

Elbert Champlin van Blarcom

Elbert Champlin van Blarcom was born about 1855 in Buenos Aires, Argentina. He was the second of eight children of Abraham Lynes and Abbie R van Blarcom. His parents were Americans, but four of their children were born while they were living in San Pedro Gonzalez Telmo, Buenos Aires Argentina, where his father was a merchant in 1855.¹ The family sailed from Buenos Aires to New York on the ship *Parana* in June 1859.² They lived in Brooklyn, Kings, New York, in 1860.³

By 1870, the family was living in Summit, Union, New Jersey. Elbert enrolled in the mining engineering program at the School of Mines at Columbia College in New York in 1871. He donated a trunk of a tree fern from New Zealand to the geological cabinets (perhaps a fossil?). He graduated in 1876⁴ and was working as a surface foreman at the Richmond Mine in Eureka, Nevada, in 1879.⁵ On the 1880 census, he was a mining engineer in Silver Reef, Washington, Utah Territory (he was erroneously recorded as Edward).⁶

He was elected as a member of the American Institute of Mining Engineers in 1880.⁷ He moved to Tombstone, Cochise, Arizona, where he was a civil and mining engineer in 1881.⁸ He was nominated for county surveyor; his platform was changes in the mining laws. He wrote a letter that was published in an engineering journal explaining his suggested changes.⁹ Later he wrote an article for *Scientific American* entitled "Assaying with the Horn Spoon".¹⁰ An article entitled "Working Gold and Silver Ores: Cheap Methods for Prospectors and Miners" in the *Mining and Scientific Press* was based on Elbert's notes from his many years in the Mexican mines.¹¹

Elbert worked as a field assistant for the State Mining and Mineral Museum in California in 1888.¹² He had his own office as a mining engineer in San Francisco in 1889.¹³ By 1892, he was examining the mines of Pachuca in Mexico. He spent years in the Mexican mines.¹⁴ In 1900, he patented a filter for use in ore reduction with J. I. Pullon.¹⁵ It is unknown when or where he died.

¹ Argentina, Capital Federal Census, 1855.

² New York Passenger Lists, 1820-1957.

³ United States Census, 1860.

⁴ Catalogue of Columbia College, 1871, pp. 66, 114; Catalogue of the Officers and Students of Columbia College, 1872, p. 65; US School Catalogs, 1765-1935; The School of Mines Quarterly, Vol L, 1879-1880.

⁵ US School Catalogs, 1765-1935; *Columbia Daily Spectator*, 1 February 1879.

⁶ United States Census, 1880.

⁷ Transactions of the American Institute of Mining Engineers, Vol 8, p. 4; Vol 9, p. xxv; Vol 15, 1887, p. xxxvi.

⁸ Arizona Voter Registrations, 1866-1955; US School Catalogs, 1765-1935; *Tombstone Weekly Epitaph*, 4 November 1882, p. 2.

⁹ *Engineering and Mining Journal*, 1882, Vol 33-34, p. 246.

¹⁰ *Scientific American*, 1 August 1886, p. 41.

¹¹ *Mining and Scientific Press*, 10 April 1886.

¹² *State Mineralogist*, 1888, Issue 8, p. 20.

¹³ Langley's San Francisco Directory, 1889.

¹⁴ *Engineering and Mining Journal*, 25 June 1892, Vol 53, p. 670; mother's probate papers in California Wills and Probate Records, 1850-1953; *School of Mines Quarterly*, 1893, Vol 14, p. 63; Officers and Graduates of Columbia College, 1894, p. 534.

¹⁵ *Journal of the Society of Chemical Industry*, 29 June 1901, p. 562.

The April 10, 1886, issue of *Mining and Scientific Press* describes the mill in a story, "Working Gold and Silver Ores. Cheap Methods for Prospectors and Miners."

There are many places on this coast where miners or prospectors are waiting for stamp mills, while if they went about it energetically they could work out their own salvation with arrastres or Chillan mills. These appliances are by many considered "primitive," as they are old-fashioned, but anyone who has had experience with them will vouch for their efficiency and activity. They do not work as fast as quartz mills, but by their means more gold or silver is saved. These appliances are found in the most perfect form in Mexico, where thousands are in use to-day, and no one can deny that the Mexicans know how to work ore as well as any metallurgists in the world.



Except from an article based on the notes of E C van Blarcom
(The Arrastres of White Mountain City, in *The Chronicle of the Early American Industries Association*, by Patty MacLeish, December 2013)