

# Mining History News

Newsletter of the Mining History Association

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## An Endowment to Mining History

My wife knows that for much of our married life I had a mistress. A demanding and enticing mistress that occupied my thoughts during much of my waking hours. My mistress for 30 years was the U.S. Bureau of Mines, not just a job, but a demanding and equally rewarding career.

The Bureau of Mines was born in 1910 and died in 1996. In my opinion, she died an unwarranted and untimely death; she was dismembered and mutilated. Most of her research facilities along with her scientists and engineers were quickly grabbed up by other agencies, such as the Department of Energy and the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health. The U.S. Geological Survey picked up some of her geologists, most of her mineral resource data base, and some of her responsibilities. Many of her mineral land assessment people were picked up by the U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, and National Park Service. Those who chose to look outside government found a U.S. mining industry that had been largely exported to other countries. One could argue that the Bureau's value and expertise was not lost but simply reorganized. What was lost, however, was a well integrated organization dedicated to mining, metallurgical and economic mineral resource issues.

The decision to dismantle the Bureau was made at a high political level of government, where decisions are based more on ideology than good science. The Bureau openly supported the mining industry--- maybe because many of those who were attracted to her came from industry. She repeatedly turned down

opportunities to get involved in regulations or public land administration, because those things did not allow her to work in harmony with the mining industry or maintain a strict scientific, nonpolitical course of action. As a result she did not grow like most government agencies. In fact, she was the smallest Bureau in the Federal government. Being small and not politically astute is not a good combination in government, especially at a time when one party was looking to cut bureaucracy, and the other was in pursuit of their version of political correctness.

For this discussion, the cause of the Bureau of Mines' demise is not as important as the endowment she left to mining historians. For the 86 years of her existence, she left us an authoritative, documented history of mining in the U.S.. But keep in mind, the agency was not called the Bureau of Mining History, and therefore, the information was not gathered, analyzed, or published with historical preservation as a primary objective. Detailed mine and mining district descriptions, economic geology, mineral resource potential, and production statistics are contained in thousands of her technical reports.

Those publications are waiting for mining historians who are willing to sort through the scientific and economic data and present it in a pleasing, historical manner. Historians, specifically those interested in mining technology, should not forget that mining and metallurgical research was a big part of the Bureau of Mines, and it is difficult to do research without exploring the failures and successes of the past. Some of you are interested in the history of mine

safety and mine disasters. One of the reasons the Bureau was organized was to conduct research on mining accidents and help prevent mine disasters. All of these things, plus descriptions of mining regions, individual mines and the people who discovered them, are frequently contained in U. S. Bureau of Mines publications.

The Bureau's "Minerals Yearbooks" are hardbound, thick volumes, published annually, that recorded the activities of the U.S. mining industry by area and commodity. For example, if you wanted to know about the gold, silver, copper and lead mining activity in Fremont County, Wyoming during 1937, you will find it on page 463 of the Minerals Yearbook for 1938. In later years the Bureau also published Yearbooks on international mining activity. "Minerals Facts and Problems", another huge, hardbound series of bulletins, is the standard reference work on mineral commodities in the United States and abroad. The industry for each mineral commodity is described by size, organization and geographic distribution. Definitions, grades and specifications are given for each mineral commodity. Uses, reserves-resources, geology, exploration, development, mining, processing, production, research are part of each commodity description.

"War Minerals Reports", written during WW II, were descriptions of individual deposits of strategic and critical minerals. They were considered confidential for many years because they contained conclusions on the economic viability of privately-owned mineral deposits. "Information Circulars" do not normally contain new information on mining research or mineral resource evaluations, but are very useful in summarizing existing information. A good example is IC 9035, "Principal Deposits of Strategic and Critical Minerals in Nevada." It contains no new information, but presents salient deposit information in abstract form on 119 principal mineral deposits in Nevada. "Reports of Investigations" were the usual vehicle for reporting new results of the Bureau's research on mineral deposit investigations. A couple of random examples are: RI 5356, "Rock Breakage by Explosives" and RI 5650, "Tungsten Deposits of Cochise, Pima, and Santa Cruz Counties, Ariz.". The titles were obviously not intended to emphasize

historical aspects of the reports, but let me assure you, there is a lot of mining history documented in Bureau of Mines publications.

This discussion is not intended as a complete listing of Bureau of Mines publication series or even a synopsis of the Bureau's objectives or expertise. Those can be found on the internet, as short histories of the Bureau of Mines, usually written by past employees. Opinions here are strictly those of the author. Enjoy your endowment.

Bob Weldin

## USBM Publications

When the U.S. Bureau of Mines (USBM) was abolished in January 1996, most of the library collections for the Washington, D.C., and Denver, Colorado, offices were transferred to the U.S. Geological Survey libraries in Reston, Virginia, and Denver, respectively. USBM publications are now available from these two libraries through interlibrary loan as well as from several repository sources.

The National Technical Information Service (NTIS) has a "legacy" collection of USBM publications dating from 1910-1995. These publications are available for purchase from NTIS and represent most of the research work done by the USBM in the fields of mining technology, mine safety and health, and the mineral industry. A free searchable index of USBM publications received after 1990 is provided by NTIS at <http://www.ntis.gov/products/specialty/bom.asp?loc=4-5-1>

The Bureau of Mines participated in the United States Government Printing Office (GPO) Depository Library Program. Many depository libraries received USBM publications and should have them available for use on site. They are listed on the Web at: <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/libraries.html#locate>

National Technical Information Service (NTIS)  
Information Phone: 703-605-6000  
Order Phone: 1-800-553-NTIS

# SEVENTEENTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE MINING HISTORY ASSOCIATION

GLOBE, ARIZONA  
JUNE 1-4, 2006



The seventeenth annual conference of the Mining History Association will be held in the historic copper mining country around Globe-Miami, Arizona. The conference will take place at the Apache Gold Casino and Resort, located on the San Carlos Apache Reservation just east of town. The Globe area is in the high desert country at an elevation of 3541 feet. Nearby mining sites include Superior, Ray, and Hayden. Highlights of the meeting are expected to include an opening reception at the Globe Museum, a walking tour of downtown and a visit to the antique stores in Miami, a tour of Phelps Dodge facilities, and a trip to the Ray open pit. For inquiries contact: Jim McBride, 1223 E. Manhattan, Tempe, AZ 85282. E-mail [james.mcbride@asu.edu](mailto:james.mcbride@asu.edu)



## CALL FOR PRESENTATIONS

The program committee for the Globe meeting invites proposals for individual presentations or complete sessions (including chair) on any topic or aspect of mining history (we especially encourage presentations on mining in Arizona and the Southwest). Sessions normally include three papers of twenty minutes each. There are no temporal or geographical limits.

Proposals must include title of presentation, an abstract (not to exceed one page) for each presentation, plus biographical information about each presenter and session participant (including mailing/email address). Please note, speakers must register for the conference in order to give their presentations. Please send the written proposals to the program committee chair by **November 30, 2005**.

**Bob Trennert, Program Chair**  
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# Organizing a MHA Annual Conference

Each year about the time of our annual conference, members or friends come forward with ideas for future MHA meeting locations. We welcome these ideas. But what we really need is a local arrangements chair backed by a group of folks to work with the MHA to help organize the event. We need people to do all those local arrangements to ensure that meeting spaces are found, a good bus service is located, and the conference tours meet the desires of our group.

A formal proposal for a future MHA conference needs to be presented to the MHA board for approval, before actual arrangements can begin. This is usually done a couple years prior to the meeting. If you want to come forward with a proposal, there's what you'll need to present to the MHA board for review. The package should include:

- **Timing:** When will the conference be held? The first half of June is usually the best time. The conference traditionally begins with a reception on Thursday evening and ends with an all-day tour on Sunday.
- **Location:** Information about the historical mining location, past and present. Usually a local chamber of commerce or visitors' center publication will do.
- **Hotels:** Describe the conference hotel, or if none available describe how lodging can be obtained (multiple hotels or B&Bs in town). Estimate costs and if a special rate can be obtained.
- **Meeting Place:** Describe available meeting space, and cost of rental of the facility. Is the space big enough for our group? Does the facility have slide and powerpoint projectors, laptops, screens, a lighted podium, and other commonly used equipment (PA system, for example).
- **Receptions:** Describe the facility for our opening reception (Thursday). We may have a second reception that may be held Saturday; if so, describe a second reception site. Describe possible host(s) for the reception(s), or alternatively, provide a rough estimate of the cost(s).
- **Banquet and Presidential luncheon facility:** Describe facility (restaurant, hotel, or convention center) that can provide space for our annual Friday night banquet and Saturday presidential luncheon. Please provide a rough cost estimate for meals.
- **Describe potential tours:** Friday afternoon and all day Sunday are the usual time for tours. We usually combine a lunch with the Friday tour. We then tour a historic site or the community. The all day Sunday tour can be to nearby mines or ghost towns, museums or mining tours. Provide information on who will lead the tour, bus service and lunch options for the tours.
- **Potential co-sponsors:** Although the meeting is usually supported by registration and special events fees, the conference is always improved when we have a donor or two to host a reception or tour. Describe potential sponsors, especially if any have committed to the event.
- A separate Program committee will be set up by MHA to set the agenda.
- We usually have at least 100 participants at our annual conference, but that does not mean that every participant attends every event. Usually the Friday banquet has 75 participants, while the Sunday tour has 35 or so. The other events range in-between in size.

- It is highly recommended that your proposal include information about your ability to organize such an event. It is important for you to understand that you not only need to plan for the above activities, you need to be able to implement them as well. For example, you will need to set the cost (to attendees for each event), set the menus, and arrange the caterer for the luncheon and the banquet, get any required down payment to the caterer, arrange the transportation (buses) for the tours, etc. MHA does not have staff to do these things for you (but the treasurer needs to be kept informed of when and if deposit checks are needed, and what fees will be charged. MHA adds a percentage in order to cover additional costs for rooms, guest speakers, etc.)
- The proposal should contain a list of the organizers, their phone numbers, and their responsibilities so that they can be reached in the event of questions.
- Have you attended previous MHA meetings? This is important. It will give you a “feel” for our mixed group, what we are willing to accept - having our annual meeting in an old mining camp is more desirable than a meeting in an urban center’s convention hotel. We want to enjoy the historic mining scene and tours, as well as hear good papers on mining topics.
- Finally, as host for your community, please be ready to welcome and spend time with the group, at the registration desk, tours, and any additional social event.

## Book Reviewers Wanted

If you are interested in reviewing books for the Mining History Journal, please contact the Journal’s editor, Eric Clements, at [eclements@semo.edu](mailto:eclements@semo.edu). Be sure to indicate your subject areas of interest and expertise.

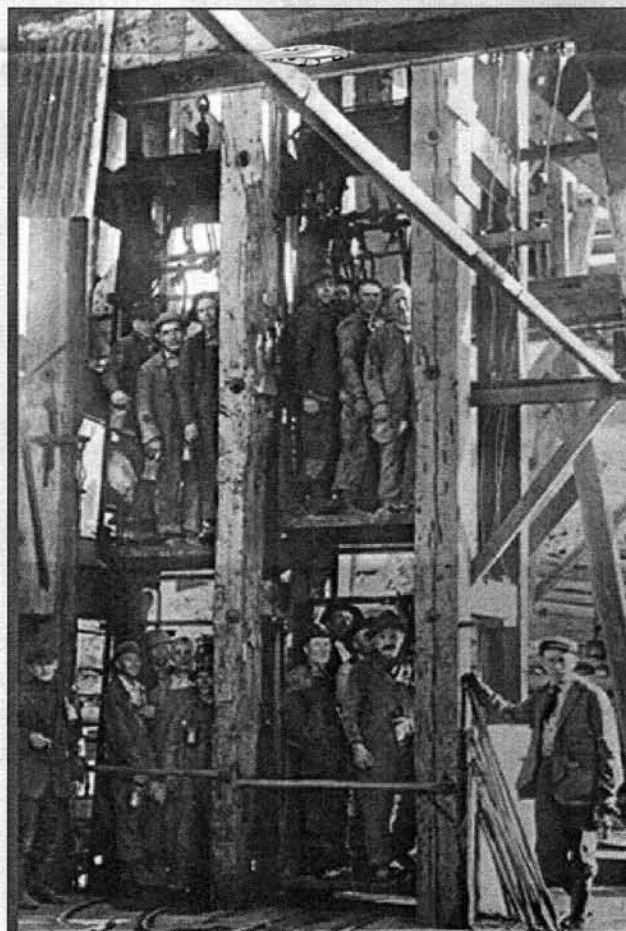
## Election Results for 2005

Congratulations to the newly elected MHA officers:

James McBride	vice-president/president elect
Ed Raines	Council member 2005-2007
David Wolf	Council member 2005-2007
Jim Beselme	Nominating committee

The ballot for 2006 officers is scheduled to appear in the September 2005 newsletter. If you have suggestions for nominees, please forward them to Ron Limbaugh, Nominating committee chair, [limbaugh@mcn.org](mailto:limbaugh@mcn.org)

Check Out Our Updated Website at  
[www.mininghistoryassociation.org](http://www.mininghistoryassociation.org)





## New Books & Things

***A Room for the Summer, Adventure, Misadventure, and Seduction in the Mines of the Coeur D'Alene***, by Fritz Wolff (The University of Oklahoma Press, 2004, 288 pages, cloth \$29.95, ISBN: 0-8061-3658-8, 1-800-627-7377, [www.oup.com](http://www.oup.com)). Fritz Wolff takes the reader on a memorable journey into the rough-and-tumble world of hardrock mining, recounting his experiences both above and below ground as an apprentice engineer during the late 1950s.

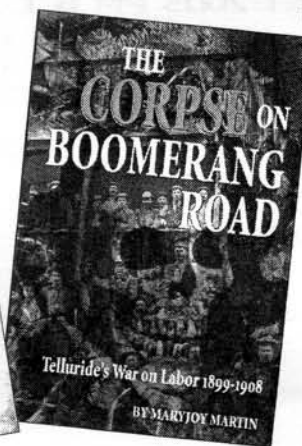
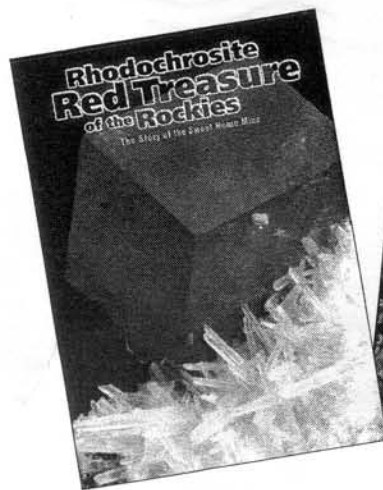
***Changing Mines in America***, by Peter Goin and C. Elizabeth Raymond (The University of Chicago Press, 2003, 240 pages, cloth \$55.00, ISBN: 1-930066-11-2; paper \$27.59, ISBN: 1-930066-12-0; 773-702-7000, [www.press.uchicago.edu](http://www.press.uchicago.edu)). Most Americans today view mines as little more than ugly scars on the landscape, places with no connection to an American way of life. This creative new work will force many to rethink that impression: after an introduction to the history of mining in America, the authors present eight visual and historical essays about diverse sites across the nation, each of which reveals mines not simply as physical degradations but as evolving cultural artifacts of the American landscape.

***Streams of Gold*** (Landlocked Films, 1505 Mariposa Ave., Boulder, CO 80302, DVD, \$30, 303-447-2821, [www.landlockedfilms.com](http://www.landlockedfilms.com)) This one-hour documentary traces the history of an American company's presence in an Andean mining town called Portovelo from the 1890s to World War II, where filmmaker John Tweedy's grandparents lived and worked for nearly 30 years.

***47 Down: The 1922 Argonaut Gold Mine Disaster***, by O. Henry Mace (Wiley, 2004, 288 pages, hardcover, ISBN: 0-471-44692-0, \$24.95, [www.wiley.com](http://www.wiley.com)). This volume details the fire in the main shaft of a gold mine in Jackson, California, the Argonaut, which trapped 47 miners 4,650 feet below ground in the summer of 1922.

***The Deep Dark, Disaster and Redemption in America's Richest Silver Mine*** by Gregg Olsen (Crown Publishing, 2005, 321 pages, hardcover, \$24.95, ISBN: 0-609-61016-3, 800-733-3000, [www.randomhouse.com/crown](http://www.randomhouse.com/crown)). Gregg Olsen presents the harrowing story of the May 2, 1972 fire in the Sunshine Mine in Kellogg, Idaho in which 91 miners lost their lives. In addition to the intensely suspenseful story of the fire and rescue, the book also describes the wounded heart of Kellogg, a quintessential company town that has never recovered from its loss.





***Rhodochrosite: Red Treasure of the Rockies, The Story of the Sweet Home Mine*** (Silver Mountain Productions, P.O. Box, 460323, Aurora, CO 80046-0323, 2004, 84 minutes, \$24.95 (7.2% sales tax Colorado addresses, DVD or VHS, 303-589-2953, [www.silvermp.com](http://www.silvermp.com)). Interviews with key people, historic photographs, graphics, and computer animations help this video document the story of the Sweet Home Mine from its beginnings as a modest 1870s silver mine, through the decades of ups and downs, until its eventual rebirth as a world-renowned source of beautiful rhodochrosite crystals. Cameras go inside the Sweet Home Mine, deep within Colorado's 14-thousand foot Mt. Bross, to bring you up-close mining action. Watch miners as they drill and blast trying to find elusive pockets of red riches, and learn of the special tools and techniques developed over the years to carefully remove delicate crystals. 3D computer animations show how the mine has evolved over the years and illustrates where the action is happening inside the mine.

***The Corpse on Boomerang Road, Telluride's War on Labor 1899-1908***, by Maryjoy Martin (Western Reflections Publishing Co., 2004, 392 pages, hardbound, \$29.95, ISBN:1-932738-02-9, 800-993-4490, [www.westernreflections.pub.com](http://www.westernreflections.pub.com)). The Corpse on Boomerang Road details cold-blooded killings, brutal assassinations, seething animosity and sinister tales—all elements you will find in a great mystery novel! But this is a true story about the Telluride labor wars from 1899-1908.

***A Quick History of Leadville***, by Christian J. Buys (Western Reflections Publishing Co., 2004, 104 pages, softbound, \$29.95, ISBN:1-932738-00-2, 800-993-4490, [www.westernreflections.pub.com](http://www.westernreflections.pub.com)). *A Quick History of Leadville* chronicles the fascinating history of Leadville, Colorado—the boomtown of Colorado's boomtowns—from the 1860s all the way to the present. Every page brings to life those former days: the arrival of the first prospectors, the booming mining era, the near mythical saga of the Tabors, the silver crash, the Crystal Carnival and its magnificent ice palace, the anarchy caused by the miners' strikes, the rise and fall of the railroads, Camp Hale and its famous 10th Mountain Division, the Climax Mine's rise and demise, the Environmental Protection Agency's cleanup efforts, and more—much more.

***The Rise of the Silver Queen, Georgetown, Colorado, 1859-1896***, by Liston E. Leyendecker, Duane A. Smith, Christine A. Bradley (2005, University Press of Colorado, 312 pages, cloth \$55.00 ISBN: 0-87081-793-0, paper \$22.95 ISBN:0-87081-794-9, 800-627-7377, [www.upcolorado.com](http://www.upcolorado.com)). For nearly 150 years the community of Georgetown, home to approximately 1,100 people, has sat nestled high in the Rocky Mountains west of Denver. The Rise of the Silver Queen tracks the history of Georgetown, its people, and its mines from its founding in 1859 through the presidential election of 1896, and demonstrates the town's place in the larger story of the settlement of the Rocky Mountains and the West.