

The year was 1894, and the air was rife with possibility as J.A. McCulloch filed his De Luz gold mine with the county. But he was not alone in his quest for fortune, for that same year, he and Charles W. Carr filed the locations of Fox and Buckhorn mines with the county recorder. It was a time of great excitement in the mining industry, and many individuals were eager to stake their claims.

Fast forward to 1897, and we find John H. Fahrenkrug and August Reuter, owners of the Constanzia gold mine in De Luz, striking a deal with a San Francisco miner by the name of Armstrong. The terms were clear: Armstrong would work the mine for 18 months, paying the owners 25% of the proceeds. At the end of this time, he would have the privilege to buy the mine for \$6,000. It was a risky venture, but the potential rewards were great.

In 1898, Elizabeth Coleman made a move of her own, filing the location of the Coronado mine in the Defiance District near De Luz. It was a time of feverish activity in the mining industry, with many individuals hoping to strike it rich.

But with great reward comes great risk, as was seen in 1899 when three men were buried by a cave-in after a blast of explosives. Fahrenkrug, Reuter, and a Corsican worker narrowly escaped death, with Reuter being

completely buried but eventually dug out, more dead than alive, by Fahrenkrug and the Corsican. Such incidents served as a poignant reminder of the inherent dangers in the pursuit of gold.

Despite these dangers, many continued their quest for riches. Farmer and vintner Vincent Roboni, for instance, had a gold and copper vein on his property, which he worked diligently. Garnets of some inferior value were also found in the area, and small amounts of gold were sifted from the waters.

There was also some promise of good copper deposits in the Defiance, or better known as the Recluse, district. However, the remoteness of the area hampered development.

By the 1930s, the Kuhn timer and Whaley mines were better known for their beautiful quartz crystals than for the hoped-for gold. One miner, John Kuhn timer, a Swiss-born mountain of a man, came to a tragic end in 1973 when his wood stove exploded after having been primed with gasoline. He was burned to death, but local stories still circulate that he was murdered for his hidden stash of gold. Such stories are a testament to the enduring fascination that gold mining holds for so many, and to the risks and rewards that come with it.

