

historians that this was the mine which Nuttall found in 1819.

Allsopp's story of the gold rush is that a hunter named Trammel took a quantity of quartz crystals he had found near Crystal Hill to Frederick Nortrebe at Arkansas Post, and the latter sent them to New Orleans to be assayed; that a trace of gold was reported having been found and this started the famous expedition to the "Gold Fields of Arkansas". This mining company, supposedly led by Jean LaFitte, established their first camp at the Point of Rocks near a spring which today lies at the foot of Spring Street in Little Rock. Trammel returned and conducted the mining crew to the location near Crystal Hill from which he had taken the crystals he delivered to Nortrebe. Here a smelter was erected and considerable time spent in fruitless mining before LaFitte admitted defeat. Shinn is reasonably convinced this was the same mine that Brangiere had earlier attempted to develop. LaFitte's party of engineers continued prospecting for many months and many miles up the Arkansas river, even as far as Dardanelle, without finding even a trace of gold or silver.

That this is the only location at Crystal Hill where prospecting was done would seem to be indicated by a letter I discovered a few months ago while doing research at the History Commission. In the Arkansas Gazette, August 14, 1873, was published a letter written by B. F. Danley of Palarm, Arkansas. He made reference to a controversy then in progress between the editors of the Arkansas Gazette and the New Orleans Herald and a number of prominent citizens of the State of Arkansas, on the subject of LaFitte's gold hunting expedition into this state. Danley said, "Some days ago your letter from the honorable Daniel T. Witter of Hempstead County, with your comments, indicate your conviction that Jean LaFitte in early times visited Crystal Hill twelve miles north of Little Rock in search of gold. It is probably true he did visit that place for the object stated, but there is no evidence of any work ever having been done there in the way of prospecting.

"I do not date back to the days of LaFitte's operation in this county, but I have lived in the vicinity of his acknowledged operations for more than forty-one years. Long years ago I was shown by the oldest living inhabitants in this county the actual place where this distinguished character and his countrymen spent considerable time in working a vein of silver ore; the place referred to was Mine Hill and it is from this circumstance it bears its name. To my mind both yourself and Judge Witter are laboring under a mistake as to the location of LaFitte's operation. From what I have seen and been familiar with for many years the location of the LaFitte mines were about three and one half miles above Little Rock on the north bank of the Arkansas river, between the mouth of Big Rock Bayou and White Oak Bayou. Many times I have seen the old furnace and quantities of broken crucibles said to have been used by the LaFitte party; fragments of these yet remain. The furnace was on the south side of the hill and the vein was said to run along that side of the hill and disappear in the river."

This latter day evidence would seem to indicate that the several stories of gold mining at Crystal Hill centered around the same spot, and comprised the efforts of both Brangiere and Jean LaFitte.