

Mining in the New County

Gold and silver fever was running rampant throughout California, Nevada, and most of the west in the 1860s. Fortunes were being made in Virginia City, Bodie, Aurora, and other nearby mining camps.

Small prospects were being worked in a number of spots in the new county. Chrysopolis, San Carlos, Bend City, and Kearsarge were just a few of the small towns that sprang up with high hopes of striking it rich.

In 1865, Pablo Flores came across a rich vein of silver, high up in the Inyo Mountains near the summit of Buena Vista Peak. The claim was eventually taken over by larger investors and grew into Cerro Gordo, the most productive silver mine in California.

Three smelters were built to refine the ore. The silver was hauled to Los Angeles 275 miles away and played a huge part in the growth of this City during the end of the 19th century. In February 1872 the Los Angeles News wrote "To this city, Cerro Gordo trade is invaluable. What now is, is mainly due to it. It is the silver cord that binds our present existence. Should it be unfortunately severed, we would inevitably collapse."

