



Mining History News

Quarterly Newsletter of the Mining History Association

A Publication of the Mining History Association

Fall 2025

Presidential Pickings

Well, here we are. Another beautiful summer is closing, and playtime is over. Part of my playtime, however, included a return to Michigan's Copper Country of Houghton and the Keweenaw Peninsula. My last trip to Michigan's Upper Peninsula (da UP!) was for the MHA's Marquette conference in 2019; I have not been to Houghton in about 17 years. It was long past due. And speaking of past due – so is our organization's need to revisit the Keweenaw. The MHA last visited Houghton in 1997, and wow has it changed. The place has grown tremendously but still retains a lot of its rustic and historic charm. Keweenaw National Historical Park – which was in its fledgling days in 1997 – now hosts a fabulous collection of mining sites and tours all across the peninsula (<https://www.nps.gov/kewe/index.htm>).

While in Houghton I arranged to meet with representatives from the Society for Industrial Archaeology, which included faculty at Michigan Tech and advisors to the Keweenaw NHP. They were very welcoming and are eager to organize a joint SIA-MHA conference in 2027. The director of the Keweenaw NHP agreed to put together a formal presentation for our Board for consideration, but I think the Houghton area and a joint conference would be a great opportunity for our group. The Keweenaw is a beautiful place to visit in the summer. In addition to the National Park there are abundant other tour options, as well as fun along the Lake Superior shoreline. A joint conference would allow us to socialize with folks having similar interests in our industrial past. Lastly, the Keweenaw NHP is facing budget cuts and staff firings like much of the Federal government, and having the park as a backdrop for a conference could help convince those in charge that preserving our past is desired by the community and the right thing to do.

These days the SIA is comparable in size to the MHA, and both follow similar conference formats of tours, meetings, paper sessions, and social events. The meeting group agreed that the logistics of a joint conference are tricky but not insurmountable. Both groups would still have separate formal meetings and award presentations, but would share receptions, paper sessions, and tours. The SIA uses a professional tour organizer, which might be especially useful for getting a larger group into some of the potential tour stops. Stay tuned.

But before 2027 let's talk briefly about 2026 and our next meeting in Pittsburg, Kansas. That meeting is coming together splendidly. The tours, talks, and venues are all looking great and I want to thank the organizers for their continued efforts. Keep up the good work!

For me this year the end of summer also means the start of "Conference Season." Between now and the end of the year I have two conferences and a mining expo to attend. In October I will be representing the MHA when I speak at the Great Basin conference on Nevada's Cold War

mineral production. My focus will be on copper and iron, including a site I recorded where the iron was being shipped to Japan in the 1950s to help with its post-war rebuilding and industrialization. Other speakers are addressing Nevada's manganese, tungsten, and uranium mining. We are going to try and emphasize the need for published research on mining from this time period, which is sorely lacking.

Nevada has very little written about its mining history after WWII, and this upcoming symposium reminds me that we need to *keep up with the past*. My job operates under Federal regulations and what we call "The 50 Year Rule," whereas anything more than 50 years old is considered historic and needs to be recorded and evaluated for its historical value. Fifty years is 1975 (ack!) which means there is very little comprehensive reference material covering about four decades of Nevada's mining history. I suspect other regions are in a similar bind. The mining industry underwent tremendous change in the 1950s-1970s and there is a myriad of avenues to study if someone takes the time. Studying the recent past has some perks, including potentially large archive collections and the ability to add oral history to your research (potentially including your own memories). If you have knowledge of mining in this time period please write it down and get it published, either in a local historical publication or perhaps even our own Journal.

One of my other events is the American Exploration and Mining Expo. This is not a historical conference but a large venue for active exploration and mining companies, and their vendors, to get together and brag about the latest and greatest discoveries, technologies, and other mining activities across the Western US. The expo includes several discussion groups that update us on mining laws and regulations, including changes to Federal policies and environmental laws. I mention this to the MHA because it is Federal environmental law that plays a direct role in helping to preserve and protect historic mining sites and ruins, and I think it is important to stay abreast of changes that could result in a negative impact to our heritage. Hopefully I won't hear of anything overly disconcerting, but it's always good to stay informed.

Yours,

Robert McQueen
Reno, Nevada

Tri-State Conference Updates

Plans for our upcoming visit to the legendary Tri-State Lead and Zinc District and its surrounding coal fields continue to coalesce. The tentative agenda (see pages 6 and 7 herein) includes two presentations by Jarod Roll, whose study of labor and working conditions in the Tri-State won a Clark Spence Award in 2020. A final call for presentations and information on potential travel grants can be found on page 5. The planning committee has also developed a list of cultural sites within 150 miles of Pittsburg for those with some additional travel time. Please contact Chris Huggard at chuggard@nwacc.edu for more information on anything related to the conference.

Conference Room Block

The Hampton Inn by Hilton in Pittsburg will serve as our official conference hotel. The planning committee has established a room block with a room rate of \$109 per night that also includes a full breakfast. The hotel is located at 1285 US-69, Pittsburg, KS 66762 and can be reached by telephone at [\(620\) 231-3100](tel:6202313100). A link to the hotel is also provided for your potential use below: <https://www.hilton.com/en/book/reservation/rooms/?ctvhocn=PTSSNHX&arrivalDate=2026-05-27&departureDate=2026-05-31&groupCode=CHHMHA&room1NumAdults=1&cid=OM%2CWW%2CHILTONLINK%2CEN%2CDirectLink>

MHA Nuggets to Return

The MHA Nuggets provide educational opportunities for members and opportunities for members to connect outside of our annual conferences. After a brief hiatus, the MHA Nuggets programs will restart in January and run through April 2026. The specific dates are already planned out and scheduled as follows: January 13, February 10, March 10, and April 14.

Barbara is currently accepting presentation proposals so please reach out to her if you are interested in presenting. Topics can include a visit to a historic mining site or town or an interesting little topic that you happened to find out about. Email Barbara at mininghistoryassociation@gmail.com if you would like to present an MHA Nugget or if you have questions about the process or whether your proposal is appropriate for a Nugget.

While you wait for the Nuggets to restart, please feel free to view past Nuggets on the “Mining History Association” YouTube channel.

The *Mining History Journal*

As an organization that promotes historical mining research, the Minnesota History Association annually publishes *The Mining History Journal*. Each paid up member of the MHA receives a copy as a benefit of their membership. The 2025 edition of the *Journal* was recently mailed to the Association’s paid-up members so if you have not received your copy yet, please check your membership status and pay your dues if necessary. Also, please make sure that Barbara has a current mailing address for you.

Planning is also underway for next year’s issue with a few more articles potentially needed to fill out the next edition. As always, *The Mining History Journal* seeks out manuscripts on mining or its supporting industries of any subject, era or locale. The journal is, however, also particularly interested in publishing the personal first-person accounts of people who have worked within the industry or seek to preserve mining’s history. Manuscripts, which will be peer reviewed, should be sent to the editor, Eric L. Clements at eclements@semo.edu

Call for Nominations

The Nominating Committee is charged with filling the following positions in the coming year: Vice President (President Elect), two Council seats, and a position on the Nominating Committee. The committee is also accepting nominations for the Secretary and Web Coordinator positions as well.

The Vice President / President-elect is one of the four named officer positions within the MHA bylaws and serves as a member of the MHA Council. According to the bylaws, “the Vice President/President-Elect shall, in the absence of the President or in the event of his or her death, inability or refusal to act, perform all duties of the President; and, when so acting, shall have all the powers and be subject to all the restrictions upon the President. The Vice President shall perform such other duties as from time to time may be assigned to him or her by the President or by the Council.” The bylaws also currently provide that the Vice President will assume the office of President after serving one year as the Vice President.

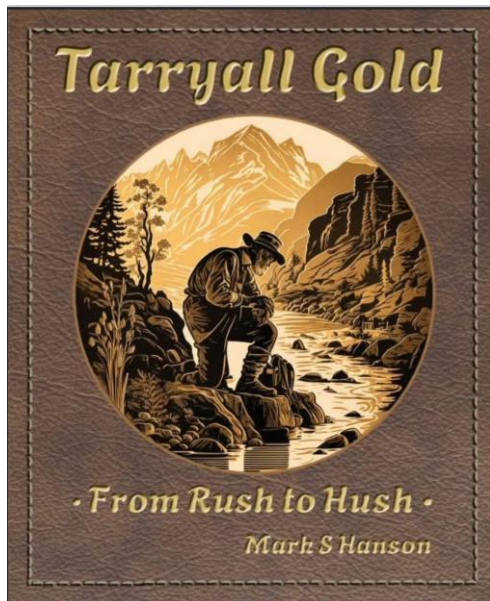
The affairs of the MHA are managed by the Council. The Council includes the organization’s officers and seven separately elected Council members. The Council typically meets in person at the Association’s annual conference and a few other times during the year as needed, usually by Zoom. Most communications with and between the Council members take place by or through email. Council members are elected to three-year terms. There will be two openings on the Council that need to be filled.

The Nominating Committee consists of three members serving staggered three-year terms. There will be one opening on the Nominating Committee. Per the bylaws, the Nominating Committee’s duty shall be to propose the names of one or more candidates for any vacancy that will occur because of the expiration of the term of a Councilor or the death or resignation of a Councilor, and for the Vice President/President-Elect.

Nominations or any questions about any of the positions including the MHA Secretary and Web Coordinator positions can be sent to william.culver@plattsburgh.edu.

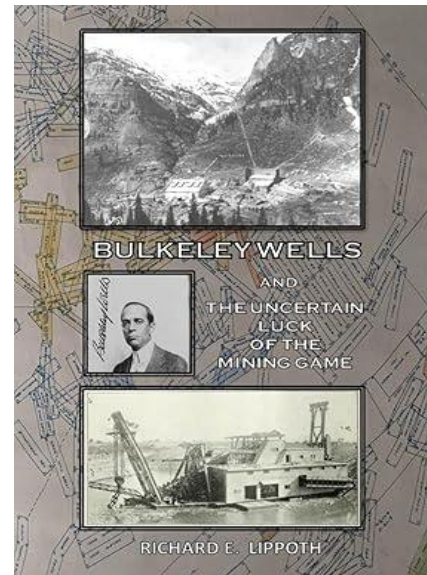
Recent Publications by MHA Authors

Mark S. Hanson. *Tarryall Gold: From Rush to Hush*. Rhyolite Press: Colorado Springs, CO, 2025. 331 pages, soft cover, ISBN 978-1-943829-66-8. \$65 cash or check, \$67 credit card.



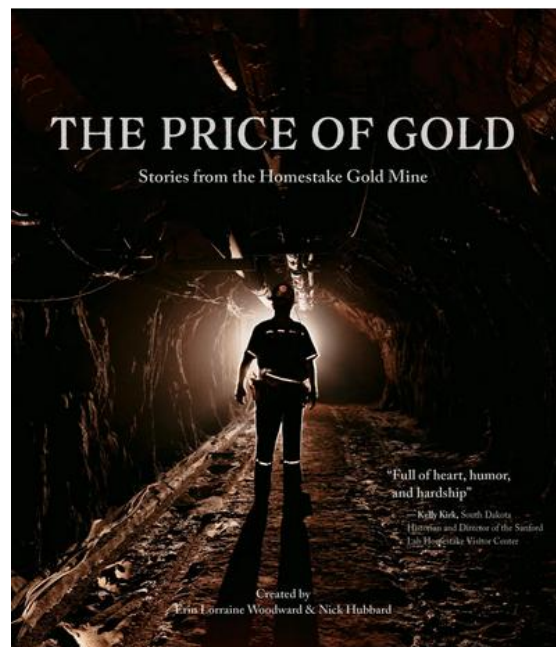
On July 19, 1859, fourteen men ventured into the uncharted South Park Basin, discovering gold in Tarryall Creek and sparking the first stampede from Colorado's front range. This rush would resonate for over a century. Today Tarryall Valley showcases a lush time capsule with more than 100 teetering cabins, 1,000 prospect pits and mines, miles of flumes and ditches, five remaining mill sites, bygone blacksmith shops, and the hopes and dreams of thousands of prospectors. "Tarryall Gold" exhibits over 220 stunning photos, maps, letters, and telegrams, while documenting a century-long search for the elusive mother lode and the rich golden bounty found amongst her glacially-bulldozed placers. Throughout, a fascinating picture emerges of the men, the conflicts, the fortunes, the failures, and the enduring mysteries of their quest, set against the breathtaking backdrop of Colorado's rugged landscape.

Richard E. Lippoth. *Bulkeley Wells and the Uncertain Luck of the Mining Game*. Ingram-Spark; Lightning Source LLC, Jackson, TN, 2025. 601 pages, hardcover, ISBN 979-8-218-56887-0, \$38; paperback, ISBN 979-8-218-56919-8, \$28; Ebook, ISBN 979-8-218-56888-7, \$16.



The career of Bulkeley Wells illustrates nearly all of the changes and challenges faced by the U.S. mining business during early twentieth century. While his name is not widely known today, Wells gained nationwide notoriety for his leadership in opposing violent labor strikes in the mining camps of Colorado between 1901 and 1904. He subsequently managed the development of several large mining and electric power projects in Colorado, California and Nevada. However, nearly all of Wells' ventures failed, for a variety of reasons, many beyond his control. Although Buck Wells had no political aspirations, as a leader in the mining business he was at the forefront in lobbying the government to support a vibrant domestic mining industry, particularly gold and silver mining. Wells was convinced that a substantial reserve of precious metals was essential for domestic and international financial stability.

Erin Lorraine Woodward and Nick Hubbard.
The Price of Gold: Stories from the Homestake Gold Mine. Erin Lorraine Media: Berkeley, CA, 2024. 248 pages, Hardcover, ISBN 979-8-218-98915-6, \$35.



The Price of Gold: Stories from the Homestake Gold Mine is a coffee table book with film portraits of and first-hand accounts from those who once worked at the Homestake Gold Mine in Lead, South Dakota. The collection includes stunning portraits of former miners, electricians, hoist operators, receptionists and chemists alongside their stories of humorous pranks, harried rescue operations and the loss of loved ones to mining accidents. The book tells of lives lived above and below the city of Lead. Steven T. Mitchell, Homestake Mine superintendent and author of *Nuggets to Neutrinos: The Homestake Story*, says the collection offers "a rare window into an underground world that very few experience first-hand."

For more information about the book, visit:
<https://www.thepriceofgoldbook.com/product-page/the-price-of-gold-stories-from-the-homestake-gold-mine>

Call for Presentations And Potential Travel Grants for the Pittsburg Conference

The 2026 Program Committee of the Mining History Association is seeking proposals for individual presentations or complete sessions (including a chair) on any topic or aspect of the history of mining, its associated industries, and its communities. There are no temporal or geographic limits to topic material, but presentations that address mining or mining history in or near Pittsburg, KS including the Tri-State Lead/Zinc District, or coal fields in Oklahoma, Missouri, or Kansas are, however, particularly welcome given the location of the conference. Sessions normally include three papers of twenty minutes each. All presenters must register for the conference. Proposals should include the title of the presentation, an abstract (not to exceed 250 words) for each presentation, and biographical information including mailing/email address for each presenter. Please send the written proposals via email attachments to Chris Huggard chuggard@nwacc.edu by Friday, January 16, 2026. Submission by email is required.

The program committee can also give out two conference travel grants of \$750 each to defray the costs of attendance at the MHA conference. Current students (including graduate students) and former students are potentially eligible for a travel grant. To be eligible, former students need to have graduated within three years of their application for funding. ***Travel grant recipients must give a presentation at the conference.*** To be considered for a conference travel grant, submit a cover letter addressed to the MHA Pittsburg Program Committee to Chris Huggard chuggard@nwacc.edu, along with your proposal by Friday, January 16, 2026. In that cover letter, the applicant should express their interest in the grant opportunity, what they hope to gain out of their conference attendance, and what significance their presentation is to mining history as a field.

**Tentative Conference Schedule – Pittsburg, Kansas
May 27-31, 2026**

Wednesday, May 27

2-4pm, MHA Council Meeting, Hampton by Hilton

Thursday, May 28

8am-3pm – Field Trip, Coal Country
Big Brutus & Museum
Heartlands Railroad Museum
Dragline Park
Miners Hall Museum
Frontenac Museum
Coal Fields

4:30-7pm – Opening Reception – Joplin History & Mineral Museum

4:30-530pm: Visit to Museum

530-6pm: Food & Drinks

6pm-645pm: Chris Wiseman, Curator, Joplin History & Mineral Museum, “Mining, Milling, & Smelting Technology of the Historic Tri-State Lead and Zinc District”

Friday, May 29

8am-3pm Presentations in Ballroom A

Session 1: 745-850am: Welcoming Session:

Chris Childers, PSU Dean of College of Arts & Sciences and History Professor, “Welcome to Pittsburg State University”

About Pittsburg, **Chris Wilson, Explore Crawford County, “Welcome to Pittsburg, Kansas”**

Mining Impact of on the Culture of Southeast Kansas

Abandoned Mine Land Program

Habitat Restoration

Session 2: 9-1015am: Mining, Minerals, and Men

Blair Schneider, “Talk about why the coal, lead, and zinc are there, the history and impact of the mining, and the future directions we are looking for remediation as well as critical mineral exploration”

Linda O'Neilo Knoll, "Army of Amazons: Strikes, Struggles, and Solidarity: Unrest in the Kansas Coalfields"

Session 3: 10:20-1130am: Tri-State Mining History

Jarod Roll, Professor of History, University of Missouri, "A Modern American Frontier: The Development of the Tri-State Mining District of Kansas, Missouri, and Oklahoma, 1850-1960"

Martin Appold, Professor of Geology, University of Missouri, Columbia, "Origin of the Mississippi Valley-type Deposits of the Tri-State District"

Session 4: 1-215pm: Coal Melting Pot, Chair Jerry Lomshek

Seth Nutt, Library Director, City of Frontenac, "An Introduction to the Heritage Hall Museum, Frontenac, KS"

Bob Zagonel, CCHM Board Member, "An Introduction to the Crawford County Historical Museum, Pittsburg, KS"

Phyllis Bitner, Chair MHM, "An Introduction to the Miners Hall Museum, Franklin, KS"

Session 5: 230-415pm: Name TBD, Chair Chris Huggard

Sara DeCaro, Director, Curator of Special Collections and University Archivist, Pittsburg State University, Title of Talk Forthcoming on Archival Collections for SE KS Coal & Tri-State

Jarod Roll, Professor of History, University of Missouri, "Poor Man's Fortune: What Made Tri-State Miners Notoriously Anti-Union?"

630-8pm MHA Awards Banquet – Ballroom A

Saturday, May 30

8am-3pm – **Presentations**, Ballroom A, Overman Student Union, PSU

Noon-130pm – **Presidential Luncheon & Address**, Paul Bartos, MHA President, "Tales from Cerro Rico de Potosi / San Bartolome"

3-430pm – **MHA Membership Meeting**, Ballroom A

Sunday, May 31

8am-5pm – **Field Trip, Tri-State District of Oklahoma**

Baxter Springs Museum

Quapaw Nation (Hosts Tim Kent, David Cates, Craig Kremin, Dana Hummell)

Picher/Douthet/Tar Creek—Mine Communities & Land Reclamation

Quapaw Farmer's Market Lunch

Commerce – Mining Remnants & Passive Treatment System (water recovery)—Host Bob Nairn, Univ. of Oklahoma

Mickey Mantle Home Site & Statue

Quapaw Museum

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

Upcoming Events

National Miners Day
December 6, 2025

Mining History Association Conference
Pittsburg, Kansas
May 28-31, 2026

Soc. Industrial Archeology Conference
Norfolk, VA
May 28-31, 2026

Natl. Assoc of Mining History Orgs.
Swaledale, New Yorkshire
June 19-22, 2026

Australasian Mining History Association
Smythesdale, Virginia
September 20-26, 2026

Mining History Association Conference
TBD
June TBD, 2027

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

Submission Deadlines:
Winter issue: December 1st
Spring issue: February 1st
Summer issue: July 1st
Fall issue: September 1st

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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