

LAS VEGAS AND TONOPAH RAILROAD AND ASSOCIATED MINING AREAS

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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>

HISTORY

The history of the Las Vegas and Tonopah railroad is associated with three gold districts: Tonopah, Goldfield and Bullfrog-Rhyolite. Four railroads competed for these markets: Tonopah and Goldfield (T&G), Bullfrog and Goldfield (B&G), Las Vegas and Tonopah (LV&T) and the Tonopah and Tidewater (T&T). The Los Angeles and Salt Lake (LA&SL), by a compromise with Union Pacific, had been completed January 30, 1905 under the direction of Senator William Andrews Clark. Clark had a tentative agreement with Francis Marion “Borax” Smith in July 1904 to build a line from the LA&SL at Las Vegas over to Smith’s Lila C mine and Death Valley Junction. Clark reneged on that agreement and initiated a “race” with Smith to build railroads to what is now Beatty and Rhyolite (Myrick, 1963:455-554; Legends of America, 2023, Serpico, 2017).

The LV&T connected to the Carrera, B&G, T&G and T&T railroads.

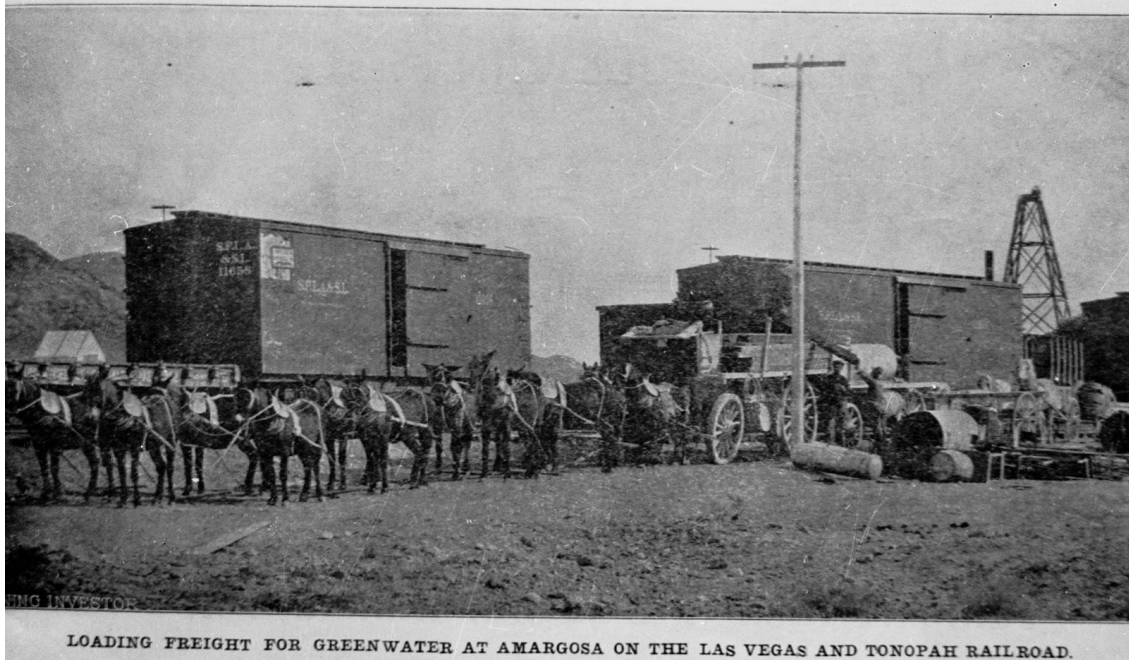
Mining districts near the LV&T were the Bullfrog, Bare Mountains, and Charleston.



Caption: Working on the Las Vegas and Tonopah Railroad. From University of Nevada at Las Vegas Collection.

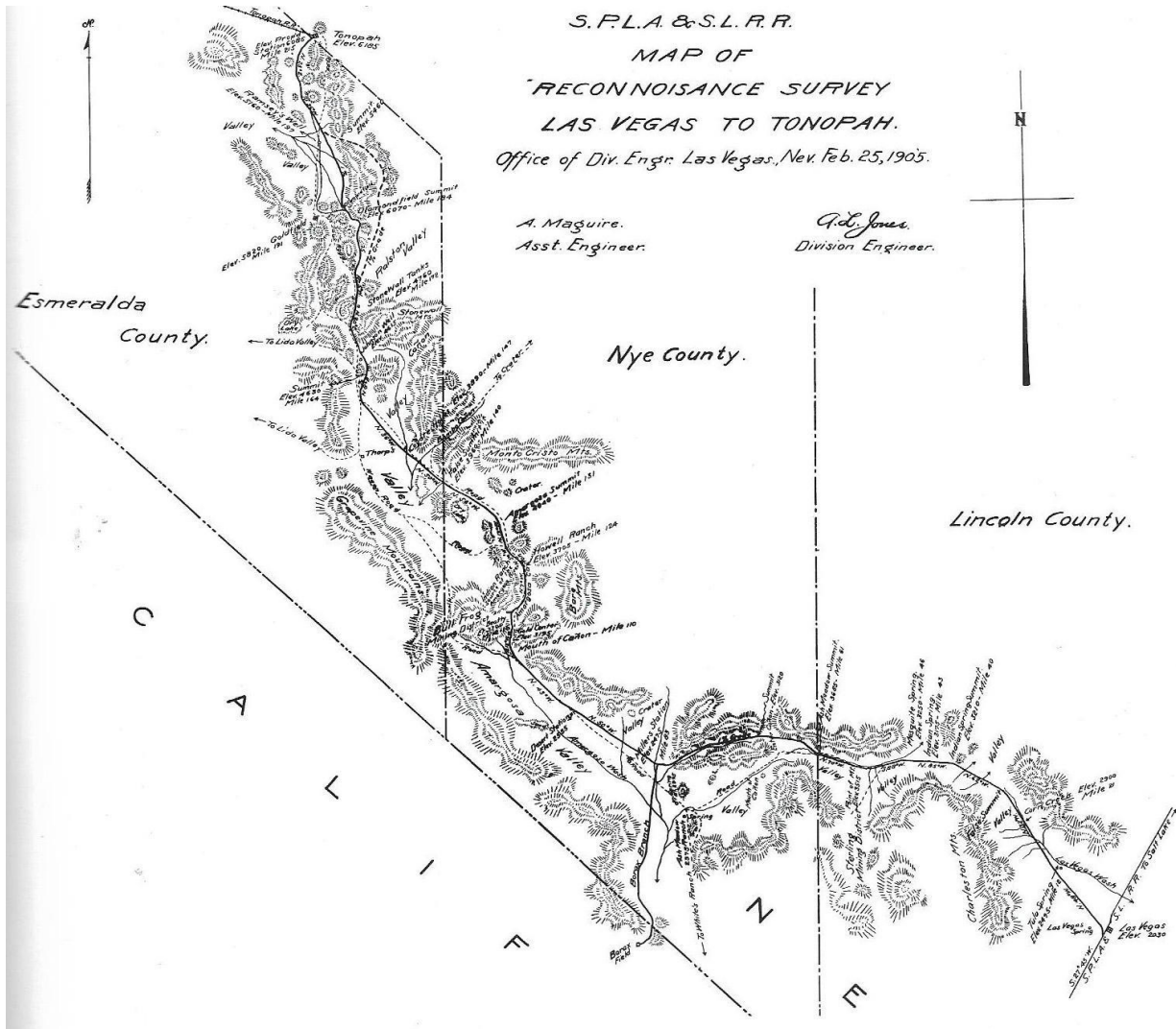


Caption: Miners would use the cars for storage rather than return them to the railroad which would cause traffic backups like this one in Tonopah. From <http://mojavedesert.net/railroads/las-vegas-and-tonopah/> accessed Nov. 14, 2023.

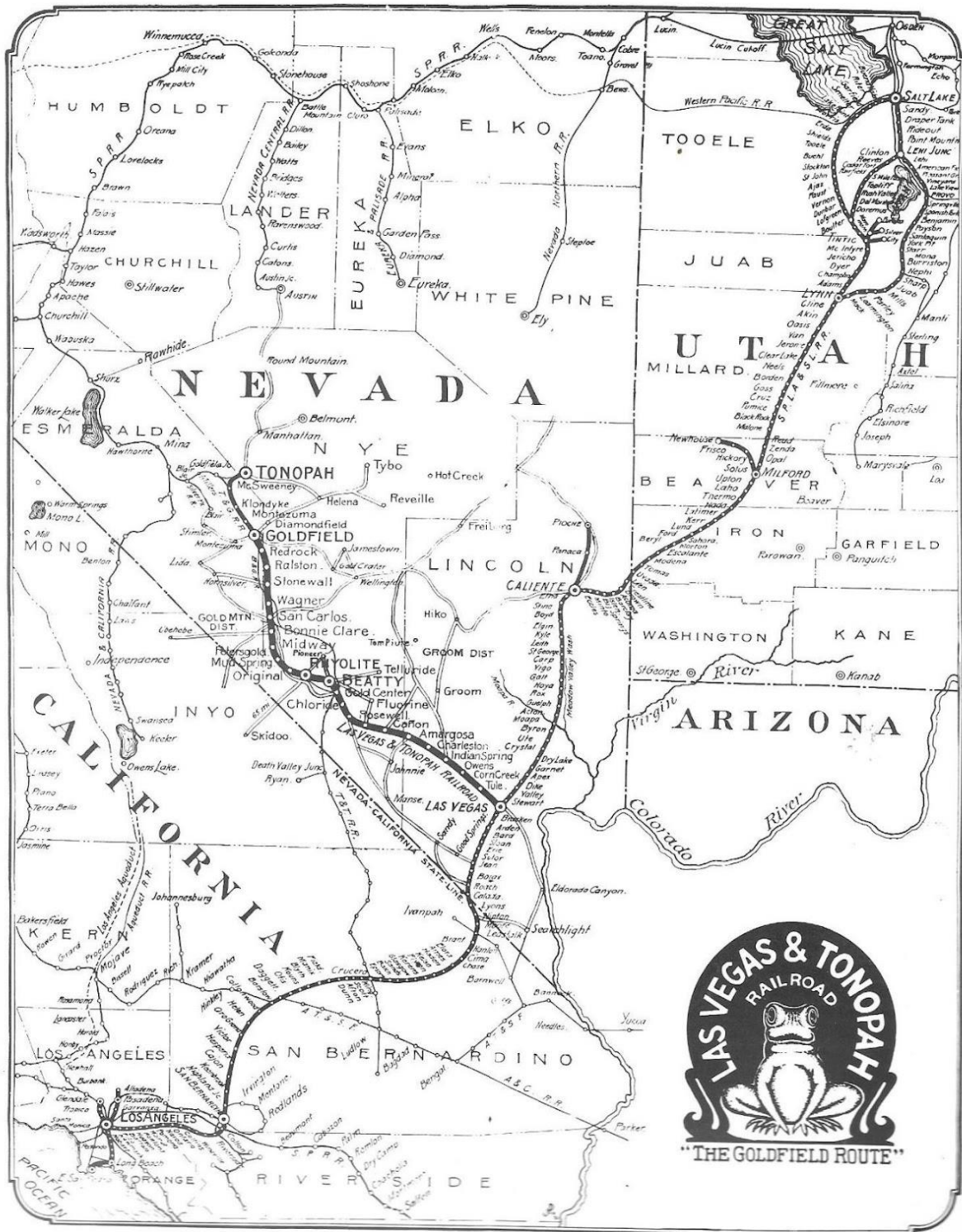


LOADING FREIGHT FOR GREENWATER AT AMARGOSA ON THE LAS VEGAS AND TONOPAH RAILROAD.

Caption: Greenwater at Amargosa on the LV&T railroad. From Mining Investor, Nov. 26, 1906



Caption: Proposed route for the Las Vegas and Tonopah railroads. From Myrick, 1963, p. 457.



FOR BEST SERVICE see that your Ticket reads and your Freight is Routed
over the LAS VEGAS & TONOPAH R R

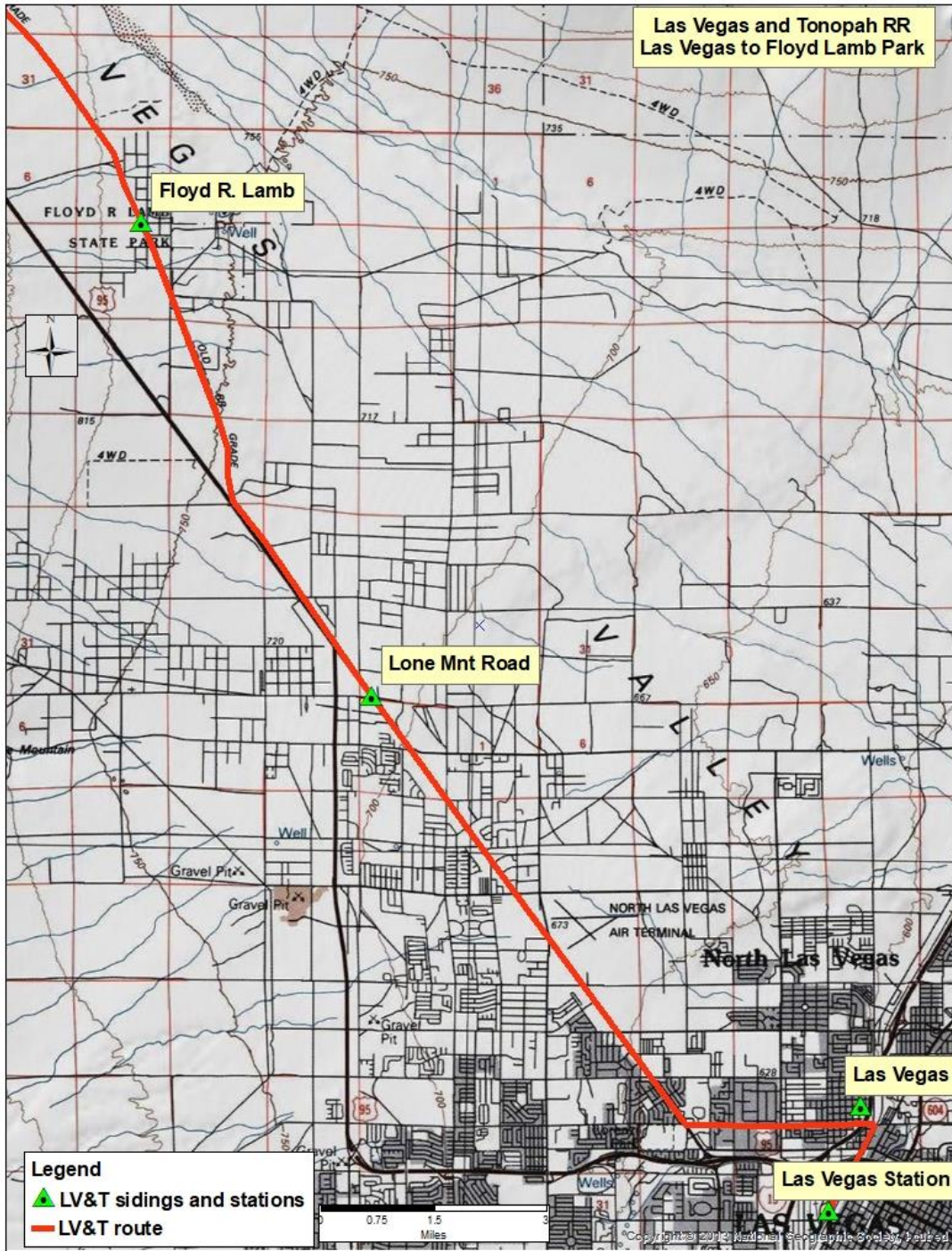
Caption: Routes of the Los Angeles & Salt Lake and Las Vegas & Tonopah railroads. From Myric, 1963.

Ed Cross and Frank "Shorty" Harris discovered the Bullfrog mine on August 9, 1904 and the town of Rhyolite was booming in 1905. Clark's engineers surveyed the LA&T route on February 25, 1905. Smith

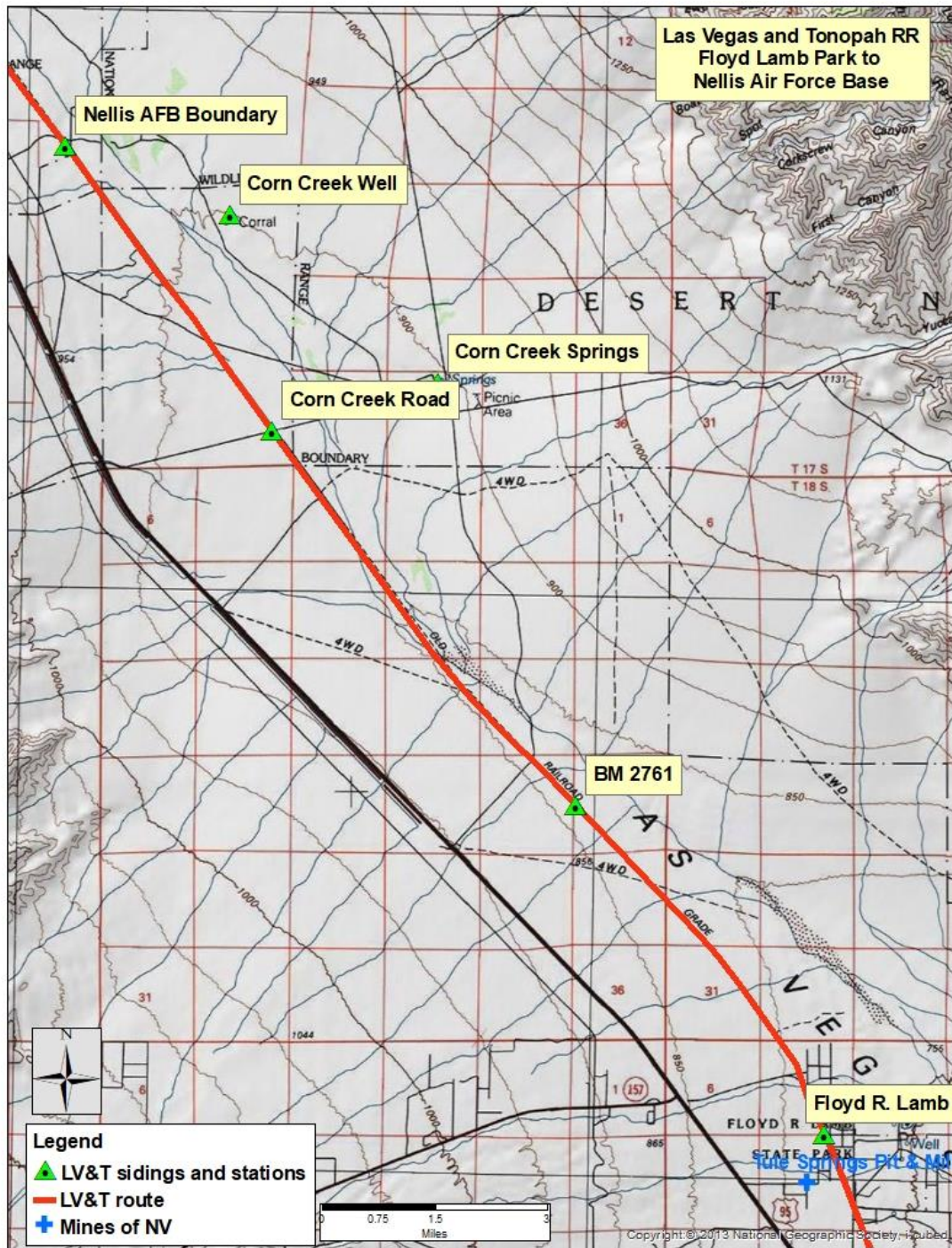
commenced his T&T railroad from Ludlow, and at the same time the B&G was building track south from Goldfields. Meanwhile additional discoveries were being made at Goldfields, Bullfrog and Tonopah. The LV&T was completed to Gold Center, south of Beatty October 12, 1906 and made it to eastern Rhyolite via Beatty on December 18, 1906. The next phase in the LV&T was to build a railroad north to Bullfrog. This section of the LV&T sometimes was laid down parallel to the B&G line. The LV&T arrived at Goldfield in October, 1907 (Myrick, 1963:455-554).

LAS VEGAS TO AMARGOSA VALLEY

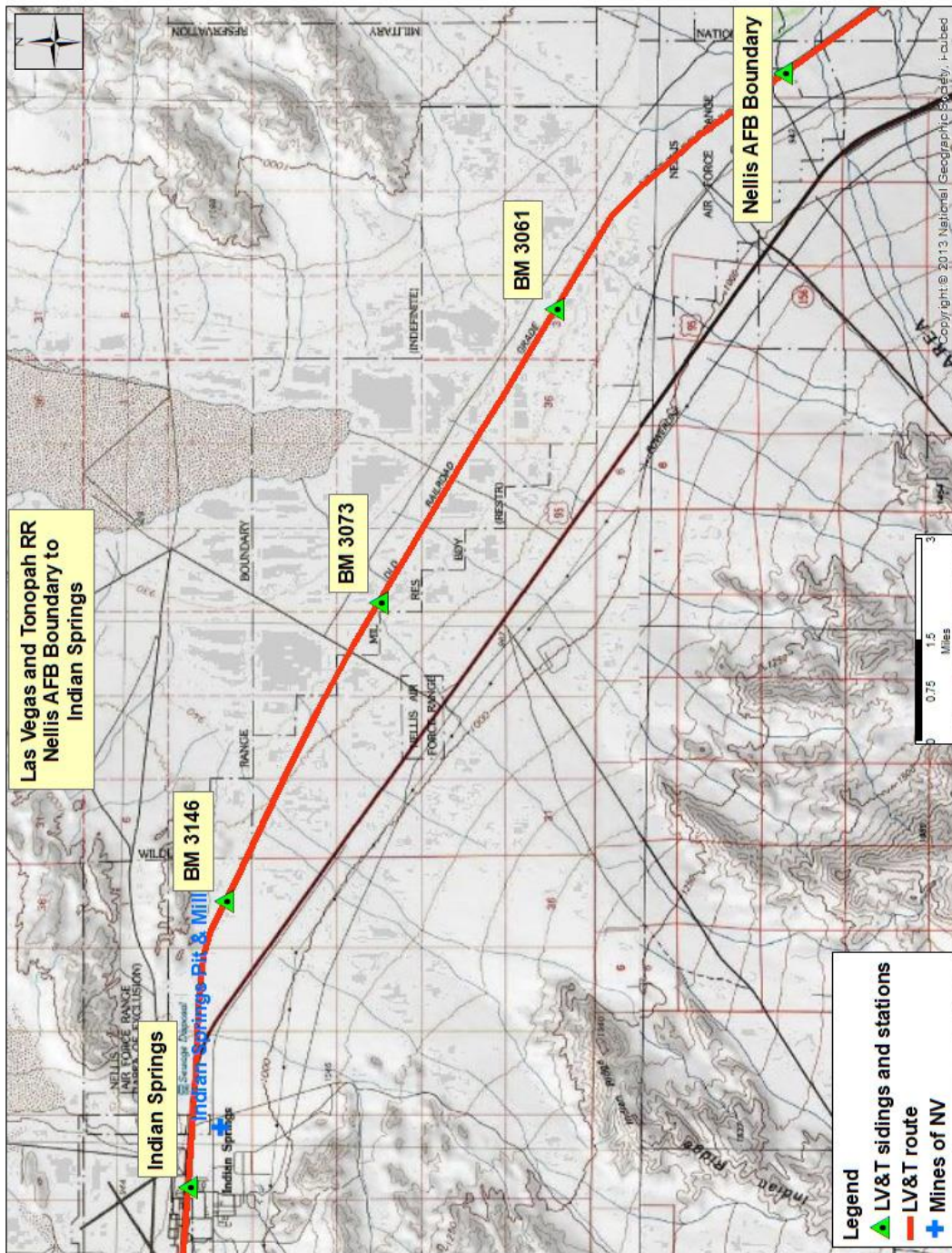
The route of the LV&T from **Las Vegas** ran parallel to the present Highway 95 along Las Vegas Valley. It went past the northern Las Vega airport and then turned northwest from Highway 95 to **Floyd R. Lamb** homestead, now a state park. Floyd R. Lamb Park is between the Gass Peak Mining District (Longwell and others, 1986:145-146) 10 miles to the northeast and the Charleston Mining District (Longwell and others, 1965:178) 5 miles to the southwest. Gass Peak is the southernmost peak of the Las Vegas Range.



From **Floyde R. Lamb Park**. The line passed 1.8 miles west of **Corn Creek Springs** thence northwest to the southern boundary of present **Nellis Air Force Base**.

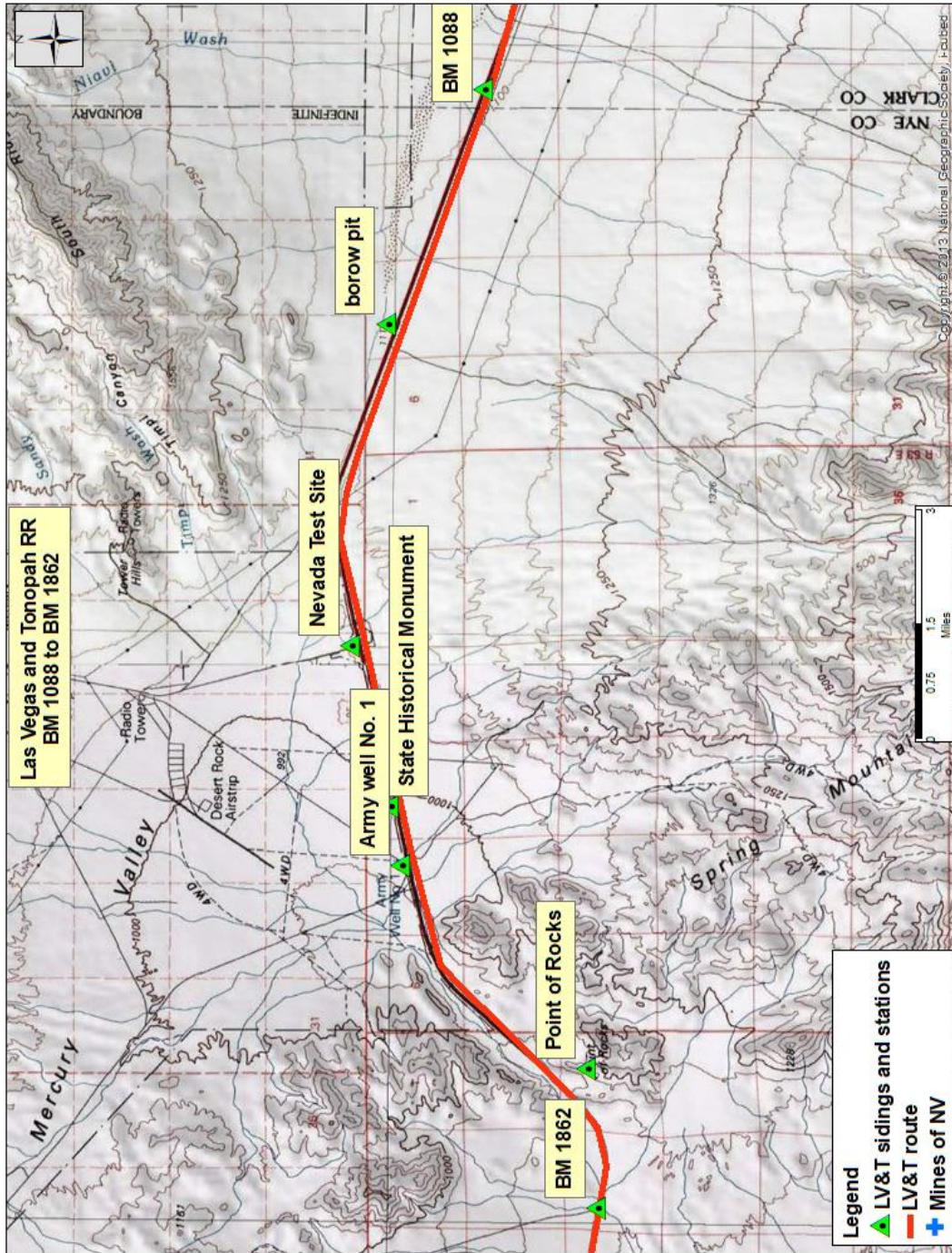


From the present Nellis Air Force Base southeastern boundary, the LV&T went northwest to sewage treatment ponds on the Air Force Base and then west to **Indian Springs**. This site is now part of Indian Springs Air Force Base. It is at the southwest end of Indian Springs Valley. On the east side of Indian Springs are two borrow pits (NDM, 1977).

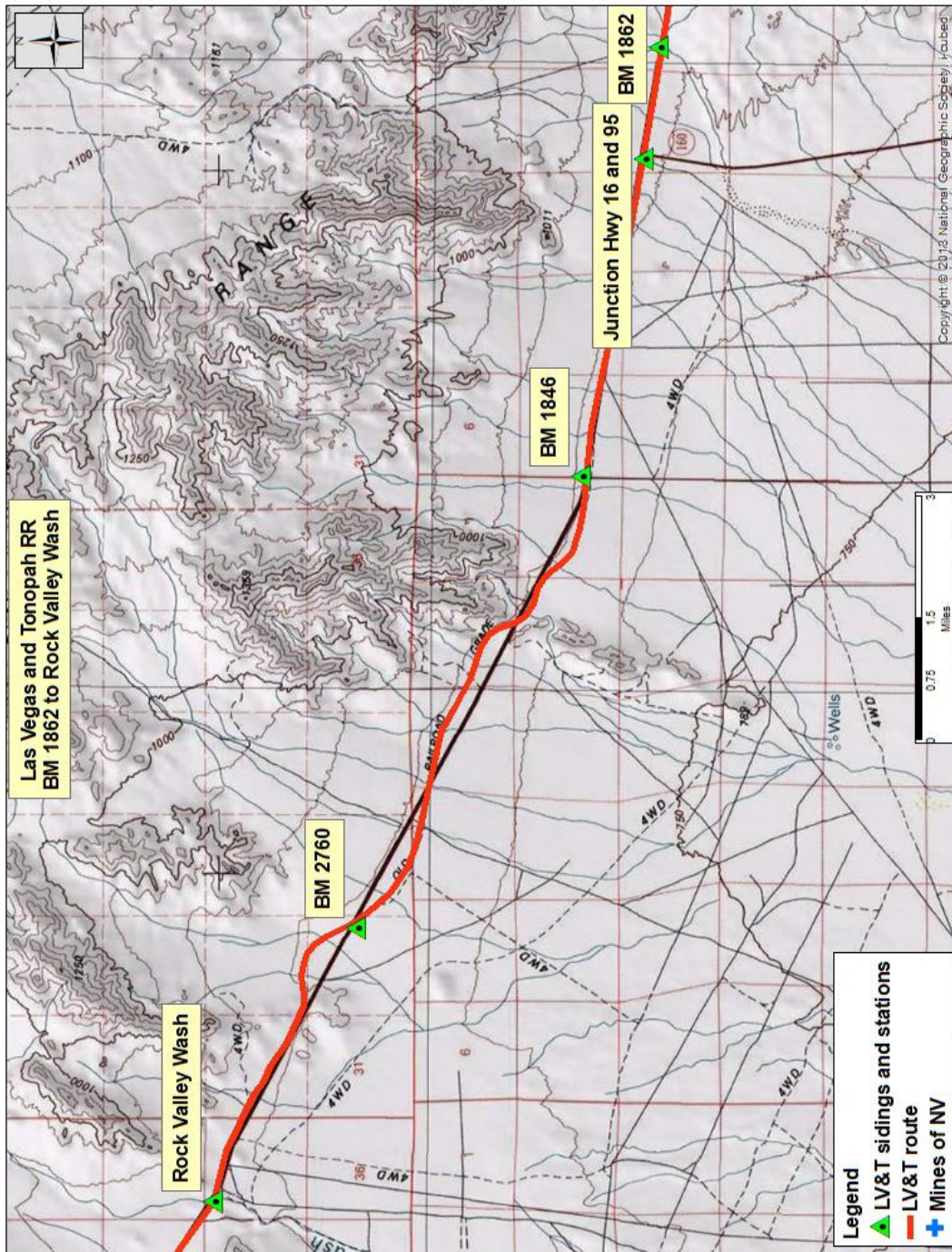


From **Indian Springs** the LV&T went west, parallel to Highway 95, to **Cactus Springs** and then past borrow pits on either side of the line. From there the LV&T went west-southwest along Indian Springs Valley to **BM 1088**.

From there the LV&T went west-southwest and then southwest between the Specter Range to the northwest and the Spring Mountains Range to the southeast . At **Point of Rocks** on the northeast end of the Spring Mountains the LV&T west-northwest and west to **BM 1862**. Eight miles southeast of Point of Rocks is the Johnnie Mining District in the Spring Mountains. This district was discovered in 1918 (Krale, 1951:8).



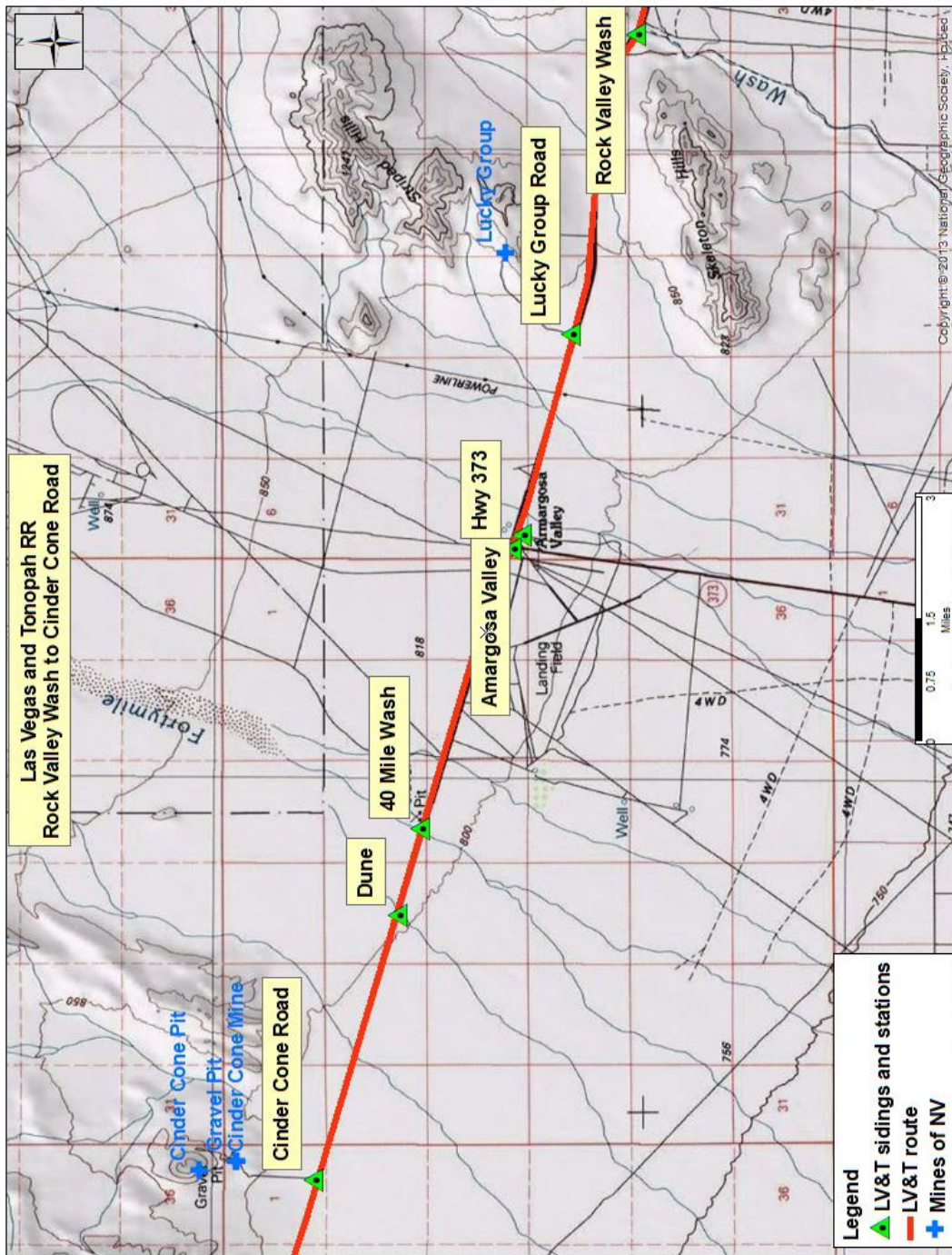
From **BM 1862**, the LV&T went westward to the road junction of Highways 95 and 16 near the southeast edge of the Specter Range. From there the LV&T went northwest to **Rock Valley Wash** near the western edge of the Specter Range.



From Rock Valley Wash, the LV&T went west-northwest to **Amargosa Valley Junction**. This is the junction of present Highway 95 and 373.

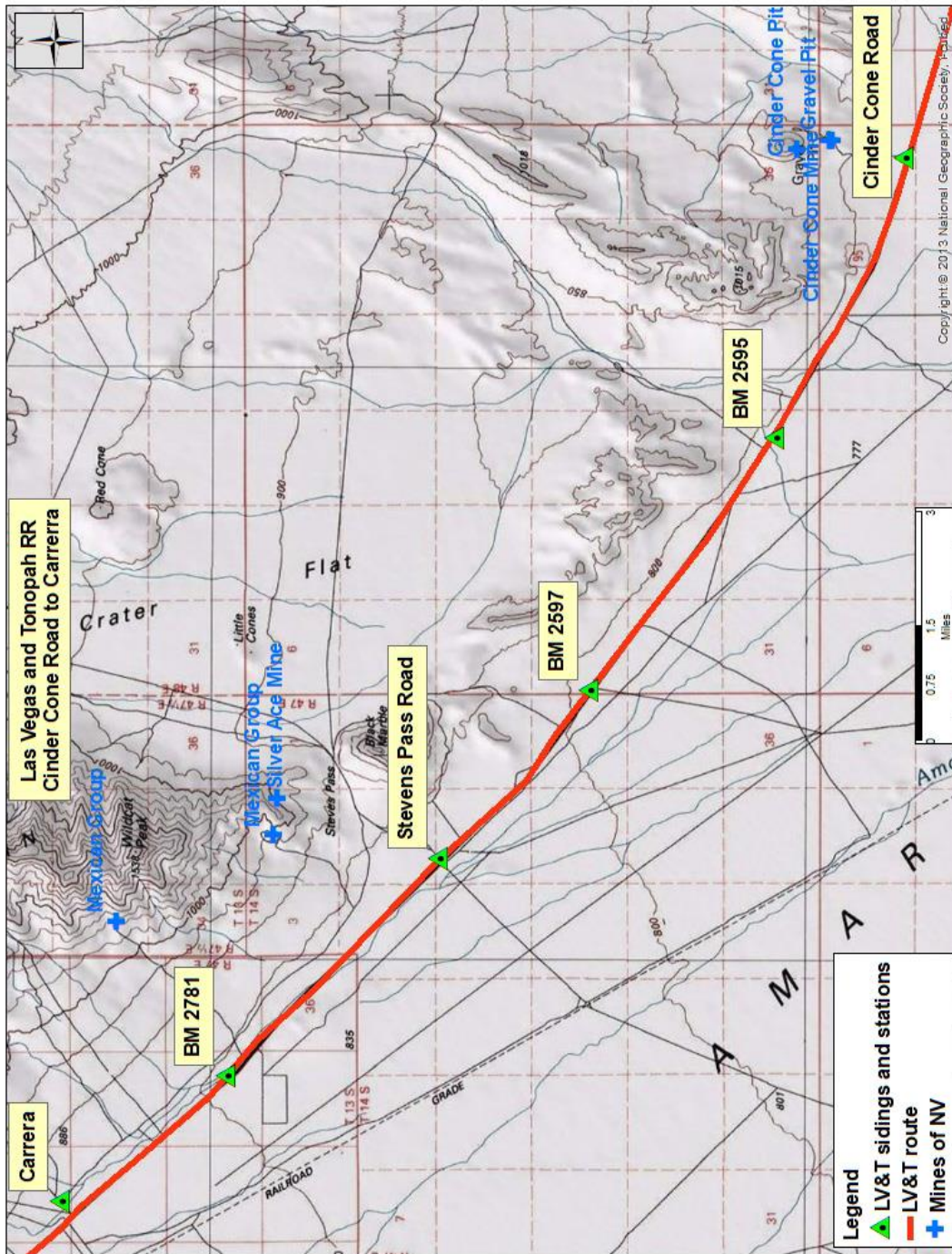
AMARGOSA JUNCTION TO RHYOLITE

From Amargosa Valley Junction the LV&T continued west and then northwest parallel to present Highway 95. This route passed Forty Mile Wash and Dune siding. Past Dune, the LV&T went west-northwest to a road junction with **Cinder Cone Road**. This road leads north to a lava field that produced cinders (Krale, 1951; Papke, 1983).



From the **Cinder Cone Road**, the LV&T went west along the northeast side of the Amargosa Valley to **Stevens Pass Road**. This road went northeast to Silver Pass which was situated between Black Butte to the southeast and the southeast end of the Bare Mountains to the northwest. At the southeast end of the Bare Mountains are the Grand Junction, Mexican Group, and Silver Ace mines (Kral, 1951:36, 54-64).

From Stevens Pass Road, the LV&T went northwest to **Carrera**.



At **Carrera** there was a short cross-over line to the Tonopah and Tidewater (T&T) line. Northwest of **Carrera** are a group of mines on the southwest flank of the Bare Mountains: Carrera, Arista, Bond and Marks, and Martin Tungsten (Krall, 1951:63-64, Minobras, 1973:34, USGS, 1988, Bulletin 105, 1988:138)

From **Carrara**, the LV&T went northwest to run parallel with the T&T through the **Amargosa Narrows** to **Gold Center**. From Gold Center the LV&T went north, paralleling the tracks of the B&G to **Beatty**. The town of Beatty was west of Beatty Mountain and northeast of Velvet Peak. From **Beatty** the LV&T went west along the north flank of Velvet Peak to **BM 3599**. From there the LV&T went around the south side of Paradise Mountain and the southwest flank of Montgomery Mountain to **Montgomery Road**.



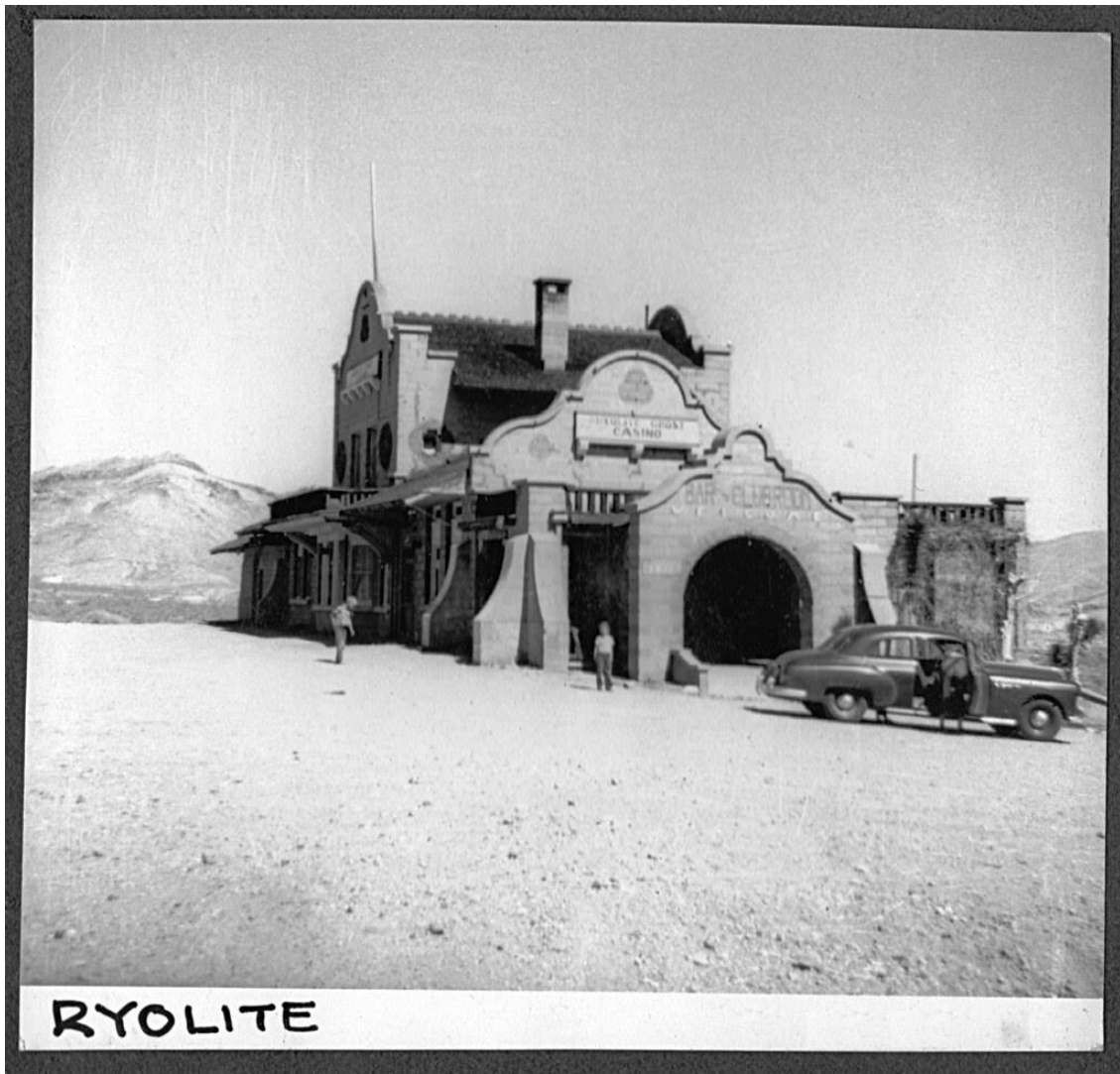
Caption: Montgomery Shoshone Mine 1907. From Western Mining History (2023c); <https://westernmininghistory.com/towns/nevada/rhyolite/> accessed Nov. 30, 2023.

From **Montgomery Road** the LV&T went west and south to **Rhyolite** on the northwestern flank of Ladd Mountain

The mines of the Bullfrog-Rhyolite District are described by Cornwall and Kleinham (1963); Minobras, (1972:35); Ransome and others (1910); Kral (1951); and Nobel and others (1991). The district was discovered in 1904. The boom was brief with the last train to leave the Rhyolite station in July 1914. The railroad was scrapped in 1916 (Western Mining History, 2023c).



Caption: Rhyolite railroad station. From <https://www.locationscout.net/usa/3639-train-station-ghost-town-rhyolite> accessed Nov. 14, 2023.



Caption: Rhyolite railroad station, 1953. From <https://www.flickr.com/photos/14844569@N07/5575505148/> accessed Nov. 14, 2023.



Caption: Cook Bank building in Rhyolite 1909. From Western Mining History (2023c); <https://westernmininghistory.com/towns/nevada/rhyolite/> accessed Nov. 30, 2023.

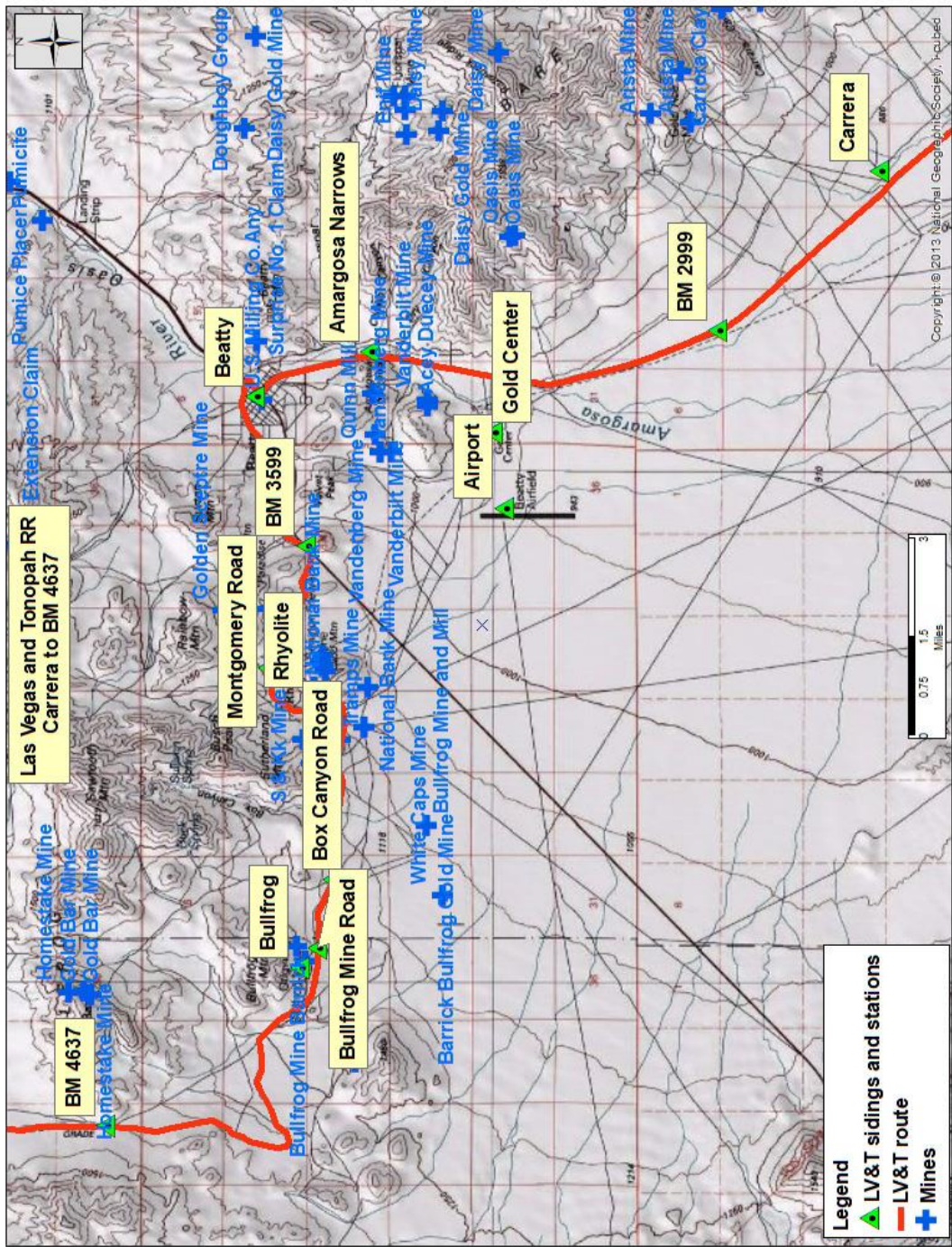


Caption: Rhyolite, Nevada in 1909. From Western Mining History (2023c); <https://westernmininghistory.com/towns/nevada/rhyolite/> accessed Nov. 30, 2023.

Rhyolite to Goldfields

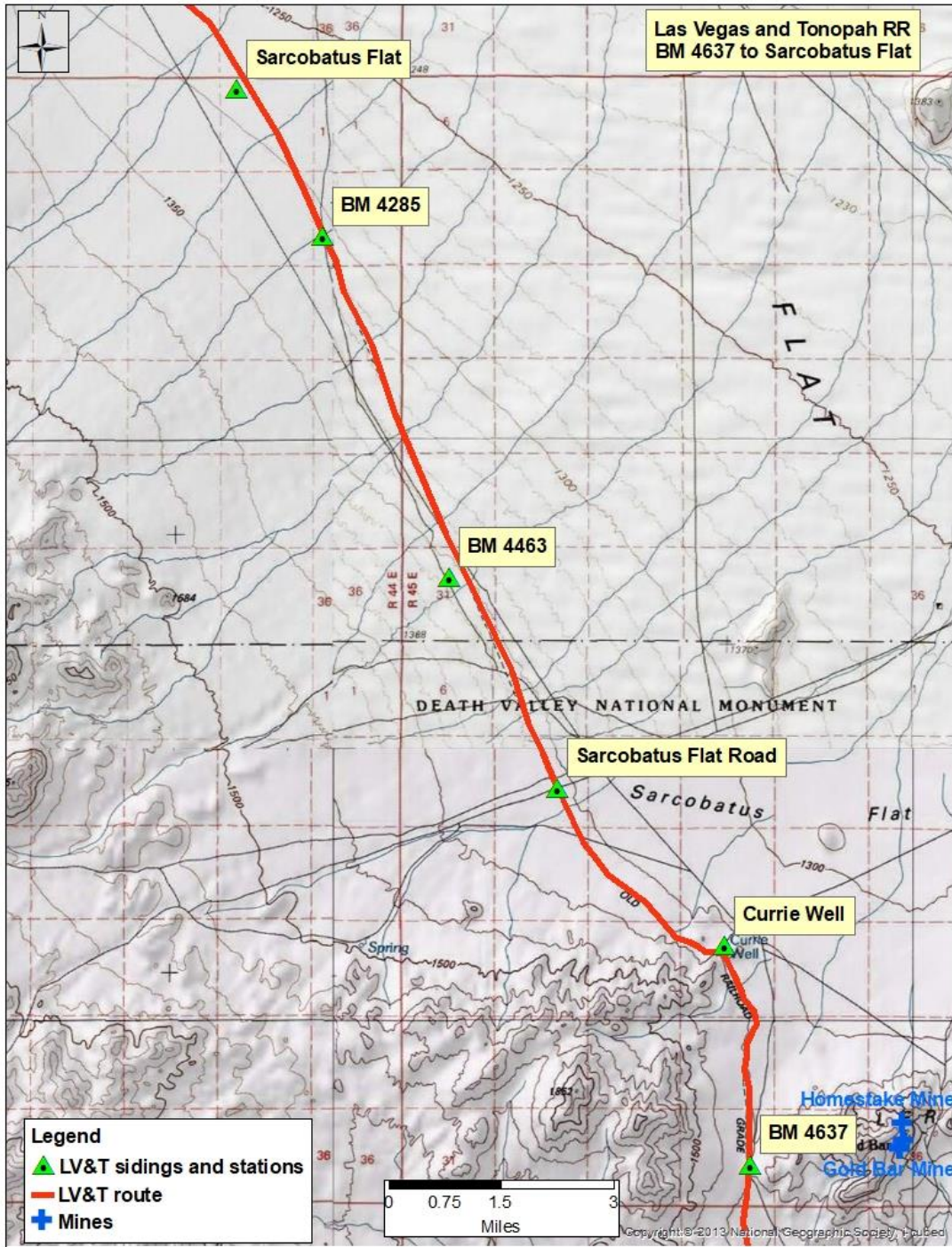
From **Rhyolite**, the LV&T went south along the west flank of Ladd Mountain and then west past the south end of Bonanza Mountain to **Box Canyon Road**. From there the LV&T went west to the south end of Bullfrog Mountain at the **Bullfrog Mine Road**.

From the **Bullfrog Mine Road** the LV&T went west and then northwest around the southwest flank of Bullfrog Mountain. Going 1.5 miles west from Bullfrog Mountain, the LV&T turned north to go through the center of the Bullfrog Hills and **BM 4637**.

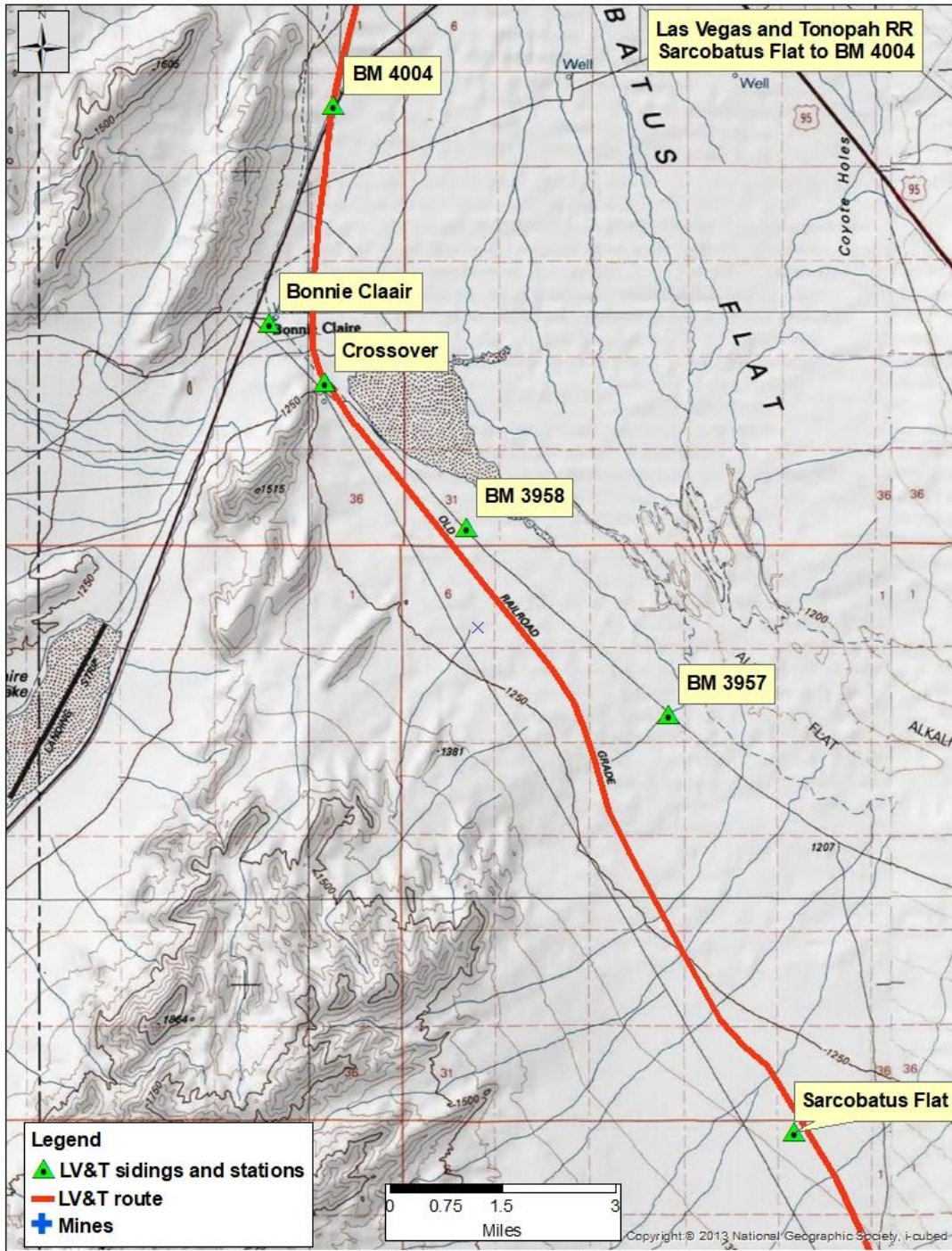


From **BM 4637** the LV&T went north to **Currie Well** at a northwest prominence of the western Bullfrog Hills.

From **Currie Well**, the LV&T went northwest to **Sarcobatus Flat Road**. From this road the LV&T went north-northwest past **BM 4463** and **BM 4285** to **Sarcobatus Flat**.



From **Sarcobatus Flat** the LV&T went northwest paralleling the B&G railroad past **BM 3957** and **BM 3958** as far as a LV&T vs B&G crossover at the northeast tip of Bonnie Hill and then to a point east of **Bonnie Claire station**. From Bonnie Claire the LV&T went north, again paralleling the B&G, and went eastward through **BM 4044**.

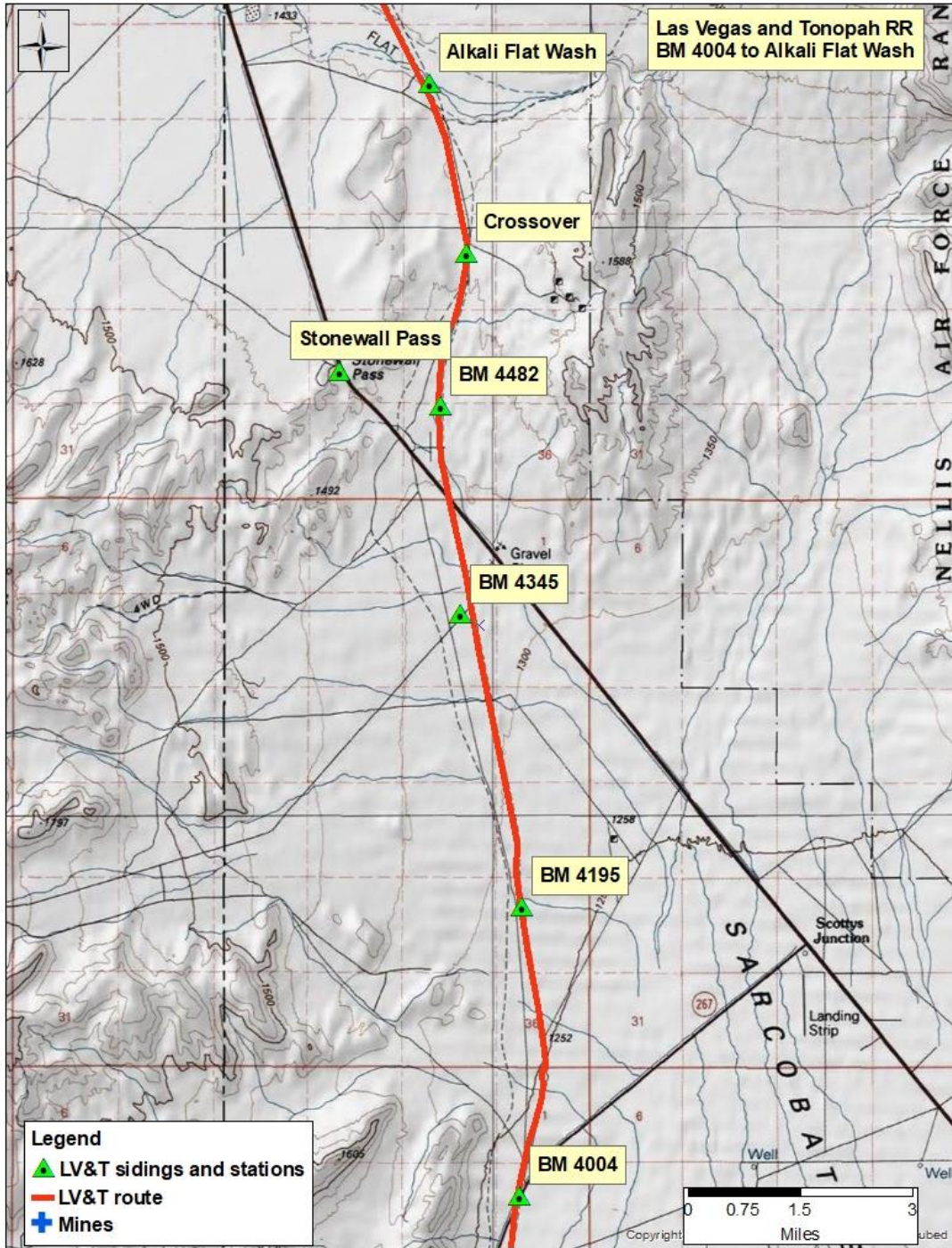


From **BM 4044**, the LV&T went through **BM 4195** and **BM 4345** to **BM 4482** to a point east of **Stonewall Pass**.

Southwest of **Stonewall Pass** and northwest of **Bonnie Clair** are the mines of Slate Ridge, Gold Mountain and Hanging Mesa. This is the Gold Point (Hornsilver) mining district. The largest mine was the Great

Western (Hayes and Lindgeen, 1909, Weed, 1922, Ransome, 1907, 1909, Turner, 1922, Lincoln, 1923, Albers and Stewart, 1972).

From the point east of Stonewall Pass, the LV&T went north to another **Crossover** with the B&G and then went north-northwest to **Alkali Flat Wash**.



From **Alkali Flat**, the LV&T went northwest, parallelling the B&G, past **BM 4665** to **Sayet**.



Caption: Goldfield extension celebration. From <https://www.legendsofamerica.com/nv-lasvegastonpahrailroad/> accessed Nov. 15, 2023.



Caption: Bonnie Clair locomotive of the LV&T railroad. From <https://www.legendsofamerica.com/nv-lasvegastonopahrailroad/> accessed Nov. 15, 2023.

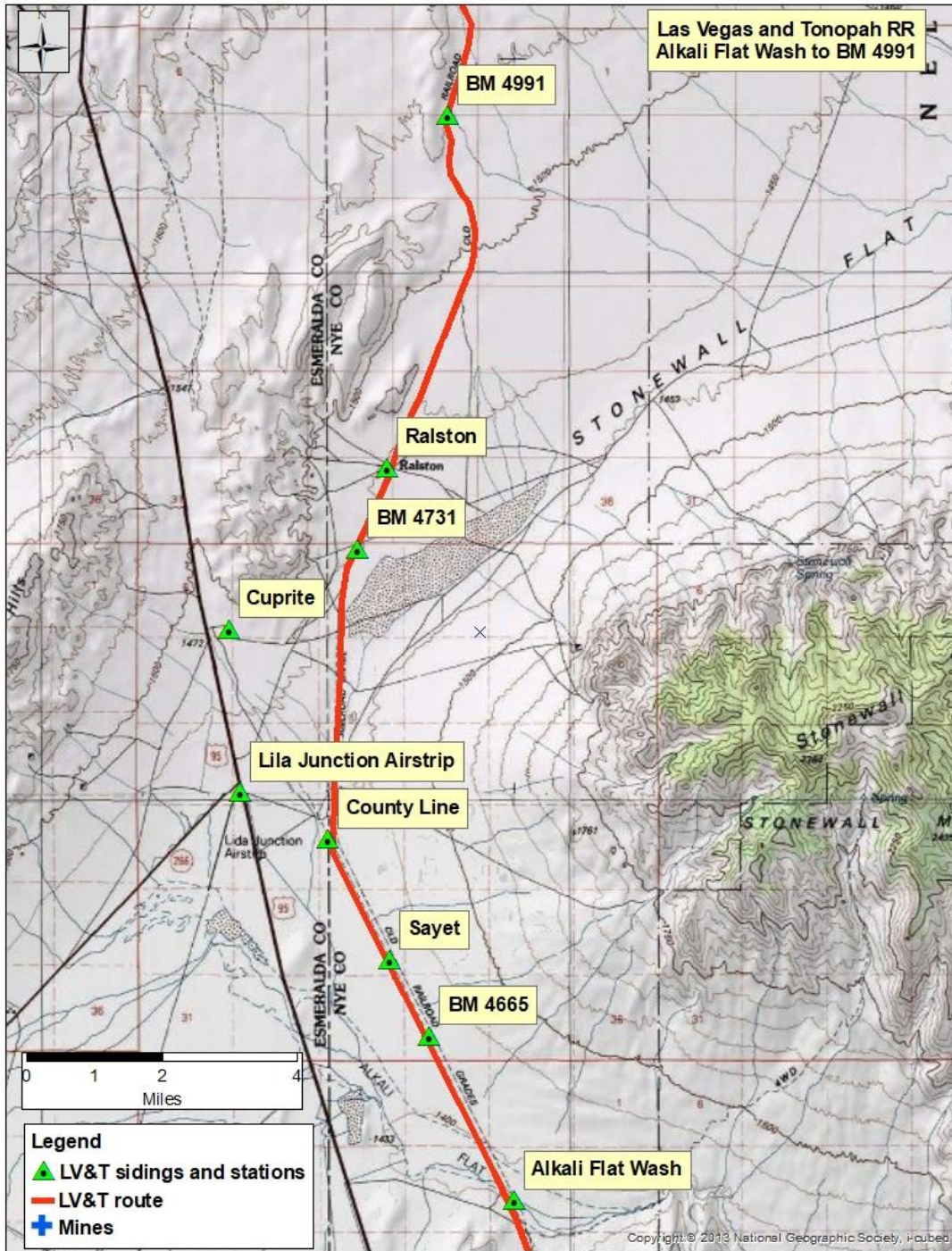


Caption: Las Vegas and Tidewater railroad with mule team. From University of Nevada Las Vegas Collection No v1c. Also at <http://mojavedesert.net/railroads/las-vegas-and-tonopah/> accessed Nov. 15, 2023.

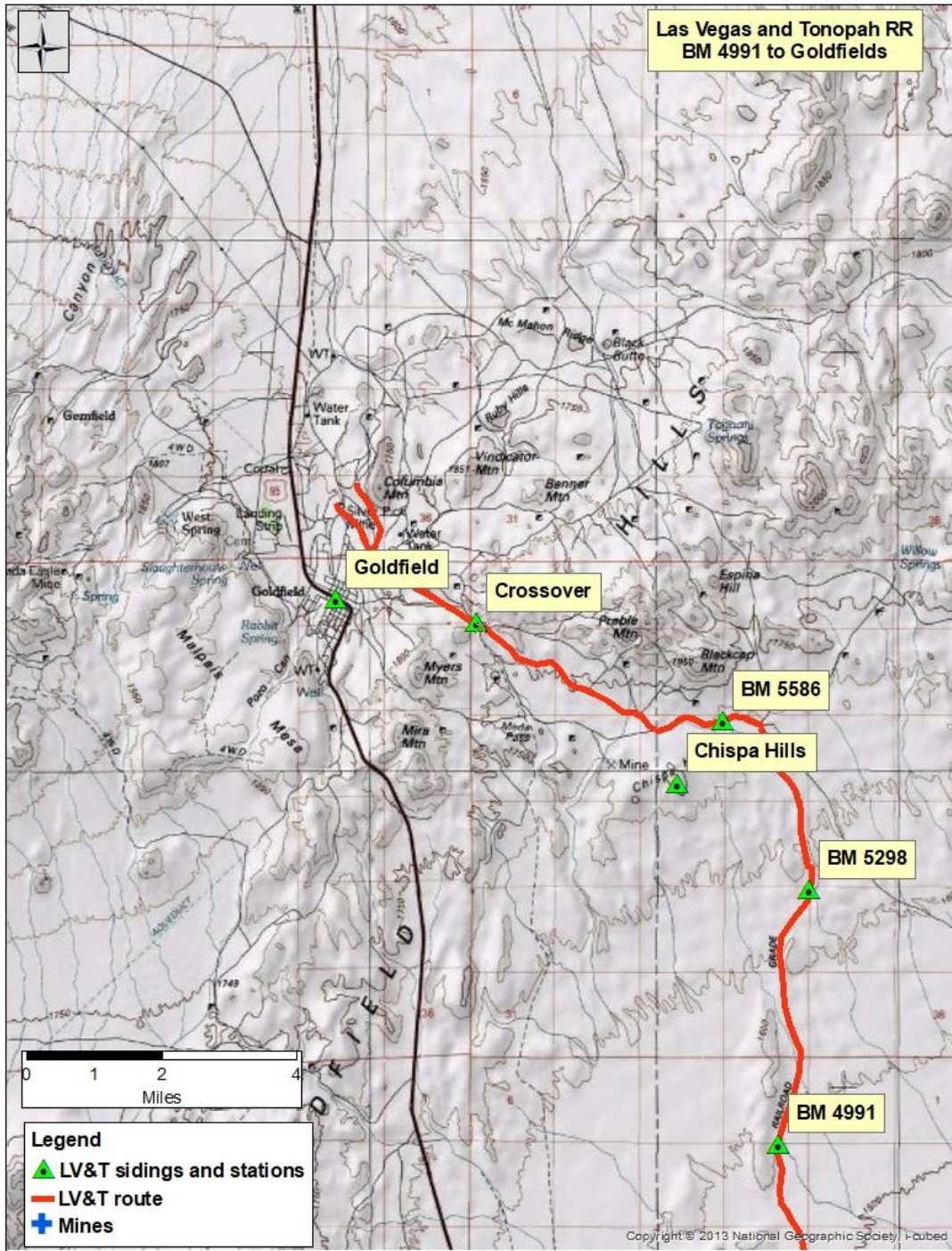
From **Sayet**, the LV&T and B&G went northwest into the Lida Valley and the Esmeralda County / Nye **County Line**. From there the B&G and LV&T diverged. The LV&T went north and then northeast to cross Stonewall Flat and thence to **BM 4731** and **Ralston**. The B&G went northwest passing the recent **Lila Junction Airstrip** to **Cuprite**.

The **Ralston** and **Cuprite** sidings were near the mines of the Cuprite Hills including the Cuprite Copper, Tri-Metallic, Goldfield-Midway, Eclipse, and Ralston mines (Ransom, 1909:109-110; Ball, 1906; Ball 1907; Albers and Stewart, 1972).

From Ralston, the LV&T went north to then northeast to **BM 4991**.



From **BM 4491** the LV&T went northeast to **BM 5298** and then north to the east end of the Chispa Hills near **BM 5586**. From a point near **BM 5586** the LV&T turned west and then northwest to a third **Crossover** with the B&G. From that Crossover the LV&T went west to **Goldfield** in the Goldfield Mountains. The LV&T never made it to Tonopah. That was accomplished by the Tonopah and Goldfield Railroad.



REFERENCES

All references in this report are available at
<http://www.greggwilkerson.com/iv-references.html>