Celebrate National Library Week

Historic Mining Maps in the Arthur Lakes Library

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One of the driving motivations of the U.S. settlement of the Rocky Mountains was mining. The gold, silver, and other minerals attracted fortune seekers from around the world. Beginning in the late 1850s, prospectors flocked to Colorado. As government organizations helped settle the lawlessness of the mining district, the need to determine accurately who had the rights to particular plots of land became necessary. At first, maps played an integral part of resolving who owned what. Later, people and companies used maps to flaunt their claims, and potential for resources and riches. In addition, maps showed safety and workings features of mines. All along, maps inadvertently painted a picture of mining's booms and busts, noted prospectors' names, and showed the development of many of Colorado's famous mountain towns. Today, historians use mining map for all those things previously listed, but also as ways to reconstruct timelines and add background to biographies. On top of that, some of the original maps are works of art. This talk will illustrate Colorado's historical mining maps using the rich collection of the Arthur Lakes Library at the Colorado School of Mines.





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