

BARNWELL AND SEARCHLIGHT RAILROAD AND ASSOCIATED MINING AREAS

Gregg Wilkerson and Larry Vredenburg

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INTRODUCTION

This report is part of a research project that describes the relationships between mines and railroads in the Mojave Desert and southwestern Great Basin. The collection can be accessed at

<http://www.greggwilkerson.com/railroads.html>

ABSTRACT

The Barnwell and Searchlight (B&S) was a subsidiary of the Quartette Railroad. It connected Barnwell and the NS&CE railroad to Searchlight, Nevada.

The Searchlight Mining District was discovered in 1897 and was most productive from 1903 to 1907. The main producing mines were the Bay City, Continental Heap, Coyote, Cyrus, Duplex, Good Hope, Padden, Quartette, Searchlight and Southern Nevada (Callahan, 1939, p. 136. 161-172; Lincoln, 1923; Ferguson, 1929, Longwell and others, 1965:201, NDM, 1983, 1984, USBOM, 1937:15, Ransome (1907).

The Barnwell and Searchlight (B&S) Railroad was incorporated shortly after the mines started producing. The line was completed on March 31, 1907 (Myrick, 1963:851). The Barnwell and Searchlight with its parent company the Quartette Railroad ended operations in 1924 (Canyon Country, 2023).

DESCRIPTION OF ROUTE

From Searchlight, the Quartette Railroad went to a mill on the Colorado river at Cottonwood Cove where there was a dock for steamships. See a description of the Quartette Railroad in Part III of this report.

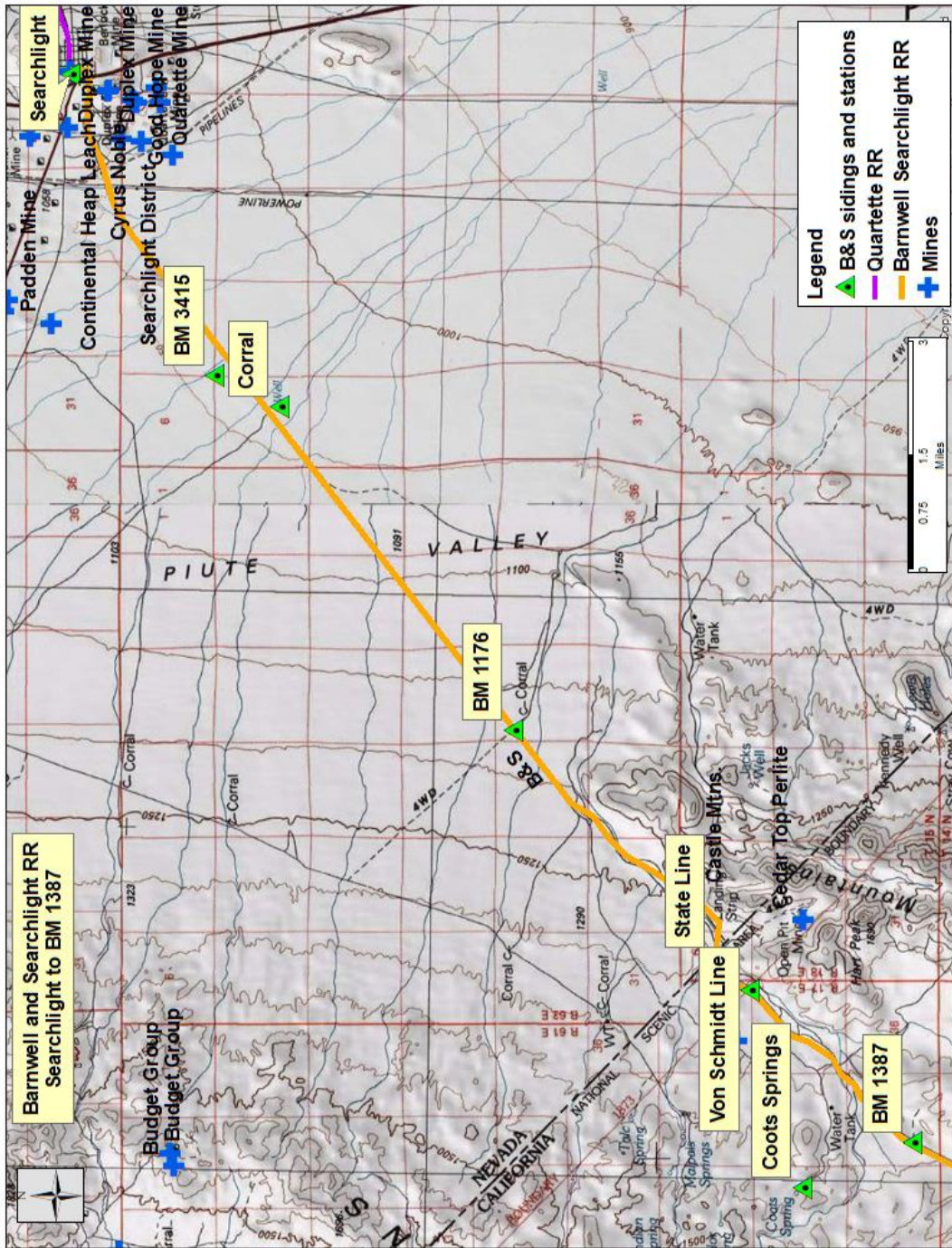
From **Searchlight**, the B&S went southwest across Piute Valley to the north end of the Castle Mountains. Going through these mountains, the B&S crossed the California-Nevada **State Line** and the earlier **Von Schmidt Line**. In this area, the B&S was near the Castle Mountain montmorillonite mine (Minobras, 1973:9) and several perlite deposits near Hart Peak (Erin, Castle Mountain Perlite, Cedar Top Pearlite).

These are described by Joseph (1985, Deposit 40), Wright and others (1953:185-187), Minobras (1973), and USBOM (1990:129). The B&S went past these mines and **Coots Springs** to **BM 1387**.



Caption: Ruins at Searchlight. From

<http://kensphotogallery.blogspot.com/2014/02/daytrip-searchlight-nevada-living-ghost.html> accessed Nov. 15, 2023.

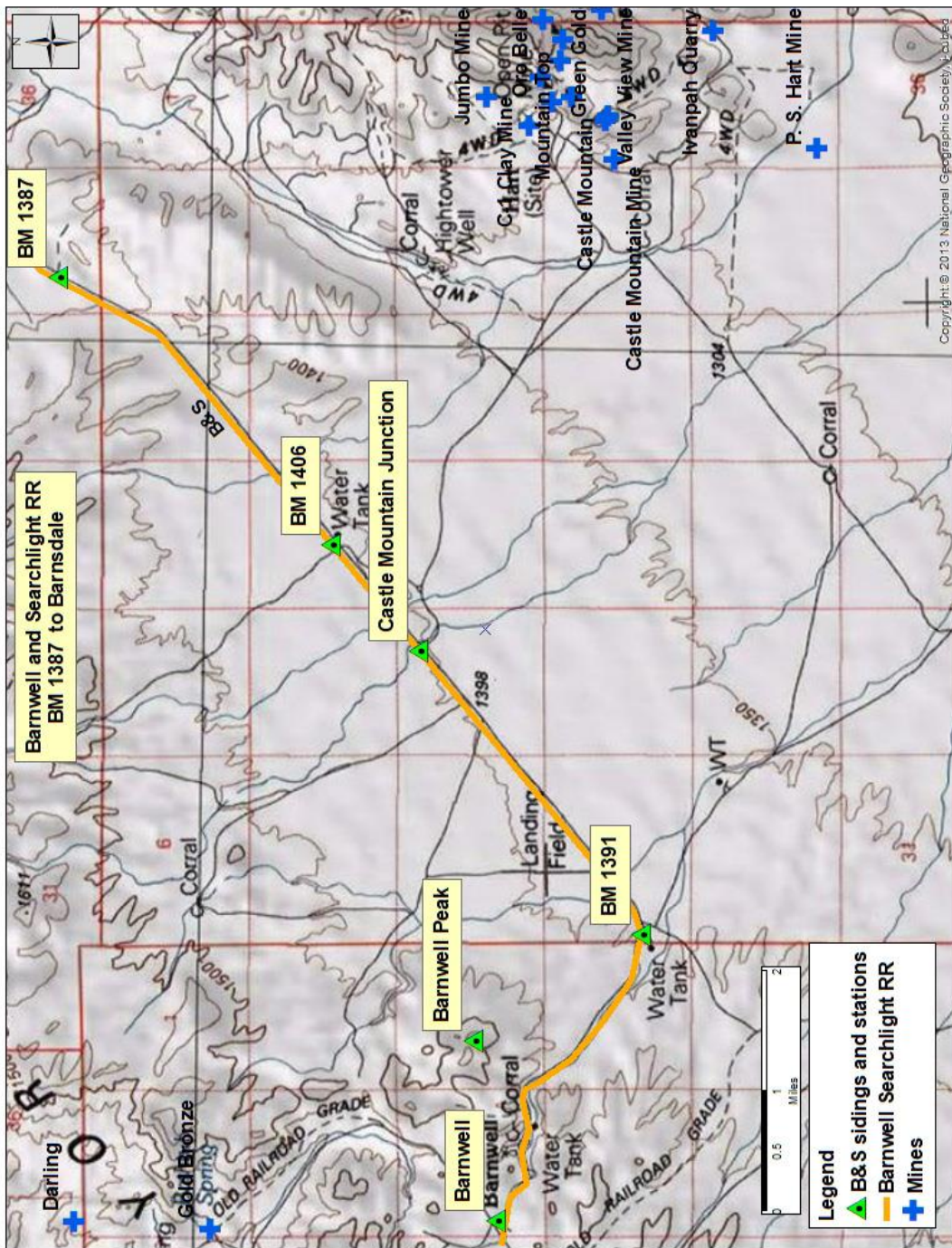


After passing the north end of the Castle Mountains at **BM 1387**, the B&S went into Lanfair Valley between the New York Mountains to the northwest and the Castle Mountains to the southeast.

In the southern part of the Castle Mountains are several gold and silver deposits first discovered in 1907. Gold production continued through 1933. The deposits were accessed from the B&S by a wagon road at

Castle Mountain Junction. The mines include the present Castle Mountain Project by Newmont Mining Company which was initiated in 2017 and is in operation today (Waiwood, 2023). Other historic producing mines are the Valley View, Oro Belle, C-1 Clay Mine, Big Chief, Valley View Mine, P. S. Hart Clay, Green Gold, Hart Consolidated, C. and M. Deposit, Jumbo Mine, Ivanpah Quarry, Mountain Top, and Huntington Tile Clay Deposit. These mines are described by Wright and others (1953:51-60), Tucker and Sampson (1943), Ausburn, (1991), E&MJ (1988), Hewett (1956:159-160); and Joseph (1980).

At the southwest end of Lanfair Valley at **BM 1391**, the B&S turned northwest into the New York Mountains to **Barnwell**. Here the B&S joined the Nevada Southern and California Eastern (NS&CE) railroad



Depressions in the mining industry adversely affected Searchlight and the mines of the Castle and New York Mountains. Catastrophic flooding in 1923 resulted in the need for expensive repairs. These events led to the closure of the B&G in 1924 (Chappell, 2005, p. 848-854; Wilkerson, 2022c, Myrick, 1963:848-852).



Barnwell and Searchlight train depot, 1920. From Digital Desert; <https://digital-desert.com/searchlight-nv/> accessed Feb. 3, 2024.



Caption. Searchlight 1930's. From Digital Desert; <https://digital-desert.com/searchlight-nv/> accessed Feb. 3, 2024.

REFERENCES

All references in this report are listed at

<http://www.greggwilkerson.com/iv-references.html>