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## The mining history of Cape Town

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Mining took place at four sites in the Cape Peninsula south of Cape Town between 1687 and 1912, but either failed or was only marginally economic. The earliest site, Silvermine, some 21 km south of Cape Town, was prospected between 1687 and 1688 by means of a 16 m-deep shaft and two adits 20 and 15 metres long excavated into sandstone of the Table Mountain Group. No silver was assayed and it is thought that the prospectors had mistaken black bands of manganese ore for tarnished silver ore [1]. The shaft and adits are still in a reasonable condition and could be preserved as a heritage site.

Gold was discovered near Lion's Head in the vicinity of Cape Town in 1886 and the site, which was named the Lion's Head Gold Mine, was prospected between 1886 and 1888 by means of a vertical shaft 45 metres deep on the contact between the Malmesbury Group hornfels and the Cape Granite Suite [2, 3]. The gold was hosted in pyrite within quartz veins with a grade of 24.5 g/t. The shaft was filled in 1951 and the site is difficult to locate.

Hout Bay Manganese Mine, 16 km south-southwest of Cape Town, was worked between 1909 and 1911, when 5130 tons of ore were exploited from a northwest-trending manganese lode 600 metres long hosted by sandstone of the Table Mountain Group [4]. Several unstable adits and stacks of manganese ore are present, as well as two concrete supports of the loading jetty on the coast below the mine [1].

The final mining operation exploited tin from a site near the present suburb of Vredehoek. This site was named the Vredehoek Tin Mine and exploited cassiterite from stockwork quartz veins in the Malmesbury Group slate between 1911 and 1912. A total of 4 tons of cassiterite concentrate at 70 % Sn was produced [5]. A 150 metre-long adit, vertical shaft and concrete flumes are still in place and could be preserved as a mining heritage site.

### *References*

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- [3] Spargo P (2015) National Library of South Africa Bulletin 69 (1): 28-40
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