Unsung Heroes of the Mining World

Heroism is a noble quality, but what does it take to be a hero? Courage under fire? Fame and fortune? I was thinking about this the last time I visited the Mining Hall of Fame in Leadville, Colorado, looking for some of my favorite characters among the 200 or more honorees. I wondered why I didn’t find a bronze plaque for James G. Fair, one of the Bonanza Kings. Perhaps Jim’s less-than-stellar reputation had something to do with it. After all, he was known as “slippery” long before he arrived on the Comstock.¹ Yet did I find such antiheroes as “Soapy” Smith, the underworld boss of Creede and Skagway before he was gunned down by a “true hero,”² or “Diamondfield Jack” Davis, a miner turned gunslinger who was nearly hanged before being pardoned,³ seem perhaps to be stretching even “hall of fame” rascality to oxymoronic proportions. It is also risky to celebrate those who flaunt public opinion or conventional standards, as the editors of Time Magazine found out after receiving a barrage of criticism for naming the Muslim cleric Ayatollah Khomeini “Man of the Year” during the American hostage crisis in Iran.⁴

There is still a third category worthy of pantheonic recognition in the Mining Hall of Fame. Unsung heroes are the “gray hats,” the men and women who may lack the superlative qualities of either heroes or antiheroes, yet who make their mark in the world. Daniel Boorstin defined an unsung hero as “the person of solid values who can be admired for something more substantial than his well-knownness.”⁵ Grayness also symbolizes the complexities of character that distinguish “real” people from the simplistic black- or white-hat caricatures created by image-makers. Public recognition might eventually earn you a star on a Hollywood sidewalk or a place in the Rock ‘n Roll Hall of Fame, but it does not characterize most of the mining worthies enshrined at Leadville. Celebrity is no substitute for substance.

Loosening the criteria for public recognition and acclaim leads to the obvious problem of limits, both qualitative and quantitative. If every admirable “person of solid values” is just as worthy as the noblest icons of the mining world, can there be any restrictions on eligibility to the Mining Hall of Fame? Doubtless every member of the Mining History Association could offer up a list of interesting possibilities not found in the Leadville roster—not yet, at least. But all these latent candidates will remain hidden unless their deeds—and misdeeds—are known to the gatekeepers of publicity. The challenge to mining historians, then, as to those in any historical field, is to rescue the “unsung heroes” from the depths of obscurity.

Ron Limbaugh, MHA President

(Continued on Page 2)
Welcome to Creede!

The 2009 Mining History Association Annual Conference will take place June 3-7, 2009 in Creede, Colorado. Creede, a silver mining town located in a mountain canyon in southwest Colorado, boomed in the late 1880s and early 1890s. As silver production became less profitable worldwide in the 20th century, Creede's mines remained in production into the 1980s by emphasizing lead and zinc. Today, the tiny town of Creede relies on tourism.

The nearest major airports to Creede are Denver and Albuquerque. Once in the Creede area, there are many choices for lodging (see the list on page 3). For more information on how to get to Creede as well as links to local attractions, look here:

http://www.creede.com/getheres.htm

Our conference will take place at the Creede Underground Mining Museum, depicted in the photo to the left. From downtown, head into the mountains (which start abruptly!), and you will see the museum on the left.

See you all in Creede!

More Digital Resources

League of Nations, Statistical Yearbooks
Although they only cover the period of existence of the League, they have comprehensive tables for major minerals. They make the useful distinction between production of ores and of metals, and they are broken down by country.

http://www.library.northwestern.edu/govinfo/collections/league/stat.html

--John Hillman, Peterborough, Ontario

"Unsung Heroes..." (Continued from Page 1)

3. www.leadville.com
5. www.idahohistory.net
6. www.time.com
7. www.quoteland.com
Lodging in and near Creede

Creede

The Creede Hotel & Restaurant ($100-$200)
www.creechotel.com
719-658-2608

Antlers Rio Grande Lodge (lodge & cabins)
www.antlerslodge.com
719-658-2423

Snowshoe Lodge ($75 to $150)
www.snowshoelodge.net
866-658-2315

Blessings Inn Bed and Breakfast
www.blessingsinn.com
719-658-0215

The Old Firehouse Restaurant B&B
www.theoldfirehouse.com
719-658-0212

RC Guest Ranch (cabins)
www.rcguestranch.com
719-658-2253

Blue Creek Lodge
800-326-6408

The Club at the Cliffs
www.clubatcliffs.com
719.873.5266

Cascada Cabins / Cascada Bar & Grill
719-658-1033

Wagon Wheel Gap (5 minutes from Creede)

Cottonwood Cove (lodge & cabins) ($100 to $200)
719-658-2242

4UR Ranch ($100)
www.4urranch.com
719-850-8716

This guest ranch has a special offer for MHA. 12 rooms will be made available for $100 per night for Tuesday through Sunday nights. 4UR is one of the premier luxury guest ranches in the west. They offer all kinds of activities and gourmet meals for $300 to $500 per night. The MHA special is bare bones. No meals, no activities, but very close to Creede, and right across the way from one of our field trip stops, the CFI Fluorspar Mine. Several MHA couples have already signed up to stay there! Email Robin for a MHA special deal reservation. Her email is Robin@4urranch.com.

South Fork (20 minutes from Creede)

Apple Dumpling Bed & Breakfast ($100 to $150)
www.applestundlingbandb.com
719-873-9876

Arbor House Inn Bed & Breakfast ($100 to $150)
www.arborhouseinnco.com
719-873-5012

The Inn Motel ($50 to $75)
www.innsouthfork.com
800-233-9723

Lazy Bear Cabins ($75 to $100)
www.lazybearcabins.com
877-873-1443

Chinook Lodge & Smokehouse ($75 to $100)
www.chinooklodge.com
719-873-1707

Rainbow Lodge ($50 to $100)
www.rainbowsouthfork.biz
719-873-5571

Spruce Lodge ($50 to $150 & up)
www.thesprucelodge.com
719-873-5605

Ute Bluff Lodge ($50 to $100)
www.uteblufflodge.com
719-873-5595

Wolf Creek Lodge ($50 to $100)
www.wolfcreekskilodge.com
719-873-5547
Mining History Association
Annual Meeting June 3-7, 2009
Creede Underground Mining Museum
503 Forest Service Rd #9
Creede, Colorado

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 3

All day  Pre-conference field trip
Ed Raines, Volcanic Geology of the Eastern San Juans. Tour from the pre-caldera eruptions, to the early Cochetopa and La Garita Calderas, to the late Creede Caldera. Travel by individual car.

THURSDAY, JUNE 4
(All events at Creede Underground Mining Museum)

All day  Opportunity to visit regional mining museums
1:00-3:00  MHA Council Meeting – both outgoing and incoming MHA board members
3:30-4:30  MHA Editorial Board Meeting
1:00-8:00  Registration
6:00-8:00  Welcoming Reception at the Creede Underground Mining Museum
Janis Jacobs, President of Creede Historical Society
History of Creede

FRIDAY, JUNE 5

8:00-9:00  Session 1: Conference Opening
Welcome: Ron Limbaugh, MHA President 2008-09
Conference Opening: Ed Raines, Conference Chair
Ed Raines, Mining History of Creede
Bill Culver, What to Expect from the Creede Program Presentations

9:10-10:15  Session 2: Late Nineteenth Century Mining Law
Chair: Johnny Johnsson
Eric Nystrom, “Some Graphic Method of Visualization”: Mining Law and the Visual Culture of Mining
Rudy Davison, “Apexers” versus “Sideliners,” the Legal Struggle to Gain Possession of the Durant Mine in Aspen from 1879-1889
Gordon Bakken, Apex Law, Geology, Expert Witnesses and Demogorgon: The Best Mining Law for Litigators for a Half Century

10:25-11:40  Session 3: Colorado Mining
Chair: Duane A. Smith, Fort Lewis College
James Warren Andrews, Creede – Mineral County, Colorado
Douglas Thayer and David Thayer, The Gold Prince Aerial Tram, San Juan County, Colorado
Bob Ring and Al Ring, Ambrose E. Ring’s Colorado Mining Experiences: 1917-1928

11:55-1:10  Session 4: Documenting the Mining Past
Chair: David Wolff, Black Hills State University
Noel Kirshenbaum, Mining Rickard’s Written Records
**Karmen King**, *An Interesting Curve in the Road: The Chattanooga Curve in the Red Mountain Mining District*

1:10-2:30 Lunch – open/in Creede (individually drive into Creede)

2:30-4:00 Session 5: **Remediation and Preservation – Compatible?**  
Chair: **Eric Nystrom**, Rochester Institute of Technology  
**D.D. “Dec” Trent**, *Cleaning Up a Century of Hardrock Mining: The Abandoned Mine Lands Initiative*  
**Brian Leech**, *Debating the Pit: Urban Renewal and the Struggle Over Open-Pit Copper Mining in Butte, Montana*  
**Beverly Rich and William Tookey**, *Castle in the Clouds, the Saving of the Old 100 Boardinghouse*

4:15-5:30 Session 6: **Three Books of Mining History**  
Chair: **William Culver**, State University of New York at Plattsburgh  
**Russell Hartill**, *Backfilling the Books: A Look at Utah's Abandoned Mine Reclamation Program and Its Impact on Mine Heritage*  
**Mike Capps and Stuart Burgess**, *Opening the Books: Exploring the History and Underground Passages of Ophir Hill Mine*  
**Brannon Harthill**, *The Future of Mining Books*

6:30-7:00 Reception at the **Rio Grande Club** in South Fork  
(Rio Grande Club is a 20 minute drive from the Creede Underground Mining Museum)

7:00-on **Awards Banquet at the Rio Grande Club**  
Banquet Moderator: **Ron Limbaugh**, MHA President 2008-09  
The MHA Awards Program  
Featured Speaker: **Duane Smith**, *Sesquicentennial of the Colorado Gold Rush*

**SATURDAY, JUNE 6**

8:00-9:30 Session 7: **Star Mining History Student Presentations**  
Chair: **Tom Noel**, University of Colorado, Denver  
**Debra Faulkner**, *Silver Heels: The Guardian Angel of the Miners*  
**John Stewart**, *Thomas F. Walsh: Mining Millionaire*  
**Charla Stilling**, *Brides of the Mining Multitudes: Commercial Romance in the Mining Camps*  
**Dino Maniatis**, *The Phoenix Mine: A Reborn Treasure*

9:45-10:45 Session 8: **Trends in Mining Research and Heritage Preservation**  
Chair: **Jeremy Mouat**, University of Alberta – Augustana  
**Joe Mussey**, *Chihuahuan Desert Mining Heritage Exhibit*  
**Barry McGowan**, *The Last El Dorado - The Legend of Australia's Lasseter's Reef*

11:00-12:15 Session 9: **From the Rio Grande to Roughing It**  
Chair: **Jay Fell**, University of Colorado  
**Tom Noel**, *Creede and the Upper Rio Grande Mining*  
**Dana EchoHawk**, *Native & Hispanic Fortune Seekers on the Rio Grande del Norte*  
**Mark Twain (Hugh Bingham)**, *Roughing It on the Mines*

12:45-2:15 Presidential Luncheon at the Underground Museum  
Passing of Presidential Rock Pick: **Ron Limbaugh**, MHA President 2008-09  
**Karen Vendl**, MHA President 2009-10
Presidential Lecture: Treasures from the Miner's Lunchbox

2:30-3:45  Session 10: Creede's History Seen Locally
Chair: Ed Raines, Consulting Geologist
Beth Simmons, Arthur Lakes – He Overlooked Creede
Ken Wiley, The Amethyst Vein

4:00-5:00  Session 11: Jim Besleme (1937-2009) – Memorial for a Mining Historian
Open session for memories and tall tales.

5:15-6:30  MHA Business Meeting (open to all members)

6:30-8:00  Dinner on your own

8:00-9:00  Session 12: Presentation of Lockout
Chair: Eleanor Swent, MHA President 2007-08, and Director of the Oral History Series on
Western Mining in the Twentieth Century, The Bancroft Library, University of California-
Berkeley.
Alan Murray, Dead Men Talking, followed by the 60 minute documentary Lockout

SUNDAY, JUNE 7

Post-Conference Field Trip: A Tour of Portions of the Creede, Wagon Wheel Gap, and Lake City Mining Districts.
Limited to 36 passengers on the bus.

Attention Conference Vendors

Tables are available for selling books and merchandise during the conference. The cost is $25.
For further details or to reserve a spot, contact conference organizer Ed Raines:
ghs@peakpeak.com

Creede Reading List


Edwin Lewis Bennet and Agnes Wright Spring, Boom Town Boy in Old Creede, Colorado (Chicago: Sage Books, 1966)

# MHA 2009 Conference Registration Form

**Creede, Colorado -- June 3-7, 2009**

Your Name (for badge):

Spouse Name (for badge):

Mailing Address:

City/State/Zip/Country:

Email / Telephone:

- [ ] Please list me in the conference packet
- [ ] I am a current member (2009 on mailing label)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Cost per Attendee</th>
<th>Number Attending</th>
<th>Total per Event</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conference Registration (No charge for spouses) <strong>Members = $60, Non-Members = $70</strong></td>
<td>$60 / $70</td>
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<tr>
<td>MHA Annual Membership (U.S. / International)</td>
<td>$25 / $35</td>
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<td>Meal Package: Thursday Reception, Friday Awards Banquet, and Presidential Luncheon</td>
<td>$100 per adult / $25 per child 12 &amp; under</td>
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<td>Banquet (circle choice): Prime Rib, Teriyaki Salmon Filet, Chicken Picata</td>
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<td>Pre-Conference Geology Field Trip of the Eastern San Juan Volcanic Field (drive yourself or carpool; handout provided)</td>
<td>$15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sunday Bus Tour: Portions of the Creede, Wagon Wheel Gap, and Lake City Mining Districts. Limited to 36 passengers (includes lunch) Sandwich (circle): Roast Beef, Turkey, Ham</td>
<td>$45</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Total Payment**

Make checks payable to: *Mining History Association*

(all payments must be in U.S. dollars)

Mail completed registration form and payment to:

**MHA Creede 2009**

c/o Ed Hunter

P.O. Box 186

Victor, CO 80860

Tour and banquet spaces are limited, so register early to guarantee availability.
Questions about registration? Contact **Ed Hunter**, Local Arrangements

stoperrat@ccvnet.net
Upcoming Events

20th Annual Mining History Conference
June 4-6, 2009
Creede, CO
http://www.mininghistoryassociation.org

2009 Vernacular Architecture Forum: "Mining Metropolis: An Island in a Stockmen's Paradise"
June 10-13, 2009
Butte, MT
http://www.vafweb.org

8th International Mining History Conference
June 12-15, 2009
Redruth, Cornwall, Great Britain
http://www.huss.ex.ac.uk/history/imhc/index.php

10th Cultural Heritage Symposium on Mining, Metallurgy, and Geosciences
September 29-October 2, 2009
Freiberg, Saxony, Germany

10th Meeting of Historians of Latin American Mining
November 4-6, 2009
San Luis Potosi, Mexico

The Mining History News is published quarterly by the Mining History Association. It is sent to MHA members who also receive the annual Mining History Journal. MHA is an organization of individuals interested in the history of mining and metallurgy. Submissions for the newsletter are encouraged and should be sent to Eric Nystrom at the MHA address or by email: eric.nystrom@rit.edu.

Deadlines: March issue: February 15
June issue: May 15
September issue: August 15
December issue: November 15

Change of Address: Please send all address changes to Diane Dudley, Membership Chair, at:

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www.mininghistoryassociation.org