Collection 3034

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

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

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### Box and folder listing

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