

to have discovered gold in a quartz matrix near Crystal Hill which is located on the north side of the Arkansas River between Burns Park and the Maumelle Ordnance Works. This discovery provided an excuse for the Spanish government to send an expedition into Arkansas led by Jean Laffite whose party came into Arkansas in the spring of 1816 and after some unsuccessful prospecting for gold and silver located a silver mine or pretended silver mine on Mine Hill located downstream from Crystal Hill on the north bank of the Arkansas River in what is now Burns Park. Although it is possible that some small silver-bearing lead veins exist at this location it is generally concluded that this mine was a hoax and a cover-up for the real mission of surveying. Most early historians state that when this mine was abandoned the expedition returned to New Orleans. However, Pope in his book "Early Days in Arkansas" published in 1895, states that after leaving Mine Hill the miners sank several shafts between the bank of the Arkansas River and Crystal Hill and built a smelter higher upon the hill. According to Pope this mine was abandoned because of rising water in the shafts. I have spent considerable time looking for these old mines and have as yet found no evidence of their existence.

The most famous and productive of the precious and base metal mines in Pulaski County was the Kellogg mines located just north of Sylvan Hills off of State Highway 5. Several shafts have been sunk in this area on small veins containing silver, lead, zinc and copper. It is these mines that gave North Little Rock its former name of Argenta, derived from the Latin word Argentum meaning silver. Although it is believed that mining in this area started about 1840 the earliest written report on these mines is in Owens "First Geological Reconnaissance" of 1857-1858. Owens states that "when discovered, these mines caused considerable excitement, and the right of mining was leased to a company, who was to hold this right so long as they paid him regularly a stipulated amount of the ore. Some forty or fifty tons of this ore was mined and shipped to Europe for the purpose of ascertaining its value. No account was ever received, at the mines, regarding the sale or disposition of this shipment of ore and the company, whose means were limited, becoming involved in debt and discouraged, finally abandoned the enterprise. From long disuse, the shafts from which this ore was raised, have become filled with water, rubbish, earth and rocks, washed in or detached from the mouth of the pits, so that there is no opportunity now, of inspecting the condition of the ore in place." Owens was very impressed with samples of ore taken from these mines and in spite of not seeing the ore in place states that if this property "can be obtained on reasonable terms, and a judicious and economical system of mining instituted, there can be but little doubt of a profitable result."

Dr. Comstock in his "Gold-Silver Report" mentions three shafts in the Kellogg area; the Welldiggen shaft and the Confederate shaft, both of which were in bad condition due to long disuse, and the German shaft which was being mined at the time of his visit (July 19, 1888). Some selected samples of the vein minerals were taken by Dr. Comstock and found to be extremely high in silver, lead, zinc and copper but the amount and concentration of the ore minerals present was still in question. Dr. Comstock concluded "Whatever may be said of the Kellogg mining property as to its past, there is no doubt that it deserves thorough exploration and from present indications, it might be made to return much of the cost of development even now, if placed under the management of a competent mining engineer and metallurgist."