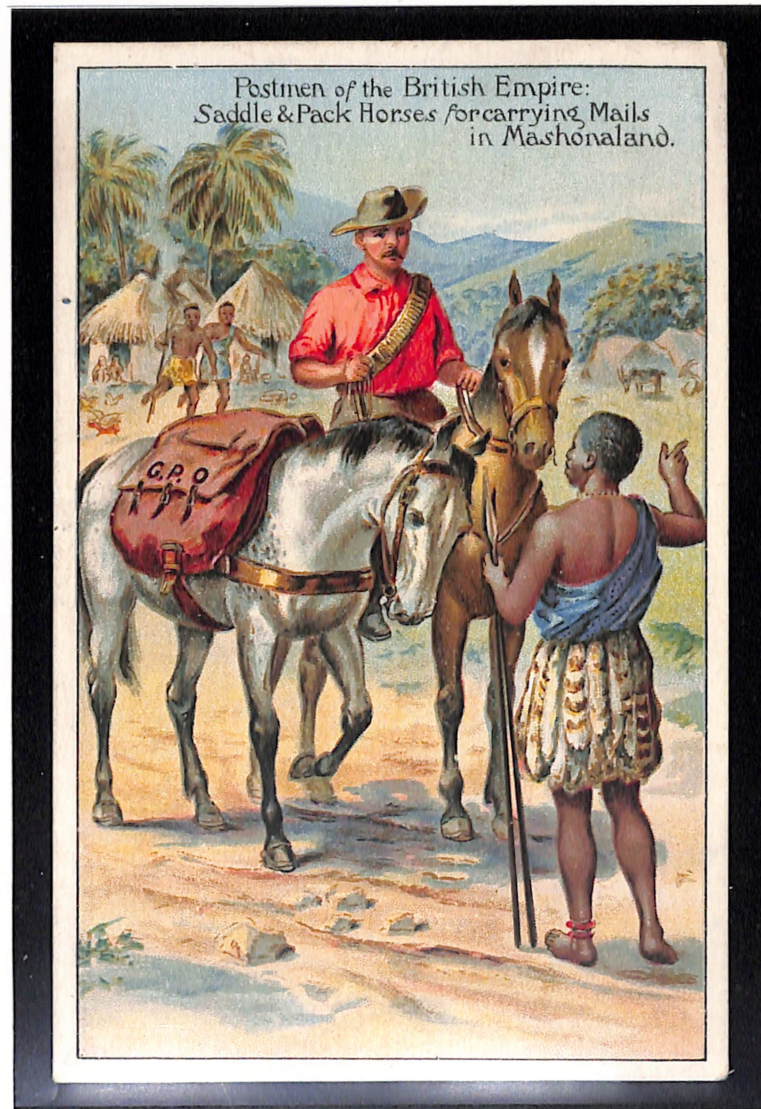


The "Mine" Postmarks of Rhodesia

In 1890, the uncolonized territory in central Africa (Mashonaland and Matabeleland) that is now the country of Zimbabwe came under British rule through a Royal Charter awarded to Cecil Rhodes' British South Africa Company. In 1897 Barotseland (now Zambia) became a British protectorate.

The Company administered these territories and provision of a postal service was one of its obligations. Mining, notably for gold, was the principal source of wealth for The company. Post Offices or Postal Agencies were opened to serve mines. This display shows those with "MINE" (or M.) in their postmarks and is limited to postmarks in the in the company and colonial era.



Jon and Jenifer Barry list 44 Southern Rhodesian postmarks that have "MINE" in the name - "*The Postmarks of Rhodesia 1888 - 1980*" (Philatelic Federation of South Africa, 1998). Many post offices and postal agencies existed for a very short time. For 9 ("x" on the table) no example of its postmark is known to exist. Not every mine post office had the word mine in its postmark. For some mines (e.g. Globe & Phoenix) the post office at the nearby settlement (here Que Que) served the mine. **AW** = a site of ancient working.

Mashonaland / Mazoe	
1	Chin Mine
2	Joker Mine
3	Jumbo Mine AW
4	Planet Mine X
5	Arcturus Mine
Lomagundi / Sinoia	
6	Jolly Boys Mine X
7	Ayrshire Mine AW
8	Muriel Mine
9	Eldorado Mine
10	Shankuru Mine X
11	Alaska Mine AW
Hartley / Gatooma	
12	Turkois Mine
13	Surprize Mine
14	Giant Mine X

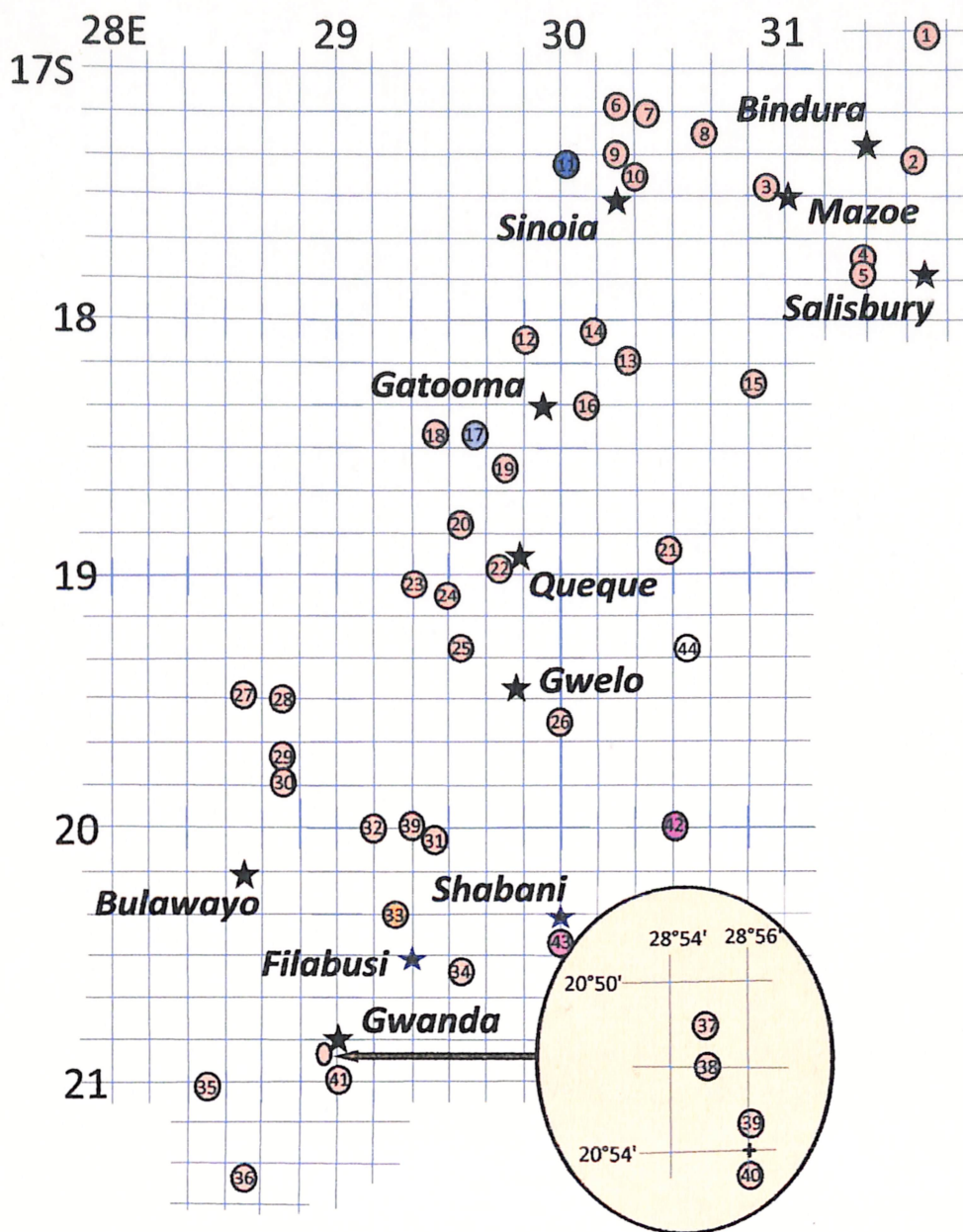
15	Beatrice Mine
16	Inez Mine
17	Empress Mine
18	Bluegum Mine X
19	Battlefields Mine
Midlands: Gwelo / Queque	
20	Theta Mine X
21	Gem Mine
22	Riverlea Mine X
23	Gothic Mine
24	Veracity Mine
25	Shamrock Mine
26	Wanderer Mine AW
27	Motapa Mine
28	Lonely Mine AW
44	Iron Hill Mine AW
Matabeleland	

29	Turk Mine
30	Queens Mine AW
31	Nelly Mine
32	Claremont Mine X
33	Mayfair Mine
34	Killarney Mine AW
35	Antelope Mine AW
Matabeleland - Gwanda	
36	Legion Mine AW
37	Blanket Mine X
38	Sabiwa Mine
39	Peggy Mine
40	Susannah Mine
41	Anterior Mine AW
Victoria	
42	Gath's Mine
43	Nil Desperandum Mine

gold	Copper	Nickel	Asbestos	Iron
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Some of these mines produced more than one metal. The main product is indicated.

Geographic location of these mines



The Postmarks

Black font & lines = that part of postmark that is present and readable

Red ink = that part of postmark that is not present

Red font = used when the font is unclear/missing but can be assigned a letter or number with a high degree of certainty.

"x" = used when the letter/number cannot be identified with any certainty

	Status		Status
PO	Post Office	PA	Postal Agency
TO	Telegraph Office	TA	Telegraph Agency
PTO	Post & Telegraph Office	PTA	Post & Telegraph Agency
MTO	Money & Telegraph Office	MTA	Money & Telegraph Agency
RTO	Railway Telegraph Office	POA	Post Office Agency
PTMOO	Post, Telegraph and Money Order Office		

The status of a facility depended upon the services it supplied (related to the expected demand) and its control (directly by the Administration or by a civilian agent). The status would be changed in response to the user or company/government requirements.

1. Chin Mine



A gold mine with many subsidiary mines. One of the earliest in the Mount Darwen area. Production started in 1906 and continued into the 1920s

Opened: TO - 14/09/1909
 Regraded: PTA - 27/04/1912
 Closed: 07/05/1917

3. Jumbo Mine



Pegged in 1891 by (Sir) Charles Coghlan, a member the Pioneer Column. The mine opened in 1904 and operations continued until 1932. Mining at Mazowe Mine, its post-independence successor, has seen disruption by political in-fighting and artisanal miners' violence.

Opened: TO - 14/08/1903
 Regraded: PO - 01/04/1904
 Regraded: PTA - 31/10/1916
 Closed: 30/04/1919
 Reopened: as "Jumbo" 15/03/1933

7. Ayrshire Mine



Gold claims were registered on 08/05/1893. To feed speculation in London, the mine was touted as a fabulous deposit. Unfortunately for these speculators, the gold reef began petering-out in 1906 and the mine closed in 1909.

Opened: TO - 04/10/1900
 Regraded: PO - 30/11/1902
 Regraded: PTMOO - 12/10/1905
 Closed: 31/12/1909

9. Eldorado Mine



A gold mine just outside Sinoia on the site of pre-colonial workings. Registered as a gold claim in 1893. It reached its zenith as the colony's premier mine in 1915 but soon went into rapid decline and closed in 1918. Replaced by smaller workings which finally closed in 1959.

Opened: TO - 12/10/1905
 Opened: PA - 18/02/1907
 Regraded: PTA - 01/08/1919
 Closed when mine closed 30/11/1919

12. Turkois Mine



Turkois Mine, 30km NE from Gatooma, was pegged in 1907 near to Dalny Mine (pegged in 1905). The nearby settlement was named Turkois Mine in 1907 but changed to Shagari in 1911, then to more correct Shona Chagari in 1923. A post office at Dalny Mine was proposed in 1911, but instead the Turkois Mine post office was moved to a site nearer the Dalny Mine and renamed Shagari. Since 1945 this gold field has been highly productive.

Opened: PA - 15/06/1908
 Regraded: MTO - 24/05/1909
 Name changed: Shagari 01/09/1911

15. Beatrice Mine



A gold mine 90km east of Gatooma, named after Beatrice Borrow, sister of Lt. Borrow of the Pioneer Column. The mine produced gold from 1895 until 1945.

Opened: POA - 11/10/1911

Renamed: Beatrice - 21/07/1915

This post office was run by a mine employee in a store. Although "Mine" was dropped from its name in 1915, the old canceller was not returned and on occasion still used until a new post office was built in 1953.

19. Battlefields Mine



In 1902, a settlement was established on the Salisbury - Bulawayo railway line at a point 180km from Salisbury and 288km from Bulawayo (in the Gatooma gold mining area). "Battlefields Mine" is not a single mine but a group of mines, each named after a famous British Napoleonic War battle: e.g. Trafalgar, Waterloo.

Opened: POA - 14/08/1903

Regraded: MTO - 21/08/1909

Renamed: Battlefields - 01/07/1912

23. Gothic Mine

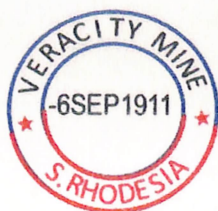


Gothic Mine is a large gold mine that owes its name to the farm on which it lies. This is 70km north of Gwelo town on the west side of the Gwelo River and on the Silobela Road. The find was pegged in 1898. Milling ceased in 1910., but the mine reopened in 1978. The Postal Agency served the workforce of several mines.

Opened: PA - 22/08/1912

Closed: 22/08/1931

24. Veracity Mine



A gold mine in the Lower Gwelo area, 64km northwest from Gwelo town and on the Silobela Road. Situated on Ellesmere Farm, it is close to Gothic Mine. At the present time, it does not appear to be operating.

Opened: PO - 31/12/1909

Closed: 01/07/1919

25. Shamrock Mine



Shamrock gold mine is 37km northwest of Gwelo town and about 1.5km from the Gwelo River on the Ranche Farm. The postal agency served both Shamrock Mine and the Rose of Shannon Mine (as well as a few other smaller mines).

Opened: PA - 09/09/1909

Closed: 01/08/1934

On the postmark "MINE" is abbreviated to "M".
"P" was used for the year

26. Wanderer Mine



This gold claim was pegged in 1897 on a site of ancient workings, 25km south-east from Gwelo town and 4km east from the Salisbury / Bulawayo railway line. In 1936, a mine was opened by the "Wanderer Selukwe Mining Company Ltd". Soon, it became a major gold producer. However, by the late 1940s the ore began to run-out and the mine was closed permanently in 1952.

Opened: MTO - 01/04/1936

Closed permanently : 01/06/1952 when the mine closed.

28. Lonely Mine



A gold mine 84km north from Bulawayo, next to Inyati Mission. Gold was discovered in 1906 and production started in 1907. The mine yielded an average of $\frac{1}{2}$ oz/ton of ore in the first 20 years. It closed in 1944 but was reinstated to become the largest mine in the Bubi green stone belt (until the 1990s). Mining continues to this day.

Opened: PO - ?/10/1911

Regraded: PA - 29/03/1912

Regraded: PTA - 01/07/1944

Closed: 29/12/1978

31. Nelly Mine



This post office was sited on Eldorado Farm, 65km north from Filabusi. It is close to Peggy Mine. In 1910 postal services were moved to Peggy Mine but the facility remained open as a telegraph office. Postal services were restored in 1916.

Opened: PO - 14/08/1903

Regraded: PTO - 01/12/1909

Regraded: TO - 29/11/1911

Regraded: PTA - 30/12/1916

Regraded: PA - 01/08/1929

Closed: 03/12/1949

33. Mayfair Mine



This gold mine was sited on the edge of the Insiza River, 23km north-northwest from Filabusi. Not much development took place before 1908 and mining was spasmodic after that. It has been under water since 1978, covered by the Mayfair/Insiza Dam, construction of which began in 1973.

Opened: PA - 08/01 1929

Closed: 11/07/1931

Reopened: MIO - 01/04/1934

Closed: 24/12/1941

34. Killarney Mine



One in a group of mines in the Filabusi Gold Field, 12km E-SE from Filabusi. This mine, opened in 1904 and closed in 1910, was the first large scale gold producer. Notable for the only full-blown bullion robbery in Rhodesian history. In 1906, 3 masked & armed men held up a cart 13km north of Filabusi and 1744 oz. in gold bars (today = £6 million) from the Killarney and nearby Celtic mines were stolen. The mastermind, a BSAP trooper, escaped conviction but was jailed for fighting with witnesses after the trial!

Opened: PTO - 14/08/03

Regraded: MTO - 15/01/06

Regraded: PTO - 28/01/08

Closed: 31/12/10

35. Antelope Mine



Gold mine & village 114km south of Bulawayo and east of Gwanda; a claim pegged on ancient workings in 1894. Developments commenced in 1906 and milling in 1913. Closed 03/11/1978 after terrorists burnt down the building. The site of a Zimbabwe Army massacre of Ndebele civilians in 1996.

Opened: PA - 01/05/1910

Regraded: MTO - 01/04/1944

Closed: 03/11/1978 due to terrorist attack

36. Legion Mine



A gold mine 136km south of Bulawayo. A claim was pegged in 1894 on the site of ancient workings. After that, in 1895, it was re-pegged as Mystery Claims. Finally, in 1920, after changing hands several times it was renamed Legion Mine.

Opened: PA - 07/08/1927

Re-graded: PTA - 01/03/1947

Closed: 03/06/1965

39. Peggy Mine



Located in the Belingwe District of Matabeleland, close to Nelly Mine, it was a gold mine of the 1908 - 1912 era and again in 1932. In the latter period it used the mill at the nearby Nelly Mine. The postal agency building was 5km south of the Nelly Mine.

Opened: PA - 31/03/1911

Regraded: PTA - 01/09/1911

Closed: 20/12/1916

42. Gath's Mine



A large asbestos mine, originally pegged in 1907, 37km northeast of Shabani. Mining ceased in 1998. Although there is still a demand for the "safer" white asbestos that it produces, the cost of resuming mining would be prohibitive. Its buildings now house Great Zimbabwe University. Pollution is a major concern and as much as 2500km² around the mine could be affected.

Opened: PTA - 01/05/1949

Closed: 31/07/1975

44. Iron Mine Hill



A site of a pre-colonial iron mine at a prominent kopje 57km from Gwelo. This feature was used as the meeting point for the Salisbury & Victoria columns in the 1893 conquest of the Matabeleland. The post office was sacked during the 1896 rebellion and the modern mine closed in 1912. In 1913 the site of the post office was moved 3.5km from the mine to a railway siding.

Opened: PO - 29/10/1895

Closed by the Matabele Rebellion: 27/05/1896

Reopened: by 12/12/1898

Closed: 31/03/99

Reopened: POA - 15/12/13:

Closed: 30/06/1950

43. Nil Desperandum Mine



An asbestos Mine 12km south of Shabani. Mining started in 1916 to meet demand for the mineral during World War I. It became a significant producer of "white asbestos", (along with several nearby mines). From the 1960s, concern about the health hazard of asbestos dust resulted in severe restrictions on its use and a great drop in demand. Action on asbestos dust pollution around mines added further costs to its production.

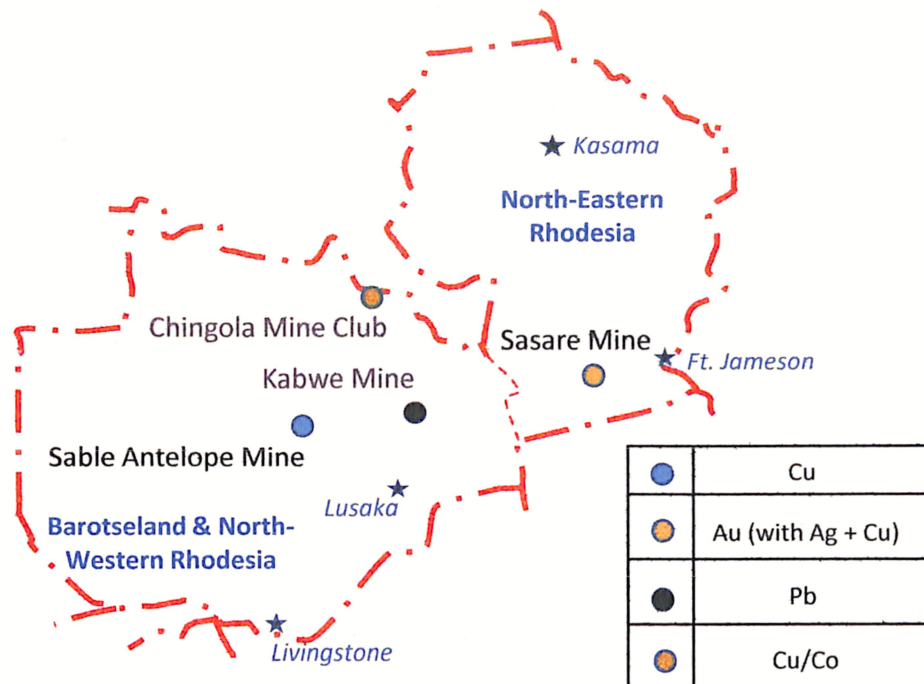
Nil Desperandum Mine closed around 2000.

Opened: PTA - 17/12/1930

Closed: 22/01/1959

Mine Postmarks of Northern Rhodesia

In 1890, British territory northwest of the Zambezi became the "Protectorate of Barotseland & North-Western Rhodesia" with the BSACo having a mineral concession. In 1899, land to the northeast became the "Protectorate of Northern-Eastern Rhodesia". The border between them was the Kafue River. Both were administered under the charter of the BSACo. In 1911 they were merged to create the "British Protectorate of Northern Rhodesia", and responsibility for administration was transferred to the British Colonial Office. Hoyte identified only 4 "Mine" postmarks: Sasare Mine (NE), Sable Antelope Mine (NW), Kabwe Mine (NR) and Mine Club Chingola (NR).

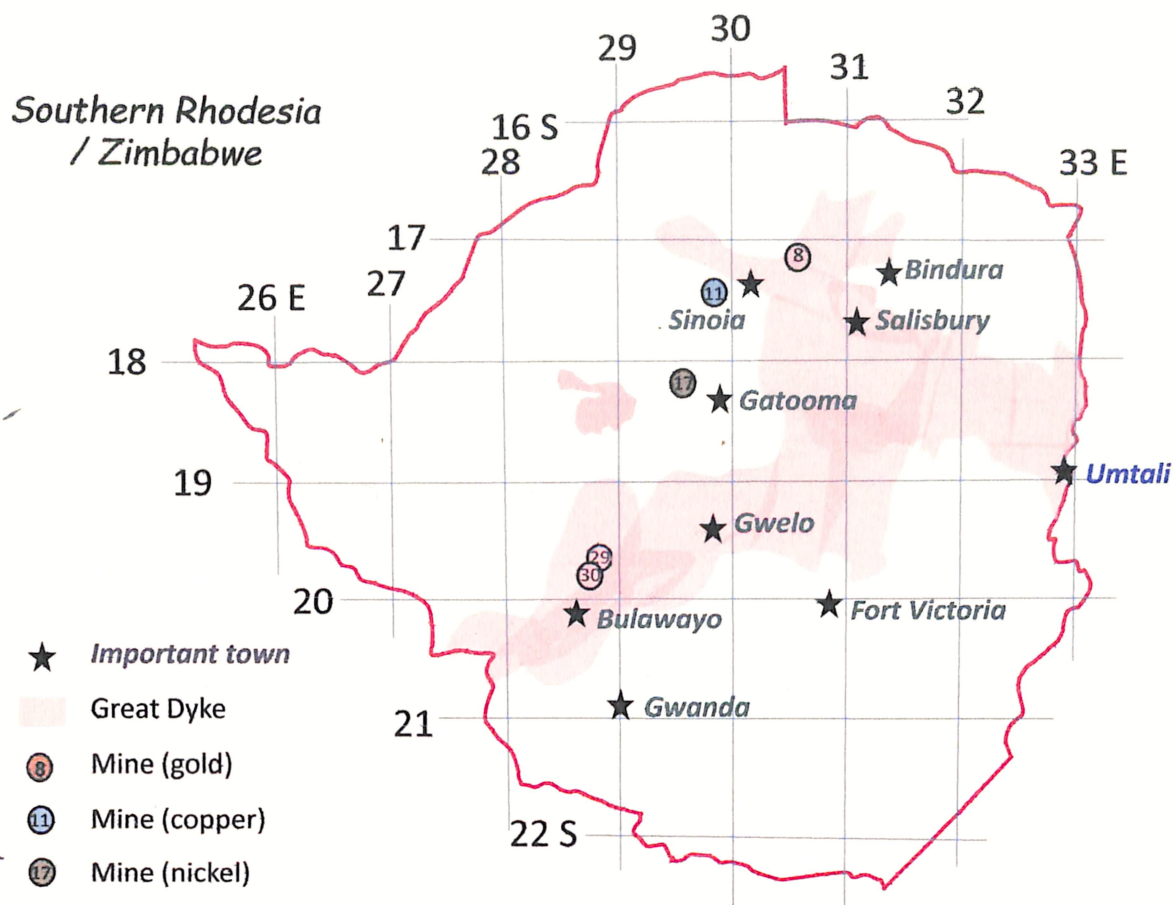


Sasare Mine

This mine produced 12,000 oz of gold during its operational life (1901 to 1942). As a mine of some importance, a post office was justified. (Postmarks are dated 1903 to 1914). Mining operations were suspended in 1914 and did not resume until 1932. It closed once more in 1942 when its owner, Jack Crowe, left for Salisbury to serve in the BSAP Reserve during the war. Though he intended to reopen the mine after the war, it remained closed.



As mines were developed, small communities of miners and traders settled around them. With the creation of a postal service in Rhodesia, post offices were opened at the mines or their local trading posts. Over time, new post offices with MINE in their names were opened while others were closed or renamed.



As noted already, over the 90 years during which Southern Rhodesia existed, a total of 44 such postmarks have been identified though fewer, 35, have been found. At Zimbabwe Independence (1980) just 5 of these were still open, operating as PTAs (4) and a MTO (1). (numbered circles on the map.)

By the time of Zambian independence (24th October 1964), all four MINE named Post Offices located north of the Zambezi River had been closed.

"Mine" MTO, MTA, PTA, PA remaining operational
at Zimbabwe Independence, 17/4/80

11. Alaska Mine



A large copper deposit 20km west from Sinoia named after the Alaskan gold fields which were opening at the same time. Mining started in 1959 (many years after its discovery) with a smelter being built in 1966 and a refinery added in 1980. The facility served smaller copper mines in the Lomagundi vicinity. Although the Alaska Mine closed in 1977, refining of concentrates from other nearby mines continued until 2000 when closure of this facility forced them to close as well.



Opened: PTA in the Alaska Trading Store 25/10/1976

Temporarily closed: 31/12/1977

Reopened: 01/02/1978

Regraded: MTA - 01/02/1993

8. Muriel Mine



An accidental discovery of a Cu/Au bearing ore in 1923 led to an intensive search for the main body which was found in 1932. Muriel Mine opened in 1945, 40km NE from Sinoia. By 1999, it had produced 34 tonnes of gold and 14 tonnes of copper (as an important by-product).

Opened: PA - 04/08/1961

Still open 17/04/1980

29. Turk Mine



As well as the gold mine, a settlement grew up around it and shares the name. Turk Mine settlement serves as the administrative centre for the surrounding mining and ranching area. It is on the Huntsman Farm, 78km NE from Bulawayo on the Lonely Mine Road. The gold deposit is rich (4 to 6g/ton) and expected to produce 22 to 23 thousand oz of gold annually over an expected life of 20 years. A notable relatively recent event (23/12/2018) was an armed robbery in which 12kg of gold was stolen.

Opened: PO - 22/10/1927

Regraded: MTO - 01/03/1936

Still open 17/04/1980

30. Queens Mine



Queen's Mine gets its name from the nearby Matabele Queen's Kraal. It is 55km northeast from Bulawayo. The mine is closed now but the postal facility remains open to service a settlement of the same name. The gold mine was pegged in 1896 on the site of ancient workings. The original post office, sited at Inyati Mine, was destroyed during the 1896 Matabele Rebellion but reopened later.

Reopened: PA (at Queen's Mine) - 02/10/1911

Regraded: MTO - 04/11/1912

Regraded: PTA - 11/02/1924

Still open 17/04/1980

Concluding remarks

The present status of this project:

Number of "MINE" postmarks listed	48
Less number collected to date	<u>26</u>
Number remaining	22
Less number not known to exist	<u>11</u>
Number left to collect	<u>11</u>

The future direction of this project:

- 1) Continue to collect the remaining eleven, although some will be extremely rare (known by single strikes). Hopefully, discover a previously unrecorded strike.
- 2) Move from this simplified approach, a single mark for each mine, to a specialized approach, collect all cancellers. There are 82 distinct cancellations, varying from one to nine for each MINE postmark. But this also faces a limitation for the same reason. Obviously, the prospect of completing this is more remote!

Over the 90 years covered by this project many of the gold mines in Southern Rhodesia closed when they were deemed to be uneconomic. However, the equation has changed! In April 2001 the market price of gold was \$US 260 per oz., whereas today it has passed \$US 5,000 per oz (a 40x increase in price). Old closed mines are reopening, and lower yielding deposits are being exploited. Unfortunately, for the philatelist there will be no reemergence of post offices with "MINE" postmarks. Use of the postal service in Zimbabwe has fallen dramatically with the rise of mobile phone and internet use.