



Charles E. Mills (1867-1929)

Mining Manager, Founder and President, Apache Powder Company
and The Valley National Bank

2013 Inductee from Mining's Past

Charles E. Mills left major footprints in both the banking and the mining industries. Following graduation from the University of Iowa, School of Engineering, he joined the Copper Queen Mine at Bisbee, Arizona in 1888. Shortly thereafter, he left for Harvard University and returned after two years to become the general manager of the Detroit Copper Mining Company at Morenci but resigned to become a private in the Rough Riders during the Spanish American War. Mills resumed his managerial duty at Morenci after the war but left in 1912 to become dual general manager of the Inspiration Consolidated Copper Company and the International Smelting Company at Miami. While there, he directed the development of the Inspiration Mine adopting flotation as the method of concentration, the construction of the mill and buildings, and built the International Smelter.

When this nation entered World War I, Mills volunteered as a “dollar a year” man in the aircraft production division. On his return after the war, Mills recognized the need for a regional source of explosives and formed the Apache Powder Company providing explosives for the southwestern mines and successfully eliminating freight expenses. In 1990, the company formally changed its name to Apache Nitrogen Products, Inc.

In 1899, Mills broadened his interests towards the finance industry and embarked on his other notable career beginning with the Gila Valley Bank and Trust Company and under his direction, became the largest branch banking institution in Arizona. Mills steadily acquired the major financial interest in the bank and became President in 1908. In 1914, Mills was appointed to reorganize The Gila Valley Bank and The Valley Bank and merged the two banking institutions in 1922 to form The Valley National Bank. Mills remained the guiding source of The Valley

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National Bank and the Apache Powder Company and served as President of both industries until his death in 1929.