Tonopah Thank Yous

The June Mining History Association meeting in Tonopah was a celebration and revelation for the over 100 attendees who congregated in the high desert camp. Many Nevadans joined together to show case there town and region. On the first eve Shawn Hall, historian and manager, welcomed the group to the Tonopah Historic Mining Park, one of the best in-situ display of mining equipment and operations around. Its significance as the location of the rich Mizpah mine added to the striking structures and mining landscape above town.

Thanks to Don Hardesty and Sally Zanjani for organizing the conference, including a slate of excellent papers. The group toured Goldfield with the ghost camp officianado Bill Meischer -- many folks pondering the opportunity to bid on some of the derelict buildings including the grand Goldfield Hotel, all to be auctioned the following week. Unfortunately, members lacked the $400,000 or so opening bid.

Participants also wandered through the Central Nevada Museum, who’s staff provided a showing of the interpretive film on the area’s boom and bust. Stan Paher, author of Nevada Ghost Towns & Mining Camps, led a jeep tour of off-road sites, which met the second tour at Belmont, the new state park and site of a significant Stetefeldi furnace. A tip of the hat and thanks to all who chipped in to make the Tonopah conference a silver-lined success.

Mayflower Mill

Congratulations to Dawn Bunyak, historian, and the San Juan County [Colorado] Historical Society, owner, for their successful nomination of the Shenandoah-Dives mill, better known as the Mayflower, as a National Historic Landmark. The landmark was designated February 16, 2000. Many MHAers toured the mill during the 1999 conference in Ouray. Built in 1929, the Mayflower is a classic flotation plant, which milled the gold ores of the San Juan Mountains around Silverton until its closure in 1992. Today, the complex is a museum. Dawn also wrote a history of flotation, Frothers, Bubbles and Flotation, a Survey of Flotation Milling in the Twentieth-Century Metals Industry, as part of the contextual study of the Mayflower mill. Copies are available from her at the National Park Service, P.O. Box 25287, Denver, CO 80225-0287.

Poet’s Corner

The National Mining Hall of Fame and Museum in Leadville hosted its annual Miner’s Poetry Jamboree this summer. Our mining poetry reporter and former Bisbeeite Mason Coggin, who shared a few of his best at the Tonopah conference, was awarded third prize for his “We Mine Copper.”

Tom Pool, mining engineer of Denver, came in first with his “Brothers.” He will read his poem at the museum’s annual conference in Las Vegas October 8. Dean Cook of Glendale, Arizona came in second with his “Desert rat.”

Mason, as expected, waxed poetic about the event, which included 28 poets from 13 states and the District of Columbia. Tape recordings of miner poetry are available from him at 317 E. Griswold, Phoenix, AZ, 85020, or call 602-944-3763.

Its Gone

In the previous newsletter we mentioned the impending fate of the smelter stacks at Murray, Utah, site of one of the last major Salt Lake smelters, and site of one of the earliest in the valley. Despite last ditch efforts, the stacks came down in July. In contrast, more creative souls near Pittsburg, Pennsylvania found a way to save the distinctive line of a dozen smokestacks of the former Homestead steel plant, landmarks at the entrance to a new retail center.
President's Page

This is as good as it gets! -- A comment that was made to me at Tonopah referring to the MHA annual meeting. There is little doubt in my mind that this reflected the sentiment of all of those in attendance. So much was seen and heard about mining in this pleasant, former, mining town now at a crossroad with its future.

Fortunately in looking to the future, no small part of Tonopah's past has been recognized as important and worth saving. It was a distinct pleasure to see the fruits of the mining history preservation by the folks in this small community. One of the very best flat-rope hoist I have ever been privileged to see in situ, original hoist house and all, has been incorporated into the displays in a large area covering several of the important mines. The efforts of a dedicated few in Tonopah are little short of amazing.

As is always the case, the presentations were excellent, covering a wide range of mining topics. No matter which of the many aspects of mining's past you find most interesting, chances are it was in one of the papers. When it is realized that so much original research is first, if not only, presented at the MHA meetings, the importance of these gatherings comes clearly into focus.

But for me, and I am sure for most that attended, it was the opportunity to visit with so many others that share the same interest (passion) in mining and mining history. The free, unabated flow of ideas, and experiences was ever present as was the search for and giving of information. Few, if any, went away without having benefited from this type of exchange.

Such as this is the substance from which our group is made, but it can only be had at its fullest by participation in the meetings. The next gathering in Butte is not all that far in the future, plan to be there. Let's make "The Richest Hill on Earth" a little richer by going to Butte with the aim of furthering the goals of the Mining History Association.

Richard Graeme
Accra, Ghana

Organization Notes

Awards

During the Tonopah conference banquet and award ceremony we had the pleasure of the company of Helen and April Townley, mother and widow of MHA editor, historian and friend John Townley. The John Townley Award for the best essay in the 1999 Mining History Journal was presented to Erik Nordberg for his essay "The Arizona & Michigan Mining Company, Globe District, Arizona Territory: A Study of a Small Mine in a Large Network."

During the ceremony, President Richard Graeme presented Don Hardesty with the Rodman Paul Award for contributions to mining history. Past president of the MHA and professor at the University of Nevada, Reno, his the Archeology of Mining and Miners is the standard reference for archaeologists studying the mining past.

1999 Mining History Journal

A special issue dedicated to the Southwest, the 1999 Journal was mailed to all members this past summer. If you did not receive your copy please notify the MHA, P. O. Box 150300, Denver, CO 80215. Outgoing editor Chris Huggard reports the 2000 Journal well under way, while incoming editor Eric L. Clements welcomes submissions for upcoming issues. If you have an essay you wish considered please contact Eric at Southeast Missouri State University, History Department M/S 2960, Cape Girardeau, Missouri 63701. Or e-mail him at: eclements@semo.msu.edu

At the Tonopah conference the editors, managing editor Charles Hughes, and the editorial review board convened and planned the publication's future.

Ballot

The nominating committee has put together a slate of candidates for the annual election of officers. Please return the enclosed ballot by December 1.

Butte Conference

The local arrangement committee headed by Mary Williams reports things coming together. We will have a conference hotel, the Ramada "Copper King" on Harrison Avenue (406-494-6666 or 800-332-8600), indicative of the size of the reviving copper camp. We will begin Thursday the 14th of June with a tour/reception and continue to Sunday the 17th with sessions and tours.

Obituary Note

W. Turrentine Jackson, friend of the MHA, recipient of the Rodman Paul award, and author of numerous western history books, including the recently reprinted classic Treasure Hill, Portrait of a Silver Mining Camp, died at age 85 on May 28.

Mining History Association web page: http://www.lib.mtu.edu/mha/mha.htm
For submissions contact MHA webmaster Erik Nordberg by e:mail at copper@mtu.edu

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

TWELFTH MEETING
OF THE
MINING HISTORY ASSOCIATION

BUTTE, MONTANA
JUNE 15-17, 2001

The program committee for the Butte 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 presenter and session participant. Please send the written proposals to the program committee chair by February 15, 2001.

2001 Program Committee:

Robert Spude, 2001 program chair, Cultural Resources & National Register Programs, National Park Service, P. O. Box 728, Santa Fe, New Mexico 87505; 505-988-6770; Bob_Spude@nps.gov

Elizabeth Jameson, University of Calgary, Calgary, Alberta

James McBride, Arizona State University, Tempe, Arizona
Mining History Association Election
2000 Candidates Biographies

Vice-President/President Elect

Jeremy Mouat is professor of History at Athabasca University, Athabasca, Alberta, Canada's Open University. 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 coordinated the 1996 MHA conference held in Rossland, British Columbia. He has published extensively, but mining historians know best his book Roaring Days, Rossland's Mines and the History of British Columbia (1995). He was born in British Columbia, went to college in New Zealand before returning to the University of British Columbia for the Ph.D. He is a prime mover in the international study of mining history.

Council (vote for 2)

Lee Swent was born in Lead, South Dakota, where her father was chief metallurgist at the Homestake Mining Company. She received her Ll.D. from the South Dakota School of Mines & Technology. With her late husband Langan Swent, a mining engineer, she moved around the mining West and Mexico. Since 1985 she has been a research interviewer and editor, Regional Oral History Office, the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley and project director for the Western Mining in the Twentieth Century series.

H. Mason Coggin, retired mining engineer, served as the director of the Arizona State Mining Museum, Phoenix, before retiring again to become full time mining historian and poet. He has published in the Mining History Journal, most recently with "John C. Greenway, the Ajo Experience." His company, Cowboy Miner productions releases tapes of poetry, his own and the familiar, as well as popular books on mining history.

Nominating Committee (vote for three)

Lysa Wegman-French, a historian with the National Park Service in Denver, is a preservationist working with communities seeking to preserve historic mining properties and other sites in the Intermountain Region. She has served on the MHA council and also serves as the MHA coordinator in Denver.

Robert Weldin, a retired geologist, operates Miners' Quest in Spokane, vendor of antiques, books, and other items often seen at the annual Mining History Association conference.

David Wolff teaches at Black Hills State College, Spearfish, S.D. and published an award winning essay in the Mining History Journal.
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. It does not include books, since they are covered in the book review section of the newsletter. Thanks to those who sent in suggestions for this installment. We welcome citations for inclusion in the next update. Compiled by Lysa Wegman-French


Boom in Silver Mining History Books

During the last half of the nineteenth century a host of silver mining camps boomed onto the western landscape, and then vanished after the silver market crash of 1893 removed their economic basis and left only ghost towns. Treasure Hill, Nevada, Wood River, Idaho Territory, Red Mountain, Colorado, Calico, California, and Galeyville, Arizona Territory are each the focus of recent extended studies that reveal not only the various fates of lesser known mining camps but the different approaches used by historians to tell their story.

W. Turrentine Jackson, the late dean of western historians, wrote the classic account of silver mining boom and bust, that of the region known as Treasure Hill, White Pine County, Nevada. Treasure Hill, Portrait of a Silver Mining Camp, (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2000, 272 pp., $17.95, pb) is the model for mining camp social and economic history; Jackson details the discovery and rush of ’69, the development of companies, mines, and towns, evolution of the body politic, and the long decline. He is best in placing the experience at White Pine into the broader context of the American Dream, “a belief in the law of progress with the right to pursue success and happiness” (p. 2). The mining experience at Treasure Hill is representative of the many silver stampedes, and nowhere is the experience better told. Out of print for over thirty years, the University of Nevada Press has reprinted the book, an essential acquisition for anyone interested in the mining frontier.

On equal par with Jackson as a western historian is Clark Spence, the most respected of mining historians. His latest in a long series of excellent mining histories, For Wood River or Bust, Idaho’s Silver Boom of the 1880s (Moscow: University of Idaho, 1999, 260 pp., $29.95, hb) recounts the 1880s development of the Wood River country of central Idaho. The district’s production was rich, but brief and today the region is better known for the ski industry -- Sun Valley is here. Spence’s contribution is a well-detailed case study and is equal to Jackson’s. Their works are book ends to the silver era -- Jackson’s with the beginnings in the 1860s Great Basin, and Spence on the 1880s Rocky Mountain finale.

The University of Idaho Press has produced another high quality book in it’s Idaho Legacy Series. MHAers will remember their visit to the Red Mountain district outside Ouray, Colorado during the 1999 conference. The best single history of the region has been reprinted. P. David Smith’s Mountains of Silver, Life in Colorado’s Red Mountain District, (Ouray, Colorado: Western Reflections Publishing Company) covers the region’s silver boom of the late nineteenth century.

Douglas Steeple’s study of Calico is the first book length treatment of a California silver camp. Treasure from the Painted Hills, A History of Calico, California, 1882-1907, (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1999, 142 pp., $49.95, hb) is, unfortunately, an over-priced book that needed a more thorough editing before publication (and better checks during the publication process; the photograph of the camp on page 96 is upside down). Calico too boomed in the 1880s with the approach of a railroad, and went through the vicissitudes of mining before the crash of 1893. A revival occurred with the mining of borax, but this too passed and the reconstructed Calico of today is a Disneyesque theme park. Readers interested in this desert country camp will find good information here: the author has researched his topic well. Again, the presentation is lacking.

Remi Nadeau, foremost narrative historian of frontier California’s desert country, has compiled a series of tales about silver mining camps of the state. The Silver Seekers, They Tamed California’s Last Frontier, (Santa Barbara: Crest Publishers, 1999, 328 pages, $17.95) is a fun read. Eleven camps receive a chapter each -- from Cerro Gordo to Panamint, Calico to Bodie -- as do tales of mining investors, freighting, deceit and larceny, and an appendix of terms. There is some duplication of his 1954 ghost town book, but this volume adds much more. The book is an entertaining introduction to California’s silver camps by an old, respected hand at narrative history.

Don’t, Don’t, DON’T follow the example of Brooks White, who purchased the site of the ephemeral silver camp of Galeyville and then unsystematically undertook an archeological dig -- more correctly called pot-hunting -- of the old townsite. His Galeyville, Arizona Territory 1880, Its History and Historic Archeology, (Raleigh, North Carolina: Pentland Press, Inc., 2000, 413 pp., $39.95, hb.) is the result. Retired director of telecommunications at the University of California, Los Angeles, White moved to Arizona and became intrigued with the ghost camp, the one-time satellite of Tombstone, Arizona Territory. White compiled every bit of information about Galeyville that he could find, minimally synthesized the material into the narrative presented here, and began a decade long collection of artifacts. Although he attempts to provide a description of his research methodology, his archeological effort lacks any value to the profession.

Mining history provides an understanding of the first wave of European settlement of certain regions of the American West. Each of the books reviewed here provide information, some better than others, about different locales with similar pasts. Silver camps, big and small, shared like chronologies and fates. “For mining communities as well as mortals, there is a time to be born and a time to die”: the reader would do well to pick-up the Spence and Jackson volumes in order to understand “the average people, in settlements typical of the mineral West” (Spence, p. ix).
More Book Notes

Sally Zanjani's portrayal of the woman prospector has been reprinted in paperback. *A Mine of Her Own, Women Prospectors in the American West, 1850-1950* is the best collection of prospectors' personal histories, male or female. She not only gives many examples of women but provides descriptions of motivations and desires of why people get into the game in the first place, and how they endure with only hope and beans. The paperback is a Bison Book, University of Nebraska Press, $17.95. Zanjani's award winning volume, *Goldfield, the Last Gold Rush on the Western Frontier,* has also done well and is in its third printing.

A new overview of mining in Canada has been published by the National Museum of Science and Technology. By Jeremy Mouat, the volume titled *Metal Mining in Canada, 1840-1950* is a 125 page history of the industry, from the early gold rushes of British Columbia to the opening of the massive gold deposits of Ontario. The book is a good overview and includes bibliography and suggestions for research. Available for $20 Canadian from the museum at P. O. Box 9724, Station T, Ottawa, Ontario K1G 5A3.

In *Coal People, Life in Southern Colorado’s Company Towns, 1890-1930,* Rack Cline writes of the development of the coal camps around Trinidad-Walsenburg, Colorado at the turn of the last century. Besides chronicling the corporate background, he also uses a collection of oral histories to bring to life the ethnic groups that called the communities home. Initially a master's thesis, the book provides a good background of the often studied events around the Ludlow Massacre. The book, published by the Colorado Historical Society, includes a wide array of photographs of people and places. The 121 page paperback is available for $12.95.

Help Requested

Collamer Abbott writes of the EPA's pending clean-up work of the historic **Vermont copper mining region** north of White River Junction. The Elizabeth mine, discovered in 1793, has vast tailings, especially from a mid-twentieth century flotation mill, that are being studied as a potential Superfund site. Local preservationists are concerned that the Elizabeth and nearby Ely mine, will be lost. They would like to save an 1830s smelting site, the mid-nineteenth century copperas plant site, the twentieth century mill buildings and other related structures, objects and sites. The particularly significant archeological evidence of the industrial village, ca. 1812, at Ely includes stone cellars, a native stone smoke flue, and components of the lead smelting districts of England. The sites are associated with Isaac Tyson, Jr., (1792-1861) recently inducted into the National Mining Hall of Fame, Leadville, Colorado. Collamer is interested in advice and can be reached at 644 Fairview Terrace, White River Jet, VT. 05001-6124.

James Copeland reports that he is working on a reference book which will contain a listing of mining companies organized in Colorado between 1859 and 1869. Currently he has 10,400 different companies listed and expects this number to total at least 14,000 when the book is completed in about three years. The information needed for each company includes the full name, district and county of mines, state and year of incorporation, capitalized shares and par value per share. There will be two or three references per company. The book will include cross references of more than 5000 entries to date. Colorado mining districts will be included in another section. He is also collecting copies of stock certificates. Anyone interested in providing information or directions to sources should contact him at 253 S. Golfview Drive, Pueblo West, CO 81007 or JBCopelanb@aol.com

Fifth Internation

Occasionally distracted by the blue Aegean and the island atmosphere of Greece, including tastes and sounds of that splendid country, participants at the Fifth International Mining History Conference in Milos successfully exchanged research and mutual interests in the mining past. Over 200 participants met September 12-15 at the new George Eliopoulos Conference Center, a splendidly rehabilitated milling complex near Adamas on Milos. Many old friends were encountered, especially veterans from previous meetings in Guanajuato, Mexico, Golden, Colorado, and Bochum, Germany. Only Mel Davies of the Australian Mining History Association attended all, including the first held at Melbourne.

Besides formal presentations on topics from prehistoric miners in Greece to twentieth century mining in Japan, the conference included tours of mining sites on the island thanks to Silver & Baryte Ores Mining Company S. A., Greece and Royal Gold Inc., U.S. A. Especially valuable was the post conference tour of the famed, classic Greek mining sites of Laurium south of Athens. The group toured worker homes, milling and mining sites, and the sea side smelter ruins. This was an incomparable opportunity to walk among the archeological evidence, with a short underground excursion, of these internationally significant silver mines.

Thanks to the International organizing committee (Stan Dempsey, Mel Davies, Jay Fell, George Xydos, and others) for another in the string of successful exchanges and learning experiences.
More Help Requested

Larry George writes requesting help from MHAers for information or sources about the general mining history of Virginia ca 1700-1860 and about mineral rights, especially within the Northern Neck Proprietary. The proprietary was granted a royal charter in 1649 and issued land grants until 1782, including royal mine grants for gold and silver and a different grant for lead, copper, tin, iron, and coal. He is especially interested in the royal mines royalty rights of the latter, which were finally abolished by the Virginia General Assembly in 1779. He is interested in the disposition and present status of the rights, which would affect 2.7 million acres in Virginia and West Virginia. Please write him at Barth, Thompson & George, P. O. Box 129, Charleston, WV 25314, or call 304-342-7111, or e:mail him at: lgeorge@btglaw.com

Preservation

The August 2000 issue of *Preservation* magazine praised the efforts of Elton Pearson and his neighbors in Toluca, Illinois in preserving the gob piles of this coal mining country. After noticing the disappearance of the dumps for fill, he organized "Save the Jumbos" campaign. The Toluca Coal Mine Preservation and Development company was formed, which is now stabilizing and enhancing the affectionally named "Jumbos", mine waste heaps. After some opposition, the community came to support the effort, even tho they had to endure such local news headlines as "Heaps of History in Toluca" and "Toluca is Heaping with Pride." Pearson and his friends realize that what is worth preserving is in the eye of the beholder, and the history of the community of Toluca rested squarely with those Jumbos. They were worth saving.

Nevada City, California, site of the 1995 MHA conference, is being overrun by dot.com millionaires, who are building MacMansions, causing realtors to go giddy, and in general overwhelming this and other mother lode communities. The high tek industries boom is bringing too much development, much to the chagrin of the locals. An anti-growth measure is on the November