



Mining History News

Quarterly Newsletter of the Mining History Association

A Publication of the Mining History Association

Winter 2023

Wieliczka Salt Mine, UNESCO World Cultural Site

Today's Wieliczka Salt Mine and Museum, also known as the Cracow Salt Works Museum, attracts more than a million visitors a year. A UNESCO World Cultural Site since 1978, the mine has a centuries long history. Poles have been mining salt at Wieliczka since the 13th century. Miners dug their first shaft, known as the Goryszowski Shaft, in search of rock salt in the 1280s. Casimir the Great officially formalized the works under legal auspices with the Saltworks Statute of 1368. Known as Casimir III, the only Polish king to be designated The Great, national lore claims "he found a Poland made of wood and left it made of stone." With the salt wealth, for instance, he founded the Cracow Academy, the first university in Poland. His efforts marked the beginning of modern mining for halite or sodium chloride (NaCl) in the nation.

The underground salts were formed into lump and bedded deposits over millennia from an ancient Miocene Sea. This saline sea, which covered a vast area from the Carpathian Mountains of Silesia to Iron Gate in Romania, formed a reservoir with watercourses that cut deep into the landscapes of the region, forming narrow bays and lagoons that later would be discovered after subsidence and aridity altered them into underground salt beds. Near Wieliczka, massive underground deposits formed in an area of about 10 kilometers in length and from hundreds of feet to 1.5 kilometers in width. By the time the mine closed in 1996, miners had blasted and dug on nine levels with 26 shafts, the deepest at 327 meters. The Polish citizenry used salt to preserve meats and fishes for everyday use. Salt was also central to commerce and trade, serving as a form of currency for the royal treasury for centuries before becoming a principal export in modern times.

Neolithic peoples began producing salt from brine that bubbled to the surface in the region from springs. Boiled in clay pots, the brine was transformed into usable salt. The oldest known salt working tools of Central Europe, in fact, were discovered in the village of Barycz not far from Cracow. In miner's legends, St. Kinga protected them in their work. In the late-nineteenth century, to honor their patron saint, they produced St. Kinga's Chapel—where Sunday Mass and Christmas Eve services are held—101 meters underground. This ornamental chamber reflects the cultural and artistic traditions incorporated into various levels of the mine works, which traverse miles and miles of the underground below Wieliczka. Among the more popular tourist destinations are a relief of the Last Supper (based on DaVinci's famous painting) and other biblical scenes; the Saltworks Castle erected in the late 13th century; and, a statue of Pope John Paul II completed in 1999.

Legend also played an important role in the history of the mine. It was told that Hungarian Princess Kinga—no doubt associated with the salt miner's patron St. Kinga—brought the "precious salt" to Poland through marriage. After Polish Prince Boleslaw the Chaste proposed to her, she accepted his engagement ring, only to drop it into a shaft of the salt mine in the Maramuresz region of Romania she had requested from her father for her dowry. The story symbolizes her willingness to forsake material things like gold in favor salt, a necessity of the people of her new homeland. Soon afterwards, some of her new subjects in a small village near Cracow found a lump of salt that had miraculously appeared. When they picked it up, the legend narrates, her engagement ring fell out of it and that, the myth reveals,

is how salt came to be in Wieliczka. Later, of course, modern geologists would delineate the true story of how rock salt—from the most valuable form called Fore-shaft salt to others like Spiza, Eagle Spiza, and Cracking salts—came to be formed providing the scientific information engineers and miners needed to extract the most marketable deposits. Perhaps the secondary salt crystallizations inspired this story. Beautiful salt stalagmites hang from ceilings in the mine and Christmas tree formations rise from the work's floors each having formed from dripping brine that trickles through the cracks in the surrounding bedrock.

While in production, the mine became a famous tourist site. In the centuries before the end of World War II, most visitors were royal dignitaries, community burghers, wealthy merchants, political officials, and famous Poles and other Europeans. The first tourist is believed to have been renowned astronomer Nicolaus Copernicus (ca. 1493), who is memorialized with a salt figurine in one of the underground chambers. Later visitors—who learned about the “Devil’s Drop,” a spot where miners descended into some of the works with ropes—took boat rides lighted by torches and accompanied by orchestras and fireworks on underground lakes. In 1774, officials started a guest book, a historic document that reveals that Johann Wolfgang Goethe, Frederic Chopin, Tsar Alexander I, and Austrian Emperor Franz Joseph among other famous people visited the unique mine. During the interwar years (1918-1939), more than 120,000 invitees attended political rallies, popular conventions, and national anniversaries, many to commemorate Polish independence after World War I. Because of the role of the legendary salt mines in Poland’s history, Wieliczka became a destination for expressing patriotic national pride.

Under Polish sovereignty, authorities expanded the mine works with modern mining technologies as well as with a new system of leaching to capture brine waters. Mined salt and processed brine resulted in large increases in salt production that exceeded 200,000 tons a year with peak output in the 1970s when all nine levels were completed. And although rock salt production ended in 1964, wet mining and evaporation methods allowed for the largest outputs during the life of the works. In 1994, President Lech Wałęsa declared the Wieliczka saltworks a National Historic Monument just two years before all production ended.

MHA members interested in the salt mine, its history, and its cultural value, should be made aware that the public can visit the Cracow Saltworks Museum. The brainchild of Alfons Długosz—a native of Wieliczka and renowned painter, photographer, and educator—the museum was founded in 1951 and then opened to the general public in 1966. Along with miners Jan Wąsik, Franciszek Krzeczowski and Jan Rojek, and with the support of the national saltworks management board, sections of the mine were reopened prior to 1951 to search for artifacts. As Długosz later stated, “I decided to help save the priceless monument I was aware that considerable effort awaited me. I had no funds, all my capital was my own hands and a lot of good intentions. However, I started to work with passion With a joint effort from the underground labyrinth of collapses ... we [found] abandoned or forgotten work tools, bizarre machines and devices from centuries ago” (see, <https://muzeum.wieliczka.pl/en/mine-history>).

MHA members may want to consider visiting this Polish national treasure and combine the visit with attendance at an upcoming conference hosted by Museum Director Jan Godlowski and Representative for International Cooperation Monika Dziobek-Motyka from May 22 to 25, 2023, to take place in the underground museum. Experts from around the globe will be presenting on the history of mining and mine museums from different sections of the world at the UNESCO Heritage Site. If you have questions about the conference, contact Monika at m.dziobek@muzeum.wieliczka.pl (For more information on the Wieliczka Saltworks Museum and Mine, see these websites: <https://www.wieliczka-saltmine.com/individual-tourist/contact>; <https://abpoland.com/attractions/wieliczka-salt-mine>; <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/32/>; <https://muzeum.wieliczka.pl/?lang=en>)

Chris Huggard, MHA President 2022-2023
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MHA Officers and Nominations Committee Report

The Nominating Committee has been busy identifying candidates for the office of VP / President-elect, two Council positions, and a position on the Nominating Committee. Thank you to Stephen Hart and Peter Maciulaitis for their hard work this year. A ballot for each position is included on page **four (4)** with room for write in candidates.

Nominated for the position of Vice President / President-elect is **Eric Clements**. Growing up in the former mining-supply town of Boulder, Colorado, Eric Clements was intrigued as a child by the old mine dumps that dotted the ridges immediately to the west of his family's home, doubtless the diggings of the gold seekers of '59. Turns out they were quarries that supplied flagstone to construct the local university. Oh well. His interest nonetheless kindled, years later he wrote a dissertation under Duane Smith and Bob Trennert that became *After the Boom in Tombstone and Jerome, Arizona: Decline in Western Resource Towns* (University of Nevada Press, 2003). Before that he came within an hour of becoming a charter member of the Mining History Association, arriving at its 1990 inaugural conference session in Virginia City's Fourth Ward Schoolhouse just as it was ending, having misread the schedule. He has since attempted to atone by attending all but two of the organization's conventions, assuming editorship of its *Mining History Journal* in 2001, and serving twice on the MHA Board. Were he to be elected, it would be his first vice-presidency of any kind.

Nominated for the two open positions on the Council are **Dick Beach** and **Rudy Davison**.

Born and reared in Connecticut, **Dick Beach** "came West" as a young man to study minerals and graduate from the Colorado School of Mines with a professional degree in geological engineering. After serving in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in Virginia and Vietnam, Dick worked as a geologist and physical scientist for the U.S. Bureau of Mines, assessing the mineral resources needed to sustain our economy and standard of life. Since retirement, Dick has continued to be actively involved in professional activities, especially with the Denver Mining Club, Denver Region Exploration Geologists' Society, and Society for Mining, Metallurgy & Exploration; as Chair of the SME Colorado Section Minerals Education Coalition, Dick makes presentations in Denver Metro area classrooms, and at other venues, about mining and minerals. Dick has been a member of MHA since 2017, attending the conferences in Fairbanks, Deadwood, Marquette, Elko (virtually), and Birmingham.

Rudy Davison is a "generalist" who has had various experiences in mining, zookeeping, journalism, travel, hospitality, and writing, but he has never had a career. Regarding MHA, he has been a member since 2005, attending most annual conferences since that date. He is a frequent conference presenter, a contributor to the MHA Journal, organized the annual conference in Telluride, CO in 2016, and is a past MHA Council member. Outside of MHA, Rudy is a long-time board member of the Telluride Historical Museum where he gives Fireside chats on various historic subjects, leads Hikes Into History, and creates field trips. He is also a member of the Rimrocker Historical Museum in Nucla, CO. Over the past eight years, Rudy has been a commentator and producer for numerous Colorado Experience programs on Rocky Mountain PBS. The most recent of these documentaries is "History of the Million Dollar

Highway” which aired November 3, 2022. Rudy and his wife Andie split their time between living in Durango and Telluride, CO. They have three cats.

Nominated to join Stephen and Peter on the Nominating Committee is **Richard F. Reid**.

Richard Reid completed a Bachelor of Arts degree in Earth and Environmental Science from Wesleyan University in Connecticut in 1980 and moved to Nevada in early 1981. Richard initially worked as a mine geologist in central Nevada and then continued his career doing reconnaissance and near mine gold exploration in the western US and internationally. Richard completed his career with Newmont Mining Corporation. During his twenty-one years with Newmont he was a Senior Geologist, Nevada Exploration Manager and Exploration Business Development Manager for North America, ending up his career with Newmont as Chief Geologist of North America. Richard is now semi-retired but is affiliated with several Canadian junior companies. In 2020 Richard organized the 31st Annual MHA Conference for the Elko, Nevada, area. The conference was subsequently postponed and then completed in 2021 as a virtual event due the Covid pandemic.

2023/2024 Ballot

Mail by February 28, 2023 to:

Mining History Association, P.O. Box 1536, Cape Girardeau MO 63702-1536

Vice President / President Elect

☒ Eric Clement ☐ _____ (write in)

MHA Council:

☒ Dick Beach ☐ _____ (write in)

MHA Council:

☒ Rudy Davison ☐ _____ (write in)

Nominating Committee:

☒ Richard Reid ☐ _____ (write in)

Join the Mining History Association in Socorro, New Mexico

Annual Meeting June 8-11, 2023

" Exploring the Land of Enchantment "

Preliminary details available on the MHA's website:

<https://www.mininghistoryassociation.org/Socorro2023.htm>

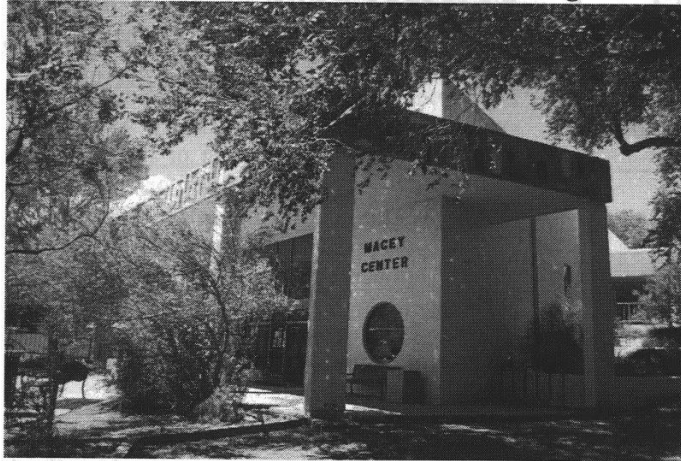
*Complete conference details and session program
forthcoming in Spring 2023 Mining History News*

Socorro Conference Hotel Room Block

There is no conference hotel, but the **Holiday Inn Express** has offered a special rate to MHA conference attendees. The Holiday Inn's conference rate starts at a very reasonable \$98.00 per night, plus tax. The number of blocked rooms is limited, and the booking window is open. **EARLY RESERVATIONS ARE STRONGLY ENCOURAGED.** Be sure to mention the Mining History Association when booking your conference rate room.

Holiday Inn Express 1040 North California Street, Socorro, NM, 87801. Direct: 575-838-4600 and mention "MHA." We have double queen and single king rooms.


Macey Center, New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology, Conference Venue



The conference program will be held at the Macey Center on the campus of the New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology. The center has a well-equipped auditorium with equipment to conduct a Zoom component of the conference presentations. There is space in the lobby for vendors. The Friday awards banquet will be nearby in the campus student union, the Fidel Center. The Saturday presidential luncheon will be held at the Macey Center.

MHA Nuggets	8:00 pm Eastern
January 17	7:00 pm Central
February 21	6:00 pm Mountain
March 21	5:00 pm Pacific
April 18	5 minutes of social time
May 16	20/25 minute presentation
	Questions/social time

Zoom Meeting, Passcode: MHA
OR
LiveStream on YouTube
Mining History Association channel



Join us for MHA Nuggets the third Tuesday of the month on Zoom. Each Nugget includes a mining related presentation and social time to spend with your MHA friends!

January 17, 2023

A Visit to Helgustaðanáma, Iceland's Historic Spar Mine

by Johnny Johnson

Meeting ID: 846 9877 5787 Password: MHA

February 21, 2023

Copper Follies: How Some of the Smartest Men in the Business Tried and Failed to Control the Market From 1870-1917

By Edward McCarthy

Meeting ID: 882 0873 1550 Password: MHA

March 21, 2023

Touching the Irish Famine in a 19th Century Pauper Cemetery: The Effort in Leadville, Colorado to Memorialize 1000 Irish Immigrants Buried in Sunken, Ap

By James Walsh

Meeting ID: 844 0004 6536 Password: MHA

April 18, 2023

"Comstock Photos"

By Kelly Cluer

Meeting ID: 899 1358 9221 Password: MHA

May 16, 2023

Speaker needed

The presentations will also be livestreamed on YouTube during the presentation and also recorded for later viewing on the Mining History Association YouTube channel. To utilize the chat features or ask questions during or after the program, you should login using Zoom.

We have openings for talks in May and next Fall. Your topic doesn't have to be academic. Topics can include a visit to a historic mining site or town or an interesting little topic that you happened to find out about. Send an email to mininghistoryassociation@gmail.com if you would like to present an MHA Nugget in the future.

Lattimer Massacre Program

A public commemoration of the Lattimer Massacre will take place on January 1, 2023, in the Hazle Township Building (101 W. 27th Street, Hazle Township) in Luzerne County, PA. The event is sponsored by the Greater Hazleton Historical Society & Museum and Pennsylvania Anthracite Society for Mining, Metallurgy and Exploration. The Commemoration begins at 6:30 p.m.

The Mining History Journal

As an organization that promotes historical mining research, the Minnesota History Association annually publishes *The Mining History Journal*. Each member of the MHA receives a copy as a benefit of their membership.

The Mining History Journal, the annual literary publication of the Mining History Association, seeks manuscripts on mining or its supporting industries of any subject, era or locale. The journal is particularly interested in publishing the personal first-person accounts of persons who have worked within the industry or to preserve mining's history. Manuscripts, which will be peer reviewed, should be sent to the editor, Eric L. Clements at eclements@semo.edu

In Memorium

Recipient of the Rodman Paul Award and early supporter of the MHA, William R. Hunt passed away Nov. 17, 2022 in Ft. Collins CO at the age of 93. Bill was professor emeritus of the University of Alaska, Fairbanks and author of a dozen books, best known being his *North of 53: The Wild Days of the Alaska-Yukon Mining Frontier, 1870-1914*.

Future MHA Meetings

2024 Meeting

June 5-9

Park City, UT

2025 Meeting

June

Proposals Welcome

If you are interested in organizing an MHA annual conference please e-mail MHA Secretary Brian Leech for the "Guide for Organizing Mining History Association Annual Conferences" at brianleech@augustana.edu

HELP WANTED

As with all MHA conferences, volunteers will be essential to the success of our 2024 event in Park City, Utah. We'll need good hands for all shifts, but now seek early commitments for help with the following:

Registration: Monitoring both on-line and mail conference registrations; stuffing conference packets; registration table shifts (June 5 – 7).

Vendors: Promotion and management of vendor tables – typically book sellers and mining artifact dealers. (The Park City conference may also generate increased interest in tables/displays by our industry partners.)

Please consider joining the 2024 team, and contact the conference committee at MHA2024Utah@gmail.com

2023 MHA Membership Renewal

Student: \$20, Individual: \$35, International (outside the U.S.): \$45, Sustaining: \$60, Patron: \$100

Name: _____

Business Affiliation (if used for address) _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email _____ Phone _____

Three areas of mining interest: _____

The MHA will be producing a Membership Directory in 2023. If you DO NOT want to be listed, please check here: _____

Send with check to: Mining History Association, PO Box 1536, Cape Girardeau MO 63702-1536

OR Go to the MHA Website and use our online system and pay by credit card:
<https://mininghistoryassociation.org/member.htm>

Mining History Association
PO Box 1536
Cape Girardeau MO 63702-1536

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Upcoming Events

Arizona History Conference

Tempe, Arizona
April 13-15, 2023

**International Conference of Mining and
Underground Museums (ICUM2023)**

Wieliczka, Poland
May 22-25, 2023

Mining History Association Conference

Socorro, New Mexico
June 8-11, 2023

Western History Association

Los Angeles, California
October 26-29, 2023

Mining History Association Conference

Park City Utah
June 5-9, 2024

The *Mining History News* is published quarterly by and for the members of the **Mining History Association**. Submissions for the newsletter are encouraged.

Deadlines: Spring issue: February 15th
 Summer issue: June 15th
 Fall issue: September 15th
 Winter issue: November 15th

Submissions for the newsletter should be sent to Paul R. Spyhalski at prspyhal@yahoo.com with MHA at the start of the subject line.

Change of address: Please send all address changes to Barbara Clements, Membership Chair, at mininghistoryassociation@gmail.com

or

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