

INVENTORY

GOLD KING AND GOLD KING EXTENSION MINES COLLECTION

No. 996

THE COLORADO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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## INTRODUCTION

Willis Z. Kinney was born in Massena, New York, on 2 July 1860. He relocated to Colorado in 1875, residing in Silverton where he was instrumental in developing the Gold King and Gold Prince properties, two of the largest producers of gold and silver in San Juan County. Kinney also served as postmaster of Silverton for many years, and was active in local and state politics. He married Mary E. Witzburger in 1887. The couple had one daughter, Gertrude Mary Kinney. The family moved to Denver in 1904. Mrs. Kinney died in 1931. Willis Kinney succumbed to a cerebral hemorrhage on 24 June 1934, while in Presbyterian Hospital for treatment of uremic poisoning.

In the fall of 1893, Kinney joined Cyrus W. Davis of Waterville, Maine, and Fred W. Jones of St. John, New Brunswick, in prospecting property that became the Harrison Mine. Kinney, with financial support from Davis and Jones, opened the mine and erected a 10-stamp mill. When available ore bodies proved low-grade, Kinney leased the adjoining Gold King claim. Values averaging \$43 per ton from that property attracted ample capital with which to enlarge the enterprise.

The Gold King Mining and Milling Co. was organized in 1895, absorbing the mining properties and mill of the Harrison Mining Co., Ltd. and the Gold King lode. Kinney served as vice president and general manager of the new enterprise. In the spring of 1897, he

enlarged the mill from 10 to 40 stamps and erected a tramway connecting the upper level of the mine and the mill. This ended reliance on pack mules to transport ore from the mine to the mill.

Stockholders of the Gold King Mining and Milling Co. created as subsidiaries in 1898 the American Mining and Tunnel Co., the Anglo-Saxon Mining Co., and the Rocky Mountain Fuel Co. The parent and related enterprises were combined in 1900 to form the Gold King Consolidated Mines Co. The Gold King Mine was worked on a large scale, yielding in the years from 1900 to 1908 \$1,750,000 in dividends, in addition to large sums that were invested in the adjoining Gold Prince Mine. Most of the buildings at the Gold King Mine burned in 1908, after which the property was worked by leasers until 1918.

Kinney resigned as general manager of the Gold King Consolidated Mines Co. in 1917, at which time the property was absorbed by a new corporation, the Gold King Extension Mines Co. At about this time, Kinney became vice president and general manager of the Alaska Gold Mine Corp., owner of mining properties near Ward, in Boulder County.

#### PROVENANCE

The Gold King and Gold King Extension Mines Collection was given to The Colorado Historical Society by Carl Akers, the deed of gift dated 21 May 1982.

SIGNIFICANCE

The Gold King and Gold King Extension Mines Collection consists of letters and documents created by Willis Z. Kinney during his tenure as general manager of the properties at Gladstone, near Silverton in San Juan County, Colorado. A small amount of correspondence, several reports, and photographs provide important information about the origin and evolution of the properties, and of the facilities, employees, and underground workings. There are, in addition, documents that pertain to the Snow Flake Mine, near Silverton, Snake River Play<sup>ers</sup>, and the Alaska Gold Mine Corp., owner of mining properties near Ward, in Boulder County.

Inventory of Collection:

- FF 1 Correspondence, 27 April-21 December 1910
- 2 Correspondence, 21 Dec. 1918-9 April 1935
- 3 Correspondence, n. d.
- 4 Deed, agreement, insurance policy and bill issued to Mary E. Kinney, 1905-1930
- 5 Snake River Placers. Preliminary Report, 1915
- 6 Gold King Extension Mines Co. and Gold King Mines Corp., reports, 1918-1922
- 7 Gold King Extension Mines Co., Prospectus
- 8 Report on Snow Flake Mine, Silverton, Colo.
- 9 Engineering & Mining Journal, July 1934
- 10 Advertisement, "The Gold King Extension Mines"
- 11 Advertisement: The Alaska Gold Mine Corp., owner of properties near Ward, Colo. (3 cops.)
- 12 Newspapers containing obituaries of W. Z. Kenny: Silverton Standard, 30 June 1934; Massena (New York) Observer, 5 July 1934
- 13 Surveys (unidentified) of mining claims and tunnels
- 14 Blank stationery: Gold King Mines Corp. and Sylvanus R. Salter, Engineer of Mines
- 15 Blank subscription forms for stock in Goody Placer Gold Co., n. d.
- 16 Photographs of vessel "Cyprus," n. d.

43 photographs of the Gold King and Gold Prince mines have been transferred from this collection to the Photograph Department of The Colorado Historical Society. These are filed under "K" in the photograph collection