

JUN
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NO. 7

ROCHESTER



Julia's Unequivical Nevada Klampouts

1	1980	Charter	Star City-Unionville
2	1981		Manhattan
3	1982		Kennedy
4	1983		Pinegrove
5	1984		Leadville
6	1985		Berlin
7	1986		Rochester

Bibliography

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Rochester	Hugh A. Shamberger
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Nevada Ghost Towns and Mining Camps	Stanley Paher
Ghost Towns of Nevada	Donald C. Miller
All photographs courtesy	Stanley Paher

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ROCHESTER

EARLY HISTORY

The Rochester District was discovered and named in the 1860's by prospectors from Rochester, New York. They worked Rochester Canyon and sank shafts and inclines and made open cuts. Upon reaching a depth of approximately eighty feet the miners were driven from these workings by a strong flow of water from an ungerground channel, which they had tapped, leaving pumps in the shaft and barely escaping with their lives. From Rochester Canyon the miners went to the southeast and established the Relief District.

About 1881 gold was found in the gravel at the mouth of American Canyon. These placers were worked until 1895, first by the americans, who reportedly took out \$1,000,000, and later by the chinese who formed a considerable settlement in American Canyon and mined the gravel with great skill. It was estimated that the chinese took out as much as \$10,000,000.

In 1906 Hutch Stevens came to Nevada from Cripple Creek, Colorado. He had heard about the chinese placer operations in American Canyon, and came to search for the source of the placer gold. He set up camp in American Canyon, and went up on top of the hill (later named Nenzel Hill) and located four claims in 1907 along the top of the hill, these claims were the Golden Gate, Crown Point, Ormus and one other. He continued to prospect for another two years without any success.

In the fall of 1909 Hutch Stevens failed to meet the stage that supplied him with his provisions. A search party was started. Heavy snows set in, and although they hunted a long time, they could not find him. About April of 1910 his body was discovered in American Canyon.

In the spring of 1911 Joseph Nenzel and his family moved to Limerick Canyon. Joseph's wife was the niece of Hutch Stevens, who had died in American Canyon. Joseph continued to work Hutch Stevens's claims. On June 28, 1912 Joseph found a rich silver float on the Crown Point claim. This led to the uncovering of valuable silver deposits on what is now known as Nenzel Hill, at the head of Rochester Canyon.

Joseph Nenzel started working his claim. Without assistance he dug a tunnel into Nenzel Hill, and sacked his ore. After removing the ore, he built a trail down the mountain side into Rochester Canyon. Constructing a sled out of the Junipers which grew upon the side of the mountain, Nenzel dragged his ore down the steep slope of the mountain to a point in Rochester Canyon where it was placed on wagons and hauled to the railroad 12 miles away.

The first car of ore shipped by Nenzel gave returns of \$72.90 a ton.

TOWNS

Between the later part of 1912 through the spring of 1917 six townsites had been plotted and recorded. These were Rochester, East Rochester, Central Rochester, Rochester Heights, Panama and Packard.

Rochester townsite was near the lower end of Rochester Canyon, about two miles from the foot of Nenzel Hill. The town consisted of one street running parallel to the canyon, which was named Main Street. There were five cross

streets, dividing the town into ten blocks. The town was later referred to as Lower Rochester.

The second townsite was East Rochester. It was situated near the base of Nenzel Hill about two miles up the canyon from Rochester.

There were three streets running in an east-west direction, the center one being Main Street. Another street took off from Main Street, running in a southeasterly direction along the hillside.

During 1913 East Rochester became the main town in the district, and was referred to as Rochester, the lower town then being called Lower Rochester.

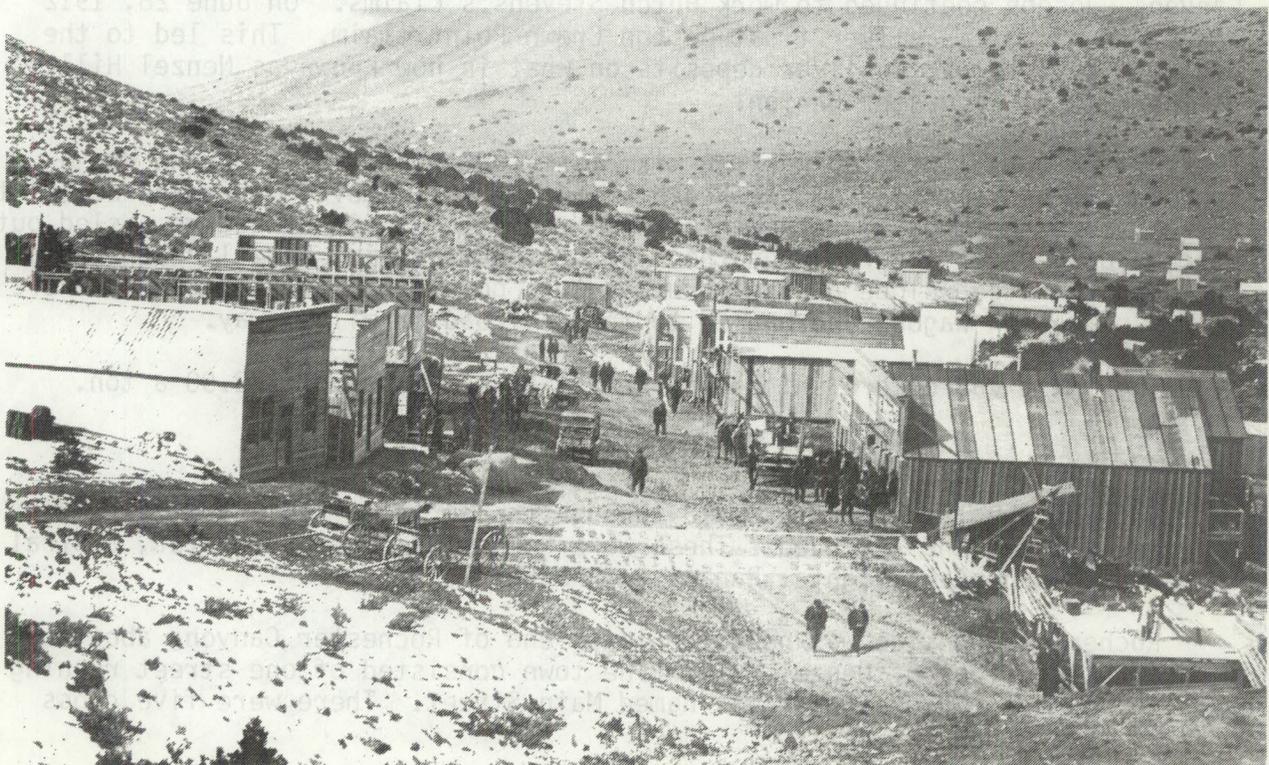
The third townsite was Central Rochester which came into being shortly after the first of the year in 1913. It was situated about halfway between Rochester and East Rochester. Soon after it was recorded it disappeared.

The fourth townsite was Rochester Heights. The townsite was about 1,000 feet wide and over 2,100 feet long and ran along the hillside above East Rochester. Rochester Heights was earlier known as squatters town. Not much is known of this town.

The fifth townsite was Panama. The building of the high line road from near the top of Nenzel Hill to Limerick Canyon for the hauling of ore was the reason for the location of this townsite. Panama lasted only a few months. Ore hauling over this road was discontinued in favor of hauling to the railhead, then at (Lower) Rochester.

The sixth townsite was Packard. In the spring of 1915, the Nevada Packard Mines Company built housing for their employees. The buildings were on the Arkon Mining Claim, about one-half mile northwest of the mill.

In the early days of the district mail, mail was delivered to (Lower) Rochester, and if there was anyone passing through they would pick up the mail for Central Rochester, East Rochester and Packard.





The first Post Office was established in Benny Hazelstene's general store in (Lower) Rochester, and later moved to the National Mercantile Company building. On February 20, 1913 E. Baker was appointed Postmaster. He announced that he would establish the post office in (Lower) Rochester, this annoyed the citizens in Rochester Heights and East Rochester for they wanted the post office in their towns.

In April 1913 a post office inspector paid a visit to Mr. Watters, then acting as provisional postmaster, who was expected to make recommendations for a post office at East Rochester.

At the same time the people of (Lower) Rochester had been assured that their post office would not be moved. The residents were not alarmed when a notice appeared in the post office section of Watter's store informing the public that the post office department had authorized the moving of the office across and up the street.

The residents assumed Watters was moving to a vacant building next to the Palace Hotel in (Lower) Rochester which was across and up the street. The people got a surprise one Monday morning when they found that Watters had moved across the street and two miles up the street to East Rochester. Since the official name of the post office was Rochester, when it moved up the canyon, East Rochester then became generally known as Rochester. As a result of the name change the people in Rochester had to settle for a new name, Lower Rochester. This probably happened sometime in mid 1913.

Approximate population for the district between 1913-1914 was about 2,200. It was stated that in 1917 Rochester Canyon had a railroad, electric power from Lake Lahontan, two telephone companies at one period, a newspaper, two U.S. Post Offices, three grammar schools, two baseball teams, a race track, a gun club, a minning stock exchange, a commercial club, a cemetery, a vigilante committee, 52 saloons in operation 24 hours a day, no churches, but three sunday schools.

As in other mining camps the camp had a red-light district, located just below the large waste dump made in driving the Friedman Tunnel.

MINING DISTRICTS

There were three mining districts in the Rochester District. They were the Nenzel Hill deposits, the Nevada Packard Mining Company property two miles south, and the Lincoln Hill area, close by (Lower) Rochester. The first two areas contained primarily silver ore, with small gold values. Lincoln Hill was both silver and gold, the main values being in gold.

NENZEL HILL

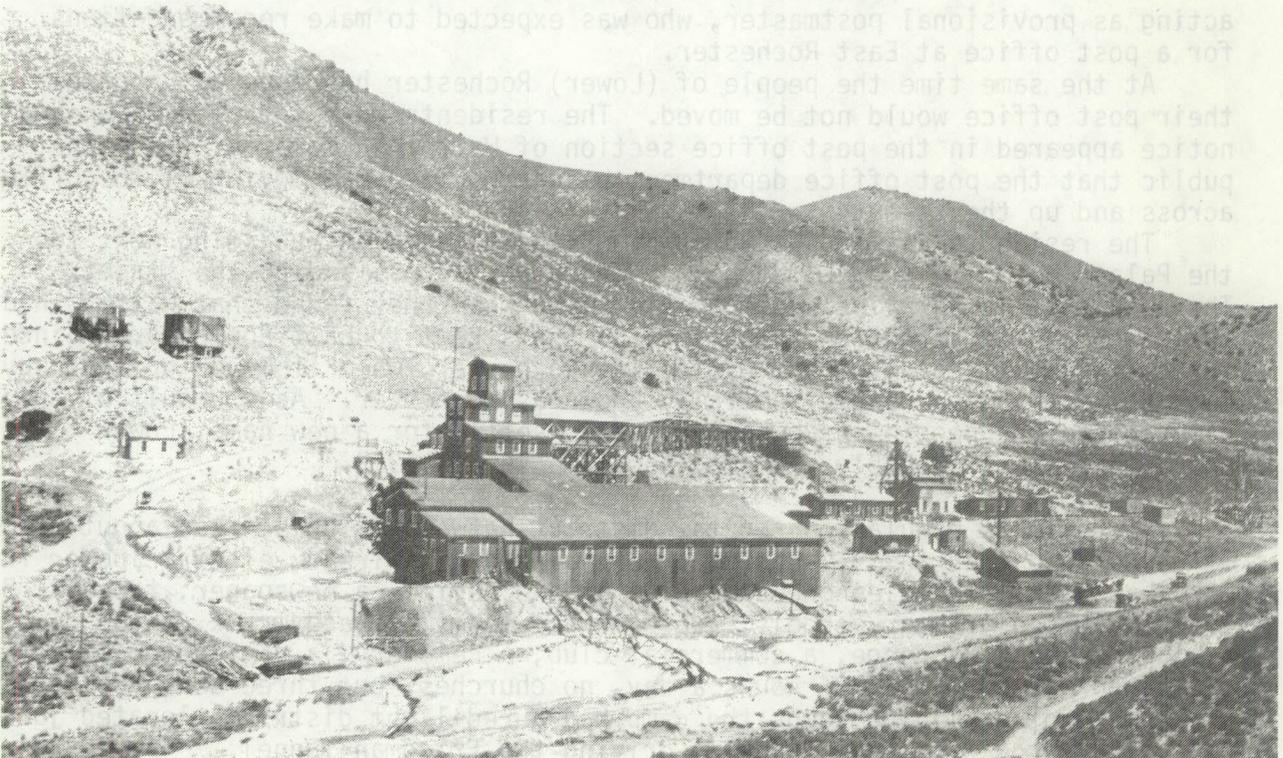
Nenzel Hill which produced the majority of the districts ore rises to an elevation of 7,300 feet. The veins, ten or more in number, varied from 100 to 3,700 feet in length.

Joseph Nenzel located six claims and a fraction in June of 1911. These were Crown Point numbers 1,2,3,4 and 5 claims and the Crown Hills Claim and the Crown Point Fraction.

During the summer of 1912 other prospectors began locating claims on Nenzel Hill. Frank Schick located the Rochester group of five claims. His claims extended to the bottom of the hill and later included Rochester Heights townsite. Frank Schick and Olsen located the Weaver group south of Crown Hills claim. The Crown Point Extension Claim, adjoining Crown Point Number 1 was located by Frank Schick and William Moynagh, H.C. Hardesty located the Sunflower group, consisting of the Sunflower, Sunflower No. 2 and Little Sunflower Nos. 1 and 2.

On December 14, 1912, Nenzel incorporated the Rochester Mines Company. At the time of incorporation Joseph Nenzel relinquished to the company the Crown Point No. 1, the Crown Hills claims, and the Wedge fraction. Nenzel controlled the Rochester Mines Company for nearly two years when in November 1914 L.A. Friedman gained control.

Prior to Louis A. Friedman gaining control a 1,400 foot three-rail surface tramway had been started, to bring ore down from the mine to East Rochester. From here the ore would be shipped to Lower Rochester where it would be processed in the company's mill now under construction.



When Friedman gained control things began to happen rapidly. The Three-rail surface tramway was completed in January 1915. The 120-ton mill below (Lower) Rochester was completed in February 1915. The mill had 10 stamps, each weighing 1,650 pounds. Total cost of the mill was \$160,000. The mill was able to process 150 tons a day.

In order to reduce shipping costs of the ore from the mine to the mill (and to get away from dependency on the unreliable railroad) the company installed a 12,016-foot aerial tramway, running from the ore bins at the foot of Nenzel Hill to the mill. The tramway was operating by April 1917 and had five-eighths running cable with 72 buckets each holding around 600 pounds of ore each. Ore now was being delivered to the mill for around 17 cents per ton.

In October of 1918 the Rochester Mines Company, Elda Fina Mining Company, and the Rochester Merger Mines Company all merged to form the Rochester Silver Company, which was later changed to the Rochester Silver Corporation.

On May 1, 1919 L.A. Friedman resigned as president of the Rochester Silver Corporation.

In 1925, a lawsuit filed by Joseph Nenzel against the Rochester Silver Corporation, for trespassing, on the Crown Point Claim and extracting ore.

With this suit mining and milling operations were shut down.

The question of trespass was to be determined by a survey. A mining engineer did the survey and showed that the difidants had not trespassed.

The trial of the case was delayed many times for one reason or another. Finally in 1927 after 20 months the case was dismissed and all the attachments released. Meantime the Rochester Silver Corporation decided to go into bankruptcy.

The receiver for the company's affairs, sold the mining and mill equipment to U.S. Machinery and Steel Company for \$15,250.

Nenzel Hill produced over two-thirds of the \$9 million that was taken out of the district.

LINCOLN HILL

Lincoln Hill, lying about two and one-half miles west of Nenzel Hill, contained more gold than silver.

Jerry Healey, a prospector and minor struck a claim nameing it "Abe Lincoln-Honest Old Abe" and people began calling the mountain Lincoln Hill.

By July 1913 considerable activity was going on and a mill was erected one-half mile below (Lower) Rochester. This was a two-stamp amalgamating mill for the treatment of gold ore from the Lincoln Hill Mine.

The mine only produced around \$80,000 in gold and silver up to 1917.

Later, most of the claims on Lincoln Hill were taken over by the Great Western Mines Company, which did a great deal of exploratory work with poor results.

All the high grade ore bodies were taken close to the surface and did not improve with depth so heavy activity never developed.

PACKARD

The production of the mines and mills in the Packard area was approximately \$2,000,000 between 1913 and 1923.

By November 1915 the Nevada Packard Mines Company had erected a 100-ton cyanidation mill on the Packard No. 3 claim. Their was also a company town named Packard for the workers.

In 1921 the Nevada Packard Mines Company went into receivership. The mill operated until 1923, when it closed, following the decrease in silver prices from \$1 to .60-.76 an ounce.

In 1926 the mill was burned by a fire of unknown origin. The insurance carrier paid 75 cents on the dollar, amounting to \$25,000.

Although Packard does not have much written about it, it produced more in revenues than Seven Troughs and Rawhide. This is partly because Nenzel Hill gained so much publicity that it overshadowed Packard.

THE HIGH LINE ROAD
and the
NEVADA SHORT LINE RAILROAD COMPANY

In the early days of Rochester ore was sacked and then chuted several hundred feet down the steep side of Nenzel Hill, then stone-boated nearly a half-mile farther to the head of the wagon road in Rochester Canyon. From here it was freighted to Oreana. This method of transportation of the ore was quite costly, and the Rochester Mines Company and the lessees were concerned about finding a more economical method to get their ore to the railhead at Oreana. On February 14, 1913 the Ore Road Association was formed, which included Rochester Mines Company, A.A. Codd and his manager, Joseph Platt of the Big Four Lease, J.H. Caustens and Joseph Sullivan of the No. 3 lease, and L.A. Friedman and W.C. Pitt.

The high line road was completed at a cost of \$10,000. The road extended from the Limerick Canyon Road directly to the mines, and almost to the top of Nenzel Hill. This new road saved the companies about one dollar per ton.

In order to reduce shipping costs even more Arthur Ashton Codd announced on May 23, 1913, that he would construct a narrow-gage railroad from Oreana, to the mouth of Limerick Canyon.

The railroad was built from Oreana eastward four miles across the sandy flats of the valley to ore bins at the mouth of Limerick Canyon. This would serve both the high line wagon road and the mining camps of Lower Rochester.

In a matter of weeks the grading was completed and the final track was finished on July 31st.

The "Silver Belt Railroad" as it was called began its service on August 9, 1913. The railroad suffered many misfortunes starting with a broken crankshaft that disrupted service within the first month of operation.

The High Line Road from the top of Nenzel Hill became so congested with traffic, that Codd decided to discontinue the Limerick Canyon railhead and extend the railroad to (Lower) Rochester. Also, in early 1914 word that a mill would soon be built near (Lower) Rochester, had alot of influence on extending the tracks. The last mile of the railroad going to Limerick Canyon was removed, and the six-mile extension to (Lower) Rochester was completed in December 1914.

On January 15, 1915 passenger service began to (Lower) Rochester, with two trips daily.

Another extension was started, and was completed, by September 1915. This extension ran to the ore bins at East Rochester. As stated earlier, several misfortunes took place. In November 1915 a fire in the railroad shop at Oreana destroyed two of the locomotives. As a result no ore was moved to the mill at (Lower) Rochester. Because of this the mill closed down temporarily.

The death blow to the railroad came in September when L.A. Friedman, announced that the company would build an aerial tramway from Friedman Tunnel to the mill.

The railroad was forced into receivership, but did continue to operate.

In June 1918 a large flood washed out some of the roadbed below (Lower) Rochester. Shortly after this the railroad was abandoned, and in 1920 scrap dealers moved in and tore up the rails.

Even though the railroad was short-lived, and had many difficulties, it played an important role in the Rochester Mining District.

A.A. Codd financed and built the narrow-gage railroad, and was forced to sell his leases on Nenzel Hill in order to operate his railroad. Even

though their were many obstacles, Codd should receive as much credit as anyone in the development of the Rochester Mining District.

SUMMARY

Discovery of ore	June 23, 1912
Mining district organized	December 6, 1912
Height of mining boom	December 1912-1913
Total mineral production, 1912-1952	\$9,076,000

GLOSSARY

Amalgamation	The process by which mercury is alloyed with gold and silver from ground up ores.
Claim	Maximim size of a lode, mining claim is 600 feet in width by 1,500 feet in length.
Float	The term float means bunches, blotches, or boulders of quartz or rock lying detached from, or resting upon the earth's surface without any walls.
Fraction	Usually a claim was stepped off, later a surveyor would measure the distance from the location monument, with the result that a number of small areas not covered by the staked claims was usually found. These when located, were called fractions.
Lease	The practice by claim owners of giving leases in order that their property could be developed. On most leases the time period was for two years. The owner of the claim would also receive royalties depending on the quality of the ore mined.
Placer	A place where gold is obtained by washing.

Plaque Text

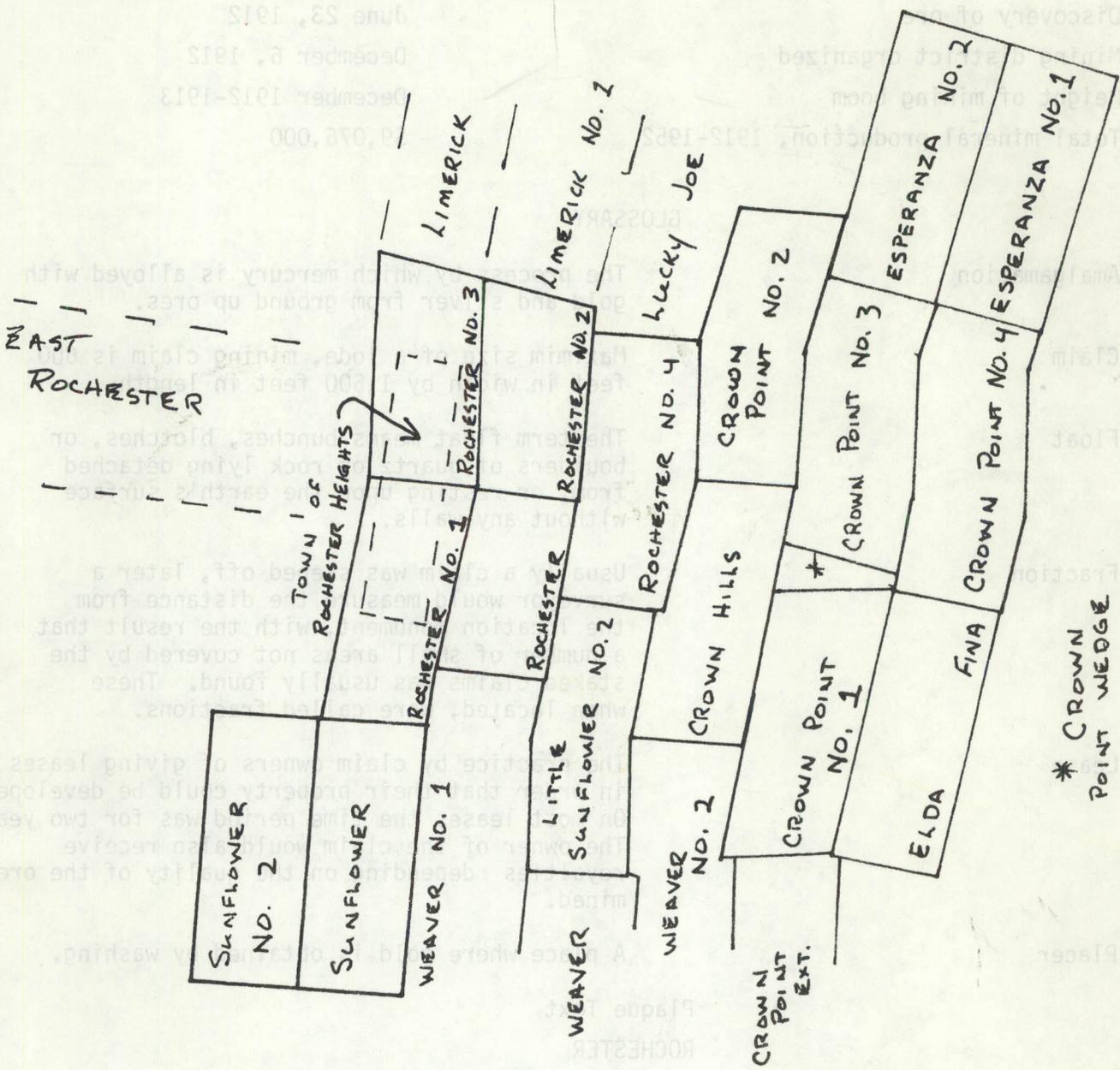
ROCHESTER

Rochester was discovered and named in the early 1860's by prospectors from Rochester, New York.

The area was relocated in 1912 when Joseph Nenzel discovered large bodies of silver ore which led to the great mining boom a year later.

Rochester produced about \$9 million in silver ores, although gold, copper, and lead were also taken

J.U.N.K. September 20, 1986
Julia's Unequivical Nevada Klampouts
Julia C. Bulette Chapter 1864
E Clampus Vitus



PRINCIPAL CLAIMS
ON
NENZEL HILL
FEB. 1913