Northern Nevada Gold and Mining History

The Mining History Association has not previously visited Northern Nevada as a destination for the Annual Conference. Significant large-scale mining for gold in the Carlin and Cortez areas is generally considered to have begun in 1962 with the discovery of the Carlin deposit just barely qualifying these areas as "historic" designation. However, in reality, the mining history of this economically significant region began very early on in the late 1800’s with the discovery of large and high grade lead-zinc-silver-gold deposits in Eureka and Cortez, gold and silver deposits in Austin and other areas in Elko and neighboring counties, and important copper-silver deposits in the Battle Mountain region. Important mining areas came and went throughout the subsequent years at well-known camps like Midas, Tuscarora and Jarbidge as well as other smaller districts.

This year our conference will focus on the mining heritage of Carlin, Cortez and Eureka to share with the MHA membership the wealth of the rich history of these areas. We are very fortunate to have several local experts on these districts in Dean Heitt, author of “Before the Gold: Early History of the Carlin Trend 1874-1961,” and Robert McQueen, co-author with Erich Obermayer, of “Historical Archaeology in the Cortez Mining District: Under the Nevada Giant.” We have also been fortunate to tap into some detailed historical information for Eureka courtesy of the Raines Family and Market in Eureka.

Our conference venue is Elko which is the main supply hub for the current mining activity in the region and also the center of the historical hub due to its centralized location for the region, its railroad heritage and its location on the main thoroughfare through Nevada along the Humboldt River which provided for and guided early miners to the California gold fields and has been an important travel corridor ever since. Elko has evolved into a mature town with modern amenities designed to provide entertainment and hospitality to visitors who are varied from mining related folks to cowboys, ranchers and general outdoor enthusiasts. The Cowboy Poetry Gathering attracts thousands of people every year as does the Mining Expo and the scenic adjacent Ruby Mountains.

We are looking forward to hosting the Mining History Associations Annual Conference and sharing our vibrant mining heritage as well as our current state of the art mining industry with our fellow members. Given the time constraints of the Conference we will not be able to visit all the interesting historic mining locations in northern Nevada but hope that the brief introduction to our area will inspire folks to further explore this region at future dates.

Thanks for visiting us!