

Plain which consists of loosely consolidated sandstones, gravels, clays, lignites and a thin bed of limestone. In the Gulf Coastal Plain south of Little Rock are large intrusions of syenite which are the largest exposed igneous intrusions in the state.

The geology of Pulaski County is very complex and many unusual and varied rock types may be found, also some of the rocks in the county are the same type as those found in known mineralized districts. It is little wonder that the early settlers thought that such rocks must contain a wealth of minerals. In discussing the resulting mines and prospects I shall break them down into the following three categories: (1) precious and base metal mines (i.e. gold, silver, copper, lead and zinc). (2) iron and manganese mines and (3) bauxite mines.

The large quartz veins and slates exposed in the western part of Pulaski County aroused the curiosity of many early settlers. Owen (1860) said of these features "the surface symptoms so much resemble those of the gold regions of Georgia and North Carolina that settlers from the states, at all acquainted with gold washing, have generally been so struck with the "prospect for gold" that they have almost invariably been induced to attempt a search, but, as far as I have been able to learn, with little or no success." Thus by 1860 the search for precious and base metals, particularly gold, was well under way. This relentless and amazing search for gold continued well into the 20th Century and even caused a gold rush in the latter part of the 19th Century in spite of the fact that no gold of any quality or quantity was ever found. Promotional mining and exploration companies had a field day selling enormous quantities of stock and giving nothing in return. During the peak of the gold mining activity from 1885 to 1888 it is estimated that gold-mining companies capitalized at more than eleven million dollars were engaged in prospecting in western and central Arkansas.

In the summer of 1887, Dr. T. B. Comstock, Assistant State Geologist, was charged with the investigation of gold occurrences in western central Arkansas. He left Little Rock in June of that year and made a horseback trip through the counties of Pulaski, Saline, Garland, Hot Spring, Montgomery, Polk, Scott and portions of Yell, Pike, Sevier, Howard, Logan, Franklin and Scott visiting all of the places where gold and silver mining or prospecting were being carried on. After careful examination of the properties and 183 chemical analyses, Dr. Comstock concluded that while other worthy but less valuable minerals existed in this area no gold worthy of being called an ore and few deposits of silver had yet been found in the state. Dr. John C. Branner, State Geologist of Arkansas, wrote in the introduction to Dr. Comstock's "Gold-Silver Report" that the results of the survey's investigation of gold mines of the state must prove a disappointment to many, and that they will excite the animosity of others, are foregone conclusions. Public welfare and official integrity, however, alike demand that these results be made known. Apparently considerable animosity was aroused as the Arkansas Geological Survey was shortly thereafter disbanded.

The earliest recorded discovery of precious metals in Pulaski County (this material was extracted from Margaret Smith Ross's two articles on Jean Laffite's visit to Arkansas in the Arkansas Gazette March 24 and 31, 1957) was in the early 1800's by a hunter named Trammell. Trammell is said