Wide Awake Quicksilver Mine Records MSS.309

Finding aid prepared by Leilani Silver, Pamela Nett Kruger
Processing of this collection was funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and administered by the Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR), Cataloging Hidden Special Collections and Archives program.
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Title: Wide Awake Quicksilver Mine Records
Identifier/Call Number: MSS.309
Contributing Institution: California State University, Chico, Special Collections, Meriam Library
Language of Material: English
Physical Description: 0.3 Linear feet 1 Folder
Date (inclusive): 1900-1930
Abstract: The collection includes reports and correspondence concerning the Wide Awake Quicksilver Mine, and its owner A. A. Gibson, as well as photographs depicting mine operations.
Alternate Form of Material: No other forms of material.
Language of Materials note: English
creator: Gibson, A. A.

Biographical/Historical note
The Wide Awake Mine produced mercury from rock that contained the mineral cinnabar. The Wide Awake Mine was located in the Sulphur Creek Mining District, Colusa County and was once known by the name, old Buckeye mine. A. A. Gibson, who was then the superintendent and general manager of the Abbott Quicksilver Mine, saw potential in the old Buckeye mine which had been closed for many years. A. A. Gibson began his career in mining as a driver of a dump cart and has worked in every position connected with mining. Mr. Gibson had a well-merited reputation as a successful miner and caused his name to be linked in ventures with some of the most prominent mining capitalists on the coast, among them being Major Rathbone of San Francisco.

Once A. A. Gibson had acquired the property and mineral rights, he went about developing the old mine. The old shaft was cleaned out and re-timbered. Then Gibson arranged for new and improved equipment to be shipped from San Francisco. When the old shaft had been re-timbered to the depth of nearly 200 feet, the tunnel leading into the old works was discovered. Following this tunnel to the old diggings a large body of rich ore was found.

Arrangement note
Original

Access Restrictions
Collection is open for research without restriction.

Usage Restrictions
No restrictions.

Immediate Source of Acquisition note
Loan from Sacramento Valley Museum.

Preferred Citation note
Wide Awake Quicksilver Mine, MSS 309, Special Collections, Meriam Library, California State University, Chico.

Scope and Contents note
The collection includes reports and correspondence concerning the Wide Awake Quicksilver Mine, and its owner A. A. Gibson, as well as photographs depicting mine operations. Included is a report, titled “Importance of Research of Historic Information on Mines in California that Used or Produced Mercury”, by Chris T. Higgins and Ronald K. Churchill of the California Department of Conservation, Division of Mines and Geology.

There are two copies of a descriptive report examining the condition of the Wide Awake Quicksilver Mine and the surrounding area conducted by R. B. Symington. One of the copies is of the original report with notes written in the margins, and the other is a typed representative of the original without the notes. Also included in the collection is a photocopy of a report on the production and uses of quicksilver. There is also a diagram illustrating the Wide Awake Quicksilver Mine and Lands, which is meant to accompany the report by R. B. Symington.

The collection also includes a copy of the State of California, Department of Public Works, Division of Highways, Service Agreement dated July 21, 1932 that recognizes A. A. Gibson, Ruth B. Gibson, and Emma G. Trebilcot, formerly Emma G. Gibson as owners of the property containing the Wide Awake Quicksilver Mine, as well as a photocopy of correspondence from an inmate at San Quentin, acquiring about employment at the mine.

Nineteen photographs accompany this collection. Identification and captions have been provided by Chris T. Higgins, California Division of Mines and Geology. All of the photographs from the Quicksilver Mine are believed to be taken around 1900, except for sc21054, which is most likely taken in the 1930’s. Nearly all of the structures visible in these photographs are no longer in existence.
Material Cataloged Separately
All photographs have been cataloged separately, except for sc21072, which is filed in the Northeastern California Historic Photograph Collection.
sc21054-sc21072

Publication Rights
The library can only claim physical ownership of the collection. Users are responsible for satisfying any claimants of literary property.

Processing Information note
Processing of the Wide Awake Quicksilver Mine Records was generously funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and administered by the Council on Library and Information Resources (CLIR). The [ABC repository] was awarded a Cataloging Hidden Special Collections and Archives grant from 2010-2012, "Uncovering California's Environmental Collections," in collaboration with eight additional special collections and archival repositories throughout the state and the California Digital Library (CDL). Grant objectives included processing of over 33 hidden collections related to the state’s environment and environmental history. The collections document an array of important sub-topics such as irrigation, mining, forestry, agriculture, industry, land use, activism, and research. Together they form a multifaceted picture of the natural world and the way it was probed, altered, exploited and protected in California over the twentieth century. Finding aids are made available through the Online Archive of California (OAC).

Subjects and Indexing Terms
Abbott Quicksilver Mine.
Buckeye Mine (Calif.).
Manzanita Mine.
Wide Awake Mine.
Miners--California--Colusa County--Photographs
Mines and mineral resources--California--Colusa County
Sulphur Creek Valley (Calif.)--Photographs
Uncovering California's Environmental Collections Project

Box 1

Reports and Photographs

Folder 1: Reports and Correspondence
Item 1: sc21054 Photograph of Quicksilver Mine (possibly Wide Awake Mine) 1930
Item 2: sc21055 Photograph shows view Northwest of the furnace-condenser complex at the Wide Awake Mine. 1900
Item 3: sc21056 Photograph shows view Northwestward across canyon showing surface facilities of Wide Awake Mine. 1900
Item 4: sc21057 Photograph shows view eastward across Sulphur Creek Valley, Colusa County. 1900
Item 5: sc21058 Photograph shows view Eastward of the main surface facilities of the Wide Awake Mine. 1900
Item 6: sc21059 Photograph shows miners removing mercury ore underground in the Wide Awake Mine. 1900
Item 7: sc21060 Photograph shows bank of condensers in the furnace-condenser complex at the Wide Awake Mine. 1900
Item 8: sc21061 Photograph shows Northwestward of surface facilities of the Wide Awake Mine. 1900
Item 9: sc21062 Photograph shows hoisting machinery for the shaft at the Wide Awake Mine. 1900
Item 10: sc21063 Photograph shows entry to the furnace-condenser complex of the Wide Awake Mine, shown in photograph sc21055. 1900
Item 11: sc21064 Photograph shows worker feeding wood to the furnace at the Wide Awake Mine. 1900
Item 12: sc21065 Photograph shows furnace at the Wide Awake Mine. A similar view taken later is shown in photograph sc21064. 1900
Item 13: sc21066 Photograph shows view Westward of the bunkhouse and cookhouse at the Wide Awake Mine. The relative locations of these facilities can be seen in photographs sc21056 and sc21061. 1900

Item 14: sc21067 Photograph shows miners at the Wide Awake Mine. 1900

Item 15: sc21068 Photograph shows view Southwestward of the village of Sulphur Creek Mining District, Colusa County. The Wide Awake mine is behind the sloping ridge of the middle distance. 1900

Item 16: sc21069 Photograph shows view Southwestward of the shafthouse of the Wide Awake Mine. 1900

Item 17: sc21070 Photograph shows view of the furnace-condenser complex of the Wide Awake Mine. 1900

Item 18: sc21071 Photograph shows view Northward of the furnace-condenser complex under construction at the Wide Wake Mine. 1900

Item 19: sc21072 Photograph shows view Northward of the shafthouse at the Wide Awake Mine. 1900