

Guide to the Goldfield Consolidated Mines Company Records

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Summary Information

Repository:	University of Nevada, Las Vegas. University Libraries. Special Collections and Archives.
Creator:	Goldfield Consolidated Mines Company
Title:	Goldfield Consolidated Mines Company Records
ID:	MS-00744
Date [inclusive]:	1904-1930
Physical Description:	4.30 Linear Feet (2 boxes, 1 oversized box, and 1 flat file)
Language of the Material:	English
Abstract:	The Goldfield Consolidated Mines Company Records (1904-1930) consist of correspondence, invoices, receipts with voucher checks, mining leases, insurance policies, payroll accounts, published notices and articles. Also included is a monthly Goldfield Consolidated Mines reports ledger from February 1914 to October 1916 for mines located in the south central Nevada area.

Preferred Citation

Goldfield Consolidated Mines Company Records, 1904-1930. MS-00744. Special Collections, University Libraries, University of Nevada, Las Vegas. Las Vegas, Nevada.

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Historical Note

The Goldfield Consolidated Mines Company was the culmination of years of shrewd investments, skillful maneuvering in the volatile financial and mining stock markets, and mastering the art of personal persuasion by two of Nevada's most colorful millionaires of the early twentieth century, George S. Nixon (1860-1912) and George Wingfield (1876-1959). Wingfield, a rover and gambler who dabbled in mining in northern Nevada, found his way, like many others, in the soon-to-boom silver town of Tonopah in 1902. George Nixon, personable, self-taught banker with political ambitions had met Wingfield in Winnemucca where Nixon had established a bank. The two became life-long friends and ultimately hugely successful business partners, Wingfield the richest man in Nevada and its premier political power-broker, and Nixon, a U.S. Senator. In 1902, however, both were still small players in a Nevada that was rapidly changing. In Tonopah, Wingfield did what he did best, gambled, won, bought a saloon with his winnings, and began investing in local mining operations. Nixon, the banker and politician, saw the potential of the Tonopah boom, and with his friend and now business partner George Wingfield, brought his financial resources into play. When the

gold strikes in neighboring Goldfield began to draw investors, Nixon and Wingfield followed, first in small ventures in Columbia (just outside Goldfield) and eventually as major investors in the Goldfield Mohawk Mining Company, whose mine was the site of a phenomenally rich strike in 1906. Wingfield and Nixon proceeded to acquire control over the Mohawk and its earnings, which they then used to gain control over neighboring mines. The scheme that resulted in creation of the Goldfield Consolidated Mines Company arose initially as a defensive move against the intrusions of the Goldfield Combination Mining Company, whose claims encroached on the Mohawk mine. Given the muddle of over-lapping mining claims over the same ore deposits and the looseness of the Nevada mining laws, Wingfield and Nixon's attorneys advised them that rather than pursuing litigation with an uncertain outcome, the better strategy would be to buy out the neighboring mining companies, thereby neutralizing their claims. And this is precisely what Wingfield and Nixon did. Using their extensive capital, financial acumen, and east-coast connections, they were able to buy controlling interests in the Goldfield, Red Top, Jumbo, and Laguna mining companies, controlling the Mohawk, Florence, Red Top, and Jumbo mines, the largest producers in Goldfield. Wingfield and Nixon organized a holding company, the Goldfield Consolidated Mines Company, incorporated in Wyoming and capitalized for \$50,000,000. To complete their near monopoly of mining in the Goldfield district, Wingfield and Nixon leveraged a buyout of the Combination Mines Company, their only major competitor, in 1907. This completed the consolidation of mining in Goldfield by a company that by 1917 was ranked as the 148th largest industrial corporation in the United States.

The centralized, systematic and direct management of mining operations, as opposed to the older system of leasing mines to smaller, independent operators, made Goldfield Consolidated the most efficient and cost effective mining company in the state with its own mill and railroad, and also the most productive, at least while the ore held out. Consolidation helped Goldfield Consolidated weather the financial slumps that ruined most smaller mining operators, but by 1913 the ore was playing out and the company's dividends fell off. In 1919, in the wake of the post-war depression, the company ceased operations in Goldfield and closed its mines and mills, although the company continued as a holding company for Wingfield's mining ventures throughout the west. Wingfield lost his fortune (and his stock in Goldfield Consolidated Mines Company) in the Great Depression but he remained on its Board of Directors until his death in 1959. While it lasted, the Goldfield Consolidated Mines Company paid out a total of over \$29 million in dividends to stockholders, of which at least \$8 million was paid to George Wingfield personally.

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Scope and Contents Note

The collection primarily dates from 1904, before the consolidation when the boom in Goldfield was beginning in earnest, until 1919, when the company ceased its operations in Goldfield, although there are a few records post 1919 as the company continued to exist after the mines and mill closed down. The bulk of this collection originated in the company's accounting office, and consists primarily of original invoices from the company's suppliers, employees, and contractors, receipts for payments made, and voucher checks that constituted the actual payment. In the absence of account ledgers, these invoices and vouchers constitute the most complete record of the company's expenditures, whether for machinery, lumber, or chemicals

for ore processing, to services rendered from employees, attorneys and engineering consultants, or the private detectives the company employed as miners to inform on their employees. Unlike ledgers in which expenditures are usually abstracted or summarized, as, for example "sundries" or "general expenses," the invoices itemize everything the company paid for, including ore cars, or freight charges, office rent, legal fees, cigars and whiskey for George Wingfield, and or the ambiguous expenses of the legal department for "entertaining" jurors after a trial.

While this collection of Goldfield Consolidated Mines Company records is an archive of the company, it is not The Archive of the company, in any sense of a comprehensive corporate archives. The collection, as it was received by UNLV, came from more than one source through a private manuscript dealer, although it is probable that all the records were originally kept in the Goldfield Consolidated office building in downtown Goldfield. Although there are multiple copies of the published by-law, the collection does not contain what are usually considered the "corporate records," that is, the official or legal records of the corporation, such as the minutes of board of directors and stock holders meetings, articles of incorporation, annual reports, stock ledgers, account ledgers, or legal documents governing the company and its various transactions. There is also no series of correspondence, or letter books, to or from the owners or officers. Because the company was incorporated in Wyoming, and its president, George Wingfield, resided for most of his later life in Reno, Nevada, those records (if they survived) might be found in one of those places, probably with one of its courts. George Wingfield's personal papers were deposited at the Nevada Historical Society in Reno, but that collection does not include the corporate records of the Goldfield Consolidated Mines Company.

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Arrangement

The collection is arranged chronologically with the exception of the two ledger books and one oversized flat folder.

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Administrative Information

Access Note

Collection is open for research.

Publication Rights

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Acquisition Note

Materials were purchased in 2012, 2013, and 2015; accession numbers 2012-17, 2013-20, and 2015-49.

Processing Note

Collection was processed in 2015 by Joyce Moore. Collection description was written by Peter Michel.

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Names and Subjects

- Gold mines and mining -- Nevada -- Goldfield
- Mining -- Nevada
- Mineral industries -- Nevada -- Goldfield

Collection Inventory

Title/Description	Containers
Invoices and receipts, 1904	box 01
Time sheets, 1904	box 01
Invoices and receipts, 1905	box 01
Magazine, newspaper, and journal articles and notices, 1905-1913	box 01
Invoices and receipts, 1906 Physical Description: 2 Files	box 01
Bylaws, 1906	box 01
Payroll sheets, 1906-1910, 1914	box 01
Correspondence, 1907	box 01
Insurance policies, 1907	box 01
Invoices and receipts, 1907	box 01
Payroll ledgers, 1907-1908	box 01
Insurance policies, 1908	box 01
Invoices and receipts, 1908 Physical Description: 4 Files	box 01
Time sheets, 1908	box 01
Invoices with voucher checks, 1908	box 01

Insurance policies, 1909	box 01
Invoices and receipts, 1909	box 01
Railroad Voucher checks, 1909-1910	box 02
Mohawk Mining, payroll receipts, 1909	box 02
Mining leases, 1917-1918	box 02
Insurance policies, 1910	box 02
Invoices and receipts, 1910 Physical Description: 6 Files	box 02
Mining leases, 1910	box 02
Invoices with voucher checks, 1910	box 02
Insurance policies, 1911	box 02
Invoices with voucher checks, 1911	box 02
Insurance policies, 1912	box 02
Invoices and receipts, 1912	box 02
Invoices with voucher checks, 1913	box 02
Metal production analysis, 1914-1915	box 02
Invoices with voucher checks, 1914	box 02
Insurance policy, 1915	box 02
Correspondence regarding mine accidents, 1916	box 02
Invoices with voucher checks, 1916	box 02
Insurance policies, 1917	box 02
Invoices, receipts, and voucher checks, 1917-1919	box 02
Insurance policies, 1918	box 02
Mercantile Department receipts, 1918	box 02
Correspondence regarding A.H. Lawry, general superintendent, 1924-1927, 1930	box 02
Patent advertisement ledger, 1906-1914	box 02
Monthly mining reports, 1914 February-1916 November	oversized box 03
Mohawk Mine summary of direct costs and productions, 1915 June-December	flat file 01