

# **The Palm Borate Company Operations, Calico**

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### **Introduction**

In 1991 Alan Hensher and I visited with Glen and Dorene Settle at their home at the Tropico Mine, just outside of Rosemond. During the course of our conversation the Settles mentioned that someone had dropped off a photo album with them, but they didn't know where the pictures were from. After looking through the album, Alan and I felt some of the photos were from the Calico area, but we weren't sure. Glen and Dorene allowed me to copy the photos in the album, and a short time later, with prints in hand, I visited Daggett and was able to confirm that some of the photos were taken there. But some of the most intriguing photos remained a mystery until I received an inquiry from Bob Reynolds in July 2006. I supplied him with the photos and he was able to confirm the location of the mine railroad and mill shown in some of the photos. Recently, Mike Rauschkolb with Rio Tinto Minerals, was able to identify the mine as the operations of The Palm Borate Company.

### **The Palm Borate Company Operations**

Much has been written on the borax deposits of Calico, but operations of the Palm Borate Company and its successor Borax Properties Limited are scarcely a footnote. The borate-bearing shale exposed in an unnamed canyon on the southeast end of the Calico Mountain appear to have been first developed by the Stephens & Greer mine probably during the height of the borax boom in the Calico Mountains in the late 1890s (Bailey, 1902, p. 59).

The Palm Borate Company, was organized in 1902, and was capitalized for \$500,000. The company eventually patented 10 mining claims (Table 1), which had been located between 1900 and 1903. Six of the claims were patented on June 30, 1905 under the company's previous name, the American Board of Promoters Boracic Acid Company (The Mining World, 6 June 1906, p. 4; VerPlank, 1956, p. 282; Yale, 1905, p. 1022), the remainder were patented October 13, 1910, under the name Palm Borate Company (BLM Records).

In P. E. Nettleton's 1906 evaluation report of the six claims patented in 1905 he observed 5 shallow shafts with a total of 508 feet of workings, and an adit with a total of 1,550 feet of workings. The adit was on the Altura mining claim. The portal of the adit was just north of the south side line of the claim, just west of the drainage that cuts the claim. Also, he estimated the claims should yield 250,000 tons with an average of 8 percent boric acid, and that the mine should return an annual profit of \$131,000 per year.

In 1908, persuaded by this glowing report, The Borax Properties Limited, of London, England (capitalized for £130,000) acquired an interest in the property. By June, construction was well under way on a gravity tramway, which required a trestle and tunnels to bring ore from mine to mill. In addition to the mill, which reportedly cost \$75,000, the company constructed a mess hall,

a bunk house and other administrative structures (Rhyolite Herald, 4 Nov. 1908; American Mining Review 20 June 1908, p. 15). A number of structures were also erected on the Mascot claim.

According to Wright (1953, p. 224) the plant operated only 10 days, when a drop in boric acid prices forced its closure. In 1910 the Palm Borate Company lost its corporate license to operate for failure to pay the required fees (Curry, 1911, p. 15).

## References

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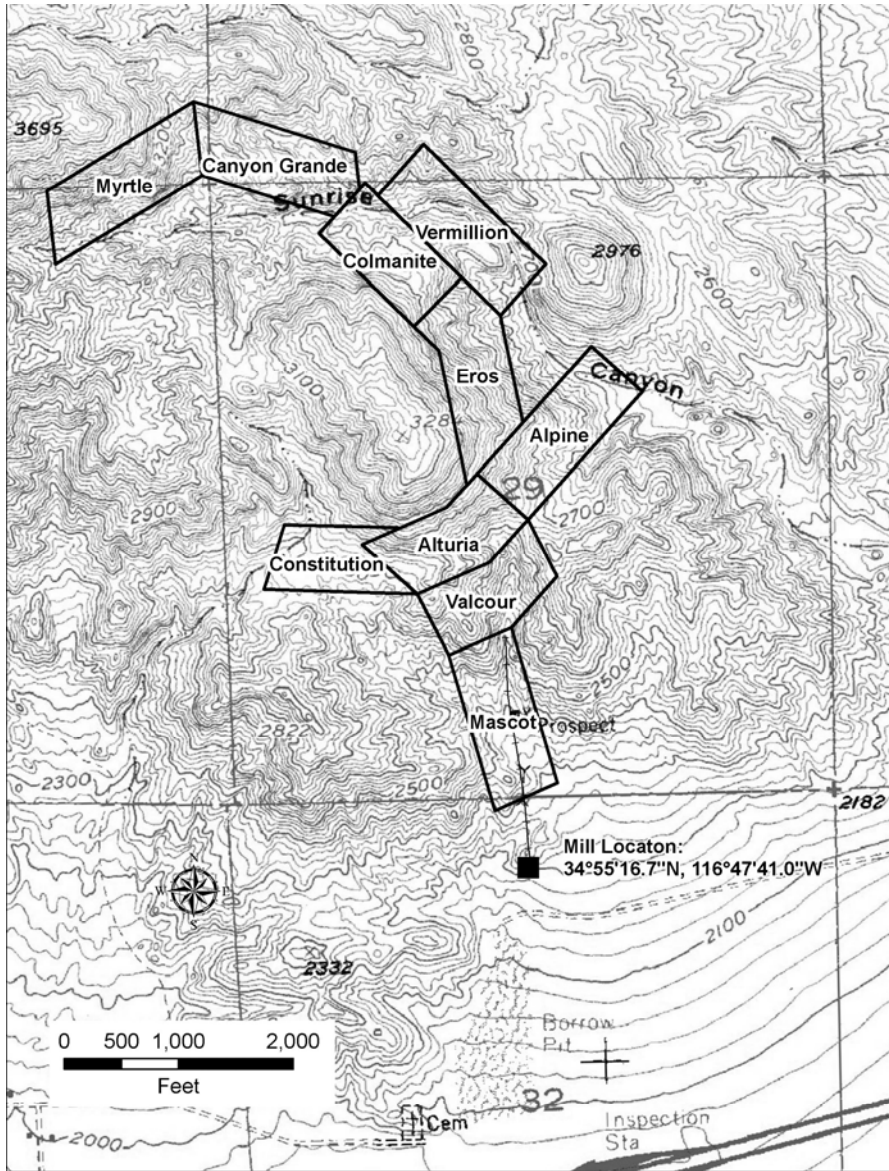
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**Table 1**  
**Patented Mining Claims**  
**of the**  
**Palm Borate Company**

<b>Claim Name Section</b>	<b>Mineral Survey</b>	<b>Date of Location</b>	<b>Patent Date Date</b>	<b>Patentee</b>	<b>Mine Name</b>
Alpine	4174	29 Oct 1900	30 June 1905	American Board of Promoters Boracic Acid Co.	Colmanite Consolidated Mine
Canyon Grande	4174	8 Jan 1901	30 June 1905	American Board of Promoters Boracic Acid Co.	Colmanite Consolidated Mine
Alturia	4174	8 Jan 1901	30 June 1905	American Board of Promoters Boracic Acid Co.	Colmanite Consolidated Mine
Myrtle	4174	20 Apr 1901	30 June 1905	American Board of Promoters Boracic Acid Co.	Colmanite Consolidated Mine
Constitution	4705	20 Jun 1901	13 Oct 1910	Palm Borate Co.	
Colmanite	4174	21 Jul 1903	30 June 1905	American Board of Promoters Boracic Acid Co.	Colmanite Consolidated Mine
Eros	4174	21 Jul 1903	30 June 1905	American Board of Promoters Boracic Acid Co.	Colmanite Consolidated Mine
Vermillion	4707	8 Aug 1903	13 Oct 1910	Palm Borate Co.	
Mascot	4706	8 Aug 1903	13 Oct 1910	Palm Borate Co.	Mascot Consolidated Lode
Valcour	4706	8 Aug 1903	13 Oct 1910	Palm Borate Co.	Mascot Consolidated Lode



Map showing patented mining claims  
of the Palm Borate Company  
T. 10 N., R. 2 E., SBM.



Working on the Borax Properties Limited mine railroad,



These two dare devils pose on the newly completed trestle.



Mill and camp of the Borax Properties Limited about 1908. This mill was located at:  
34°55'16.70"N, 116°47'41.00"W