An Inventory of the Papers of the

Charles L. Hall Family

Collection Number 285

a holding of
the Library of the Colorado Historical Society
Denver, Colorado 80203

Processed by Tracie Etheredge

June 1992

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BIOGRAFICAL INFORMATION

Charles Hall came to Colorado in 1859 as a typical pioneer looking to make his fortune out of the riches of the new territory. He experienced the risks and hardships common to early settlers and eventually built up a series of businesses and enterprises that played essential roles in the growth and development of Colorado. His family, as well, played important roles in the history of Colorado.

Charles L. Hall was born in Sherman, New York in 1835, and with his parents, moved to Jackson County, Iowa in 1844. He attended Iowa College in Davenport, Iowa until 1859, studying law and other subjects with the intention to go into the ministry.

At the age of twenty, he went into the flour mill business. But because it proved unprofitable, he soon abandoned it and moved to Colorado. He settled on Ralston Creek where he started a stock farm, which he sold the following year. In the winter of 1860, he moved to California Gulch, near Leadville and began prospecting and mining where he, like many of the hopefuls that came to Colorado with the gold rush, was only moderately successful.

As the gold rush progressed, rumors of rich deposits of ore in the southwestern part of Colorado began reaching the miners operating at the already booming Clear Creek and California Gulch areas. In the spring of 1861, a large party of prospectors,
including Hall, formed to explore the region and determine its potential for providing gold. The first expedition was made by Hall and two companions named Harris and O'Neill. As they traveled through the San Juans, near the current site of Durango, the party became confused as to which river they were following. Thinking they were on the Los Pinos they were in fact farther north on the Gunnison. They consequently got lost, and struggled along in the mountains without food for fourteen days. Finally the report of Hall's pistol was heard by Ben Eaton (later Colorado Governor) and his party, who were also prospecting in the vicinity. The lost explorers were quickly rescued and transported to Baker's Park where they were given food and started on the road to recovery. Hall lost 87 pounds during his adventure and they were all considered lucky to be alive, despite their unsuccessful quest for gold.

A 21-year old woman, Mary Melissa Nye, and her two children. were with Eaton's party. Mrs. Nye nursed and fed Hall back to health and, the next year, the couple married.

After this experience, Hall returned to California Gulch and continued prospecting on Cash Creek above Fairplay. Hall's luck proved not to lie in gold when, in the spring of 1862, he located a salt springs in the area and, with John Q.A. Rollins, established the Colorado Salt Works, twenty miles from Fairplay. The salt they produced was a valuable and important commodity in the new settlements in Colorado. It sold in Denver for seven cents a pound and for eight cents in Central City. Salt
previously had to be shipped 700 miles overland from Missouri, so a source so near the gold camps was a windfall. Although it proved to be an extremely successful and profitable business, the salt works came to an end after years of legal battles between Rollins and Hall. Rollins sued Hall for selling a portion of the land to Rollins and then mortgaging his remaining interest to raise the means to complete the construction of the salt works, which eventually cost approximately $50,000. The Works had done a thriving business, turning out enormous quantities of salt, but with the advent of the railroads and the cheapening of freight rates, the competition knocked down the Work's profits.

Meanwhile, the Hall mortgage had been foreclosed and the whole property fell into the possession of Rollins and his son. Hall then filed the property under the homestead laws, claiming it as agricultural land and not for its mineral rights, which essentially took all rights to it away from Rollins. Although the salt works did not survive the court battles, the Hall family remained on the property and continues to operate a ranch there in 1992.

During the Civil War, Hall served as a lieutenant in the Second Colorado Cavalry and participated in various campaigns with the regiment. He was involved in hunts for guerrillas which crossed into the territory from the south and was also at Sand Creek when the troops under Chivington attacked Cheyenne and Arapahoe Indians camped with Black Kettle.
In 1878, Hall moved to Leadville and was involved in several different business enterprises, among which was contracting for grading the streets of the city. In 1897, he organized a stock company with George Fisher, Dennis Sullivan, and others and established the Leadville Illuminating Gas Company to light the city of Leadville with gas street lamps. Later, he served as one of the directors of the Pueblo Gas & Electric Company promoting the same utility in that city. Hall continued to spend a large amount of money and time in prospecting and mining, with but little success. But in the spring of 1881, he and Dennis Sullivan bought into the well-known Mylo group of mines in the Ten Mile District, which proved quite successful.

Hall was twice elected to the state legislature from the Eighth Colorado District (Leadville), and served for three years as the county commissioner. In 1880, Hall joined with two very important figures in the building of Denver, William Bush and Horace A.W. Tabor and they opened the Windsor Hotel on the corner of 18th and Larimer Streets in Denver. Hall subsequently sold his interest to Mr. Tabor, but the hotel continued to be a central and important meeting place in the city. Hall also owned stock in several railroads and owned valuable real estate in Leadville.

In 1892, Hall moved to Arizona and started the noted Mammoth Mine, out of which he took minerals worth eight hundred thousand dollars. As a gesture of his importance to the mining industry,
he was delegated to represent Arizona territory at the metallic
convention held in St. Louis, Missouri, in October 1893.

At the time of his death, in 1907, Hall was the owner of
about forty mines in Colorado and Arizona. Many of the
businesses with which he was associated are operating today.

Hall's wife, Mary Melissa, was a remarkable woman who showed
a tremendous ability to survive and prosper in the adverse
conditions of early Colorado. Born in Genessee County, New York
in 1838, she was about sixteen when she married Nathan Nye. They
had two children, Ella and Hal. In 1860, the family crossed the
plains to Colorado where, some time soon afterward, Nye abandoned
his family.

Mary married Charles Hall in 1862. While living at the
isolated Colorado Salt Works in South Park, she played hostess to
anybody who happened to be traveling through the area. She also
nursed wounded Ute Indians when they came to her door, and had to
defend herself from the dangers of the Rocky Mountains during the
many times her husband was away from home on his business
ventures.

Around 1880, the Hall family moved to Denver. The children;
Minnie B. (b. 1863), Charles A. (b. 1865), and Mildred "Nettie"
(b. 1869), were placed in school to finish the education they
started on the ranch with tutors.

In 1885, while in Denver, Mrs. Hall's eyesight began to
deteriorate. She traveled east for treatment and, while in
Chicago, was introduced to the Christian Science religion which,
according to her daughter, was responsible for her recovery. Mrs. Hall lived another 14 years in which she was instrumental in bringing Christian Science to Colorado. She died in Denver on July 17, 1899.

The Hall's youngest daughter, Mildred, attended Wellesley College where she majored in dramatics. She went into acting and had a successful career touring the country acting in road companies. In the midst of her career she returned to live at the family's Salt Works Ranch in South Park where she remained until her death. She married twice, the first time in 1911 to George Wessells, an actor, and then in 1945 to Thomas McQuade.

Charles A. Hall worked with his father at the Salt Works and ranch until some time after 1892 when he moved to Arizona to take over his father's mining interests there. He died one year before his father, in 1906.

Perhaps the most dynamic of the Hall children was Minnie Betsy. She attended Battle Creek College after Wolfe Hall, (the famous girl's school in Denver). She began her training in art at sixteen when she studied painting with Henry Read of Denver and later at the Chicago Art Institute and the New York Art League.

In 1885, she accompanied her ailing mother to Chicago and was also introduced to the Christian Science religion. After their return to Denver, the mother and daughter worked to establish a Christian Science Church in Colorado. On January 4, 1886, they established the Metaphysical Christian Science
Institute Association in their home and Minnie received a charter to conduct the Colorado Christian Science Institute. In May 1886, Minnie traveled to Boston to take the Normal Course in Christian Science. She took the entire course under the personal instruction of Mary Baker Eddy, the church's founder.

Minnie lectured throughout the state about the Christian Science Church and, with her sister, in 1887, started the first Sunday School for Christian Science in Colorado in their home. The First Church of Christ, Scientist, was formally organized in Denver on January 11, 1891.

Minnie Hall was first married in 1887 to William R. Perry of Denver. Her second marriage was in 1910 to Edward Roberts Murphy, general auditor of the Denver & Rio Grande Railroad.

During World War I Minnie was involved in many charitable causes; she established a unit of the Comforts Forwarding Committee of Boston in Denver, secured funds and volunteers to establish entertainment for the hundreds of troops that were passing through Denver, started a cafeteria to feed the soldiers, and worked in support of the Red Cross.

In 1933, Minnie married Emilio DeSoto, a Denver attorney. She died in Denver in 1952, at the age of 89.

Antoinette Perry, Minnie and William R. Perry's only daughter, was born in 1888 in Denver. She was introduced to acting and the stage by her aunt Mildred and made her acting debut in "Mrs. Temple's Telegram" at Power's Theater in Chicago.
In 1909, she married Frank W. Frueauff, president of the Denver Gas and Electric Company, and retired from acting to have a family. The couple had three daughters, Virginia Day, who died in infancy; and Margaret Hall and Elaine Storr, who both followed their mother onto the stage.

In January 1924, eighteen months after Frank Frueauff's death, Antoinette returned to acting, and began directing, for which she is best remembered. She also served as chairman of the American Theatre Council's Committee of the Apprentice Theatre (1937-1939), and president of Actor's Equity Experimental Theatre Wing War Service. She died of a heart attack in 1946 at her home in New York. In 1947, in commemoration of her generous services to the stage, the American Theatre Wing inaugurated its annual presentation of the Antoinette Perry Awards ("Tony") for distinguished achievements in the theatre profession.

For over a hundred years the Hall family has been important citizens of Colorado. They each have been involved in pioneering industries, companies, and ideas that continue to influence life in Colorado.
CHRONOLOGY

1835 November 22: Charles L. Hall is born in Sherman, N.Y.
1838 March 8: Mary Melissa Hill is born in Gennesee, N.Y.
1844 The Hall family moves to Jackson County, Iowa.
1854(?) Mary Melissa Hill marries Nathan Nye.
1858 Gold is first discovered in Colorado.
1859 Charles Hall graduates from Iowa College and moves to Colorado.
Gold is discovered in Black Hawk and Central City, triggering the Pike's Peak Gold Rush.
1860 Mary Melissa Nye and family move to Colorado where Nathan abandons them.
December 14: Charles Hall moves to California Gulch.
1861 The Colorado Territory is formed.
Charles Hall, as part of a surveying party, gets lost in the San Juan mountains while hunting for gold.
The American Civil War begins.
1862 Charles Hall and Mary Melissa Nye are married.
Hall family moves to Fairplay and establishes the Colorado Salt Works.
1863 Minnie B. Hall is born.
1864 Charles Hall becomes a Lieutenant in the 2nd Colorado Calvary.
November: Troops of the 2nd Colorado Calvary under Colonel J. Chivington massacre a group of Indians at Sand Creek.
1865 Charles A. Hall is born.
The Civil War ends.
Charles L. becomes a representative from Park County in the Territorial Legislature.

1869 Mildred Nettie is born.
1876 Colorado gains statehood.
1878 The Hall family moves to Leadville.
1879 With George Fisher and Dennis Sullivan, Hall establishes the Leadville Illuminating Gas Company.
1880 Tabor, Bush & Hall open the Windsor Hotel, in Denver.
1881 Melissa and Minnie Hall travel to Chicago and are introduced to the Church of Christ, Scientist.
1885 With Dennis Sullivan Hall purchases the Mylo Mines in the Ten Mile District.
1887 Minnie B. Hall marries William B. Perry.
1888 Antoinette Perry is born.
1892 Hall goes to Arizona and discovers the Mammoth Mine.
1893 October: Hall is voted to represent the Arizona Territory in the Metallic Convention held in St. Louis, Missouri.
1899 Mary Melissa Hall dies.
1905 Antoinette Perry makes her acting debut in Chicago.
1906 Charles A. Hall dies.
1907 Charles L. Hall dies.
1909 Antoinette Perry marries Frank W. Frueauff.
1910 Minnie B. marries Thomas McQuade.
1911 Mildred Hall marries George Wessells.
1913 Margaret Hall Frueauff is born.
1921 Elaine Storrs Frueauff is born.
1924 Frank Frueauff dies.
1925 Antoinette Perry returns to the stage.
1933 Minnie B. Hall marries Emilio DeSoto.
1946 Antoinette Perry dies.
1947 The "Tony" Awards are first presented by the American Theatre Wing.
1952 Minnie B. Hall DeSoto dies in Denver.
1990 The Colorado Historical Society honors the Colorado Salt Works Ranch as one of its Centennial Farms.
Members of the Charles L. Hall Family have played important roles in the history of Colorado. They have pioneered industries, companies, and ideas that continue to influence life in Colorado and the United States.

The collection spans 1855 to 1907. The series include: 1. Correspondence (1855-1905), which primarily contains letters to and from Charles Hall and his family; 2. Legal Records (1860-1907), contains land claims, deeds, and court records; 3. Business and Financial Records (1859-1906), contains account ledgers, receipts, bills of sale, and other miscellaneous business records; and 4. Miscellaneous Materials (1862-1903), which includes a scrapbook, and a manuscript by Minnie Hall Murphy.

The collection was donated by Margaret Fanning and Elaine Perry, the grand-daughters of Minnie Hall, in 1959. Additional donations were received from Howard A. Hutson in 1991.

The Colorado Historical Society has a related collection of the papers of Antoinette Perry, Manuscript Collection 745. All photographs have been transferred to the society's Department of Photography. Materials relating to the family and Christian Science religion in Colorado were donated by the family to the Mother Church, Boston, Massachusetts. Additional documents remain in private collections.
## SERIES DESCRIPTIONS

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## Correspondence

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## Legal Records

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78 Copps Landowner August 1875

79 Colorado State Constitution July 1876
80 Colorado State Constitution July 1876
81 Biennial report of the Adjutant General of Colorado 1882
82 Autograph Album 1885
83 Goldfield Mining Company booklet 1903
84 Manuscript, "Pikes Peak or Bust," by Minnie Hall Murphy, pt. I (undated)
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86 Charles A. Hall, Arithmetic Exam (undated)
87 Miscellaneous (undated)

**Bound Volumes**

Scrapbook, 1890-1892- opera & theater programs & newspaper clippings
"French Bakery Register"- hotel register (1862-1863), Montgomery Mining Stock Company Minutes (1865), Colorado Salt Works register (1878)