

Mines and minerals along New Mexico's old Route 66

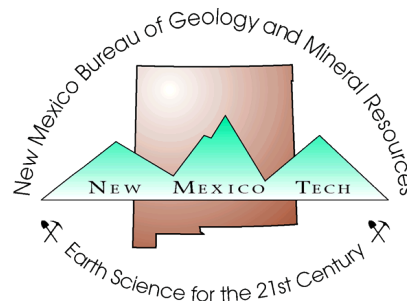
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The annual [New Mexico Mineral Symposium](#) provides a forum for both professionals and amateurs interested in mineralogy. The meeting allows all to share their cumulative knowledge of mineral occurrences and provides stimulus for mineralogical studies and new mineral discoveries. In addition, the informal atmosphere encourages intimate discussions among all interested in mineralogy and associated fields.

The symposium is organized each year by the [Mineral Museum](#) at the [New Mexico Bureau of Geology & Mineral Resources](#).



Abstracts from all prior symposiums are also available: <https://geoinfo.nmt.edu/museum/minsymp/abstracts>

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MINES & MINERALS ALONG NEW MEXICO'S OLD ROUTE 66

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The Lincoln Highway, dedicated in 1913, was the first road to connect the East Coast, starting in Times Square in NYC, to the West Coast in Lincoln Park, San Francisco. It stretched across 13 states but was no more than a well-traveled trail. But the first paved road, completed in 1938, connected the Midwest, with its start in downtown Chicago, to the West Coast in Los Angeles. Known by many names, including Main Street America, the Mother Road and the Will Rogers Highway, it is probably best known as Route 66.

The original Route 66, today, has been overtaken by state and interstate highways but there are some sections still navigable in New Mexico and Arizona. We will follow old Route 66 across northern New Mexico, much of which underlies interstates 40 and 25 in the eastern, central and western portions of the route. Route 66 in the northwestern part of New Mexico strays from I-40 where sections of the original route are still visible. This presentation will deal with what remains of Route 66 across northern New Mexico but will also note mining districts and some mineral commodities it connected with or crossed.



Topaz, ASDM#7536, Rock Hill Quarry, Valencia County, New Mexico, K. Don photo.



Andersonite, ASDM#3994, Valencia County, New Mexico, K. Don photo.

This presenter arbitrarily divided the area traversed into three sections – the eastern, the central surrounding Albuquerque and the western across Cibola and McKinley counties.

Metal deposits were discovered in the 1950's in the eastern districts of Logan and San Jon. No production was reported but the deposits yielded some copper (Cu), silver (Ag) and gold (Au). Also in the eastern section, uranium (U) was discovered in the district surrounding Tucumcari.

The majority of the mining districts in the central portion of the target area surrounding Albuquerque were metal deposits with some U in the Hagan Basin and La Bajada and industrial minerals adjacent east and west of Albuquerque. Of note are occurrences of Au in the New and Old Placers and turquoise from the Cerrillos District. Other mineral occurrences include Cu, Ag, lead (Pb) and zinc (Zn).

The western section in Cibola and McKinley counties was mainly mined for U and coal in the Laguna, Ambrosia Lake and Church Rock-Crownpoint sub districts. Also in the western portion, mining activity in the Zuni Mountains in Cibola County produced metals from the early- to mid-1900's. Ore minerals included those for Cu, Au, Ag, fluorine (F) and Pb.

Minerals from the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum's micro-mount collections were pulled and photographed for this presentation. Other photos were taken by the presenter in the Mineral Museum while still others were gleaned from MinDat.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Zippeite, ASDM#9603, Valencia County, New Mexico, K. Don photo.