Thanks Ouray Hosts!

Decidedly one of the most splendid venues for the MHA was our June meeting in Ouray. Some 150 MHAers gathered in the high, mountain city to enjoy the last bit of winter (yes, it was spitting snow one day) and the exchanges about our mining past. The tours of the Camp Bird and the all day event to the Mayflower mill, Old Hundred Mine, and Silverton were blessed by good weather and good tour guides: Tom Rosemeyer, one-time manager of the former, and Duane Smith, a walking fount of San Juaniana.

Thanks to Mark and Karen Vendl for coordinating the local arrangements. Anyone who has taken on the task knows you need a host a good friends to back you up. And Karen and Mark want to thank the Langenfelds, Lynn and Mark, the Ouray County Historical Society volunteers and staff, especially Caroline Stoufer, and Ann Hoffman, director of the OCHS museum.

The program was a good mix of academic papers, popular issues and topics, and folklife -- including a splendid session from John O'Donnel and the Cape Breton's coal miners' choir, The Men of the Deeps. Thanks to the 1999 program committee, Duane Smith, chair, and Eric Clements.

There were many memorable events and tours, not least of which was the drive along the narrow, winding, hair-raising mountain road into town. This shouldn't be a problem next year in Tonopah. See you then.

Gather for Poetry

The Western Folk Life Center in Elko, Nevada is hosting a "Mining Poetry Gathering: Mining Traditions at the Millennium" on November 13. Rhymes of the mines are growing in popularity, but are still far behind the cowboy poets. Join in and support the expanding group. Call 775-738-7508 or e-mail: westfolk.org

Our poet of the mines, Mason Coggin, also reports the outcome of the recent contest at the National Mining Hall of Fame and Museum at Leadville.

The winning entry was by Verne Boston of Mabton, Washington, "The Hard Rock Miner." Verne is now the 1999 Miner's Poet Laureate. Janice Coggin tied for second with her "The Ride." Former Anaconda miner Jim Edwards, Sheridan, MT, tied for second with his new rendition of "My Sweetheart's a Mule in the Mine."

Mason and Janice have a recording titled "Rhymes of the Mines, Life in the Underground" available from their Cowboy Miner Productions, P. O. Box 9674, Phoenix, AZ 85068 for $14.95 plus $3.25 shipping and handling. It includes classical and contemporary poetry devoted to miners from the nineteenth century to the present.

The Coggins are interested in communicating with poets and would be poets. Mason can be best reached via e-mail at MASONCOG@aol.com. He is also our official reviewer of such things poetic, so please send him any news of events or publications or recordings.

Fifth International in Greece

Planning for the Fifth International Mining History Congress is well underway. The event, to be held in Milos, Greece, September 12-17, 2000 is sponsored by an international mix of mining historians, preservationists, and industry people. Registration materials can be found on the Web page for the conference: www.heliotopos.net, or write Terpsihoiris 38, 175 62 Paleo Faliro, Athens, Greece. Responses must be made by November 30 for the next update. They have sent a request for papers (due January 31). Suggested topics are varied: mining in Greece, the archeology of mining, preservation of properties ancient to modern, technology, social impacts, international aspects, economics of mining, health and safety, education, gender, and environmental issues. Abstracts are due March 15.
The President's Page

The summer is the traditional season for doing fieldwork in archaeology in this part of the world. It should come as no surprise, therefore, to find that I am in the midst of final preparations for a dig at a mining camp. Island Mountain or Gold Creek, a placer mining district in the northeastern part of Elko County, Nevada, is the place. The site is a small settlement, now in the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest, with the remains of at least 15 dugouts. In 1880 the settlement, according to the federal population census, consisted of 14 dwellings occupied mostly by Chinese placer miners but also including a few Native Americans and Euro-Americans.

Documentary images of Island Mountain suggest that the mining history of the area goes back at least to 1864, when prospectors developed hardrock mines in the area. They organized the Bruno district and established the town of Bruno City (Bruneau City) in 1869. Placer mining and the organization of the Island Mountain district began in 1873. Soon thereafter emerged the town of Island Mountain, consisting of a few houses, hotel, blacksmith shop, and a Chinese store. The 1880 federal census for Island Mountain tallies 71 residents. Of these, most (54) came from China, the others being either Native American or Euro-American. The Chinese residents apparently lived in a separate settlement, the site of the upcoming dig, situated approximately one mile north of the town of Island Mountain. Placer mining in the district declined by 1878. Little is known about the period from 1880 until 1896, when a second boom began with the organization of the Gold Creek Mining Company. At that time the new town of Gold Creek was platted over the ridge from the original townsite of Island Mountain. Around 1897 the Gold Creek Mining Company constructed the immense Sunflower reservoir and a large ten mile long ditch with Chinese workers. Lack of water and the costs of transporting what little water there was to the placer deposits, however, doomed the operation from its beginning, and it collapsed in 1898.

The goals of the Island Mountain dig are many. Certainly we want to construct more historical images of the lifestyles and living conditions of the poorly documented people at the camp. What are the differences and similarities in foodways, housing, and landscape among the Chinese, Native American, and EuroAmerican residents? How did their consumer habits compare? In a more academic vein, we also are interested in shedding light on such questions as how the Chinese, Native American, and EuroAmerican residents of the camp used material things such as landscape, architecture, building furnishings, clothing, and other artifacts of everyday life to negotiate social class relations among themselves and to create distinctive cultural identities in this isolated rural place. In his book Uncommon Ground (1992, Smithsonian Institution Press), for example, Leland Ferguson found that slaves on antebellum plantations in the American South actively used material things as "symbols" of their cultural autonomy. He shows how slaves actively manipulated material things associated with architecture, foodways, and ritual to create their cultural identity. Did the multi-ethnic residents of Island Mountain do the same thing?

Another, and perhaps even more important, goal of the dig is public archaeology. We plan to involve volunteers from the Asian American community through the outreach programs of the Wing Luke Asian Museum in Seattle. Other volunteers will work at the site through the Passports in Time program of the U.S. Forest Service. Yet other volunteers are from the AmArcs organization, a group of avocational archaeologists from northern Nevada, and elsewhere. The dig will be staffed by professional archaeologists from the U.S. Forest Service and, in addition to myself, by graduate students from the University of Nevada, Reno. Professor Sue Fawn Chung, an historian from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, and her graduate students are working on the documentary record of the community. All in all, this promises to be a pleasant trip into mining's past.

Don Hardesty
Reno, Nevada

Organization notes:

Managing editor Charles Hughes reports the Mining History Journal for 1998 has been mailed. Let us know if you did not receive your journal. The MHA owes a note of thanks to Charles and editor Christopher Huggard for their efforts in producing a quality journal. If you have an essay you wish to have considered for the next journal write editor Christopher Huggard at 523 N. Willow Ave., Fayetteville, AR 72701.

Information about the MHA can now be found on our home page established by Glenn Cook. See http://www.sni.net/~cookg/mha/. If you have comments please e-mail Glenn at cookg@sni.net.

Our colleagues at the Australian Mining History Association have a web page: http://www.econs.ecel.uwa.edu.au/AMHA/amhamain.htm.

Say hi to Mel Davies.

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.
CALL FOR PAPERS

ELEVENTH MEETING
OF THE
MINING HISTORY ASSOCIATION

TONOPAH, NEVADA
JUNE 1-4, 2000

The program committee for the Tonopah meeting of the Mining History Association invites proposals for individual papers or complete sessions (including chair) on any topic or aspect of mining history. Sessions normally include three papers of twenty minutes each. There are no temporal or geographic limits.

Proposals should include an abstract (one paragraph) for each paper, plus biographical information about each presentor and session participant. Please send the written proposals to the program committee chair by January 15, 2000.

2000 Program Committee:

Don Hardesty, 2000 program chair
Department of Anthropology
University of Nevada, Reno
Reno, Nevada 89557-0006
702-784-6765
hardesty@scs.unr.edu

Sally Zanjani
Reno, Nevada

Ron James
Carson City, Nevada
Mining History News

Mining History Association Election
1999 Candidates Biographies

Vice-President/President Elect

Richard Francaviglia is professor of History at the University of Texas at Arlington and director of the Center for Greater Southwestern Studies & the History of Cartography. He has served the Mining History Association as a member of the nominating committee and as a member of the council, has given papers at several conferences, and has published "Black Diamonds & Vanishing Ruins: Reconstructing the Historic Landscape of Thurber, Texas," and "In Her Image: Some Reflections on Gender and Power in Mining History," in, respectively, the 1994 and 1998 Mining History Journal. Richard has published extensively, but mining historians know best his book Hard Places, Reading the Landscape of America's Historic Mining Districts (1991). He has also worked in historic preservation offices and with efforts to preserve historic mining sites in the Midwest and Southwest.

Council (vote for 2)

Homer Milford works in the abandoned mines program of the state of New Mexico and strives to ensure the preservation of historic mining sites. He recently presented at the Fourth International Mining History Congress in Guanajuato and was a co-translator of Juan de Onate's 1625 edition of the New Laws of the Mines of Spain. He has presented at MHA conferences and has served on the nominating committee.

Glenn Cook, a miner turned archivist, has worked at the American Heritage Center at the University of Wyoming, with Newmont Corporation, and, presently, in the records division of Coors. He serves as the MHA membership committee chair and has become the webmaster for the MHA home page. And he still prospects his claims in Wyoming and Colorado.

Nominating Committee

Liping Zhu is assistant professor of history at Eastern Washington University. Born in Shanghai, he received his Ph.D from the University of New Mexico and recently published his dissertation as A Chinaman's Chance, the Chinese on the Rocky Mountain Mining Frontier.

James Fell teaches at the University of Colorado, Denver and has served the MHA in a variety of posts. He has published extensively on mining history of the Rocky Mountain West and is presently researching for a biography of James Douglas, the copper mining innovator/manager.

Ron James is the State Historic Preservation Officer for Nevada located at Carson City. His most recent book is The Roar and the Silence, a History of Virginia City and the Comstock lode.
MHA Plans for the future

Just before the Ouray conference, MHA officers, past and present, met to discuss the past ten years of successes and plan for the next ten. Among the ideas proposed were:

Awards
The group discussed the need to strengthen the profile and worth of the awards given by MHA. We need more award categories and some ways to recognize contributions of volunteers. We can use awards to accomplish other goals, such as getting student involvement.

Recommendations:
1) Initiate student award (scholarship) for best paper or presentation at MHA to assist defer cost of student participation.
2) Initiate a book award.
3) Initiate system of "certificates of appreciation" or awards for friends, donors, and volunteers.

Communications and Research
The group discussed how to encourage, assist, aid research in mining history. There was a need to provide some form of assistance or guidance or direction.

Recommendations:
1) Develop our Web page to include research tools, such as bibliographies, etc. Tap into research networks.
2) Create a "mail list serve" or bulletin board on the internet to help researches communicate with each other.
3) Have conference sessions or entire days dedicated to a certain topic.
4) Develop small research grants or stipends aimed to stimulate research.

Advocacy and Preservation
The group discussed advocacy for preservation of mining sites, which brought out some of the more divergent opinions during the day long session. This divergence rests primarily on the "clean-up" or reclamation issue at mining sites. There was general agreement that advice and guidance is needed. The group supports preservation, but that term needs definition.

Recommendation:
1) That the MHA encourage and/or co-sponsor a workshop or some new discourse on the state of preservation and philosophy.
2) Continue to recognize preservation need and provide some form of recognition of sites worthy of preserving.

Identity/Name of the Org.
The group spent much good time on discussing what the organization's "identity" should be, geographical, temporal, membership mix, etc. There was discussion about potential name changes. Though many good ideas were offered there was no consensus on a name change recommendation.

Size/Membership
Like the previous discussion, the group spent much time on the nature of the organization and its size. The discussion focused on the dilemma of size: to do more, raise more money to support more or better publications, conferences, etc. meant larger size, but larger size meant the loss of opportunity to meet in small mining towns, to participate in this small, familiar and friendly scale of the present MHA. The group did make a number of recommendations, not to change the organization but to better understand it.

Recommendations:
1) Do a survey of members (through a flyer in the newsletter or ?) to learn of the membership interests, background, demographics, etc.
2) Build bridges with other organizations for reciprocal assistance.
3) Other general recommendations:
   - Have a natural growth; remain open, inclusive; realize there are no professional "mining historians" thus realize the mixed (mixed-up) nature of org. and recognize/celebrate it; support student membership (lower fee); develop a sense of challenge for the future -- don't get too comfortable; influence of MHA is real, so set an agenda.

Consultation and Education
Because of time limits the group did not discuss this as well as the other topics. There is interest in a number of issues, but no solid recommendations developed.

Fund raising
The group discussed with the following recommendation.
Recommendation:
1) Develop a financial plan for the MHA.

Publications
The group discussed publications. The emphasis was on the journal, but also discussed were the newsletter, new publications, and reprints. Funding was also a major issue, how to raise funds or to find co-sponsors (publishing houses).
Recommendations:
1) Book reviews will now appear in the journal.
2) Explore the costs and options for reprinting classic mining volumes, etc.
3) Explore option of digitizing volumes and putting on web (see communications, above)
4) Ensure journal is published on time and is at high quality.
5) Initiate in journal short articles by old timers, or an oral history section.

Programs and Meetings
The group discussed meetings. The general consensus was keeping them informal, held in small mining towns, and mix of social activities, tours, and papers.

Recommendations:
1) Explore ways to fund a student or two to attend/participate in meetings.
2) Explore options of joint meetings
3) Explore possibility of publishing proceedings, or at least record papers/presentations.
4) Explore possibility of thematic meetings.

Notes of Retreat June 3, 1999
Ouray, Colorado
More Organization Notes

During the Ouray meeting president Don Hardesty recognized Sally Zanjani's contribution to mining history by presenting her the Rodman Paul Award. Zanjani is known for her work with the association and her long list of publications. Her first book was a memoir of her father, George Springmeyer, Nevada political rebel, titled The Unspiked Rail (1981). Her other books include Jack Longstreet, Last of the Desert Frontiersmen (1988), Goldfield, the Last Gold Rush on the Western Frontier (1992) and A Mine of Her Own, Women Prospectors in the American West, 1850-1950 (1997). She has served on the MHA board, was president in 1998, and until her recent retirement taught at the University of Nevada, Reno (1981).

Thanks to all who participated in the Ouray Retreat. They were:

The Mining History Association officers
- Don Hardesty, President
- Dick 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
- Liston Leyendecker, 1999-2001
- Charles Hughes, 1999-2001
- Erik Nordberg, 1999-2001

Memberships chair: Glenn Cook

Paul Kens’ essay, "John C. Fremont and the Biddle Boggs Case: Property Rights versus Mining Rights in Early California," was selected for The John Townley Award as the best essay in the 1998 Mining History Journal.

Historic Preservation

The Kaymoor tipple, originally built in 1900 and reconstructed in 1925, had rapidly deteriorated after its closure in the 1960s. The huge structure was leaning toward the active CSX railroad tracks and was determined a threat to the safety of the 30 trains and operators and passengers passing by daily. On March 10, a contractor employed by New River Gorge National River used five separate charges to implode the tipples supports. A giant fire ball from 75 years of coal dust accumulation was suppressed, while the tipple came to rest on the ground with form intact. The structure was recorded to Historic American Engineering Record (HAER) standards before hand and the ruin will be fenced and included in the park’s interpretation of the coal mines of this area of West Virginia.

The HAER collection at the Library of Congress is being digitized, thanks to a $500,000 grant from Shell Oil. The drawings and photographs will be available to view via the Library’s world wide web site: www.loc.gov. Many excellent drawings and photographs of historic mining sites are in the collection.

MHAer Ed Hunter sent the latest driving tour of the “World’s Greatest Gold Camp,” Cripple Creek, Colorado. The brochure incudes text by Ed that describes in detail the sites and historic events of the district. The brochure, “The Golden Loop Historic Parkway Driving Tour” is available from the Southern Teller County Focus Group, P. O. Box 328, Victor, CO 80813.

During the copper boom of the 1860s, Altaville, California was a productive center. But like many sites in the West new discoveries brought its eclipse and abandonment. Today it’s site is vacant. Last summer, the Six Rivers National Forest initiated an archeological excavation of the 3000 acre site with about 120 volunteers. They found camp building debris -- hotel, general store, and blacksmith -- and artifacts. Plans are to continue to project next year.

Book Notes

As the millennium approaches we are seeing lists of bests for the century. To counter an obviously biased East-coast list of best nonfiction books of the century the San Francisco Chronicle prepared a best of the West 100. Of course, the mining history represented leans toward Californian: J. S. Holliday’s The World Rushed In (#22) and Anybody’s Gold by Joseph Henry Jackson (#100). Mary Austin’s Land of Little Rain is #1 (she did have a chapter on the desert pocket miner). The gold rush travail is represented by Ordeal by Hunger, George Stewart’s Donner Party saga (#13). Irving Stone’s Men to Match My Mountains, that popular Western history with mining occasionally at center, is #53. The complete list is in the May 27, 1999 Chronicle (available on their web site).

Western Places press’ latest contribution to mining history is a 48 page history of the early twentieth century gold camp of Skidoo, California. Co-authored by Alan Patera and David Wright, they recount the hey day of the desert camp 1906-17. The well illustrated booklet includes a directory of mines, map, and index. Skidoo! is Available for $10 from the press at P.O.Box 2093, Lake Grove OR 97035.

Eighty year old Roger Henn, speaker at our Ouray conference, has compiled Lies, Legends & Lore of the San Juans (and a few true tales). Its a fun read. For a copy send $12.95 to Western Reflections, POBox 710, Ouray, CO 81427.
Request for Assistance

Spanish and Mexican Influences on U.S. Mining.

by Homer Milford

In one generation following the discovery of gold in California in 1848 the United States went from a limited experience in mining to a position of world leadership. American mining was infused with the knowledge accumulated over centuries of mining in many other nations. To my knowledge no one has studied the contributions of Spanish and Mexican miners regarding mining law and technology that led to the development of American (U.S.) mining.

I am in the early stages of trying to trace these influences for a project called "Huellas: Spain's Gifts to America." The first goal of this project is to prepare the text for a television program on Spain's contributions to U.S. culture. It will concentrate on Spanish contributions in three areas: ranching, irrigation agriculture and mining. Both an English and Spanish text will be written for the TV program so that it may be shown in the U.S., Mexico and Spain. Because California is both the route of Spanish (New Spain) and New Mexico.

request for assistance

Halse, A Dictionary of Spanish and Spanish-American Mining, Metallurgical and Allied Terms (1908) gives arrastre as the term for drag-mill used in Mexico. Thus its California source appears to be from Mexico. Can anyone clarify the differences between tahona and arrastre in Mexico or the date of transition from stamp mills (ingenios) to arrastres in New Spain? The Oxford's earliest reference is Rossiter Raymond's 1881 report. What is the earliest mention in California?

5. Early development of Silver refining on the Comstock. Hispanic miners were there very early, and I recall that one or several patio process mills were built in the first year or two? Who built them? Did they leave any records on how they knew about Bartolome de Medina's patio process?

6. Almarin B. Paul used an arrastra to grind his first silver ore and the next year completed the first stamp mill on the Comstock. I recall a comment that Paul "read old books" before he had the first Washoe pan built in San Francisco. Is there any place he specified what books he read? The Washoe process is based on the kettle (Cazo) or cooking (Pan Amalgamation) process developed in the 1620s by Barba. Did Paul leave any record indicating that he had a copy of Alvaro Alonzo Barba's El Arte de los Metales in Spanish or translation. What was the nature of the superficial silver mines in California? In 1859 and 1860 was it necessary to use magistral (iron and copper sulfate) for amalgamation to work?
Do you have any suggestions for photogenic places or equipment? Illustrations, paintings, historic or modern photographs that would make good TV visuals? Any and all suggestions or comments would be appreciated.

Respond to: Homer Milford
NM Mining and Minerals Division
2040 South Pacheco St.
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87505
(505) 827-1163
hmilford@state.nm.us

"The western mining frontier depended so heavily upon Spanish milling methods that it is almost correct to say that millmen used little else but Spanish techniques hooked up to steam engines." Otis Young, Western Mining.

**Book Notes**

Retired mining engineer William Stoll has written *Hunting for Gold in Alaska’s Talkeetna Mountains, 1897-1951*. In 301 well illustrated pages, he details the discovery of gold in the Willow Creek district during the Klondike excitement and traces the development of the hard rock gold mines of the rugged Talkeetna range north of Anchorage, especially from the 1930s to 1951. Stoll was manager at the famed Independence mine, now an Alaskan state park. Copies are available from the author for $24.95 plus $3 shipping. Write him at 119 Hermitage Circle, Ligonier, PA 15658.

The University of Nebraska Press has reprinted in paperback *So Much to Be Done, Women Settlers on the Mining and Ranching Frontier*, edited by Ruth B. Moynihan, Susan Armitage, and Christiane Fischer Dichamp. A compilation of first hand accounts, the book includes a childhood reminiscence of a California gold camp, the diary of a young married woman in a Sierra mining town, an account of Virginia City high society, part of Augusta Tabor’s Colorado memoir, a letter about the fancy women of gold rush Idaho, and more. Paperback $16.95.

Interested in *Mine Heritage and Tourism*? Attend the conference on that topic at Nenagh, County Tipperary, Ireland, Nov 3-6. See their web site: http://minet.era.ie

**Thanks to Art**

Art Williams donated 10 miniature ore cars and ore to the 10th annual conference banquet in Ouray. These were raffled off and the lucky few felt blessed.