



**George H. Dern (1872 – 1936)
Mining Man and American Politician
2021 Inductee from Mining's Past**

George H. Dern was an American politician, mining innovator, and businessman. He is remembered today as the co-inventor of the Holt-Dern ore-roasting furnace, as a former governor of Utah (1925–1933), and as a former U.S. Secretary of War (1933–1936).

Dern was born in Dodge County, Nebraska, on September 8, 1872. He graduated from Fremont Normal College (now Midland University) in 1888 at the age of 16 and later attended the University of Nebraska (1893–1894).

In 1894, Dern moved to Salt Lake City, Utah joining the Mercur Gold Mining and Milling Company, where his father served as president. He married Charlotte "Lottie" Brown in 1899 and they had six children. Dern rose rapidly from bookkeeper to company treasurer and in 1901 he was promoted to general manager.

Along with T. P. Holt, Dern designed the Holt-Dern roaster, a furnace for the Holt-Christenson roasting process, which was a technique for recovering silver from low-grade ores.

After Mercur Gold Mining and Milling shut down in 1913, Dern went on to positions with mining companies in the Park City, Tintic, and Little Cottonwood mining districts of Utah. His experience and passion for mining would be reflected later in his political career.

He served as the Governor of Utah for eight years, pushing to develop the state economy by using Utah's rich natural resources. During his tenure, a landmark mineral leasing act was passed that leased, rather than sold, Utah's mineral rights to private concerns.

Dern died in 1936 from kidney and heart complications caused by influenza. His legacy includes descendants Bruce Dern and Laura Dern, both prominent actors.