

CHAPTER 6 / Placer versus Quartz Mining

Compare and Contrast

“The process of placer mining involves filling a pan with the crushed ore to separate the gold. This could be done individually by one prospector on his or her own.

The process of lode [quartz] mining involves the labor of many miners working together to extract the gold from tunnels in a mountain or the earth.”

—<http://wells.entirety.ca/lode.htm>

In the space below, compare and contrast placer mining with quartz mining. Your essay may include the differences in the way the precious metal is recovered; the impact the different techniques had on the environment; the kinds of towns that grew up around the different kinds of mining; and the long-range effect of these mining techniques on Montana’s economy.

Placer mining and quartz mining are both very different ways of mining. Placer mining is the easier of the two actions, you only needed to have one person and a small amount of tools to get the gold. Unlike placer mining, quartz mining required several people and deep tunnels to extract the gold hidden beneath the surface of mountains and earth. Placer mining was environmentally-destructive type of mining. It aimed at removing gold from the stream, and also released large amounts of sediment for several miles downstream. Quartz mining was also desructive for the environment, however, they caused more damage to the landscape than placer mining did. Large pieces of mountains are worked away until its nothing but a fraction of what it was. Towns sprung up everywhere thanks to mining. Placer mining towns were often abandoned after the gold was taken out of the rivers and streams. In the towns revolved around quartz mining stayed around a bit longer and some even devoloped to being large towns and cities.