



The Historical
Society of
Pennsylvania

Collection 3034

**Santo Domingo Silver Mining Company
Records**

1891-1898

2 boxes, 2 vols., 0.5 lin. feet

Contact: The Historical Society of Pennsylvania
1300 Locust Street, Philadelphia, PA 19107
Phone: (215) 732-6200 FAX: (215) 732-2680
<http://www.hsp.org>

Processed by: Kim Massare

Processing Completed: April 2004

Sponsor: Processing made possible by a grant from the
National Endowment for the Humanities

Restrictions: None.

**Related Collections at
HSP:** Perot Family Papers, Collection 1886

Santo Domingo Silver Mining Company
Records, 1891-1898
2 boxes, 2 vols., 0.5 lin. feet

Collection 3034

Abstract

The Big Creek Mining Company was initiated in 1867 with mines located in Batopilas, in the state of Chihuahua, Mexico, and corporate offices located in Philadelphia. E.L. Stillson was superintendent of the Batopilas mines and John P. Logan was president of the company, which changed its name to the Santo Domingo Silver Mining Company in 1871. The company's business began to decline around 1917 and eventually was "denounced" in 1932 by the Mexican government for unpaid taxes. After a period of litigation with the Mexican government, the Santo Domingo Silver Mining Company was officially dissolved in 1956 by its shareholders.

The materials in this collection document production and payroll figures, as well as news and legal matters related to the Santo Domingo Silver Mining Company during the years 1891 to 1898. English is the primary written language of this collection, although a fair portion of the materials are also in Spanish.

Background note

The Big Creek Mining Company was initiated in 1867. Its mines were located in Batopilas, in the state of Chihuahua, Mexico, and its corporate offices were located in Philadelphia. Batopilas is located on the western side of the Sierra Madre mountains, whose eastern and western sides are endowed with rich silver and gold deposits. John P. Logan was the president of the Big Creek Mining Company and E.L. Stillson was the superintendent of the Batopilas mines. The company officially changed its name to the Santo Domingo Silver Mining Company in 1871.

In 1917 the properties of the Santo Domingo Silver Mining Company were looted by Mexican revolutionaries. Operations continued until 1927 when the company's indebtedness forced its properties to be pledged to a Mexican citizen. Under Mexican civil law procedure, the property was "denounced" in 1932 for its unpaid taxes. The company filed a claim for its losses against the Mexican government and after approximately fifteen years of litigation, the American-Mexican claims commission agreed to grant the company a total of \$292,264.49. The Santo Domingo Silver Mining

Company was officially dissolved in 1956 during a meeting of the company's shareholders.

Scope & content

Most of the materials in this collection were written in English, but Spanish is sprinkled throughout. The collection consists of two volumes and two boxes: a daybook (1897-1898), a payroll book (1897-1898), a set of payroll notes and various bills (1891-1898, n.d.), and a disbound letterpress book (1891-1893, n.d.).

Daybook entries include date, hour, and weight data for materials such as quicksilver, silver, lead, sand, and wood; as well as other types of production-related information for different accounts labeled "Arrastra," "Retort," "Vaso," "Fundicion," "Quicksilver," and "Ore." In this volume there are also a few pages of cashbook-type entries from 1897 to 1898. Entries document wages and various expenses for a few individuals and a few accounts.

The payroll book has a separate page for each pay week with entries that list the employee's occupation (i.e. washer, watchman, peon, breaking metal, cook, etc.), name, and amount paid for each day, as well as for the week in total. Some men worked up to seven days a week and wages ranged from \$1 to \$2.50 a day. Approximately fifteen men are consistently documented each week. Each page is stamped at the top with "Admin. subalterna del timbre, Batopilas." The payroll book pages also itemize each week's expenses for supplies such as hay, wood, and grocery bills. In a separate volume, there are many loose sheets with bills and receipts, many of which are in Spanish. A sample of items the company was billed for include large quantities of eggs, coffee, cheese, tobacco, a case of dynamite, wire, mules, dogs, and messengers. A number of the bills are stamped "Benito Martinez, Batopilas, Chihuahua., Mexico." There are also many small sheets of paper with notes concerning payroll.

The letterbook includes 390 letters, many of them long and somewhat difficult to decipher, from E.L. Stillson, mine superintendent, to John P. Logan, company president. The letters include reports about the situation at the mine and various legal matters, including a dispute between the Santo Domingo Company and A. R. Shepherd over Shepherd's alleged failure to deliver silver owned by the company. Also included are some charts of production and payroll figures.

Separation report

None.

Related materials

Perot Family Papers, Collection 1886.

Subjects

Batopilas (Mexico)

Mineral industries – Mexico – 19th century

Payrolls – 19th century

Silver mines and mining – Mexico – 19th century

Silver mines and mining – Wages – 19th century

Logan, John P.

Stillson, E.L.

Big Creek Mining Company

Santo Domingo Silver Mining Company

Administrative Information

Restrictions

None.

Acquisition information

The letterpress book (box 2) was purchased in 1953 by the Dreer Fund and the daybook (vol. 1), payroll book (vol. 2), and payroll notes and bills (box 1) were purchased in 1959 by the Gratz Fund.

Alternative format

None.

Preferred citation

Cite as: [Indicate cited item here], Santo Domingo Silver Mining Company Records, (Collection 3034), The Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

Processing note

The daybook (vol. 1), payroll book (vol. 2), and payroll notes and bills (box 1) were formerly Amb .75871. The letterpress book (box 2) was formerly Amb .7587. These records were formerly a part of Collection 2001.

The contents of box 1 are items that were removed from the payroll book. The letterpress book has been disbound for preservation purposes.

Processing made possible by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. Any views, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this finding aid do not necessarily reflect those of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Box and folder listing

Volume/Folder title	Date	Vol. /Box	Folder
Daybook	1897-1898	vol. 1	n/a
Payroll book	1897-1898	vol. 2	n/a
Payroll notes and bills	1897-1898	1	1
Payroll notes and bills	1897-1898	1	2
Payroll notes and bills	1898	1	3
Payroll notes and bills	1898	1	4
Payroll notes and bills	1898, n.d.	1	5
Payroll notes and bills	1897-1898	1	6
Payroll notes and bills	1891-1892	1	7
Letterpress book	1891, n.d.	2	1
Letterpress book	1892, n.d.	2	2-10
Letterpress book	1892	2	11-21
Letterpress book	1892, n.d.	2	22
Letterpress book	1892	2	23-31
Letterpress book	1892-1893	2	32
Letterpress book	1893	2	33
Letterpress book	1892, n.d.	2	34