



John Murchison Sully (1868-1933)

2012 Inductee from Mining's Past

Born in 1868 in Dedham, Massachusetts, an affluent suburb of Boston, John Murchison Sully graduated from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in 1888. With his Bachelor of Science degree in mining engineering, he headed west to Butte, Montana where he worked two years for the Boston & Montana Consolidated Silver & Gold Mining Co.

Mr. Sully held positions of increasing importance from 1890 through 1904 in Tennessee, Missouri, California, Alabama and West Virginia. In 1904, he accepted employment in New Mexico where he remained the rest of his life. He was the Assistant Superintendent in Hanover, New Mexico for the Hermosa Copper Co., a subsidiary of the General Electric Co.

He was asked by GE in 1906 to examine the nearby Santa Rita, New Mexico copper deposit for possible purchase. After taking thousands of samples and much research, Sully recommended the acquisition. For some reason, GE did not follow up on the advice and Mr. Sully quit soon after.

Realizing the importance of this huge low-grade copper deposit, Sully was almost single handedly responsible for putting together the financing and the forming of the Chino Copper Co. in 1909. Using large steam shovels, steam locomotives and churn drills, Mr. Sully, as general manager, developed Santa Rita into one of the largest open-pit copper mines in the United States.

A shortage of coal needed for the mining machinery and nearby concentrating mill caused Sully to purchase the Gallup American Coal Co. where he became the Vice-President and Managing Director.

Sully passed away in July 1933 at his beloved Santa Rita, New Mexico. He had been general manager of Chino for over two decades. A Master Mason, he was buried in the Silver City Masonic Cemetery. His copper casket was carried by eight pallbearers and thousands attended

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the funeral. A huge boulder was brought over from the Kneeling Nun Mountain, which overlooks the Chino pit, and placed for his headstone.

Sully was a lifetime member of the American Institute of Mining & Metallurgical Engineers (AIME) and the American Mining Congress.

Still operating today, and known as the Chino Mines, the Santa Rita copper deposit has become a major player in the world metal market. John Murchison Sully was truly the "Father of Chino."