

CALIFORNIA STATE LIBRARY

CALIFORNIA HISTORY SECTION

## RESEARCH GUIDES

MINING IN CALIFORNIA



[VISIT US](#)

*California History Section*

*900 N Street Room 200*

*9:30-4 Monday-Friday*

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California may be synonymous with gold, but that's not the only valuable mineral this state offers. Get bitten by the gold, copper or even the borax bug and explore our mining past in via [California History Section's](#) rich collections!

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ENJOY YOUR RESEARCH!

## DIGITIZED RESOURCES

Can't come to the library just yet? No worries! There are a number of online resources you can explore related to mining in California!

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### [California Gold Rush](#)

Curious about the Gold Rush? This online exhibit provides a thorough history of the period, accompanied by images drawn from our collection.



**URL:** <http://www.library.ca.gov/california-history/gold-rush/>



### [Digitized Images](#)

We have scanned and digitized a portion of our extensive photograph collection, including images related to mining. You can see them on Calisphere!



**URL:** <https://calisphere.org/institution/51/items/>

**Type in Search Box:** (mine\* OR mining)

## DIGITIZED RESOURCES

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### [Digitized Publications](#)

A few years ago we digitized some of our fragile mining publications. You can see them on Internet Archive!



**URL:** <https://archive.org/>

**Type in Search Box:** (mine\* OR mining) AND collection:(californiastatelibrary)



### [BLM-GLO](#)

Tracing your ancestor's land claim? This federal resource tells you the first BLM plot claimant for each parcel.



**URL:** <https://glorerecords.blm.gov/default.aspx>



### [California Geological Survey Library](#)

Curious about the geology of a mine? This library has a number of online resources that can help you including maps and reports.

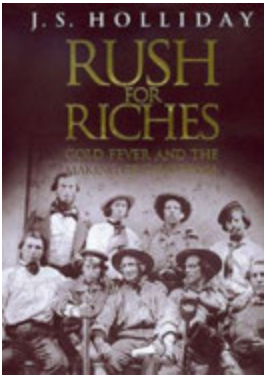


**URL:** <https://www.conservation.ca.gov/cgs/library>

## GOLD RUSH REFERENCE WORKS

Unsure about where to start? Consult a reference book! If you are interested in the Gold Rush, these books will point you in the right direction, by giving you an overview of the topic.

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Holliday, J. S. 1999. [\*Rush for Riches: Gold Fever and the Making of California\*](#). [Oakland, Calif.] : Berkeley: Oakland Museum of California ; University of California Press.

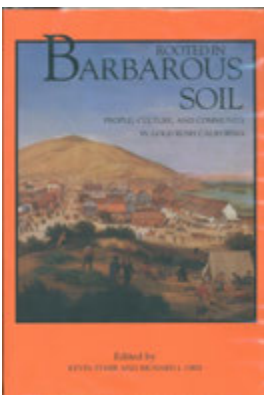
Do you want an overview of the Gold Rush? Holliday not only provides a thoroughly researched history, his excellent writing and primary-source illustrations make this seminal book a joy to read.



**URL:** [https://csl.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/search?vid=01CSL\\_INST:CSL&sortby=rank](https://csl.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/search?vid=01CSL_INST:CSL&sortby=rank)

**Search by:** Title and/or author

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Orsi, Richard J. 1998. [\*California History Sesquicentennial Series\*](#). Berkeley: University of California Press.

Want a comprehensive examination of the cultural, political and economic realities of Gold Rush California? This series explores how the confluence of cultures created by the Gold Rush gave rise to a wholly new political and cultural entity, with a massive world-wide influence, California.



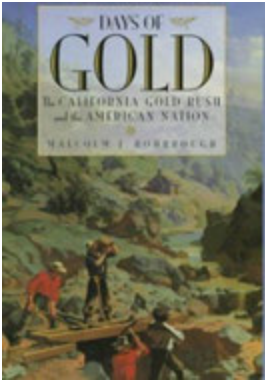
**URL:** [https://csl.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/search?vid=01CSL\\_INST:CSL&sortby=rank](https://csl.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/search?vid=01CSL_INST:CSL&sortby=rank)

**Search by:** Title and/or author

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## GOLD RUSH REFERENCE WORKS

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**Rohrbough, Malcolm J.** 1997. *[Days of Gold: The California Gold Rush and the American Nation](#)*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

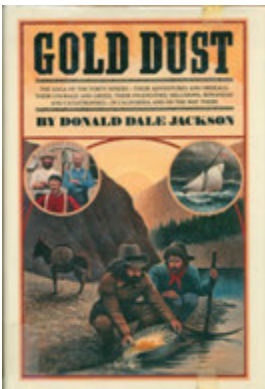
Curious about how the Gold Rush affected the social fabric of American families? In *Days of Gold*, Malcolm Rohrbough explains how the departure of so many men for California's gold fields not only created a society in California, but dramatically altered societies in the east.



**URL:** [https://cslibr.org/discovery/search?vid=01CSL\\_INST:CSL&sortby=rank](https://cslibr.org/discovery/search?vid=01CSL_INST:CSL&sortby=rank)

**Search by:** Title and/or author

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**Jackson, Donald Dale.** 1982. *[Gold Dust](#)*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

Hopes of wild success, tales of total failure and everything in between; these are the stories that Donald Jackson tells in his book *Gold Dust*. If you are looking for miner's eye views of the Gold Rush, both in its heady successes and its fatal failures, this book is definitely worth a read.



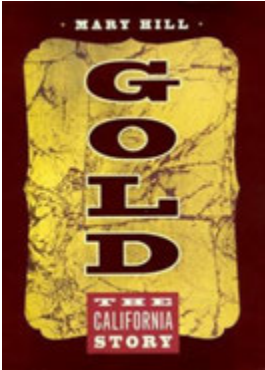
**URL:** [https://cslibr.org/discovery/search?vid=01CSL\\_INST:CSL&sortby=rank](https://cslibr.org/discovery/search?vid=01CSL_INST:CSL&sortby=rank)

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## GOLD RUSH REFERENCE WORKS

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Hill, Mary. 1999. [\*Gold: The California Story\*](#). Berkeley: University of California Press.

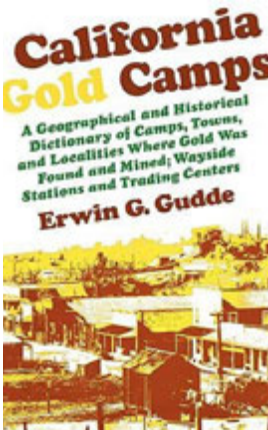
Curious about how and why gold panning eventually gave way to hydraulic mining? Then you should check out *Gold* by Mary Hill. This book provides a good lay introduction to the history, geology and technology of 19th century gold mining in California .



URL: [https://csl.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/search?vid=01CSL\\_INST:CSL&sortBy=rank](https://csl.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/search?vid=01CSL_INST:CSL&sortBy=rank)

Search by: Title and/or author

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Gudde, Gustav, and Elisabeth Gudde. 1975. [\*California Gold Camps: A Geographical and Historical Dictionary of Camps, Towns....\*](#) Berkeley: University of California Press.

Are you researching an obscure town in the Mother Lode? Start with this book. Each alphabetically listed town entry not only summarizes the town's history but lists sources that you can use for further research.



URL: [https://csl.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/search?vid=01CSL\\_INST:CSL&sortBy=rank](https://csl.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/search?vid=01CSL_INST:CSL&sortBy=rank)

Search by: Title and/or author

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## OTHER MINING REFERENCE WORKS

California is home to many minerals other than gold, its bonanzas include oil, copper, mercury and borax. Learn about these other resources through these references.

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Lingenfelter, Richard E. 2012. [\*Bonanzas & Borrascas: Gold Lust & Silver Sharks, 1848-1884\*](#). Western Lands and Waters Series, v. 26-27. Norman, Okla: Arthur H. Clark Co.

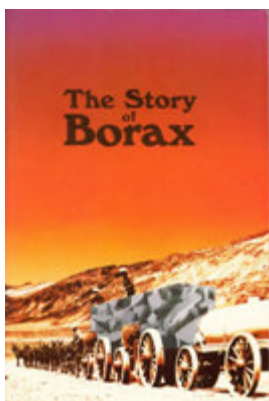
Are you curious about gold, silver or copper mining in California? This 2-volume set covers the history of all three in one go. Starting in 1848 and going up through 1918, it tracks both the successes and failures of western mining ventures for these three minerals.



**URL:** [https://csl.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/search?vid=01CSL\\_INST:CSL&sortby=rank](https://csl.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/search?vid=01CSL_INST:CSL&sortby=rank)

**Search by:** Title and/or author

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United States Borax and Chemical Corporation. 1979. [\*The Story of Borax\*](#). 2nd ed. Los Angeles, Calif: United States Borax & Chemical Corp.

Does borax appeal to you as a research topic? This approachable little book provides a highly readable overview of borax mining in California. Its coverage of mid-century mining is particularly strong .



**URL:** [https://csl.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/search?vid=01CSL\\_INST:CSL&sortby=rank](https://csl.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/search?vid=01CSL_INST:CSL&sortby=rank)

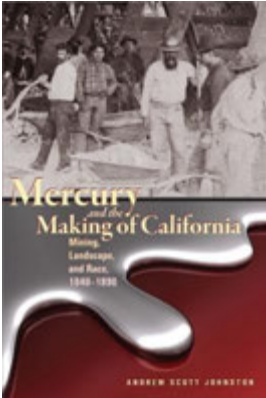
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## OTHER MINING REFERENCE WORKS

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Johnston, Andrew Scott. 2013. *[Mercury and the Making of California: Mining, Landscape, and Race, 1840-1890](#)*. Boulder: University Press of Colorado.

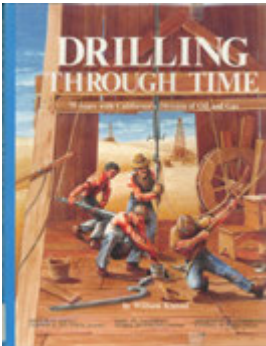
Are you curious about the mines in California's coastal range? Then it's quicksilver that you want to learn about. This book covers the history of mercury mining in California with a particular focus on the racial dynamics of hard-rock mining operations in this state.



**URL:** [https://csl.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/search?vid=01CSL\\_INST:CSL&sortby=rank](https://csl.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/search?vid=01CSL_INST:CSL&sortby=rank)

**Search by:** Title and/or author

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Rintoul, William. 1990. *[Drilling through Time: 75 Years with California's Division of Oil and Gas](#)*. Sacramento, Calif.: California Dept. of Conservation, Division of Oil and Gas.

Does California's oil mining history strike you as an interesting avenue to explore? Take a peek at *Drilling through Time* published by the California Resources Agency and the California Department of Conservation. This book provides a quick overview of California's oil drilling history and the emergence of governmental regulation.



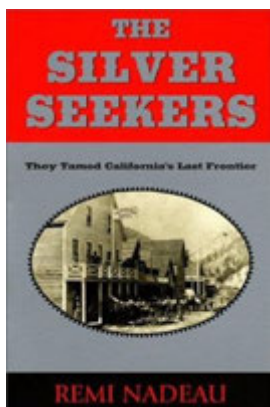
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**Search by:** Title and/or author

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## OTHER MINING REFERENCE WORKS

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Nadeau, Remi A. 1999. [\*The Silver Seekers: They Tamed California's Last Frontier\*](#). 1st ed. Santa Barbara, CA: Crest Publishers.

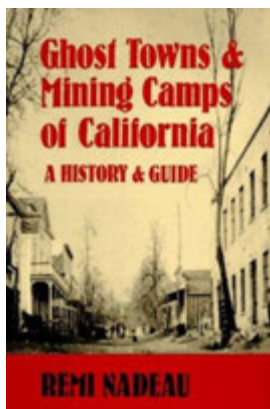
Forget gold, are you interested in the history of California's silver rush? Nadeau's seminal work tracks the history of silver mining in California from the Comstock Lode to Calico, highlighting special bonanzas and locations along the way.



**URL:** [https://csl.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/search?vid=01CSL\\_INST:CSL&sortby=rank](https://csl.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/search?vid=01CSL_INST:CSL&sortby=rank)

**Search by:** Title and/or author

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Nadeau, Remi A. 1999. [\*Ghost Towns & Mining Camps of California: A History & Guide\*](#). 5th ed. Santa Barbara, CA: Crest Publishers.

Looking for a good mining story? This is where Nadeau excels. In this overview of California gold, silver and copper mining towns, Nadeau packs a wealth of anecdotes about colorful local personalities such as Rattlesnake Dick and Joe Joiner.



**URL:** [https://csl.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/search?vid=01CSL\\_INST:CSL&sortby=rank](https://csl.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/search?vid=01CSL_INST:CSL&sortby=rank)

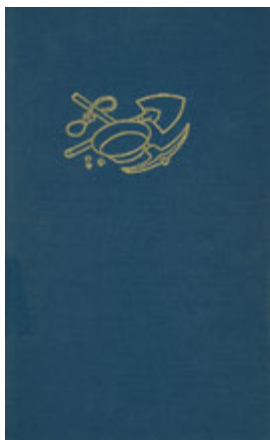
**Search by:** Title and/or author

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## BIBLIOGRAPHIES

When you're overwhelmed, it helps to ask an expert for book recommendations. These bibliographies are just that, expert recommendations of the best or the earliest materials related to mining in California

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**Kurutz, Gary F. 1997.** [\*The California Gold Rush: A Descriptive Bibliography of Books and Pamphlets Covering the Years 1848-1853.\*](#) San Francisco: Book Club of California.

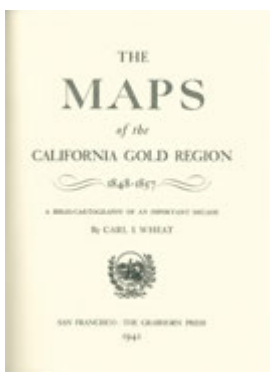
Are you looking for a primary sources but have difficulty reading handwriting? This book will point you to every published eye-witness account of the Gold Rush that its author could find. As such, it is a great starting point for researchers.



**URL:** [https://cs.l.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/search?vid=01CSL\\_INST:CSL&sortby=rank](https://cs.l.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/search?vid=01CSL_INST:CSL&sortby=rank)

**Search by:** Title and/or author

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**Wheat, Carl I. 1995.** [\*The Maps of the California Gold Region, 1848-1857: A Bibliography of an Important Decade.\*](#) Rev. ed. Storrs-Mansfield, CT: Maurizio Martino.

Are you looking for maps? In this book, Wheat tracks down every single gold-rush map he could find, and describes them in detail. This edition also includes over 20 map reproductions.



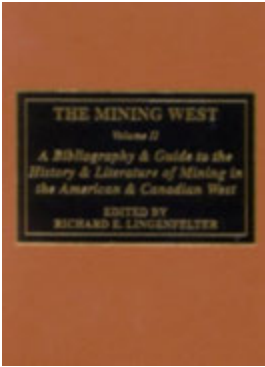
**URL:** [https://cs.l.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/search?vid=01CSL\\_INST:CSL&sortby=rank](https://cs.l.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/search?vid=01CSL_INST:CSL&sortby=rank)

**Search by:** Title and/or author

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## BIBLIOGRAPHIES

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Lingenfelter, Richard E., ed. 2003. *[The Mining West: A Bibliography & Guide to the History & Literature of Mining in the American and Canadian West](#)*. Lanham, Md: Scarecrow Press, Inc..

Want a comprehensive bibliography of books on mining in the American West? This multi-volume set covers not only the California Gold Rush, but books on other mining activities in California. The author also has chapters on other western states such as Nevada and Arizona.



**URL:** [https://cslibrino.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/search?vid=01CSL\\_INST:CSL&sortby=rank](https://cslibrino.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/search?vid=01CSL_INST:CSL&sortby=rank)

**Search by:** Title and/or author

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## CATALOG GENERAL RESEARCH TIPS

While many of our materials are online, even more are only in hard-copy. You can use the following resources to learn about our books, articles, and manuscripts on mining



### Catalog

If you are looking for [images](#), [books](#) and [articles](#) on gold mining, even [papers](#) left by miners, your best source is our [catalog](#).



**URL:** [https://csl.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/search?vid=01CSL\\_INST:CSL&lang=en&sortby=rank](https://csl.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/search?vid=01CSL_INST:CSL&lang=en&sortby=rank)

**Type in Subject Box:** (mine\* OR mining)

**Limit:** By desired material type



### California Information File II

Sometimes the catalog doesn't provide as much detail as you might like. This is why we created the California Information File II. In this resource, you can find information about individual articles, some mining deeds, even receipts.



**URL:** [http://dbs.library.ca.gov/dbtext\\_html/QueryCalinfo.htm](http://dbs.library.ca.gov/dbtext_html/QueryCalinfo.htm)

**Type in Subject Box:** mine\* OR mining

**For a narrower search:** Add a place to your keyword search

## SUBJECT-SPECIFIC RESOURCES IN OUR CATALOG

There is a rich history of mining in California. These catalog links provide an overview of the industry, from the Gold Rush Era and beyond.



### Type

- [Maps](#)
- [Books](#)
- [County Histories](#)
- [Images](#)
- [Manuscripts](#)
- [Newspapers](#)
- [Statistics](#)

### Subject

- [Agriculture](#)
- [Art](#)
- [Business](#)
- [Cooking](#)
- [Education](#)
- [Festivals](#)
- [Fiction](#)
- [Geology](#)
- [Highways](#)
- [Land](#)
- [Legislature](#)
- [Migration](#)
- [Music](#)

- [Oil](#)
- [Poetry](#)
- [Politics](#)
- [Railroads](#)
- [Religion](#)
- [Taxes](#)
- [Water](#)

### Residents

- [African Americans](#)
- [Chinese Americans](#)
- [German Americans](#)
- [Italian Americans](#)
- [Japanese Americans](#)
- [Latin Americans](#)
- [Women](#)

## COUNTY-SPECIFIC RESOURCES IN OUR CATALOG

Curious about mining in a specific county? While these catalog links don't list all that the California History Section has, they are a good starting point.

[Alameda](#)

[Alpine](#)

[Amador](#)

[Butte](#)

[Calaveras](#)

[Colusa](#)

[Monterey](#)

[Napa](#)

[Nevada](#)

[Placer](#)

[Plumas](#)

[Riverside](#)

[Sacramento](#)

[San Benito](#)

[San Bernardino](#)

[San Diego](#)

[San Francisco](#)

[San Joaquin](#)

[San Luis Obispo](#)

[Santa Clara](#)

[Shasta](#)

[Sierra](#)

[Siskiyou](#)

[Sonoma](#)

[Contra Costa](#)

[Del Norte](#)

[El Dorado](#)

[Fresno](#)

[Humboldt](#)

[Imperial](#)

[Inyo](#)

[Kern](#)

[Los Angeles](#)

[Madera](#)

[Mariposa](#)

[Mendocino](#)

[Merced](#)

[Modoc](#)

[Mono](#)

[Stanislaus](#)

[Trinity](#)

[Tulare](#)

[Tuolumne](#)

[Ventura](#)

[Yolo](#)

[Yuba](#)



## ON-SITE RESEARCH RESOURCES

Our collection predates computers and so do some of our access points! If you are in the library, be sure to check the following analog files for leads on more resources.

---



### **California Information File**

In the library? Check the California Information File before you do anything else! This file indexes over 130 years of California mining articles, books, and manuscript collections.



**Subject Headings:** Mines and Mining (various subdivisions)



### **Photographic File**

Sometimes a picture is worth a 1000 words, and not all of our pictures are online. To check the rest of the collection search our picture file.



**Subject Headings:**

1. Check by county
2. Check Mines and Mining



## OTHER ON-SITE RESOURCES

Despite our best efforts, some of our resources defy complete description. We suggest that you ask a librarian about any mining information contained in the following resources.

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### Map File

Looking for a map that details the geology and/or owners of a mining claim? Our map file is a great place to start. We have a wide variety of maps, some of which cover geology or information about property lines that are helpful to researchers.



**Subject Headings:** Check by county

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### Postcard Files

Separate from our photo collection, our postcard collection contains a number of images related to mining. Most are not online.



**Subject Headings:** Check by county

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## OTHER ON-SITE RESOURCES

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### Vertical Files

Our massive collection of vertical files covers a wide variety of topics including mining. You can check them for information on organizations, individuals, mining by location, and general mining.



#### Subject Headings:

1. Companies: Search by name
2. Counties: Amador: Pamphlets
3. Mines & Mining: Gold (and various other subdivisions)



### Textual Files

If you are looking for ephemera from California's rich prospecting history, our textual files have materials in a wide range of formats, including items from the mining era.



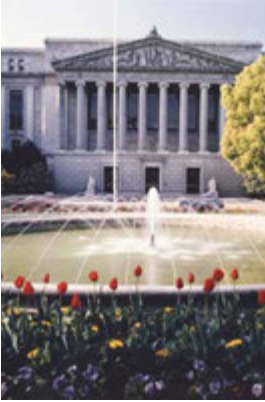
#### Subject Headings:

1. Textual file: Certificates: Mining: Search by name

## OTHER PLACES TO LOOK

Of course the California History Section doesn't have everything, so we suggest that in addition to looking at our collections, you contact the following organizations

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### **Other California State Library Sections**

[Government Publications Section](#)

[Witkin Law Library](#)

[Sutro Library](#)

[General Information](#)



- <http://www.library.ca.gov/government-publications/>
- <http://www.library.ca.gov/law/>
- <http://www.library.ca.gov/sutro/>
- <http://www.library.ca.gov/services/>



### **Other Government Agencies**

[California State Archives](#)

[California State Parks](#)

[California Geological Survey](#)

Local California libraries or archives



#### **URLs:**

- <http://www.sos.ca.gov/archives/>
- <https://www.parks.ca.gov/>
- <http://www.conservation.ca.gov/CGS/>



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This guide is also available online at:  
<http://www.library.ca.gov/california-history/research-guides/>