
ARIZONA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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MS 0827
VAIL, EDWARD L. 1849-1936
Papers, 1875-1935

DESCRIPTION

The collection reflects correspondence, business records and receipts, and personal reminiscences of Edward Vail and the Vail family enterprises in Arizona from 1875 to 1935. Family correspondence between Walter (Edward's brother), Maggie (Walter's wife), Edward, and Nathan (uncle) between 1863 and 1890 provide information on Arizona history, geography, and early life on the Empire Ranch. Manuscripts in the collection entail reminiscences of events and activities in Arizona including the 1896 cattle drive to California by Edward Vail, life at the Empire Ranch, and history of the Total Wreck Mine. One folder contains family photos including prints of Edward Vail.

6 Boxes. 2.75 linear feet

ACQUISITION

The original collection was received at the Historical Society in 1963 with a later donation by Laura Vail Ingram in 1991.

ACCESS

There are no restrictions on access to this collection.

COPYRIGHT

Requests for permission to publish material from this collection should be addressed to the Arizona Historical Society, Tucson, and Archives Department.

PROCESSING

The collection was originally processed in 1976 by Gregory P. Dowell and reviewed by William D. Tackenberg in July 1998.

ARRANGEMENT

The collection is arranged into seven series: Family genealogy; Correspondence, Manuscripts, Records, Total Wreck Mine Records, Photographs, and Ledgers.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Edward L. Vail was born September 19, 1849 in Liverpool, Nova Scotia of American parents. He grew up in New Jersey and later worked in New York as a ship candler. Edward's brother Walter L. Vail purchased the E. N. Fish Ranch in Arizona and renamed it the Empire Ranch. Edward came to Arizona from California by the Overland Stage to

Tucson in 1879 then proceeded to his brother's ranch. Walter Vail also maintained part ownership of the Total Wreck Mines and employed Edward as assayer. He supervised some of the Vail family ranches and later purchased his own ranch near Rosemont on the east slope of the Santa Rita Mountains. In 1886 Edward participated in actions against Apaches performing as a military guide for Lieutenant Bigelow of the Tenth Cavalry Regiment.

Vail was a member of the Pima County Board of Supervisors, served one term in 1906 as county treasurer, and one period as chairman of the Board of Supervisors. He was a life-long Republican.

As he grew older Vail devoted time to collecting his memoirs of life in early Arizona. Some of these reminiscences were published in local papers including: "A Story of the Old Stage Road: La Cieniga Station," "The First Railway in Arizona," and "Diary of a Desert Trail." "Diary of a Desert Trail" relates the story of a cattle drive from Arizona to California in 1896 participated in by Vail. His diary entries were published in issues of *The Arizona Daily Star* in 1926. In 1931 *The Star* also ran a series of letters written by Walter Vail to Edward in 1876 about life on the Empire Ranch. Vail became involved with the Arizona Pioneer Historical Society and served as its president in 1927.

Edward Vail never married and died October 14, 1936 in Tucson, AZ.

SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The collection reflects Vail's participation with the Empire Ranch, the Total Wreck Mine (both owned by his brother Walter Vail), and other Vail family ranching and commercial activities in Arizona between 1879 and 1935. Family correspondence between Walter, Maggie (his wife), Edward, and Nathan Vail (uncle) between 1863 and 1890 provides information on Arizona history, geography, and early life on the Empire Ranch. Approximately one half of the letters are not original but are retyped photocopies. Vail's manuscripts entail reminiscences of personal events and activities in turn-of-the-century Arizona. One folder contains family photos including photographs of Edward Vail.

Commercial records and correspondence entail materials from the enterprises managed by Edward Vail or the Vail family including the Empire Ranch, Total Wreck Mine, and the Arizona Rare Metals Company (handled ore from Total Wreck Mine). Receipts for supplies and equipment ordered for the Empire Ranch (with one folder entirely from Albert Steinfeld Company), and Total Wreck Mine reflect operations between 1898 and 1921. Bank books from the Southern Arizona Bank and Trust for 1904-1907 and 1926-1934 reflect personal purchases in an around Tucson, Arizona. Ledger books disclose labor records and expenditures for the Total Wreck Mine (1917-1918), Vail's personal investments and expenses (1890-1907), and Empire Ranch beef orders and deliveries for 1882.

Manuscripts in the collection consist of recollections written by Edward Vail later in life of events and activities he participated in or witnessed. Manuscripts include "Reminiscences of Edward L. Vail," "The Chiricahuas," "The First Railroad in Arizona," "Story of a Mine," draft copy of "History of Cieniga Station," and "Diary of a Desert Trail" along with other handwritten notes. Some of Vail's writings were published in local newspapers including the *Arizona Daily Star*. Many manuscripts are handwritten originals while others are carbon copies containing handwritten corrections.

The folder with family photos contains photos taken in the early 1930s of Vail family members, including Edward. Of related interest is a portrait photo file on Edward Vail.

Series 1 contains genealogical charts and information on the Vail and Bulkley families and consists of one folder with family history 1879-1906.

Series 2 consists of Vail family correspondence and communications with reference to the Empire Ranch and Total Wreck Mine from 1863 to 1921. The material reflects communication between the Vail family members and describes the Tucson and southern Arizona areas as well as life at the Empire Ranch with folders arranged chronologically. Correspondence also communicates with the Arizona Rare Metals Company on ore from the Total Wreck Mine and other mining interests controlled by the Vails.

Series 3 contains the manuscripts written by Edward Vail on activities and events he witnessed in Arizona 1879 to 1935. "The Diary of a Desert Trail" recorded as a journal by Vail highlights the manuscripts. Vail wrote this paper while moving cattle from Tucson to California in 1896 in an attempt to obtain better market price and cut railroad rates. This manuscript was later printed in the *Arizona Daily Star*. This series consists of seven folders and .5 linear feet.

Series 4 entails records, bills and receipts for the Empire Ranch and various mining interests. In addition, six folders contain bank statements, canceled checks, and correspondence from the Southern Arizona Bank and Trust (1904-1931) and Consolidated National and Merchants Bank (1910, 1917-1922). Materials reflect supplies and expenditures for the bulk period between 1917 and 1921 and entails .5 linear feet.

Series 5 business records, and correspondence with the Total Wreck Mine entails the period 1903 to 1934 and consists of six folders of .5 linear feet. Supplies and receipts as well as payroll records for 1916-1918 are recorded.

Series 6 has one folder with Vail family photos.

Series 7 consists of eight ledger books containing financial records for the Total Wreck Mine, Empire Ranch, and Valley Spring Ranch. In addition, personal financial expenditures and investments for Edward Vail from 1890 to 1907 are also present. Ledgers consist of 1.25 linear feet.

BOX AND FOLDER LIST

Box 1

Series 1: Genealogy and Family History

f.1 Vail Family Genealogy and History

Series 2: Correspondence (1863-1936)

f.2	Personal and Family	1863-1876
f.3	Personal and Family	1876-1881
f.4	Personal and Family	1881-1936
f.5	Arizona Rare Metals Company	1917-1918
f.6	Arizona Real Estate Sales/Insurance	1916-1917

f.7	Empire Land and Cattle Co./Stock & Cattle Raising	1916-1917
f.8	Mining Interests (Other Than Total Wreck Mines)	1916-1917
f.9	Old Pueblo Club	1916-1921

Series 3: Manuscripts

f.10	"Tucson" (By J. Ross Brown) and Vail Letters On	1864/1875
f.11	Reminiscences of E.L. Vail Notebook with Incidents in His Life Notes on "Living with Cattle" at Total Wreck Mines	1879/1880
	"Reminiscences of Edward L. Vail" (Photocopy)	
	"Reminiscences by Edward L. Vail: Dan Murphy's Ranch On The San Pedro River" (Carbon Copy)	
	"The Chiricahuas" (Draft Typed Copy)	
	"The Chiricahuas" (Handwritten Draft Copy)	
	"Jerry Dillon and Green" (Carbon Copy)	
	"The First Railroad in Arizona" (Handwritten Draft)	
	"The First Railroad in Arizona" (Typed Draft Copy)	
	"The First Railroad in Arizona" (Second Draft Typed Copy)	
	"Before The Coming of Railroad" (Newspaper Story)	
	Draft History of Cieniga Station	
	Draft Story of Oatman Massacre	

Box 2

f.12	"The Empire Ranch" (Handwritten Draft)	
	"The Empire Story" (Carbon Copy Draft)	
f.13	"The Diary of a Desert Trail" (Handwritten Draft)	
	"The Diary of a Desert Trail" (Typed Carbon Draft)	
f.14	Early Recollections of Arizona By Vail	
f.15	"How the Engineer Talks to the Conductor" (Typed Carbon Draft)	
	"The First Railroad in Arizona" (Typed Carbon Draft)	
	"CAPT Lawton and the Apache Kin"	
f.16	"The Story of a Mine" (Typed Carbon Draft)	
	"Following the Trail of the Apaches" (Typed Carbon Draft)	
	"Pioneer Days, Hunting Murderers in Mexico" (Typed Carbon Draft)	

Series 4: Records (1898-1934)

f.17	Receipts, Bills, Notes	1898-1906
f.18	Receipts, Bills, Notes	1917-1922
f.19	Receipts, Bills, Notes with Albert Steinfeld & Co.	1917-1921
f.20	Bank Correspondence and Checks	1904-1906
f.21	Bank Book-Southern Arizona Bank and Trust	1906-1907
f.22	Bank Book-Southern Arizona Bank and Trust	1926/1929

Box 3

f.23	Bank Book-Southern Arizona Bank and Trust	1929-1931
f.24	Bank Statements-Southern Arizona Bank and Trust	1931-1934
f.25	Bank Statements-Consolidated National and Merchants Bank	1910/1917-1922

**Series 5: Business Records and Correspondence of Total Wreck Mines
(1903-1937)**

f.26	Total Wreck Mines	1903-Aug. 1917
f.27	Total Wreck Mines	Sep 1917-Dec 1917
f.28	Total Wreck Mines	Jan-Feb 1918
f.29	Total Wreck Mines	1919-1934

Box 4

f.30	Total Wreck Mines-Supplies and Receipts	Mar-Dec 1918
f.31	Total Wreck Mines-Payroll Records	1916-1918

Series 6: Vail Family Photos

f.32	Vail Family Members	1934-1937
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Series 7: Ledger Books (1882-1918)

f.33	Total Wreck Mines Labor and Expenses	1917-1918
f.34	Total Wreck Mines Shipping Books and Monthly Time Book	1917
f.35	Total Wreck Mines Expenses	1917-1918

Box 5

f.36	Valley Spring Ranch Expenses	1882-1887
f.37	Empire Ranch Beef (Orders and Deliveries)	1882
f.38	Vail Personal Expenses	1890-1899
f.39	Vail Personal Expenses	1902-1907

Box 6

f.40	Vail Expenses and Investments	1905-1907
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