

An Inventory of the Records of the
Gold and Silver Extraction Company
(1890-1903)

Collection Number 269

a holding of the
Library of the Colorado Historical Society
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Processed by R. Keith Schrum

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HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Shortly after the first pioneers arrived in Colorado, they discovered that most of the precious metals hidden in the mountains of the State lay in hard rock, mica, and granite. It soon became apparent that the crude methods of panning and hydraulic mining would not free gold and silver from this ore and that more elaborate processes would be required. In many cases, companies and experts from Scotland and Wales came to Colorado to provide technical assistance in precious metal extraction.

One such company, the Gold and Silver Extraction Company of America, offered its clients a patented chemical process to remove precious metals from ore. Formed in 1890 with Leadville mining magnate Horace Austin Warner Tabor as its first president and Dr. Max Edward Werner as general manager, the company operated as a subsidiary of Cassel Gold Extracting company of Glasgow, Scotland, and specialized in extracting precious metals from mined ore by employing a cyanide chemical process.

The company established its own subsidiaries throughout the Rocky Mountain region; including the Comstock Gold and Silver Recovery Company, the California and Nevada Gold and Silver Extraction Company, and the Maricopa Gold and Silver Extraction Company. In addition, Gold and Silver Extraction contracted with mills in California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, South

Dakota, and Utah to employ its patented MacArthur-Forrest method of precious metal extraction.

The Company remained prosperous from 1890 to 1893, showing much growth throughout the West and over-all substantial profits. The Panic of 1893, however, plunged the nation and the western mining industry into economic depression. Throughout this period, the Federal government stopped buying the silver that the Company worked to extract from the ore, creating a no-profit situation for silver mines and mills. Precious metal mining never fully recovered from the panic, and the company saw only modest profits until 1903, the last year in which it filed an annual report.

CHRONOLOGY

- 1890 The Gold and Silver Extraction Company, Ltd. of America forms as a Subsidiary of Cassell Gold Extracting Company of Glasgow, Scotland.
- 1891 The company establishes the Shasta Gold Extraction Company in Oregon.
- 1892 The company incorporates the Comstock Gold and Silver Recovery, California and Nevada Gold and Silver Extraction, and the Maricopa Gold and Silver Extraction companies in California and Nevada.
- Enters into work agreements to employ the MacArthur-Forrest extraction method with mills in California, Colorado, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, South Dakota, and Utah.
- 1894-1897 Annual reports show net losses on company operations.
- 1895-1896 Wins lawsuit against Mercur Gold Mining and Milling Company for patent infringement.
- 1898 Annual report shows a net profit in company operations.
- 1901 Annual report shows a net profit in company operations.
- 1902-1903 Annual reports show a net loss in company operations.
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SCOPE AND CONTENTS

The Gold and Silver Extraction Company Collection at the Colorado Historical Society provides a unique glimpse at a company imported into the West's mining region for technical assistance. Even with the marked decline in mining in the 1890's, the company survived over a decade of tumultuous regional economic downturns. The documents in the collection consequently attest to the relative demand for the new technologies that Gold and Silver Extraction offered to replace rudimentary mining techniques.

The collection primarily consists of two series: *Correspondence (1889-1891)* and *Corporation Documents (1892-1904)*. However, there are less voluminous series of *Financial Material (1887-1889)*, *Legal Documents (1895-1896)* and *Miscellaneous Material (1879, 1890)*.

The *Correspondence* series includes letters to and from company officers and personnel. Subseries have been established to include the correspondence of men such as Leonard Gow, first vice-president; Henry A. Jones, second vice-president and general manager of Cassel of Scotland; and Dr. Max E. Werner, general manager.

Corporation Documents include annual reports, proposals, reports from company directors, and stock certificates from 1892 to 1904. There are no gaps in the annual reports that span the

Gold and Silver Extraction Company Collection 5
entire period. Photocopies of business meeting extracts that
belonged to H.A.W. Tabor also exist within this series.

The final three series are much smaller. *Financial Material*
embodies undated assay reports and a statement of cash paid to
Cassel of Scotland between November 1889 and October 1890. *Legal*
Documents include the Lawsuit Decree against Mercur Gold Mining
and Milling Company in 1895. Finally, the *Miscellaneous Material*
series contains notes and reports from the years 1879 and 1890.

Currently, there are no other known repositories of material
relating to the Gold and Silver Extraction Company of America.
Within the Tabor Manuscript Collection (Number 614) at the Colorado
Historical Society, however, there exists a file of original
documents relating to the company from which came the photocopied
Tabor material found in this collection.

The provenance of the collection is unknown.

SERIES DESCRIPTION

<i>SERIES</i>	<i>FILE FOLDER NUMBER(S)</i>
A. Correspondence (1889-1891)	1-23
B. Corporation Documents (1892-1904)	24-29
C. Financial Material (1887, 1889)	30
D. Legal Documents (1895-1896)	31
E. Miscellaneous Material (1879, 1890)	32

COLLECTION CONTENTS

<i>FF#</i>	<i>DESCRIPTION</i>
	<u>A. Correspondence</u>
1	Cuno, Charles F.: 11-14-90 to 10-29-91
2	4-17-90 to 10-28-91
3	Gow, George: 10-27-88 to 2-4-91
4	2-11-91 to 8-15-95
5	Gow, Leonard: 12-27-88 to 5-4-89
6	6-3-89 to 8-24-89
7	8-31-89 to 12-21-89
8	1-4-90 to 4-19-90
9	5-2-90 to 6-19-90
10	6-28-90 to 7-19-90
11	8-16-90 to 12-19-90
12	Jones, Henry A.: 6-8-89 to 10-26-89
13	12-7-89 to 7-16-90
14	Liepman, Henry: 3-25-90 to 8-3-90
15	Liepman, Richard: 2-20-90 to 5-29-90
16	Seaman, Lafayette: 11-21-90 to 3-6-91
17	5-4-91 to 8-26-91
18	Werner, Dr. Max Edward: 11-22-80 & 6-1-90
19	9-1-91 & 10-18-91
20	Telegrams, 1889-1890
21	undated
22	undated
23	undated
**	Letterpress Book, undated

FF#

DESCRIPTION

B. Corporation Documents

- 24 Annual Reports, 1892-1898
- 25 Annual Reports, 1899-1904
- 26 Prospectus: Allied Cyanide Companies of America, 1900
- 27 Reports and Proposals, 1902 & 1904
- 28 Stock Certificates, 1895-1896
- 29 Business Meeting Extracts: H.A.W. Tabor, 1890-1893 (photocopies)

C. Financial Material

- 30 Statement of Cash Paid to Cassel Gold Extraction of Glasgow, Scotland and Table of Assays, 1887 & 1889

D. Legal Documents

- 31 Lawsuit Decree: Gold and Silver Extraction v. Mercur Gold Mining and Milling Company, 1895-1896

E. Miscellaneous Material

- 32 Notes and Reports, 1879 & 1890
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