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## Finding aid of the The Jimmy Schneider and Robert Bulmore Collection of New Almaden Mine Materials

### Box number: 1978-251

History San José Research Library

San José, California

Processed by:

Barbara Shaffer

Date Completed:

2001

Encoded by:

Eric Schultz

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### Descriptive Summary

**Title:** The Jimmy Schneider and Robert Bulmore collection of New Almaden mine materials

**Dates:** 1850-1976

**Bulk Dates:** late 1800s

**Collection Number:** 1978-251

**Collectors:** Jimmy Schneider and Robert Bulmore

**Collection Size:** 15.5 linear feet 18 boxes

**Repository:** History San José Research Library.

San José, California 95112-2599

**Physical location:** For current information on the location of these materials, please consult the History San José Research Library.

**Languages:** Languages represented in the collection: English

### Access

The collection is open for research.

### Publication Rights

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### Preferred Citation

[Identification of Item], The Jimmy Schneider and Robert Bulmore Collection of New Almaden Mine Materials, [Box No.], History San José Research Library.

### Provenance Note

The bulk of the New Almaden Records were donated to the City of San José in the early 1970s by Jimmy Schneider and Laurence Bulmore. Many of the New Almaden materials were on display from 1952-1971 at the Statehouse Museum in the Santa Clara County Fairgrounds. The items were moved to a new exhibit at the opening of the San José Historical Museum in 1971. In 1978 the records were arranged and given their present accession number (1978-251). It is unclear which New Almaden records and artifacts had been on loan to the museums between 1952 and 1971, and which may have come after the materials were deeded to the museum.

In 2001 the materials were archivally processed. The accession number 1978-251 was retained for continuity. All research materials relating to New Almaden found in the collection were included in the 2001 processing. Institutional records are sketchy for this earlier time period, and it is therefore likely that a selection of these materials came from other donors beside the original 1954 collection. It is likely that History San José also has in its artifact collection New Almaden materials that came in the 1954 donation or later under a different accession

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number.

### Historical Note

In 1845, Captain Andres Castillero of the Mexican Army was sent on a routine scouting patrol through what is now northern California, then part of Mexican territory. As an amateur geologist, Castillero recognized the possibility that the rolling hills held vast mineral deposits. During a visit to local Ohlone indians, his suspicions were confirmed. The Ohlones told him of the red rock they used to make paint, and of the cave where the walls were solid deposits of this red rock. A trip to the cave left Castillero amazed; the red rock was cinnabar, high grade mercury ore. He quickly filed a claim with the most suitable local authority, a justice of the peace, and received mineral rights to excavate the mine site. The rights were divided among five principal holders, including Castillero, his guide, and the Ohlones who led him to the mine.

Unfortunately for Castillero, Mexican land claim regulations were unusually complex, and he found that his claim to the mine could be disputed in court by anyone interested in filing their own claim. This consideration, along with orders from the Mexican Army to prepare for war with the United States, led Castillero to sell his rights to the mine to Barron, Forbes Company, an English industrial firm.

Barron, Forbes Company, which operated a cotton mill in Tepic, Mexico, soon acquired controlling interest in the mine by buying the shares of the other principals. Organized mining operations began at the renamed New Almaden Mines (after the famous Almaden quicksilver mine in Spain) in 1847. It was the first large-scale mining venture in California.

New Almaden proved to be a bonanza. Not only were there huge cinnabar deposits to be mined, but the demand for quicksilver soon skyrocketed. Because of its chemical affinity for gold and silver, mercury was of inestimable value in the refining process of precious metals and was needed throughout the United States, Mexico, and South America. Under the direction of Henry W. Halleck (later a general in the Civil War), the Mexican miners of New Almaden tunneled into the hillside to hammer and blast the cinnabar from the mine walls. Carried or pulled to the surface, tons of ore were roasted in huge furnaces to free the mercury. The silver liquid then passed through condensers into vats, from which it was carefully ladled into seventy-five pound flasks.

The miner's life at New Almaden was not an enviable one. Men worked ten to twelve hour shifts, six days a week, for wages of \$1.50 to \$2.50 a day. Deep, hard-rock mining in tunnels was dangerous enough in itself, but New Almaden miners had to contend with the highly poisonous mercurial fumes as well. Barron, Forbes showed little regard for the welfare of its employees. Medical care was virtually non-existent, and workers lived in squalid conditions, their hastily built shacks dotting the hillside of what became known as "Spanishtown." Barron, Forbes ran New Almaden at great profit and with no interruption for a decade. But the success of the venture began to attract others who endeavored to share in the bounty. Questions soon arose regarding the legality of the original Castillero claim as well as the subsequent transfer of shares to Barron, Forbes. The complexity of sorting out Mexican land titles in what was now United States land compounded the problem. A claim presented to the Board of Land Commissioners by Barron, Forbes in 1852 proved unsatisfactory, and a suit disputing the ownership of the mine was filed. A court injunction in 1858 forced Barron, Forbes to shut down operations while investigation and litigation continued. In 1863, the case reached the United States Supreme Court, where it was decided in a four to three decision that the title did not belong to Barron, Forbes.

Seizing the opportunity, the Quicksilver Mining Company made ready to take over the property. This firm, of Pennsylvania and New York, was formed solely in anticipation of a favorable Supreme Court ruling; once that ruling was handed down, the company quickly prepared for the takeover. Barron, Forbes attempted to resist the court decision--armed confrontations at the mine entrance between men from the Quicksilver Mining Company and miners for Barron, Forbes nearly resulted in bloodshed. President Abraham Lincoln entered the fray by issuing a writ supporting the federal seizure of the mine and equipment, but the public outcry over the arbitrary use of executive authority forced the President to back down. A settlement was eventually reached in 1864 that enabled the Quicksilver Mining Company to gain possession of New Almaden on payment of \$1,750,000.

Under the Quicksilver Mining Company, little time was lost in resuming operations. Samuel Butterworth resigned as president of the company to become general manager of the mine (at an annual salary of \$25,000). Under his able direction, the mine boomed; New Almaden produced more quicksilver in 1865 than the fabled Almaden in Spain, the world's greatest mercury mine. Gross income for the three year period 1864-1867 totaled some \$6,000,000. Over one thousand men, mostly Cornish and Mexican immigrants, were on the company payroll. Butterworth brought routine and rigid order to New Almaden where none had existed before. Mine property was declared private, and a toll gate was erected at the entrance. Improvements in mining operations were initiated, machinery was improved, and the processing became more sophisticated. A tramway was constructed that brought ore from the shafts to the furnaces. Mine superintendants maintained a tightly controlled daily routine. Cornish "Cousin Jack" and Mexican minero often labored alongside one another by day, but separated at quitting time--one returning home to "Englishtown," the other to "Spanishtown."

Samuel Butterworth resigned in 1870 and his nephew, James B. Randol, became general manager. Randol's long tenure of twenty-two years resembled that of his uncle in many ways. The company expected discipline, order, and hard work from its employees; they in turn received benefits that the company extended. Mine workers lived in company houses, relaxed at company recreation halls or company-sponsored social events, and spent their \$40 to \$100 a month at the Derby and Lowe company store. Those who paid one dollar a month to the Miners' Fund, New Almaden's health plan, received medical care from the company physician.

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The mine continued to yield huge amounts of ore during Randol's years as manager. Newly-designed furnaces roared around the clock, reducing 154 tons of ore every twenty-four hours. By the early 1890s however, the glory days of quicksilver production in New Almaden were over. The mountain of cinnabar that lay beneath the cave Castillero had discovered was nearly depleted. The company cut back on employees and reduced operations. The 1893 depression forced even further cutbacks, and by 1912, the Quicksilver Mining Company had filed for and been granted bankruptcy.

Sporadic attempts to resume even small scale mining at New Almaden occurred throughout the first half of the twentieth century. Rising price and demand for mercury, especially during the war years, attracted many firms to the abandoned equipment and buildings atop "Mine Hill" as late as the 1950s. Production was limited, however, and each new venture lasted only a few years at most. During World War II, the mine was kept open and running on government orders, even though it was operating at a loss.

Today, the remains of the New Almaden repose quietly in the Capitancillos hills. The mine is protected from any land development by virtue of its Department of the Interior status as an historic landmark. Recent restorations of houses for viewing by the public and the opening of a museum signal the opening of a new era for New Almaden as a public park.

Adapted from New Almaden Mine (Calif.) Collection, 1845-1973. Stanford University, 1999.

1845-April 1846	William G. Chard
April 1846-Sept. 1849	Padre Real
1847-1850	J. A. Forbes, Walkinshaw, Young
1850-1856	Henry Wager Halleck
Nov. 1863-April 1864	James Eldredge
July 1864-July 1870	Samuel Fowler Butterworth
July 1870-April 1892	James Butterworth Randol; (Von Leicht, Harry - pro tem)
1892-1900	Robert Richard Bulmore
1900-1909	Thomas Derby
1909-1913	J. F. Tatham
1914-1917	W. H. Landers
1917-1926	George H. Sexton
1940-1946	C. N. Schuette

### Scope and Content of Collection

The New Almaden Mine Collection (Bulmore) contains documents dating from 1850 to 1976. The materials, measuring 15.5 linear feet are housed in 18 boxes and are arranged in 8 series: Administrative, Miners and Miners' Fund, Ledgers, Printed Materials, Research Files and Clippings, Ephemera, Maps and Drawings, and Photographs. The bulk of the documents cover the period of the late 1800's.

The Administrative series spans 1864 to 1940 and measures 1 linear foot. Housed within the Administrative series is correspondence, miscellaneous reports, accounting and financial documents, coded telegrams, minutes, and various legal documents. The correspondence is to and from officers of the company, i.e. S.F. Butterworth, J. W. Mather, J. B. Randol. Most of the documents in this series are monthly reports. Most of these reports are from Thomas Derby, Supt. to President, Quicksilver Mining Co., NY: Each report usually contains monthly bank statements, current accounts, ore statements, mine and hacienda accounts, Hacienda and/or mine payroll, delivery and sales of quicksilver, operation of furnaces, and general reports. Accounting and Finance contain receipts, letters, requisitions concerning mining supplies, sale of quicksilver, payrolls and rents. Coded telegrams regarding quicksilver shipments are a highlight. While the code is not included, some telegrams are deciphered. Minutes of the Board of Directors meetings, resignations, lease agreements for the New Almaden Stores resolution, patent assignments, deeds, arrest warrants - all can be found in this section. Additional administrative materials can be found in the Ledgers and Printed Materials series.

New Almaden was a company town. The documents in The Miners and Miners' Fund series relate to the everyday life of the employees - names of boarding house occupants, accounts from the company boarding house, receipts for the doctor's salary, receipts for store supplies. A noteworthy program is The Miners' Fund. It was established by J.B. Randol in 1871 and was organized to provide medical services to all employees and their families. All employees participated at a monthly fee of \$1.00. For this, each family member was eligible for any medical service without additional cost. See also the Ledgers and Printed Materials series for additional materials.

The Ledgers are housed in 9 boxes, measuring 7.5 linear feet. Ledgers are mine accounts, supplies, shipping receipts, rents, Miners' Fund assets and expenditures, daily foreman reports, time books, poll and infirmity taxes and an engineer's log.

Printed materials include annual reports (dating 1864 - 1886 and 1890 - 1912), the charter and by-laws and quicksilver condensation reports. Naming a few of these: "California Quicksilver" reprinted from the Evening Bulletin, May, 1884; reprint from Scribner's Monthly Magazine, February, 1878 "New Almaden or A California Mining Camp;" reproduction of article from Cosmopolitan, 1903, "Romances of the World's Great Mines;" reproduction from California State Mining Bureau, May, 1918, "Quicksilver Resources of California;" "Madonna Miner," 1936, 1937; Westways 1938, 1945, 1946, 1954. The three (3) Helping Hand Club publications, 1870, are unique, Cookery for Working Mens' Wives is one. Among the many publications are "The Engineering Journal," 1875, and "Hunts' Merchants' Magazine," 1856. Some interesting

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pamphlets include: A Contested Election in California, New Almaden 1878; A Mining Accident at New Almaden, CA, 1888; The Engineering and Mining Journal, Sept. 4, 1875 and Jan. 4, 1902; Mines and Minerals,, March, 1899.

Research files and clippings, comprising 3 folders, are primarily those collected by Laurence Bulmore, Jimmy Schneider and Clyde Arbuckle. These files and clippings date between 1859 and 1976. Most are original documents or correspondence; some are xeroxed.

Ephemera includes 4 ledgers containing preferred stock certificates; envelopes dated 1905-1907, addressed to A. L. Bailey, President, Quicksilver Mining co., New York; blank forms used by the New Almaden Stores, a New Almaden Co. Inc. book of blank receipts and a book: Rudiments of Written Arithmetic, 1877, Teacher's Edition.

The majority of drawings are furnaces, pumping stations, or engines. The maps are primarily USGS topographical maps; there are also mine sketches.

### **Indexing Terms**

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the library's online public access catalog.

Bulmore, Robert

Schneider, Jimmy

Mercury mines and mining--California--New Almaden

Mercury mines and mining--California--Santa Clara County

Mercury Ores--California--Santa Clara County New Almaden (Calif.)--History

### **Related Material at HSJ**

Artifact Collection - see esp. accession at #1979-251

Book Catalog (various titles)

Manuscript Catalog (1978-825; 1979-659; 1979-862; 1979-2586; 1984-103-12; 1978-713; 1980-196-2; 1985-133)

Photograph Catalog

Pamphlet Catalog (1979-49)

Santa Clara County Court Records

### **Related Collections at other Repositories**

Sourisseau Academy, SJSU, photographs only

Santa Clara County Park, New Almaden Quicksilver Mining Museum, artifacts and ephemera at

<http://www.geocities.com/almadenqs/newalmmus.html>

See the Online Archive of California for related collections at other California repositories.

**Administrative**

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**Correspondence**

box 1, folder 1	<b>1864-1865</b>
box 1, folder 2	<b>1866-1871</b>
box 1, folder 3	<b>1883-1927</b>

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**Reports**

box 1, folder 4	<b>1862-1872</b>
box 1, folder 5	<b>1875-1879</b>
box 1, folder 6	<b>1880-1883</b>
box 1, folder 7	<b>1884</b>
box 1, folder 8	<b>1886-1888</b>
box 1, folder 9	<b>1890-1899</b>
box 1, folder 10-12	<b>1904</b>
box 1, folder 13-20	<b>1905</b>
box 1, folder 21-28	<b>1906</b>
box 1, folder 29	<b>1907</b>
box 2, folder 1-3	<b>1907</b>
box 2, folder 4	<b>1850-1920</b>

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**Accounting and Finance**

box 2, folder 5	<b>1861-1865</b>
box 2, folder 6	<b>1865-1867</b>
box 2, folder 7	<b>1868-1878</b>
box 2, folder 8	<b>1876</b>
box 2, folder 9	<b>1876-1882</b>
box 2, folder 10	<b>1886</b>
box 2, folder 11	<b>1887-1890</b>
box 2, folder 12	<b>1891-1897</b>
box 2, folder 13	<b>1908-1940</b>

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**Legal - Board of Directors**

box 2, folder 14	<b>1864-1870</b>
box 2, folder 15	<b>1892-1915</b>

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**Legal - Company**

box 2, folder 16	<b>1892-1915</b>
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**Legal - Patents**

box 2, folder 17	<b>1879-1880</b>
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**Administrative**

**Legal - Patents**

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box 2, folder 18	<b>1876-1880</b>
box 2, folder 19	<b>1879-1885</b>

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**Legal - Land Transactions - Railroad**

box 2, folder 20	<b>1886-1887</b>
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**Legal - Mortgages**

box 2, folder 21	<b>1850-1861</b>
box 2, folder 22	<b>1863-1865</b>
box 2, folder 23	<b>1866-1869</b>
box 2, folder 24	<b>1869-1876</b>
box 3, folder 1	<b>1912</b>

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**Legal - Company**

box 3, folder 2	<b>1863</b>
box 3, folder 3	<b>1863-1869</b>
box 3, folder 4	<b>1876-1912</b>

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**Legal - Company Store**

box 3, folder 5	<b>1871-1888</b>
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**Legal - Miners**

box 3, folder 6	<b>1866</b>
box 3, folder 7	<b>1867-1881</b>

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**Legal - Coded Telegrams**

box 3, folder 8	<b>1853-1884</b>
box 3, folder 9	<b>1881-1883</b>
box 3, folder 10	<b>1884</b>

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**Miners and Miners' Fund**

box 4, folder 1	<b>1865-1892</b>
box 4, folder 2	<b>1894-1895</b>
box 4, folder 3	<b>1896-1917</b>

**Printed Materials**

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**Annual Reports**

box 4, folder 4      **1864-1872**  
box 4, folder 5      **1873-1886**  
box 4, folder 6      **1890-1912**

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**Charter/By-laws**

box 4, folder 7      **1867 1883**

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**Legal**

box 4, folder 8      **1878-1887**  
box 4, folder 9      **1888**

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**Condensation Reports**

box 4, folder 10      **1884 1885**

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**Mines**

box 4, folder 11      **1866**

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**Mines - Statistics**

box 4, folder 12      **1884-1886**

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**Helping Hand Club**

box 4, folder 13      **1890**

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**Miscellaneous**

box 4, folder 14      **1856**  
box 4, folder 15      **1875 1892**  
box 5, folder 1      **1878-1884**  
box 5, folder 2      **1889-1899**

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**Mines-Miscellaneous**

box 5, folder 3      **1903-1936**

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**Printed Materials**

**Mines-Miscellaneous**

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box 5, folder 4	<b>1936-1938</b>
box 5, folder 5	<b>1942-1943</b>
box 5, folder 6	<b>1945-1954</b>
box 5, folder 7	<b>1954-1955</b>
box 5, folder 8	<b>1956-1967</b>

**Research Files and Clippings**

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box 5, folder 9      **Newspaper clipping 1942-1967, no date**

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box 5, folder 10      **Correspondence 1859-1951**

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box 5, folder 11      **Correspondence 1953-1967**

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**Ephemera**

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box 5, folder 12      **Personal Reminiscences no date**

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box 5, folder 13      **Miscellaneous no date**

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Maps and Drawings

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box 5, folder 14      1918-1952

**Ephemera**

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box 6

**Telegrams, Shipping Records, and Messages 1884**

Ledgers [Arranged by physical size, not content.]

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box 7            **Stock Certificates \$100 Quicksilver Mining Co. (2 vols.) December 1917**

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box 8            **Purchase Log, Braun-Knecht-Heimann Company, Consignee June 1915-July 1916**

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box 8            **Mdse., Cash, Pool Cash, Coupons... November 1915-February 1917**

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box 8            **Monthly Timebook and Payroll January 1917-June 1917**

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box 9            **Cash Book - Store No. 1 September 1911-October 1917**

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box 9            **Lists Misc, and Equipment Expenses July 1897-April 1900**

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box 9            **Receipts and Disbursements April 1915-July 1920**

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box 9            **Requisitions April 10, 1909-March 1, 1910**

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box 9            **Surface Foreman's Account October-March, no year**

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box 10           **Toll Gate 1864-1870**

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box 10           **Transfer Book February-March, 1888**

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box 10           **F. F. Wilkinson, Surveyor October 1889-April 1891**

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Ledgers [Arranged by physical size, not content.]

Ralph Lowe January 1866-December 1871

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box 10            **Ralph Lowe January 1866-December 1871**

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box 10            **Daily Report of Hacienda Foreman October 1879-July 1880**

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box 10            **Poll and Infirmary Taxes 1899**

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box 10            **Metal May 1905-April 1907**

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box 11            **Account Book Materials February-March, 1869**

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box 11            **Materials Issued to Miners... March 1869**

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box 11            **Payment A/C Payroll July 1882-December 1883**

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box 11            **Ores Burnt and Wood Consumed April 1879-July 1879**

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box 11            **Rent Roll 1866-1868**

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box 11            **Mine Time Book (2 vols.) February 1891, November 1885**

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box 11            **Monthly Time Book January 1894-August 1895**

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box 11            **Miners' Fund (2 vols.) December 1876-December 1880, November 1882-December 1885**

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box 11            **Accounting Book Miner Fund Tickets February 1899-January 1903**

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Payrolls May 1893-February 1897

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box 11            **Payrolls May 1893-February 1897**

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box 11            **Blacksmiths Outside Work January 1875-December 1876**

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box 11            **Wood 1896-1898**

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box 11            **Time Book Senator Shaft June 1915-December 1915**

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box 11            **Mine Time Book (2 vols.) November 1897, December 1900**

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box 12            **Aurora November 1862-May 1864**

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box 12            **Materials Issued to Miners... November 14, 1863-July 16, 1865**

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box 12            **Shipping Receipts 1864-1865**

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box 12            **Statement of the Business of the Quicksilver Mining Co. 1889-1909**

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box 13            **Clippings Related to New Almaden 1863-1904**

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box 13            **Quicksilver Mining Company December 1867-May 1885**

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box 14            **Cash April 1898-June 1901**

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box 14            **Cash October 1885-June 1901**

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Ledgers [Arranged by physical size, not content.]

New York June 1901-April 1901

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box 14            **New York June 1901-April 1901**

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box 15            **The Quicksilver Mining Co. September 1890 1913-1914**

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box 16            **Contract Bids October 1891-June 19??**

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box 16            **Hacienda Payroll No: Mine Purchases or Hacienda Purchases March 1887-March 1891**

box 17      **Maps and Oversize Materials**

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**Administrative**

Reports, Finance, Legal 1865-1893  
Legal 1856-1888

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**Research Materials**

Clippings 1865-1969

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**Printed Materials 1949-1950**

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**Folders (located in map case 1, drawer 3)**

folder 1	"Dry Chamber," drawing 1879
folder 1	"Water Tank Elevator," ink and watercolor June 1879
folder 2	Property transferred from Henry LeFranc to Louise Masson (3 copies) May 1935
folder 3	Plat of Property c. 1880-1900
folder 3	Southern Pacific Railroad: Map of area of territory surrounding Almaden and Guadalupe Mines (reproduction) 1886
folder 4	"New Almaden," USGS Topographic Maps 1915, 1954, 1955, undated
folder 5	"Superintendent's Residence and Vicinity on the Hill," ink drawing
folder 5	Furnaces and Condensors
folder 6	Smoke Washer Diagram
folder 7	North and South Section: 500 feet east of Randol shaft 1885?
folder 7	Longitudinal Section of the South Ore Channel 1885?
folder 8	"Plan of Furnace Yard" December 1879
folder 9	Knox Apparatus, ink scale drawing February 1873
folder 9	Plan of Pitwork, "Santa Isabel shaft" April 1882
folder 10	"New Almaden Direct Acting Pumping Engine Beam and Crank Shaft Pillow Block Sole Palte" September 1882
folder 10	"Platform for Pumping Engine New Almaden Quicksilver Mining Co." September 1882
folder 11	"New Almaden Direct Acting Pumping Engine" October 1882
folder 11	"New Almaden Direct Acting Pumping Engine" September 1882
folder 12	"Almaden Hall," blueprint
folder 12	"Plan of the New Almaden Quicksilver Mine"
folder 12	Furnace Cross Section, Tierro and Tierrero, ink and watercolor drawing
folder 13	Map of Agricultural Lands 1864

box 18

**Photographs**