Silver San Juans

The Mining History Association’s Tenth Annual Conference organizers invite you to Ouray, June 3-6, 1999. Plans continue to gel for an interesting meet in the high San Juan Mountains of southwest Colorado.

One of the richest gold and silver regions in the state, mining has been a part of the area’s history for 150 years. The legendary mines of the Telluride-Ouray-Silverton-Lake City region sprouted big operations and boom camps, now ghost towns and tremendous relics, some of which hearty MHAers will visit (remember we will be at 7,800 feet or higher).

Our friends at the Ouray County Historical Society will host registration at the Ouray County Museum on the afternoon of June 3. They have also planned a special museum tour for MHA registrants. Local historian and geologist Tom Rosemeyer opens the conference that evening at the Ouray Community Center, where he will talk about mining in the San Juans. Tom will also lead our tour of the famed Camp Bird gold mine, known for its owner Tom Walsh and the gold dividends that went to buy the Hope Diamond.

The Ouray County Historical Society will host a picnic lunch at the Ouray Park followed by a double-jacking contest. Presentations will commence Friday afternoon in the Ouray Community Center and will continue through Saturday. The annual banquet will be Friday evening in the center.

Duane Smith, author of numerous books on the region, professor at Durango’s Fort Lewis College, and leading figure in the MHA will enlighten and entertain. On Sunday he also leads the field trip over Red Mountain, and to points unaccessible to the common visitor.

We will not have a conference hotel. For accommodations call the Ouray Chamber Resort Association at 1-800-228-1876 or see their Homepage at www.ouraycolorado.com. Conference organizers Mark and Karen Vendl say make your reservations early since Ouray, like most of this part of Colorado, is a popular summer destination.

Spring Reading Suggestions:

For an overview history of the region see Duane Smith’s Song of the Hammer and Drill, The Colorado San Juans 1860-1914 (Golden: Colorado School of Mines, 1982); on the Camp Bird see Evalyn Walsh McLean, Father Struck it Rich (Ouray, CO: Bear Creek Publishing, 1981 reprint); on Ouray, see P. David Smith’s 96 page Ouray, A Quick History (Fort Collins: Firstlight, 1996); another in the series is Duane Smith’s Silverton, A Quick History; on a personal view of life at an area gold mine see Harriet Fish Backus, Tomboy Bride (Boulder: Pruett, 1969).

Those travelers interested in riding the famed narrow gauge railroad from Durango up the Animas River Valley to Silverton should contact the rail line directly at 970-247-2733.

On the Road

On your way to Ouray, try to make some side trips into Colorado. If passing through Colorado Springs, the Western Museum of Mining & Industry has operating machinery and a mill worth the stop; they are friends of the MHA (ask Eric for the chance to feed the mules).

Two hours from Denver will take you to Leadville, home of the National Mining Hall of Fame and Museum, one of the best in the West. They have been expanding since we met there in 1991. Beyond Leadville, follow down the Arkansas River valley to the cutoff for Independence Pass and the high road to Aspen, another former bonanza silver camp, now ski resort (This is the long route). Or cut west of Salida into the Gunnison country -- if time allows take a loop to Pitkin and Tincup, then cut southwest from Gunnison to the San Juans and Ouray.
President’s Page

All of us want to travel into mining’s past. How best to get there, however, is more controversial. In his book *The Past is a Foreign Country* (Cambridge University Press, 1985), David Lowenthal tells us that we encounter the past by traveling along the three quite separate pathways of history, memories, and relics. Many of us visit mining’s past mostly by traveling along a paper trail, through written accounts, photographs, maps, and other documents. Others travel through the stories and memories of old-timers. Yet others visit the past through the landscapes, buildings, structures, artifacts, and other physical remains left behind by past miners and mining. The best journey into and experience of mining’s past comes from traveling these roads together. Thus Lowenthal (page 249) further tells us that “Each route requires the others for the journey to be significant and credible. Relics trigger recollection, which history affirms and extends backward in time. History in isolation is barren and lifeless; relics mean only what history and memory convey.”

Finding these roads, however, is only part of the story. All of us should also work to keep the roads to mining’s past well-maintained. Making it possible for others to travel the paper trail, for example, demands that we not only find and mark the road by locating documents but also maintain the trail by preserving documents. In the same way, preserving the relics of mining’s past, the landscapes and buildings and machinery and ruins, makes it possible for others to travel along this road by experiencing first hand the material world of mining history. For this purpose I declare this year’s presidential theme to be “mining and historic preservation.”

What is preserved and what is not speaks to us about mining’s past in a multitude of voices, some speaking loudly, others barely in a whisper. Some of the voices come from the underground, the buried remains of the practices of miners and mining that are affected by the ravages of nature and humanity alike. Other voices yell at us through still standing magnificent buildings and structures. Some voices speak in the legal language of public laws and policies, other voices come from the economics of tourism and the private interests of free enterprise. Yet other voices come from the role that the relics play as symbols of a glorious past or a bleak environmental future. Preservation clearly controls the future of mining’s past.

Donald L. Hardesty
University of Nevada, Reno

Organization Notes

Welcome to our new members of the MHA council. They are Liston Leyendecker, Charles Hughes, and Erik Nordberg. The following are MHA officers for 1999:

Donald Hardesty, President
Richard Graeme, Vice-President
Jay Fell, Treasurer
Bob Spude, Secretary
Council members:
Sally Zanjani, Past-President
Ed Hunter, 1997-9
Lysa Wegman-French, 1997-9
Roger Burt, 1998-2000
Eric Clements, 1998-2000
Liston Leyendecker, 1999-2001
Charles Hughes, 1999-2001
Erik Nordberg, 1999-2001

Thanks to our outgoing council members, Richard Francaviglia, James Edgerley, and Lynn Langenfeld, for their good work the past three years. Tap ’er light!

The MHA’s new nominating committee for 1999 are Duane Smith, Ruth Ann Gardner, and James Edgerley. They will be accepting nominations for the next year at our annual conference or any time you wish to drop a note via the MHA at P. O. Box 150300, Denver, CO.

Managing editor Charles Hughes reports

The *Mining History Journal* for 1998 will be mailed to members soon. Editor Chris Huggard is always looking for scholarly contributions. Please mail manuscripts to him at 523 N Willow Ave, Fayetteville, AR 72701. The next journal will be a special issue dedicated to the Southwest. Plans are underway for a special edition on mining site archeology as well.

International V

The Isle of Milos, Greece will be the locale for the International Mining History Congress V, September 2000. Jay Fell, MHA, will be the chair for the program. He is accepting proposals for papers or sessions. Please contact him at 687 W. Linden St., Louisville, CO 80027 or e-mail: JFell@carbon.CUdenver.edu

The MHA has a new Homepage on the Internet, where you will be able to find information on conferences, membership, list of officers and officials, and links to related sites. Some of the related sites include organizations, research collections, museums, and bibliographies. If you have information on sites that should be added to the page please send the information to Glenn Cook at cookg@sni.net. The address for the new Homepage is: http://www.sni.net/~cookg/mha/

The Mining History Association Newsletter

Denver, Colorado

Distributed to association members; membership is open to all interested in the history of mining. Dues are $25 per year. Please send dues to MHA, Post Office Box 150300, Denver, Colorado 80215.

Submissions for publication in the newsletter are welcome. Write to Robert L. Spude, Editor.
Year of Mining Site Historic Preservation

Send us your lists. MHA president Don Hardesty has dedicated 1999 as the Year of Mining & Historic Preservation. As one of the projects this year, the Mining History Association is compiling a list of threatened sites important to the history of American Mining. The National Trust for Historic Preservation, as does many of the statewide nonprofit preservation organizations, compile lists of threatened properties. Colorado’s list last year included Black Hawk and Central City, and Leadville. The New Mexico list included Shakespeare ghost town. If you wish to nominate a property please send a brief description of the property’s history or significance, and a synopsis of the threat, and a snapshot of the site. Please mail your nomination by June 1 to the MHA at P. O. Box 150300, Denver, CO 80215.

The continuing battle to save the Lace House, a superb example of Carpenter Gothic Architecture, in the former mining town, now gambling wasteland of Black Hawk, had a victory with an Appeals Court ruling that the building could not be removed for a parking lot or another casino. The Colorado Historical Society has a covenant restriction on the property, which received a Historic Preservation Fund grant in 1976. Black Hawk is on the National Trust for Historic Preservation 11 most endangered landmarks list, and is a lesson to us all. If a proponent of gambling lures your community with gambling as a means for historic preservation, as Black Hawk/Central City did, don’t listen to them -- don’t, Don’t, DON’T.

The ASARCO smelter at El Paso has shut down. The plant, initiated by others in 1887, is a symbol of the one-time extensive mining in the Southwest. It was the last of the big plants. The company is helping workers find new jobs, while the plant is being dismantled. On December 11, 1998 two of the historic structures within the National Register listed Rush Historic District were lost to fire. The zinc mining district contains many other related buildings that are interpreted by the National Park Service as part of Buffalo National River, Arkansas.

The "Homestead House Museum," one of the best preservation of a turn of the century brothels, is being threatened by the expansion of gaming, of course, in Cripple Creek, Colorado. Jubilee casino plans to auction off the property and ca. 1896 furnishings to whomever will move the two story brick building. Locals have organized a preservation effort and are seeking donations or advice. Write Homestead House Museum, P. O. Box 268, Cripple Creek, CO 80813 or call 719-689-2485.

A group has organized to preserve the Snowstorm Dredge in Fairplay, Colorado. The dredge operated in the placer district over fifty years ago, and has recently been offered to a preservation group for removal and stabilization. A mini-grant from the Colorado Historical Society has been awarded the group. For more information contact Jackie Powell at Preserve the Snowstorm Dredge, P. O. Box 99, Fairplay, CO 80440.

Rhymes of the Mines

H. Mason Coggin, poet and MHAer, writes that the National Mining Hall of Fame & Museum, Leadville is seeking poets to contribute to their Rhymes of the Mines program. Poets are invited to submit compositions to the museum by July 1. A jury of Leadville peers will select the Mining Poet Laureate for 1999 and will invite the speaker to their 12th annual banquet in St. Louis on October 10. Send written or recorded submissions to NMHF&M, P. O. Box 981, Leadville, CO 80461.

Mason Coggin is also seeking contributions for review by the MHA. The MHA will include a section of notations on poetry and other popular forms of celebrating the mining past. To inspire would be contributors he sent the following poem by Joe Currie, from his, The Image O’ God and other Poems, The Forward Publishing Co., Lotc., 26 Brown Street, Port-Dundas, Glasgow 188?, Contact Mason at Cowboy, Miner Productions, 317 East Griswold, Phoenix, AZ 85020; (602) 944-3763

IT’S FINE TAE KEEP IN WI’ THE GAFFER.

For mony a year I ha’e worked doon awa',
But never in pits that are wet or are low,
For I mak’ it my business wherever I go,
Aye tae keep in wi’ the gaffer.

I wasn’ lang started till plain I could see
That some had it easy, as easy could be;
So I took tae myself that the best thing for me
Was tae try and keep in wi’ the gaffer.

Oh! it’s fine tae keep in wi’ the gaffer.

My boss at the time was Mason, ye ken,
So I went me the bank for my seven pounds ten,
And bravely I bearded the goat in its den.
A’ tae keep in wi’ the gaffer.

Oh! it’s fine tae keep in wi’ the gaffer.

The next ane tae come was a musical hand,
He stood in the middle and waggled the wand;
So I learned the cornet and played in his band.
A’ tae keep in wi’ the gaffer.

Oh! it’s fine tae keep in wi’ the gaffer.

The next was a cratur o’ different stamp;
A high heid cadet in the Salvation camp;
So I got him tae “save” me and carried the lamp.
A’ tae keep in wi’ the gaffer.

Oh! it’s fine tae keep in wi’ the gaffer.

The next was a punter — a horse racin’ man,
So I bocht the “Noon Record” and followed his plan;
And I finished it up wi’ my shirt in the pawn.
A’ tae keep in wi’ the gaffer.

Oh! it’s fine tae keep in wi’ the gaffer.

Tae the lad wi’ ambition I gie this advice.
Nae maitter wha says, tae the gaffer be nice;
Jist work tae his orders and never think twice.
For it pays tae keep in wi’ the gaffer.
Recent publications on the history of mining

The following list contains articles and dissertations that relate to the history of mining. It includes all types of mining in North America. Thanks to those who sent in suggestions for this installment. We welcome citations for inclusion in the next update.

Compiled by Lysa Wegman-French


Bordewich, Fergus M. "I've Found Gold!" Reader's Digest 152, no. 910 (February 1998): 134-140. (California gold rush.)


Elizabeth Jameson’s *All That Glitters*, a monograph in the Working Class in America Series, is part of an agreeable trend toward using the histories of mining districts as case studies to answer other questions. *All That Glitters* is not a comprehensive history of Cripple Creek District, but, instead, tells the story of a ten-year period bracketed by two major labor strikes. The strike of 1894 was a victory for the nascent Western Federation of Miners, which included de facto recognition. The strike of 1903-4 resulted in the defeat and destruction of the district’s unions.

Jameson sets the scene in the first section of her book by explaining the industrial nature of mining in Cripple Creek, which turned the district into an arena contested by great capitalists and wage laborers. They soon set about defining and defending their respective rights. This early period culminated in the resolution of the strike of 1894, which established a fairly cooperative relationship between labor and capital based upon mutual power and respect. In the second section of her book, Jameson considers the union’s ability to establish cross-class relationships through the networks of associations provided by the district’s fraternal orders, and she examines the failure of the unions to establish complete working class solidarity because of their exclusion of members of particular races and ethnic groups and their marginalization of working-class women. The final section of the book offers a detailed account of the Cripple Creek strike of 1903-4, its violence and upheaval.

Jameson’s analysis is sophisticated. Extensively researched, her book considers not only the factors which led to the strikes and their different outcomes, but also the complexity and multiplicity of the district’s working class and its union movement. This is the book’s strength. Jameson dissects both the union locals and the mine owners’ association, and concludes that each had its internal conflicts and weaknesses. She found the Cripple Creek’s union locals, though organized on the principle of industrial unionism, were weakened by their exclusion of many members of the working class because of race, ethnicity and gender. Particularly effective is her use of the federal census of 1900 (the district’s peak year) to examine differences between the working class as a whole and the unions’ leadership. Her exploration concludes that, at least in this case, union leaders were more likely than the working class in general to be married, have children, and own their own homes. Cripple Creek’s union leaders did not fit the popular conception of vagabond radicals with nothing to lose.

One criticism is Jameson’s tendency to take the statements and rhetoric of labor sources at face value, while being quite skeptical of the statements and motives of labor’s opponents. This has several ramifications. The rhetoric of classes against the masses causes the author to dismiss the district’s middle class merchants, artisans and professionals as nearly inconsequential, where in fact they may have been significant out of proportion to their percentage of the population. Jameson recounts the great strike of 1903-4 almost entirely from union sources, the lone significant exception being “A Report on Labor Disturbances in the State of Colorado” compiled for Congress. Her sources led her to statements about violence and sabotage that, to the reviewer, appears one sided; to the author, the owners are primarily to blame. This is a weak stance given other evidence.

It is certainly true that the laborers of 1900 were treated in many ways that everyone now considers patently unjust. But both management and labor acted less than nobly during the Cripple Creek strikes, while each claimed to be upholding important principles. It is time for mining and labor historians, a century removed from events, to write dispassionate histories, so that we may gain a more complete understanding of the lives and actions of the people that make up the mining community. But, as the author states, hers is the view of labor to counter the more well-known accusations of the mine owners, winners of the strike of 03-4. The above criticisms aside, the book is good social history and a solid contribution to gold camp history.

Eric Clements
Western Museum of Mining & Industry


*Pride and Vision* is the story of the Canadian Institute of Mining, Metallurgy and Petroleum (CIM), the professional association of mining engineers, metallurgists, geologists, petroleum engineers and others associated with Canada’s mineral industry for the past one hundred years. The CIM’s formation was largely the vision of one man, mining journalist B. T. A. Bell. In 1891, Bell convinced mining men in Quebec to form a mining association. Other Canadian provinces followed Quebec’s lead. A Federation was formed in 1896, followed by the CIM in 1898 with Bell as Secretary.

Crossfield’s history is divided into four chapters which, oddly, decrease in length exponentially: Chapter 1 is 172 pages; 2 is 29 pages; 3 is 15 pages; and chapter 4 only 4 pages. The first and best chapter, which could have been improved by division into several chapters, covers the early years of CIM, its founders, how various branches were formed, challenges faced by World War I, the Depression, and World War II.
relocating the headquarters, and the acceptance of women as members. As if that were not sufficient for one chapter, it continues with coverage of new publications, computerization, environmental challenges, reorganizations, and the Institute's "identity."

Chapter 2 presents the Branches of the CIM in each province in tabular form -- when established, first chairman, and whether still active or not. The history of the CIM technical sections, such as Coal, Metallurgy, Geology, Metals, Petroleum, etc. is covered in the third chapter. Chapter 4 looks to the future of the CIM. Appendix One is a list of the Institute's Founders and Presidents; Appendix Two lists Secretaries of the CIM.

The most dynamic aspects of the book were: 1) the various long term relationships between the CIM and the American Institute of Mining Engineers; 2) the story of Benjamin Taylor A. Bell and his untimely death which occurred after accidently falling into an open elevator shaft, and 3) the interesting photographs throughout the book. E. Tina Crossfield provides insights on what motivated the development and later changes to the CIM. The reader is left with an appreciation of the success of the CIM during the past 100 years; may the next 100 years be as interesting and exciting!

Mel Schmidt
Lake Charles, Louisiana

Book Notes

Mike Brand sends the following note about Lilly Chow's *Sojourners in the North*. She has undertaken a considerable project in tracing the history of the Chinese people in the interior of British Columbia, Canada, from the Fraser River discovery and subsequent gold rush, especially in the 1860s, to the present. Although this is a popular volume, it is obvious that Chow went to substantial lengths in her research. The contents are divided into three sections: Chinese participation in early gold rushes (Fraser River, Caribou, and Omineca), the development of Prince George, B. C. and its Chinese community, and Chinese organizations, such as the Chee Duck Tong. Three common themes run through the book: 1) the efforts of the Chinese people to retain their culture; 2) discrimination, and; 3) the contributions these people made in their communities. Perhaps most importantly it provides us with another perspective on a number of gold rushes which figure prominently in the province's early history. *Sojourners in the North* is published by Catlin Press, P. O. Box 2387, Stn. B., Prince George, B. C., V2N 2S6, Canada. $16 (Canadian).

W. Donald Smith of Seattle sent a review of the recent translated Japanese work, Nimura Kazuo's *The Ashio Riot of 1907: a Social History of Mining in Japan* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1997). 275+pp. The Ashio copper mine and smelter was the site of one of the most significant labor strikes in twentieth century Japan and subsequent three day revolution. The study reviews technological change, the labor process, corporate and state strategy, and labor organization and activism. Nimura's study, writes Smith, is a masterwork that will be consulted for generations.

The University of Nevada Press has published Ferol Egan's solid study of the California and Nevada mining men, William Bourn I and his son, William Bourn II. Titled, *Last Bonanza Kings, the Bourne's of San Francisco*, the book details the elder Bourn's ventures at the Comstock and other Nevada districts, but, more importantly, father and son's good fortune in Grass Valley, California, where they controlled the rich Empire Mine. They held onto their money through investments in California land and water. The book is well written, covering the business and personal aspects of these Bonanza Kings.

Silvia Pettem writes that she has republished Harrison Cobb's *Prospecting Our Past: Gold, Silver, and Tungsten Mills of Boulder County*. Her business, the Book Lode, first published the book in 1988, but the book sold out years ago. Said Pettem, "Harrison Cobb is now 90 years old and a wealth of information. We worked together to revise and update the book and added a chapter on smelters." The new edition is 8 1/2" x 11" paperback with full-color cover, 160 pages, and 180 photos. The foreword is by Duane Smith. Cost is $19.95, plus $2 shipping. Colorado residents add state tax. To order write Silvia at 721 Francis St, Longmont, CO 80501 or call 303-682-2828.

Mel Schmidt invites you to visit his new Internet site offering recent, rare, and out of print publications of interest to geologists and mining historians. The site is located at: http://home.earthlink.net/~msbooks/ If you do not have access to the Internet, send for his free catalog at MSBook and Mineral Co., P. O. Box 6774, Lake Charles, LA 70606.
From the Archives

Lee Swent sent a follow-up note about the Western Mining in the Twentieth Century Oral History Series at the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley. Last fall she described the ongoing work recording and organizing materials about the McLaughlin Gold Mine of northern California. More volumes are ready. For libraries or groups interested copies of the entire 46 volumes of the mining series see their web page at: http://library.berkeley.edu/BANC/ROHO [go to "Oral histories by topic" and "Mining"] or call Lee at 510-642-7395.

Anyone doing research on Colorado mining will enjoy the Denver Public Library’s new homepage which allows net surfers to view 50,000 of its historic photographs. Give it a look: http://gowest.coalliance.org

The Special Collections & Archives at the University of Idaho has initiated a revolving exhibit, "Digital Memories" on its web page of items from its vast collection. The items include photographs, objects and collectibles related, in some cases, to mining. Access is via their homepage at http://www.lib.uidaho.edu/edu/special-collections/

The University of Nevada has initiated a mining oral history project. Funds have been raised to initiate the program. The program will follow the format of the Mineral Ridge Mining District at Silver Peak, an already completed oral history study. The university is looking for recommendations for oral histories as well as ways to distribute the studies widely. For more info write Vikki Ford, Oral History Program/324, University of Nevada, Reno, Reno, NV 89557-0099 or call 702-784-6932.

A Favorite Spot. Anyone travelling to the Ouray meeting finding themselves in Denver with some time, we recommend a visit to the Colorado School of Mines’ Arthur Lakes Library, especially its archives and special collections. Mining history researchers will find all in one place those magazines, bulletins and other rare volumes. And the staff are nice people too.

Festival

The Reed Gold Mine State Historic Site, North Caroline is hosting the Bicentennial of the First Gold Discovery in the U. S. On June 19-20 will be the Gold Bicentennial Festival, with living history, theater, gold panning, and more. An academic symposium will be held September 17-19, at UNC, Charlotte. For more information on events contact Dr. Barbara Thiede at 704-721-4653 or e-mail: reedmine@ctc.net