



Guide to the Malakoff Diggins State Historic Park Collection

Malakoff Diggins State Historic Park

Nevada City, California

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Descriptive Summary

Title

Malakoff Diggins State Historic Park collection, 1867-1959 (bulk 1871-1920)

Collection number

Consult repository

Collector

Malakoff Diggins State Historic Park (Calif.)

Extent

33.5 cubic feet

Repository

California State Parks. Cultural Resources Division. Sacramento, California 95814.

Location of collection

The collection is on deposit at the California State Archives, Sacramento.

Abstract

The Malakoff Diggins State Historic Park Collection contains correspondence and financial material of the North Bloomfield Gravel Mining Company, owner of the Malakoff Diggins Mine. The world's largest hydraulic mining operation, Malakoff Diggins Mine was located near the town of North Bloomfield, California. This collection also includes the financial and administrative records from North Bloomfield's Post Office and the McKillican and Mobley General Store. In addition, the collection contains personal material belonging to North Bloomfield resident Mary Kallenberger. The records in this collection cover the years 1867 to 1959 with the bulk of the material ranging from 1871-1920.

Administrative Information

Access

This collection is open for research.

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Preferred Citation

[item] Malakoff Diggins State Historic Park Collection. California State Parks, Sacramento, California.

Acquisition Information

Gifts of families residing in the North Bloomfield, California, area and their heirs including Stella Tracey and Mary Kallenberger.

Processing History

Processed by History Associates Incorporated, 2002.

Organizational History

The Malakoff Diggins Mine, located near North Bloomfield, California, was the world's largest hydraulic mining operation. Small-scale hydraulic mining of gravel deposits near present day Malakoff Diggins began in 1853. By the 1860s miners discovered that in order to profit from hydraulic mining, long-term investments were required. At this point many claims were consolidated and stock companies were established to assemble the necessary capital. In 1866 a local miner consolidated multiple gravel claims (including Malakoff Diggins) and with backing from San Francisco investors, established the North Bloomfield Gravel Mining Company.

Hydraulic mining was invented in Nevada County, California, in 1852. In hydraulic mining, miners directed a powerful stream of water at a hillside, washing away gravel into sluice boxes. The sluice boxes trapped heavy rock and gold, and the mud and other debris washed into ditches that carried it to nearby rivers. Monitors (i.e., large water canons) were used to direct water at hillsides. The monitors were able to discharge thousands of gallons of water per minute. Getting water to the site was typically done through dams and ditches which were costly to build and maintain. In 1876, when Malakoff Diggins was in full operation, 16 billion gallons of water was used each year and 100,000 tons of gravel was mined per day.

Although hydraulic mining was remarkably profitable, it was also extremely harmful to the environment. As early as 1873, farmers residing downstream from hydraulic mining operations began complaining about the mud and silt that inundated their land. Initially, waste gravel, mud, and excess water from Malakoff Diggins were disposed of via Humbug Creek, and later into the Yuba River. Eventually Malakoff Diggins mining debris polluted streams, killed fish, damaged agricultural property, and caused repeated flooding in the towns of Marysville and Yuba City. In 1875 the most damaging flood occurred when Marysville streets filled with thick brown mud after Malakoff Diggins' debris accumulated until the Yuba River's bottom was higher than the adjacent town, causing severe flooding, damage, and death.

Damage from Northern California's hydraulic mining industry was far reaching. Over 1 billion cubic yards of debris raised the bottom of parts of San Francisco Bay by as much as 3 feet. The bed of the Sacramento River rose 16 feet, impeding navigation and causing millions of dollars in damage to California's Central Valley farms. In addition, the Central Pacific Railroad suffered damage as tracks along rivers were continually flooded.

Finally in 1882, E. Woodruff, a New York resident and Marysville property owner, filed a suit against the North Bloomfield Gravel Mining Company. In 1884 Judge Lorenzo Sawyer presented his decision that hydraulic mining was legal, however discharging the debris into local rivers was illegal. The judge stated that the North Bloomfield Gravel Mining Company violated the rights of individuals downstream by destroying the landscape and damaging the watershed. The company was allowed to carry out hydraulic mining, however it was required to contain the debris within its own property and could no longer dump it into any river. The Sawyer Decision was among the first environmental laws introduced in the United States.

After the Sawyer Decision, most hydraulic mines were unable to operate profitably under the new restrictions. When mining operations were curtailed at Malakoff Diggins in 1884, it was the

largest and richest hydraulic gold mine in the world. By 1910, hydraulic mining was entirely abandoned in the area.

The town of North Bloomfield, California, was established in 1853 to support the nearby hydraulic mining operations. As many as 1,500 people reportedly lived there during the prosperous years at Malakoff Diggins from the 1850s to 1884. The town served as a residence for the miners and its merchants supplied all the goods required by the nearby mines.

Chronology

- 1851 Gravel deposits were discovered in the hills northeast of Nevada City, California.
- 1853 Hydraulic mining of gravel deposits began in the region near present day Malakoff Diggins.
The town of Humbug was established near Humbug Creek, California.
- 1857 Town of Humbug's name was changed to North Bloomfield.
Post Office was established in North Bloomfield.
Population of North Bloomfield was ca. 500.
- 1860s Drought diminished water supplies and hydraulic mining was curtailed until the late 1860s.
- 1860 The building currently housing St. Columncille's Catholic Church was built in North Bloomfield.
The building was originally used for training civil war soldiers.
- 1862 Home of Rush Skidmore (saloon owner and relation of Mary Kallenberger) was built in North Bloomfield.
- 1866 North Bloomfield miner consolidated multiple gravel mining claims along the Yuba River, secured outside investors, and established the North Bloomfield Gravel Mining Company.
- 1869 St. Columncille's Catholic Church building was finally used as a church for local Catholics.
- 1870 McKillican and Mobley General Store was built in North Bloomfield.
Post Office moved into the McKillican and Mobley General Store.
- 1870 Water from the Big Canyon Creek Dam first reached Malakoff.
- 1873 Farmers began protesting the mud and silt that inundated their land due to upstream hydraulic mining operations.
- 1874 Malakoff Diggins' 8,000 foot long drainage tunnel was completed under the direction of engineer Hamilton Smith.
- 1876 Hydraulic mining was in full operation at Malakoff Diggins' with 7 monitors in use.
Population of North Bloomfield was ca. 1500.
- 1875 Town of Marysville flooded sweeping away levees, seriously damaging property, and causing loss of life. Subsequently, a petition was submitted to the State Legislature requesting that laws regulating hydraulic mining be passed.
- 1880 First long distance telephone line in the United States was developed for use at Malakoff Diggins.
- 1882 E. Woodruff, New York resident and Marysville property owner, filed suit against the North Bloomfield Gravel Mining Company in order to halt the dumping of debris into the Yuba River.
- 1884 Judge Lorenzo Sawyer decided that hydraulic mining was legal, however discharging the debris into the river was illegal.
- 1900 Population of North Bloomfield was ca. 730.
- 1910 Hydraulic mining was entirely abandoned.
- 1940s McKillican and Mobley General Store closed.
- 1965 The Malakoff Diggins State Historic Park was established.

Collection Scope and Content Summary

The Malakoff Diggins State Historic Park Collection contains correspondence and financial material of the North Bloomfield Gravel Mining Company, owner of the Malakoff Diggins Mine. The world's largest hydraulic mining operation, Malakoff Diggins Mine was located near the town of North Bloomfield, California. This collection also includes the financial and administrative records from North Bloomfield's Post Office and the McKillican and Mobley General Store. In addition, the collection contains personal material belonging to North Bloomfield resident Mary Kallenberger. The records in this collection cover the years 1867 to 1959 with the bulk of the material ranging from 1871-1920.

The records in this collection are largely textual and consist of correspondence, ledgers, invoices, newspaper clippings, pamphlets, receipts, and shipping statements. Other types of records, such as sheet music and artwork, are primarily included in the Mary Kallenberger materials.

Much of this collection documents life in the town of North Bloomfield rather than the nearby mining activity. The largest series is made up of Post Office records documenting North Bloomfield's postal activity for a period of 30 years beginning in 1870. The second largest series consists of Mary Kallenberger's material. Much of this series consists of sheet music and also includes other records documenting Kallenberger's interest in art, music, and writing.

This collection does not contain the records of Malakoff Diggins Mine or legal records pertaining to the Sawyer Decision or any other major court actions regarding hydraulic mining activity in the region.

Documents within folders are arranged in chronological order by date and undated material resides at the end of each folder. The overall arrangement of the collection was imposed during processing in the absence of a usable original order.

The collection is organized into six series:

- Series 1. North Bloomfield Gravel Mining Company, 1870-1901 and undated
1.5 cubic ft.
- Series 2. McKillican and Mobley General Store, 1870-1942 and undated. 3.5 cubic ft.
- Series 3. Post Office, 1867-1939 and undated. 21.5 cubic ft.
- Series 4. Topical Files, 1871-1955 and undated. 1 cubic ft.
- Series 5. Mary Kallenberger Material, 1860-1959 and undated. 6 cubic ft.
- Series 6. Oversize Material

Indexing Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection:

Gold mines and mining--California--Nevada County--Archival resources.

Historic sites--California--Nevada County--Archival resources.

Malakoff Diggins State Historic Park (Calif.)--Archival resources.

Post office stations and branches--California--Nevada County--Archival resources.

Collection Contents

Series 1. North Bloomfield Gravel Mining Company, 1870-1901 and undated. 1.5 cubic ft.

Series Scope and Content Summary

This series contains financial records, correspondence, and a few documents on mining-related topics including the construction of Milton Ditch and a Treinta mining claim map.

This series is arranged alphabetically by subject.

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Series 2. McKillican and Mobley General Store, 1870-1942 and undated. 3.5 cubic ft.**Series Scope and Content Summary**

This series contains financial and administrative records from the McKillican and Mobley General Store located in North Bloomfield, California. The store was built in 1870 and served the townspeople as well as miners and nearby mining operations. North Bloomfield's Post Office operated from within the store beginning with the store's establishment.

The name of the store changed several times between the 1870s and 1898. Other names include McKillican Burt, Crandall and McKillican, and Estate of D. R. McKillican. The proprietor D. R. McKillican died in 1892 and upon the settlement of his estate in 1898, the store became the McKillican and Mobley General Store until its dissolution.

Goods and supplies typically came from San Francisco or Sacramento to Nevada City by way of the Nevada County Narrow Gauge Railroad. The merchandise was then loaded onto freight wagons and hauled to North Bloomfield. Included in this series are shipping records from the Nevada County Narrow Gauge Railroad, the Central Pacific Railroad, the Chicago and North-Western Railway, and the Pennsylvania Railroad Company.

The bulk of this series consists of receipts and invoices from vendors selling merchandise to McKillican and Mobley. Correspondence in this series is primarily with vendors.

This series is arranged alphabetically by subject.

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Series 3. Post Office, 1867-1939 and undated. 21.5 cubic ft.**Series Scope and Content Summary**

This series contains financial and administrative records of the Post Office located in North Bloomfield, California. The Post Office was established in 1857 and operated from the McKillican and Mobley General Store beginning in 1870.

The bulk of the records include money order applications, registered package receipts, and registry bills. Other records include certificates of deposit, financial statements, postal guides for employees, records of registered letters, and records of the Post Office Department, United States Treasury.

This series is arranged alphabetically by subject.

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Advice payment (Canadian), 1903-1911	6 : 7
Applications, 1892-1915 and 1917-1918	6 : 8-13 : 12
Certificates of deposit, 1892-1917	14 : 1-10
Coupons, 1910-1915	14 : 11-14
Letter of inquiry, 1896	14 : 15
Post office list, 1903	14 : 16
Registry, 1904-1906	14 : 17
Special notice of repayment, 1899	14 : 18
Post Office Department, United States Treasury	14 : 19-31
Deposit receipts, 1892-1903	14 : 19
District office remittance letter, 1936	14 : 20
<i>Forty-one Rulings Answering as Many Questions in Regards to the Postal Service,</i> 1892	14 : 21
Invoice of postal notes, 1892-1894	14 : 22
Mail carrier proposal (blank), 1878	14 : 23
Mail route advertisement, 1893	14 : 24
Official correspondence, 1867-1916	14 : 25
Postage stamp agency notices, 1893-1903	14 : 26
Postal account audit notices, 1893-1903	14 : 27
Postmaster certificate for Claude Clark, 1939	14 : 28
Receipt for counterfeit coin, 1903	14 : 29
Stolen money order alerts, 1916-1917	14 : 30
United States Treasury Department audits, 1892-1913	14 : 31
Postal Guides, 1888-1891, 1893-1894, and 1902-1913	15 : 1-14

<u>Folder Title</u>	<u>Box : Folder</u>
Record of registered letters received and delivered, 1893	15 : 15
Record of registered matter in transit, 1884-1889	15 : 16
Register of arrivals and departures of mails, 1892-1913	15 : 17
Registered letter bills, 1874-1879	15 : 18
Registered letter receipts, 1871	15 : 19
Registered mail registration books, 1881, 1884-1897, and 1902-1903	16 : 1-18
Registered package receipts, 1877-1879, 1881, and 1887-1913	17 : 1-21 : 4
Registered returns	21 : 5-8
Bills, 1877-1879	21 : 5
Receipts, 1877-1879	21 : 6-8
Registered stamped mail, 1870s	21 : 9
Registry bills, 1879-1882 and 1885-1907	21 : 10-26 : 1
Registry inquiry, 1912	26 : 2
Registry notices, 1902-1903	26 : 3
Registry return receipts, 1879-1913	26 : 4-10
Window registration books, 1904-1907	26 : 11

Series 4. Topical Files, 1871-1955 and undated. 1 cubic ft.**Series Scope and Content Summary**

This series contains miscellaneous records pertaining to the city of North Bloomfield and its residents. Records in this series include North Bloomfield public school registers, Mills Feed Store receipts, county peddling licenses, National Mine accounting records, a Pioneer Reduction Works Company ledger, and newspaper clippings.

This series is arranged alphabetically by subject.

<u>Folder Title</u>	<u>Box : Folder</u>
Advertisements, undated	26 : 12
Autograph book, 1889	26 : 13
Bylaws of unknown organization, ca. 1917	26 : 14
Calendar, 1917	26 : 15
Claim of property ownership by Frank Souchet, 1872	26 : 16
County peddling licenses, 1933 and 1935	26 : 17
Cummings, Ed - receipts, 1895-1898	26 : 18
Maps - Mono and Sierra counties, 1940 and undated	26 : 19
Mills Feed Store receipts and invoices, 1908-1914	26 : 20-21
National Mine	26 : 22-23
Payroll records, 1894	26 : 22
Receipts, 1891 and 1894	26 : 23
Nevada City High School commencement program, 1901	26 : 24
Newsletter - <i>Weekly Unity</i> , 1926	26 : 25
Newspaper clippings	26 : 26-27
Miscellaneous, 1918, 1923, and undated	26 : 26
State parks, 1923, 1936, and undated	26 : 27
Newspapers	26 : 28-32
Miscellaneous, 1900-1916	26 : 28
<i>Morning Union</i> (Grass Valley, CA), 1905-1913, 1917-1926, 1936, 1942, and 1945	26 : 29-32
Pacific Gas and Electric Company annual report, 1944	26 : 33
Pamphlets	26 : 34-27 : 2
<i>Complete Course of Cartilage Treatment</i> , 1903	26 : 34
<i>How to Respect and Display Our Flag</i> , 1943	26 : 35
<i>Southern Pacific's First Century</i> , ca. 1955	27 : 1
<i>Yosemite</i> , undated	27 : 2
Pharmacy prescriptions, 1929 and 1935	27 : 3-8
Photographs of pine cone art, undated	27 : 9
Pioneer Reduction Works ledger, 1892-1899	27 : 10
Political advertisements, undated	27 : 11
Post card - Pennsylvania Mine, undated	27 : 12
Postage stamp, undated	27 : 13
<i>Proceedings of the 17th Annual Session of the R. W. Grand Encampment I. O. O. F. of California</i> , 1871	27 : 14

<u>Folder Title</u>	<u>Box : Folder</u>
Public School Registers - North Bloomfield, 1899-1908, 1921-1924, 1934-1935, and 1938-1941	27 : 15-18
Receipt pad of W. H. Cartwright Wholesale and Retail Fruits and Vegetables (blank), undated	27 : 19
Rosters of names	27 : 20-21
Bloomfield, undated	27 : 20
Untitled, undated	27 : 21
Southern Pacific annual report, 1951	27 : 22
Stock Certificates	27 : 23-24
Derbec Blue Gravel Mining Company, 1893	27 : 23
Mohegan Gold and Silver Mining Company, 1893	27 : 24
United States Mint - official correspondence, 1888-1891	27 : 25
Yuba Gravel Mining Co. receipts and tax assessment list, 1871, 1892, and 1898	27 : 26

Series 5. Mary Kallenberger Material, 1860-1959 and undated. 6 cubic ft.**Series Scope and Content Summary**

This series contains material belonging to Mary Kallenberger, North Bloomfield resident and relation of R. D. Skidmore (North Bloomfield's saloon owner). Evidence of her relationship to Skidmore includes Mary Kallenberger signing her name on correspondence "Miss Mary K. Skidmore" or "M. Skidmore" during the years 1931-1933 and Skidmore family receipts from 1906-1908 were located with her records.

Much of this series is made up of 2.5 cubic feet of oversize sheet music and other records related to Mary Kallenberger's interest in music. Other records include art materials, correspondence school textbooks, writings, and periodicals that she collected.

This series is arranged alphabetically by subject.

<u>Folder Title</u>	<u>Box : Folder</u>
Art materials	27 : 27-28 : 1
Drawing books, 1895 and undated	27 : 27
<i>Illustrated Catalog of Artist's Materials and Architects' Supplies</i> , 1925	27 : 28
Instructions, undated	27 : 29
Instructions - <i>Elements of Pen-and-Ink Rendering</i> , undated	27 : 30
Samples, undated	27 : 31
Works of art, 1913, 1916, and undated	28 : 1
Composition books, 1925	28 : 2
Correspondence, 1913-1959 and undated	28 : 3
Correspondence school	28 : 4-8
Advertisement, undated	28 : 4
<i>Drawing from Cast</i> , undated	28 : 5
<i>Practical Illustrating</i> , 1910	28 : 6
<i>Rendering in Watercolor</i> , 1904	28 : 7
<i>Rendering with Pen and Ink</i> , 1903	28 : 8
Manuscripts	28 : 9-15
Birds, undated	28 : 9
Kangaroo court (?), undated	28 : 10
Miscellaneous drafts, undated	28 : 11
Pilgrims, undated	28 : 12
"Profligate's Revenge," undated	28 : 13
"Study of Botany for Young Students," 1930	28 : 14
Technical writings, undated	28 : 15
Music	28 : 16-26
Advertisements, undated	28 : 16
Articles, 1926 and undated	28 : 17
Composer portraits, undated	28 : 18
Easter services, 1894, 1899-1907, and undated	28 : 19
Instruction - <i>National School for Piano-Forte</i> , 1881	28 : 20

<u>Folder Title</u>	<u>Box : Folder</u>
Music (continued)	
Instruction - Piano, undated	28 : 21
Music and lessons, 1909	28 : 22
<i>Pentecostal Hymns</i> , 1895	28 : 23
Pepper, J. W., and Son's Complete Catalogue, 1910	28 : 24
Sheet music, A-Z and untitled, 1860-1920	28 : 25
Song lyrics, undated	28 : 26
Pamphlet - <i>The Unity School of Christianity and What its Teachings Reveal</i> , 1921	28 : 27
Periodicals	28 : 28-29 : 19
<i>Apollo</i> , undated	28 : 28
<i>Art Amateur</i> , 1901-1902	28 : 29
<i>Art Interchanger</i> , 1895-1899	28 : 30
<i>Art Student</i> , 1897-1906	28 : 31
<i>Author and Journalist</i> , 1947-1948	28 : 32-33
<i>Brainards' Musical World</i> , 1890	28 : 34
<i>Demorest's Monthly Magazine</i> , 1889	28 : 35
<i>Echo</i> , 1890	28 : 36
<i>Every Month</i> , 1897	28 : 37
<i>Folio</i> , 1879-1887 and undated	28 : 38-39
<i>Good Housekeeping</i> , 1922	28 : 40
<i>Leader</i> , 1896	29 : 1
<i>Music Business</i> , 1947	29 : 2
<i>Musical Herald</i> , 1880	29 : 3
<i>Physical Culture</i> , 1905	29 : 4
<i>Nautilus Magazine</i> , 1915 and 1949	29 : 5
<i>Richardson's Musical Hours</i> , 1879	29 : 6
<i>Sherman and Hyde's Musical Review</i> , 1879	29 : 7
<i>Signs of the Times Magazine</i> , 1916	29 : 8
<i>Unity</i> , 1929, 1937, 1939, and 1942-1944	29 : 9-12
<i>Writer</i> , 1916-1918 and 1946-1947	29 : 13-15
<i>Writer's Digest</i> , 1935-1936 and 1945	29 : 16-18
<i>Writer's Guide</i> , 1946	29 : 19
<i>Photoplay</i> typescript entitled "Bud," undated	29 : 20
Play synopsis entitled "What the Birthmark Revealed," undated	29 : 21
Poetry, undated	29 : 22
Receipts	29 : 23-24
Groceries, 1934-1935	29 : 23
Skidmore family, 1906-1908	29 : 24
Sewing articles, 1906-1931 and undated	29 : 25
<i>Writer's Talent Scout</i> , 1947	29 : 26
Writing manuals, 1922-1924	29 : 27

Series 6. Oversize Material

This series consists of oversize material that was removed from the collection and filed separately in oversize boxes. Oversize material is located in boxes 30-45.