

Guide to the Mining Records at the Salt Lake County Archives

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Overview

The Salt Lake County Archives maintains records produced by the Salt Lake County Government and works to make these records publically available. The Archive does not have all associated records referred to in mining abstracts and ledgers, as often there is a book and page listed, to which the record volume may still be with the County Recorder or Treasurer. The Archive identifies these as gaps in the collections. Some items are not arranged in any order, or do not have an index and it is up to the researcher to locate the information needed.

The bulk years of the records are 1863-1920, and 1976-2000.

The guide is broken down into section by document type with appropriate descriptions and listing of inventory by agency, title of records, dates, record series number, quantity of items, arrangement of records, and an abstract of contents.

Each record series has agency specific jargon. Examples of such terms in Recorder records is “legal instrument” used to describe document types (any formally executed written document that can be formally attributed to its author, records and formally expresses a legally enforceable act, process, or contractual duty, obligation, or right, and therefore evidences that act, process, or agreement).

Indexes*(See bottom of document)

County recorders created various indexes and abstracts to provide reference to the notices of location and other mining records. Indexes usually identify the claim, the kind of document, the date, names of locators, and book and page number where documents were recorded. There are many indexes to the records, please see the records below.

Overview of Mining Districts and Their By-Laws*

The gold rush of 1849 brought some 40,000 prospectors to California. Since no laws were in place to regulate mining, the gold rush began as a free-for-all. Prospectors soon realized the need for regulation and began organizing local mining districts to enforce order and establish ground rules. Mining districts adopted by-laws which established requirements for making and marking claims, regulated the amount which could be claimed, and the amount of work required to hold the claim. Precedents set in California were continued in Utah. Federal troops who were

stationed in Utah and who were also veteran prospectors organized Utah’s first mining districts in Tooele and Salt Lake Counties.

Initially Congress struggled with the mining issue, but finally in 1866, ruled that mineral deposits in the public domain were free and open to exploration and occupation. This act validated the mining districts that had already been organized and the conventions they had established. Prospectors organized more than 130 mining districts in Utah Territory. These districts vary greatly in terms of size and production, but all were authorized to create their own regulations within federal and state guidelines. Typically mining district by-laws designate a name for the district and specify its boundaries. By-laws detail requirements for recording claims and marking them at the site. They also define the responsibilities of the district’ recorder, designate his term of office, provide for his election, and specify the fees he can charge for services. District by-laws usually specify how records should be kept and designate who had access to them. In 1876 Utah’s Territorial Assembly validated the records kept by mining district recorders, declaring them “receivable in all courts of this territory.” The Assembly also ruled that mining district by-laws must be recorded by the county recorder in the respective counties. Since methods of organizing records vary from county to county, county recorders’ copies of district by-laws may have been filed among notices of location, in miscellaneous records, or elsewhere. Many Utah mining districts kept a copy of their by-laws in their own records or filed a copy with the General Land Office. Copies filed with the General Land Office have since been transferred to Utah State Archives.

Abstracts*

Abstracts begin with a notice of location and chronologically list each document associated with a claim. They indicate where relevant documents were recorded. Most early indexes and abstracts provide reference based on the name of the mine or claim, but not the names of the individuals or corporations involved.

Agency	Title	Dates	Series	Quantity	Arrangement	Abstract
Recorder	Mining Abstract Indexes, Books A-F.	1881-1882	RC-041	6 volumes	Arranged by page number in the abstract books within A-Z of index.	Index for Mining Abstracts records RC-041 that contain information about mines in Salt Lake County.
Recorder	Mining Abstract records.	1863-1944.	RC-041	7 microfilm reels.	Arranged alphabetically by the name of the mine.	Abstracts that contain information about mines in Salt Lake County.

Assessment Rolls

Salt Lake County Treasurer kept assessments on various incomes, work, and labor involved with the mines in order to collect taxes due for revenues. In this index there are letters above each year, possibly denoting the volume to reference. The mines are listed alphabetically and show the abbreviated name of the mining district. There are two numbers listed for mines under each year, presumably referring to a page and a line of a nonexistent record book.

Treasurer	Assessment Rolls, Index to Mining Claims.	1898-1909	TR-304	1 microfilm reel.	Arranged alphabetically by mining claim.	A list of mining claims in various districts within the county.
Treasurer	Net Proceeds of Mines Assessment Book.	1896-1897	TR-317	2 volumes	No apparent organization.	A record of net proceeds from mines.
Treasurer	Assessment Rolls Index to Mining Claims	1910-1938; 1950-1974	TR-316	6 volumes	Arranged A-Z, but not within each letter. Each letter arranged by year.	List of mining claims within Salt Lake County that is an index for another, unknown record.
Treasurer	State Assessment Books	1976-2000	TR-059	50 binders	Arranged by Taxing district, but districts are not A-Z, but district pages are grouped together.	Assessment of State properties by the county that include mines.

Mining Deeds*

A revision of the 1872 Mining Law provided a process by which claims could be patented (owned outright). Anyone who had properly located a claim could file a patent application. The application was to be accompanied by a plat map and field notes made or authorized by the surveyor general, and two affidavits verifying that the claim had been distinctly marked at the site and that notice of patent application had been posted. Applicants were additionally required to do at least \$500 worth of labor on the claim and prove that no adverse claims had been filed. After these requirements had been met the applicant could purchase the mineral land for \$5 an acre. A mineral certificate issued by the district land office entitled the claimant to a federal patent.

Utah county recorders kept copies of patents and mineral certificates with other mining deeds, which by definition transfer interest in mining claims or ownership of mineral lands from one party to another. Mining deeds name a grantor (giver) and grantee (recipient), specify the amount of consideration money, and indicate whether divided or undivided interest in the claim. They describe the location of the claim, and identify when, where and by whom it was originally recorded. Most district or county recorders kept mining deeds separate from location notices. Often, they are intermingled with other deeds transferring land.

Agency	Title	Dates	Series	Quantity	Arrangement	Abstract
Recorder	Index to Mining Deed Record.	1897	RC-044	1 vol.	Arranged alphabetically by name of interested parties.	Two indexes listing the names of each side of a deed transaction in alphabetical order.

Mining Claims

Claims were notices that an individual wanted to work a mine that was owned privately or on public lands (a patented mine is a private mine). Usually, cents and dollars were converted to labor and the labor was calculated annually. The individual was required to put in effort to maintain their claim. These indexes list the name of the mining claim, the patent number, and have two numbers entered for each year. The numbers may refer to a book, page, and line, but no records currently found match this index.

Agency	Title	Dates	Series	Quantity	Arrangement	Abstract
Recorder	Mining Claims Agreements Index, Book C.	1877-1888	RC-073	1 vol.	Arranged alphabetically according to the names in the "from" column.	An index of Salt Lake County mining claim transactions.
Recorder	Mining Claims Powers of Attorney, Book C	1877-1888	RC-020	1 vol.	Arranged alphabetically according to the names in the "from" column.	An index of Salt Lake County Powers of Attorney transactions.
Treasurer	Mining Claims-Index to Patented Mines.	1898.	TR-316	1 volume	Arranged alphabetically by name of the mining claim within each mining district.	List of mining claims within Salt Lake County that is an index for another, unknown record.

Notices of Location*

A document which records a specific claim is called a notice of location. In 1866 Congress authorized the location of a lode throughout its depth, but not the location of the land encompassing the deposit, but in 1870 extended rights to "placer claims," allowing prospectors to claim up to 160 acres. Congress adopted a fully developed mining law in 1872. This law continued the policy of making mineral deposits free and open to exploration and purchase according to the rules of local mining districts but added certain regulations. Claims were limited to 1500 feet along a vein or lode with no more than 300 feet on either side of the center, and placer claims were limited to 20 acres. After statehood, the Utah Legislature added certain qualifications to the federal law. Utah locators were required to mark their claims according to detailed instructions and to have a notice of location recorded by the county recorder within thirty days.

The 1872 mining law limited claims to "valuable" deposits. The issue of whether this law applied to petroleum became especially hot in the 1890s. In 1896 the General Land Office determined that petroleum was not "locatable." The following year (1897) Congress clarified the dispute by passing the Oil Placer Act, which stated that oil and gas were locatable under the general mining law. While most location notices recorded during the territorial period were recorded by prospectors searching for precious metals, many petroleum locations were recorded in the early twentieth century.

Notices of location dominate the mining records kept by both mining district and county recorders. Many thousands of them have been recorded. Each notice identifies the claim by a unique name, such as “Poor Man’s Friend,” “Sunshine Lode,” “Bald Eagle Mine,” or “Good Luck Mine.” Each notice names the locators, indicates the date of location, and tells how many feet or acres the claim involves. Location notices confirm compliance with federal law and affirm the locator’s citizenship. They indicate whether the claim is a lode or placer claim and sometimes name the valuable mineral being sought. Books of location notices also contain variations such as location amendments, relocation notices, or location notices for water or mill sites used in mining activities.

The abstract book and page referred to on each document in the Recorder Memorandum can be found in the “Mining Abstract” records, RC-04.

Agency	Title	Dates	Series	Quantity	Arrangement	Abstract
Recorder	Index to Mining Location Notice and Record Books.	1897	RC-045	2 Volumes: Index to Mining Location Notices Book E; Index to Mining Location Record, F.	Arranged alphabetically by name of claimant, then by claim.	First index lists the names of the claimant. The second index lists the name of the claimant and the name of the claim.
Recorder	Notice of Location.	1897-1905	RC-050	2 boxes inclusive of #s 113190-193287	Chronologically and numerically by claim.	This series contains the original Notice of Location certificates for mining claims in Salt Lake County.
Recorder	Index to Mining Claims Notice of Location -Claims Located, Books 1-4.	1897-1950	RC-050	4 microfilm reels.	Fields include claim entry number, location date, filing date, book, page number, location name, mining district, and locator name.	This series is the index of the Notice of Location.

Proof of Labor*

The General Mining Law of 1872 added a requirement for at least \$100 worth of annual assessment work to be done on each claim in order to maintain it. Failure to mark and record a claim or to do the necessary annual assessment work would open the claim for location by someone else. County or mining district recorders kept track of this assessment work. In affidavits showing proof of labor a claimant swore that he had performed the necessary amount of labor, and usually specified exactly what that labor involved, who did the work, and when. Some mining districts required district recorders to personally examine work done and make their own assessment. As long as claims were properly recorded and maintained through annual assessment work, locators could continue to hold them without the necessity of any record except at the local level. After statehood the Utah Legislature passed a law requiring prospectors

to do at least \$50 worth of labor within the first ninety days, and specifying details required in affidavits showing proof of labor filed thereafter.

The abstract book and page referred to on each document in the Recorder Memorandum can be found in the “Mining Abstract” records, RC-04.

Agency	Title	Dates	Series	Quantity	Arrangement	Abstract
Recorder	Proof of Labor.	1897-1948	RC-055	4 boxes and 1 microfilm reel.	Records are arranged chronologically.	This series contains the original Proof of Labor Certificates for mines in Salt Lake County from 1897 to 1950.

Other Mining Records

Agency	Title	Dates	Series	Quantity	Arrangement	Abstract
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Recorder	Surface Land Claims-Bingham Canyon.	1855-1951	RC-107	1 microfilm reel. Part of 2 other record series on reel #005106.	The record "Abstract Journal of Instruments Describing Surface Lands in Bingham Canyon" is arranged numerically by entry number. The "Index to Abstract Journal of Bingham Surface Lands" is arranged alphabetically with transaction entries listed as "Journal no" from a grantor to a grantee.	Information on property and buildings in Bingham Canyon involving the transfer of ownership through means of a Land Title, quit claim, and deeds. Lists date file, book and page of entry, parties of ownership and transfer, and description of property transferred.
Recorder	Property Sold to Salt Lake County.	1891-1939	RC-056	11 volumes	Records are arranged chronologically	A record of property sold to Salt Lake County.
Recorder	5 and 10 Acre Plats, Sections, and Mines #3.	1891-1923	RC-005	2 volumes	No apparent organization.	A record of five and ten acre plats, sections, and mines sold in Salt Lake County.

***Descriptions of records taken from the Utah State Archives**

<https://archives.utah.gov/research/guides/mining-claims.htm>