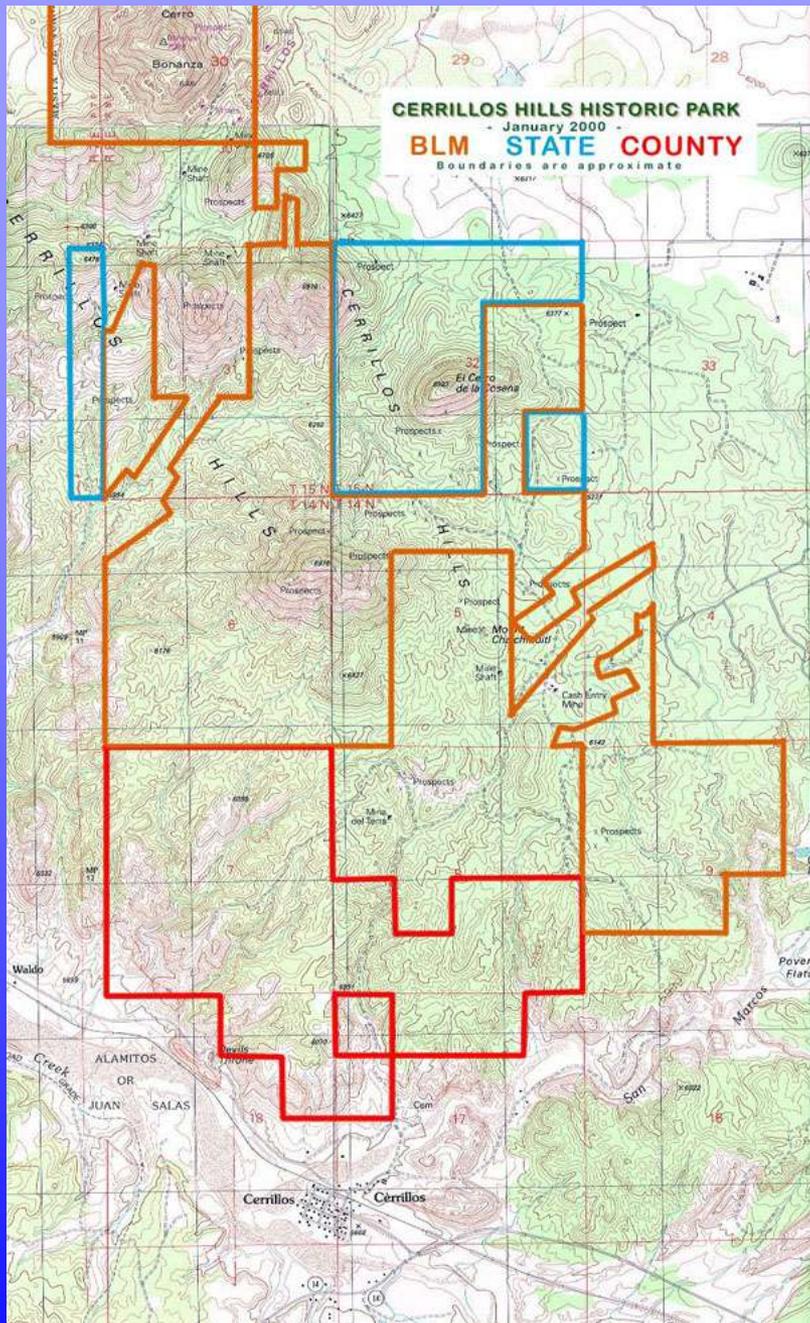


## Cash Entry Mine, Mill and Hotel, 1910

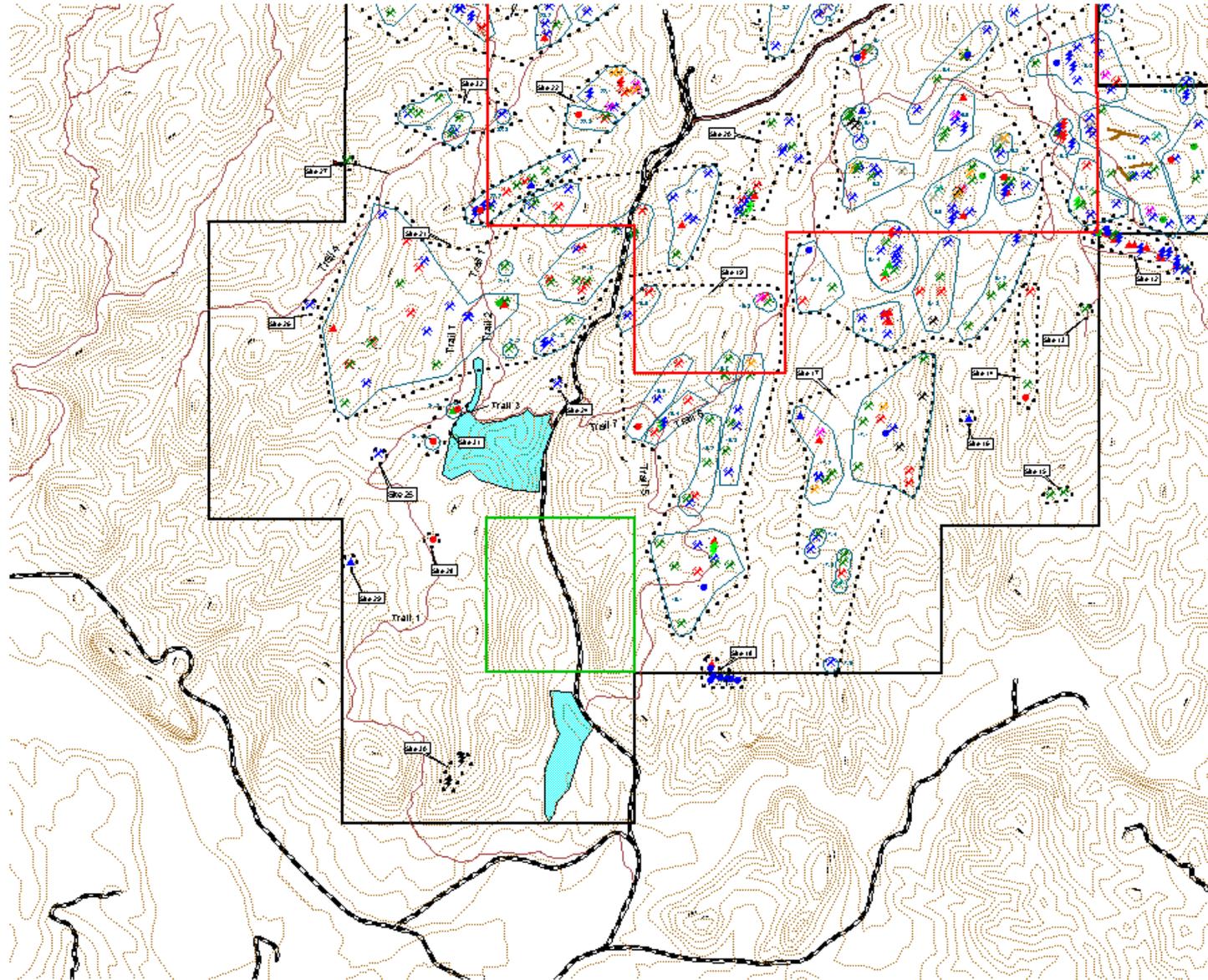
(New Mexico Bureau Geology & Mineral Resources, Historic Photograph Collection)

# Project Development

- **Voters approve open space bond in November 1998**
- **In 1999, Santa Fe County requests that AML address the mine hazards in proposed Park property.**
- **Santa Fe County completes purchase of Park property on January 28, 2000**



# Cerrillos Hills Historic Park Map





AML Bat Habitat Survey in 2001

# Agencies and Groups Consulted during Project Development

- **Cerrillos Hills Park Coalition**
- **Santa Fe County**
- **Tribes**
- **State Historic Preservation Division**
- **Bureau of Land Management**
- **Private Land Owners**
- **National Park Service and Sierra Club**



Shaft in the Cerrillos Hills Historic Park



Shaft near Trails on West Side of Park



Shaft in the Cerrillos Hills Historic Park



Shaft in the Cerrillos Hills Historic Park



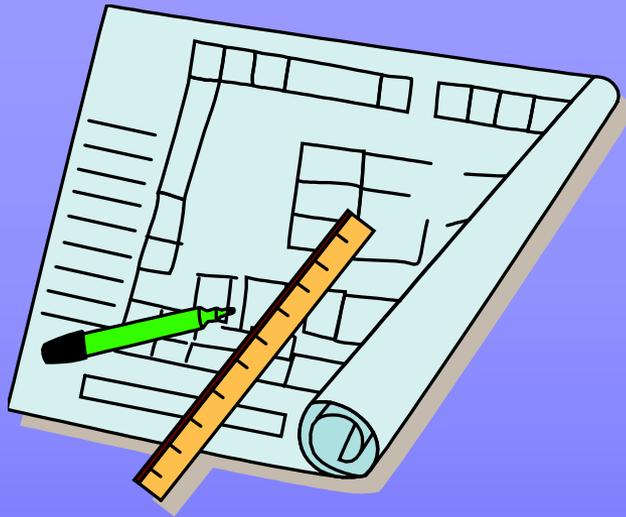
Shaft near Trail slated for Bat Cupola



# Project Priorities



- **Preservation of historic and prehistoric sites and landscape features**
- **Continued recreational uses of area**
  - **Trail system**
- **Safeguarding of hazardous mine openings for public safety**
- **Visitor viewing into selected mine openings**



# Project Priorities

- **Preservation of bat habitat in mine workings**
- **Interpretive signage**
- **Minimization of surface disturbance**
- **Reclamation of areas disturbed by construction**
- **Durable, vandal resistant and low maintenance closures**



# Small Equipment



Wire Mesh Fence at Trench Highwall

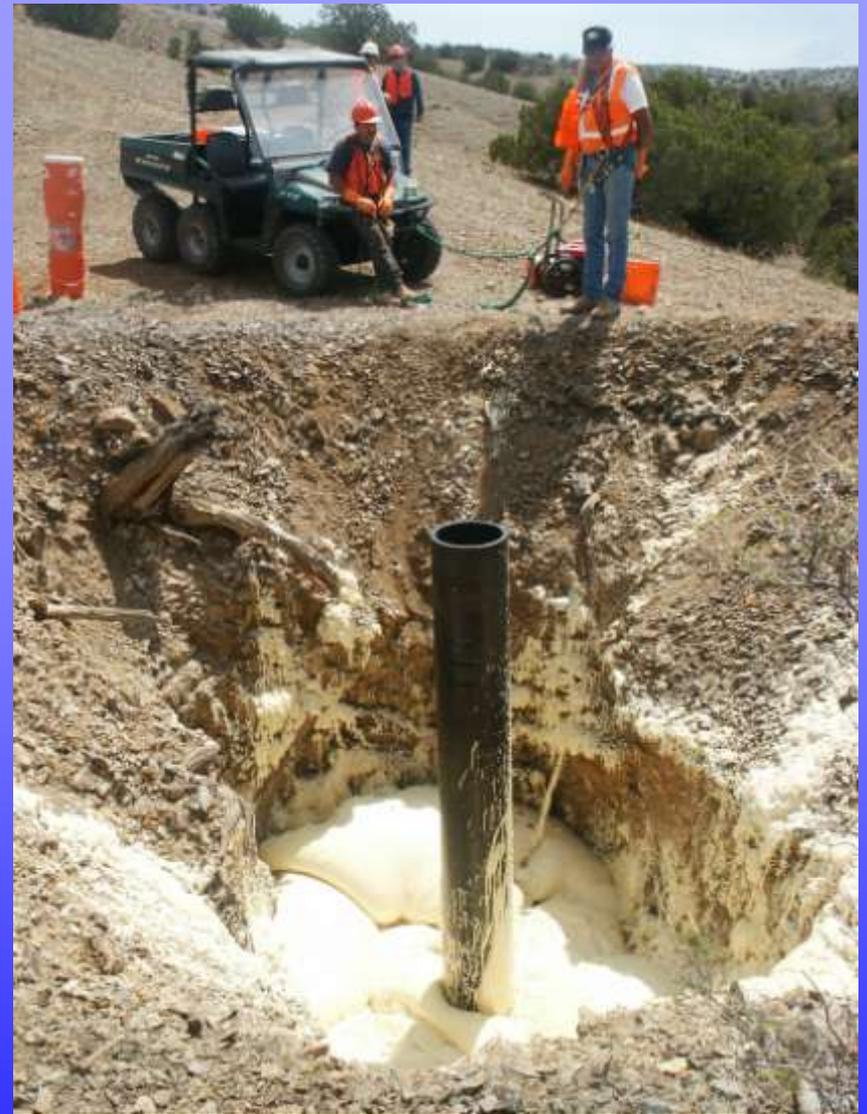


Before  
construction



Completed installation

# Metal Picket Fence around Shallow Shaft



Placing foam and drain pipe in shaft opening  
**Polyurethane Foam Plugs at Shafts**



## Completed PUF Closures

With depressed fill, grate inlet to drain pipe  
and minimally disturbed mine waste pile



Mesh placed over rock anchors  
drilled into bedrock at bridge site

**Installation of High-strength Wire Mesh**



# Mesh and Viewing Platform Installations





# Mesh and Pedestrian Bridge Installation





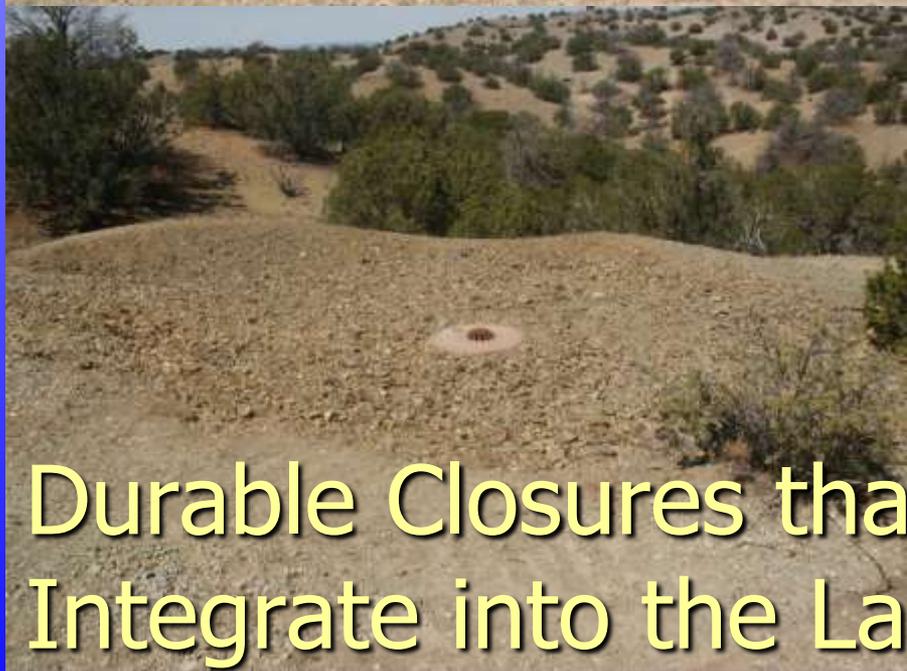
Concrete Collar with Wire Mesh  
At Mina del Tiro



Installing Structural Tubes for Bat Cupolas



Completed Bat Cupolas



Durable Closures that Integrate into the Landscape

Over the last thousand years a wide variety of minerals have been taken from the Cerrillos Hills, but almost all of the diggings visible today date from the great boom of 1879 - 1884.

## The Cerrillos Mining Boom 1879-1884

In 1879 Stephen S. Ekins, who had in the same year acquired control of the 100-square mile Little Mine Grant south of the Cerrillos Hills, hired Frank Dismick and Robert Hart to develop "his" Cerrillos properties, which had been the domain of the Delgado and Pina families.



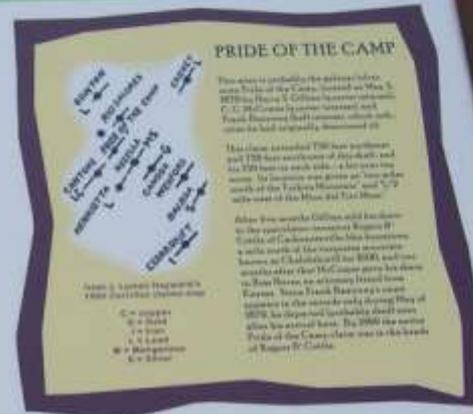
S. S. EKINS

Dismick and Hart recruited hundreds of miners from Leadville and other Colorado camps, and by the summer of 1879 over 1,000 Coloradans were digging on nearly 1,200 claims in the Cerrillos Hills for silver and gold, lead and copper, iron and manganese. Cerrillos turquoise, which would become fashionable a decade later, was at this time of interest only to the few who believed it was associated with gold.

This frenzy fed upon itself, and shares in Cerrillos mines were bought and sold, and widely promoted in the big cities of the East.

The boom died on January 1, 1884 because the New Mexico Territorial legislature changed the rules.

Rather than allowing the full calendar year to develop the claim by digging 30 feet of shaft or tunnel, the labor now had to be done within 90 days of filing the claim. This was the death knell of speculation, since the claim now had to be worked or it could be lost. Only producing mines in the Cerrillos Hills continued in operation beyond this date.



# CERRILLOS HILLS HISTORIC PARK

This interpretive display is sponsored by the Cerrillos Turquoise Mining Museum



# Interpretive Sign



**Welcome to the Santa Fe County CERRILLOS HILLS HISTORIC PARK**  
... where you will experience the tri-cultural story of New Mexico, a history of the Indians, the Spanish, and the Anglos each altering this landscape in their efforts to obtain turquoise, lead, silver, and more.

**Indians mined nearby deposits of turquoise since at least A.D. 900. Most of the turquoise uncovered at area archaeological sites as well as some discovered in Chaco Canyon probably came from the Cerrillos Hills. For almost 400 years starting in the early 1300s, the people from large pueblos such as San Marcos came to these hills for galena, a lead ore they used for the distinctive black glaze decorations on their pots. Cerrillos galena became the preferred glaze for potters throughout the Rio Grande Valley.**



**The Spanish, too, valued galena, but more for its silver content. Their first reference to the Cerrillos Hills dates from the Entrada of 1381, when two miner-soldiers claimed to have discovered 11 silver veins here. Although stories were told about rich cities of gold in El Norte, and silver, the early Spaniards found no evidence in the pueblos that either of those metals were mined. The oldest well-documented mine claim in New Mexico (there were older records, but they were destroyed in the uprising of 1680) is the 1709 claim for the nearby Santa Rosa galena-silver mine.**

**Most of the 4,000 holes, pits, and shafts visible in the Hills today are the remains of the Mining Boom of 1879-1884, when Anglos living in the western territories, speculators from the East, and recent European immigrants flocked to the Hills, digging for riches they hoped would rival the California and Colorado gold strikes.**

**To the people of Santa Fe County, who approved the 1994 bond that led to purchase these 1116 acres thank you!**

**After the N.M. Mining and Minerals Division, Abandoned Mine Land Bureau, devoted two years to surveying the property and securing the deepest mine shafts, the Cerrillos Hills Historic Park was opened to the public in the spring of 2003.**

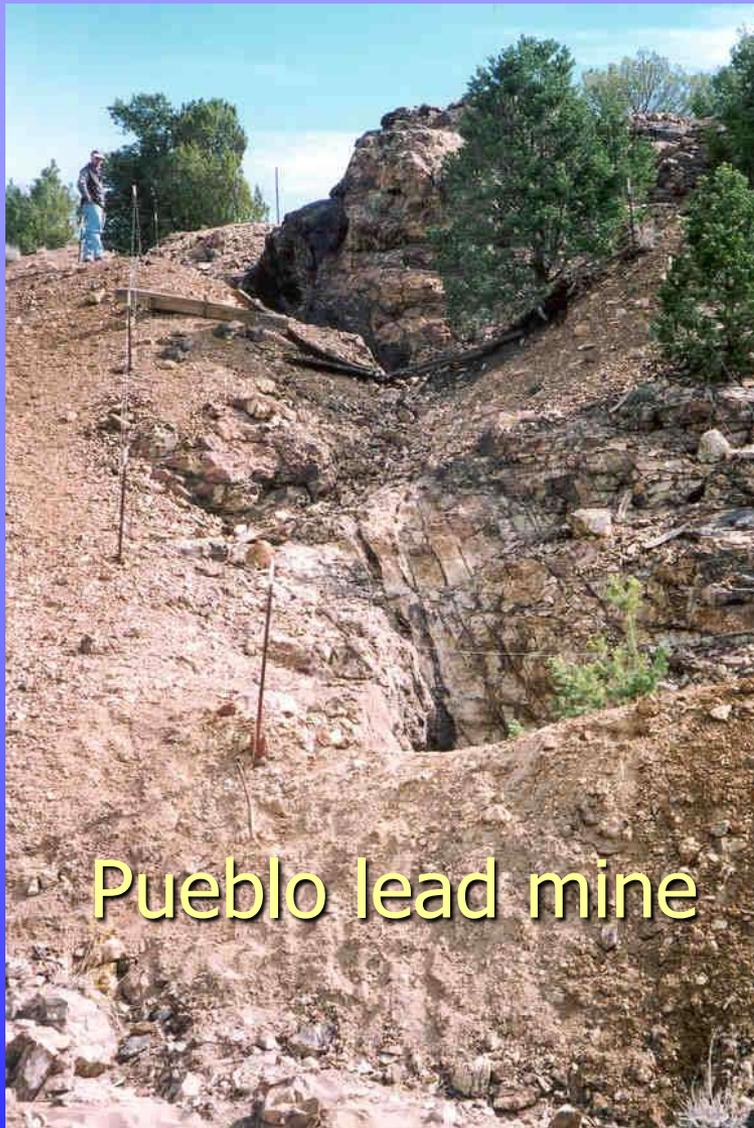


**CERRILLOS HILLS HISTORIC PARK**

This interpretive display is sponsored by: The Cerrillos Turquoise Mining Museum



Signs at Park Entrance



Pueblo lead mine



Shallow 1880s  
prospect pit

# Prehistoric and Historic Preservation





# Culturally and Ecologically Sensitive Mine Closures