



Mining History News

Quarterly Newsletter of the Mining History Association

A Publication of the Mining History Association

Summer 2025

Presidential Pickings

Greetings everyone from your new president. This is my first entry in the MHA newsletter and you may find it a bit rambling as I have a lot on my mind. I am freshly returned to Nevada from our wonderful Gunnison, CO conference and I want to give a big thank you to all of the organizers and local volunteers that put it together. The venues were great, the weather was perfect (especially for the outdoor reception at the Pioneer Museum), and everyone was extremely nice and helpful. To get to the conference I drove from Denver to Gunnison and took a side trip to Leadville, including an appropriate stop at the National Mining Hall of Fame and Museum. I definitely need to return to that town. From there the drive down to Gunnison took me through lots of old (and some active) mining sites in the Rockies. For me the mining was markedly different from what I have worked on and studied in California and Nevada. The sheer steepness of the slopes, and tremendous amount of terracing and cribbing (aptly displayed in the museum's many dioramas) was impressive. All that wood!

Which brings me to a little introduction about myself. I was born, raised, and educated in the Midwest but for the last 30 years have called Nevada home. I was one of the very first students in Michigan Tech's graduate program in Industrial Archaeology. My early background was primarily studying forest history – logging and sawmilling – and that is what brought me out west when I took a 6-month job with the Tahoe National Forest. Little did I appreciate that the 19th century logging sites I was recording in the Sierra was largely to feed Nevada's booming Comstock Lode (a USFS historic marker at Spooner Summit titled "Tomb of the Sierras" talks about this very subject; <https://www.hmdb.org/m.asp?m=229047>). After a couple of years of government work I moved to Nevada and joined the private sector. Many of my colleagues were interested in anything other than mining history, so my industrial background was unique and able to fill a niche. Nevada's mining heritage is rich and its ruins abundant, and I glammed onto it with a fervor. Seeing these mining sites in one of the most amazing desert environments in North America adds to its allure. For the last 20 years I have been working in the Cortez Mining District, but my job continues to send me into mining camps and districts that I had not previously worked in, and I continue to find them equally fascinating. Currently I am working in the Rhyolite-Tonopah-Goldfield region, the location of one of the last great mineral rushes in the Western US.

Now to change gears and talk about our Association (I said this might be rambling). Coming fresh off the conference we have a lot of fun subjects to cover. We currently have around 300 active members, which puts us on the smaller side of professional groups. This can be a positive thing. A small group allows us to get to know one another not just professionally but personally, to share ideas and really geek out on all things mining. A small group does, however, pose some challenges. Somewhere around a third to half of our membership attends the annual conference,

and a great many of these attendees have held one or more positions of various sorts in the organization (council and board members, various committees, administrative roles, etc.). To all of you that have given your time to this group I say thank you, and to our members that have not volunteered your time I encourage you seriously consider it. None of the positions take a tremendous effort or a large part of your time, and there is a wealth of people ready to help you with any questions. We are currently looking for a new Secretary and a new Webmaster. 'Webmaster' might sound intimidating but fear not! We have a paid technician to handle the nuts and bolts, all you have to do is post materials that are sent your way (photos, news items, and upcoming conference information). Typing is the main skill needed for the job. While those are our immediate needs, we are also always looking for future Board and Committee candidates, and future Presidents.

Speaking of presidents, the MHA Board has formed a committee to explore changes to the term of MHA president, specifically, to extend their term (and by extension the term of the vice-president/president elect) to two years from the current one year. As I mentioned this is a small group, and searching for a president annually can be challenging. Changing to a two-year term would ease the work of the nominating committee and allow the president to function better. Many organizations like ours have two-year presidential terms, so a change of this type is not unprecedented.

Our MHA Journal is seeking article submissions. If you or someone you know has been researching a mining topic please encourage them to consider getting it published in the journal. Also, if you know of any recent publications on mining history, please forward their citation for our annual *Recent Publications* bibliography. These can be books/book chapters, published articles, theses/dissertations, or other media. I can unequivocally say that *Recent Publications* works better than AI or any internet search engine in letting you know about new mining history publications.

Our next conference is the Tri-State area centered in Pittsburg, Kansas. Mining in this area goes back to the Civil War but it was also a critical supplier to the Allied effort during WWI. Following the Kansas meeting we have a tentative plan for a joint conference with the Society for Industrial Archeology (SIA), possibly in Houghton, MI or another northern Midwest venue. I am a member of the SIA and their president is a member of the MHA, so maybe we can use that synergy to our favor. There is of course a bit of logistics involved so stay tuned.

I look forward to serving as your president in the coming year,

Robert McQueen
Reno, Nevada

Mark out May 28-31, 2026 on your calendars as the MHA will be exploring the legendary Tri-State Mining District and its related coal fields at our upcoming annual conference in Pittsburg, KS. Also, stay tuned for information on a potential post-conference tour.



Big Brutus, West Mineral, KS

Mining History Association Awards (2025)

The MHA has various committees that review applications and nominations and decide whether to issue certain awards at the Association's Awards Banquet. The following awards were announced at this year's banquet:

The ***Rodman Paul Award*** is given in honor of scholar and mining historian Rodman Paul whose influence in the field of Western mining research inspired a generation of future mining historians. The Award is given for outstanding contributions to mining history. This year's ***Rodman Paul Award*** was presented to **Robert Eveleth**, mining engineer emeritus with the New Mexico Bureau of Geology & Mineral Resources. His many mining related achievements include starting of the New Mexico Mining Archive, writing numerous journal articles and book chapters about the history and principals of New Mexico mining and geology, and providing information on New Mexico's mining industry to the U.S. Bureau of Mines for the annual Mineral Yearbooks from about 1978 to 1995. Bob was unable to attend our conference, but the bureau hosted a reception in his honor at the Minerals Museum where Bob Spude presented the gold pan seen to the right.

The Association recognizes mining history books in two categories. The ***Clark Spence Award*** recognizes the best book in mining history based on the high academic standards of the award's namesake. The ***Mary Spence Documentary Book Award*** recognizes books that are edited works, compilations of documents, significant photographic histories, or related genres. The Committee awarded two ***Clark C. Spence Awards*** to the authors whose book covers are featured to the right.

John Townley published the Association's first issue of the *Mining History Journal*. The ***John Townley Award*** is given in honor of this achievement to the author of the best essay published in the *Mining History Journal* in the previous issue. This year's ***John Townley Award*** is given to **Robert L. Spude** for his article "Patent Wars: Edward Hoit Nutter, Minerals Separation, Ltd, and the Introduction of the Revolutionary Froth Flotation Process into the United States"

The MHA created the ***John Livermore Award*** to honor John Livermore and recognize individuals, contractors, suppliers, and companies that have gone beyond what is required to preserve, reclaim, conserve, and/or document mining heritage and the natural environment surrounding mining operations. This year's ***Livermore Award*** was presented to **Cindy Neely**, the **George Rowe Museum**, and the **Residents of Silver Plume** for their purchase and preservation of 200 acres that include numerous former mining claims and historic sites.

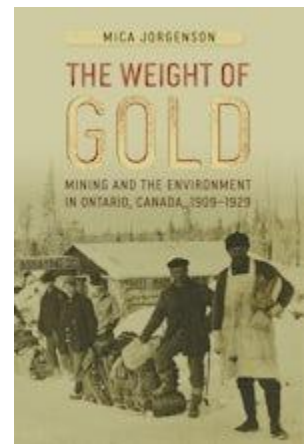
The ***Keith Long Presentation Award*** recognizes the service of past President Keith Long and is given to the presenter of the best presentation at the Association's annual meeting. This year's ***Keith Long Presentation Award*** was presented to **Ed Raines** for his presentation "Artisanal Mining in the Quartz Creek Pegmatite District, Gunnison County, Colorado."

Please visit our website for more information about these and our other awards and nominate individuals, associations, and mining related projects throughout the year.

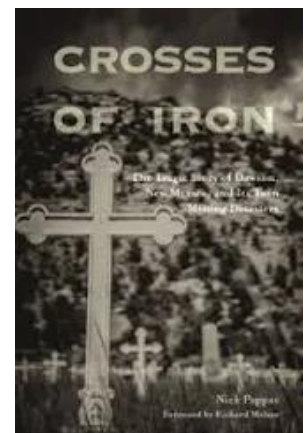
The ***Rodman Paul Award*** Gold Pan as presented to **Robert Eveleth**:



A ***Clark C. Spence Award*** was presented to **Mica Jorgenson** for:



A ***Clark C. Spence Award*** was presented to **Nick Pappas** for:



Honoring a Legend



On June 13th, Stan Dempsey presented a check to President Eric Clements to fund an award to be given in Duane A. Smith's honor. Duane was one of the six founders of the MHA, and he authored or co-authored at least 50 books, receiving two Clark Spence Awards and one Mary Lee Spence Award from the MHA in the process. Duane was obviously an enthusiastic advocate for understanding the mining past (see Eric's tribute to Duane in the winter 2024 newsletter). Stan Dempsey is well known in the industry, served as the MHA's third president, and worked with Duane and others at the MHA's beginning and continues to support the MHA.

Research Grants

The Mining History Association supports mining history research through the peer-reviewed *Mining History Journal* and by providing grants to researchers to conduct archival research. The MHA awards up to four research grants per year. This year's research grant recipients are:

Jennifer Eaglin, Associate Professor, The Ohio State University, "Extracting Nuclear Ores for a Future Nuclear Nation: The Rise of Brazilian Nuclear Energy," \$1,000.

Sarah Perry, PhD student, McMaster University, "The Spirit of the Mines: Environmental Folklore & Superstition in Belle Isle's Mining History," \$1,000.

Surabhi Pudhasaini, "Moving Mountains: Prospecting in the Gorkhali Polity," \$1000.

Nithyanand Nagesh Rao, PhD student, UC San Diego, "Gold, Labor, and the 'Ghost Particle': Underground Physics at the Kolar Gold Fields," \$975.

Nuggets from the Council Meeting

The Council met on June 12th and received reports and recommendations from officers and committees. Following a discussion of presidential terms, President Clements formed a working group to develop a proposal for longer presidential terms. It will make recommendations to the Council, including any appropriate changes to the bylaws. Members of the committee are Bill Culver, Virginia McLeMore, Karen Jass, and Paul Spyhalski.

Secretary Leech and Webmaster Kaas re-affirmed their intent to step down from their respective positions after more than a decade of yeoman-like service on behalf of the MHA. They will continue to serve until a suitable replacement is found. Recruitment efforts will take place during the conference and in the upcoming newsletter. To aid in recruitment, they were asked to create a description of their duties for potential distribution.

Call for Nominations 2025-2026

Bill Culver, Karen Jass, and Ginny Kilander currently serve as the MHA's Nominating Committee. 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. They are currently accepting nominations including self-nominations for those positions. Nominations can be sent to william.culver@plattsburgh.edu.

Calling All MHA Authors

The Mining History News includes a section in the Fall issue highlighting mining books written by our members during the past year or two. These announcements supplement but do not replace the traditional list of publications and book reviews in the Mining History Journal and serve as an additional way to bring your work to the attention of the entire membership of the MHA.

In order to participate, please send the complete bibliographic information (author, title, publisher, publisher location and year, number of pages, binding, price and ISBN) plus a 100-150 word summary to Paul Spyhalski at prspyhal@yahoo.com. Please include "MHA" at the start of the subject line. The deadline for inclusion is September 1st.



Thanks to the hard work and attention to detail of Stephen Hart and his Gunnison Organizing Committee and the educational program committee, conference attendees experienced the gamut of Gunnison Country's abundant and varied mineral resources including its one-time gold belt, silver and lead mines, coal mines and their surrounding communities, a uranium mine and mill, a granite quarry, and a marble mine. Things even got artisanal during Ed Raines' award winning presentation on pegmatites and a little "weird" on the Lake City tour as attendees encountered a carbonatite complex and transited a Slumgullion Earthflow.

As always, the guided tours provided extra value for our conference's attendees as lucky participants gained access to specialized knowledge of local tour guides and sites or buildings not generally open to the public. Wednesday's all-day Lake City Tour demonstrated some of the breadth of mineral resources in Gunnison Country and the MHA's ability to gain access to significant sites through local contacts. Our first tour stop was within what was once the Gunnison Gold Belt giving us our first glimpse of the area's mineral diversity. Unfortunately, time and reclamation interests forced us to imagine what was once there, including the headframe that once stood on the site.

From there, we headed south towards Lake City with a relatively quick stop near the Iron Hill carbonatite stock complex. At Lake City, the Hinsdale County Museum opened its doors early, allowing attendees to check out a specimen from the Marble quarry and the Museum's extensive mineral collection and many other artifacts from the area before heading west to the Ute-Ulay Mine-Mill Complex.

At the Ute-Ulay, Mette Flynt's vivid descriptions of life during the area's mining past personalized the site as attendees progressed from the public areas of the site towards the relatively intact "new" mill complex. Thank you to Metta and our Hinsdale County hosts for allowing us to experience the area's silver, lead and zinc mining and processing past.



The rehabilitated headframe and "new" mill at the Ute-Ulay site

From Ute-Ulay, we headed to the Lake San Cristobal Scenic Overlook for an introduction to the appropriately named Golden Fleece Mine and that area's unique geologic features including the Slumgullion Earthflow. The views of Lake San Cristobal were incredible. The views also provided an impressive backdrop for a discussion of how volcanic and glacial influences helped create the area's unique geologic features including the Slumgullion flow.

On Thursday, a hardy set of modern-day explorers ventured south from Gunnison in air conditioned 4WD vehicles to explore the former Aberdeen granite quarry. The early morning heat and the rough road, terrain, and need for 4WD to enter the quarry underscored the hardness of the area's early prospectors, quarry workers, and those that transported the large blocks of granite to market. When most active between 1889 and 1892, the quarry shipped as many as 40 cars of granite per week over a special spur built by the Denver Rio Grande Western with most of the granite used in the construction of the state's capitol building. The largest single piece of granite shipped from the quarry weighed 20 tons.

The quarry's production dwindled after 1892 resulting in the removal of the rail spur in 1904. Limited quarrying continued despite the lack of rail access with the quarry shipping roughly 10,000 cubic feet of granite over the ensuing two decades for projects like the Kearns Building in Salt Lake City and the State Museum in Denver.



Looking down into the quarry at remnants of the rail spur (left) and workings on the quarry face (right)

On Saturday, a small group of attendees headed north to Crested Butte for a walking tour of the town that once hosted the CF&I Big Mine. Thank you to our guide Elise Park for bringing into focus the town's boarding houses, company stores, ethnic halls, watering holes, entrances to the Big Mine, and the remnants of coke ovens that remain but are otherwise obscured by the town's focus on tourism. The lecture by WCU Professor Emeritus Duane Vandebusch on Gunnison Country's many mineral resources including those coming from the Big Mine was a highlight for many attendees.



**Coke oven
remnants at
Crested
Butte**

Saturday afternoon's coal theme continued into Sunday with a visit to a marble mine and former mill site sandwiched in between a visit to Gunnison's "other" coal country near Somerset and the restored CF&I coke ovens at Redstone. The nearly 100-mile drive from Gunnison to Somerset, punctuated by views into the Black Canyon including a stop at the Pioneer Pont Overlook to see the Curecanti Needle, emphasized the size of Gunnison County and demonstrated how towns within the county can become disconnected due to the mountain ranges.

Traveling back into coal country, our caravan passed by the Bowie No. 2 loadout near Paonia before gathering in Somerset across from the entrance to former Elk Creek Mine for an introduction to the company town of Somerset. Our lunch stop featured a more in-depth account of coal mining in the North Fork Valley including the development of the West Elk Mine, Colorado's largest operating coal mine.



**Colorado
coal country,
East of
Somerset,
CO.**

Following our lunch and lecture, our caravan snaked over McClure Pass on the way to Marble to visit the quarry that provided marble to the Lincoln Memorial and Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. Opened in 1905, the Colorado Yule Marble Company faced significant challenges that included getting the large marble blocks out of the mountain and getting those same large blocks down to the finishing mill at river level. An electric tramway eventually connected the quarry with the mill, but the tram cars were prone to derailments or run away due to the weight carried and the steep grades that we experienced going up to and coming down from the quarry. Confronted by a variety of economic pressures, the quarry stopped operating in October 1941, and the mill followed the following month. R.E.D. Graniti purchased the quarry in 1991 and continues to expand the mine it now calls The Pride of America Mine.



Colorado Stone Quarry near Marble

Our path from Marble to our final stops at Redstone mimicked the path taken by the quarry's marble as it transitioned from the mill to market by rail on the Crystal River & San Juan Railroad and eventually the Crystal River Railroad into Carbondale. Once called "The Ruby of the Rockies," CF&I owner John Cleveland Osgood developed Redstone as a utopian company town to support the company's coal miners and coke oven operators. By the end of 1899, CF&I had 249 coke ovens in place at Redstone, Coal mining and coking ended in 1909 with Redstone and its coke ovens largely abandoned. The Aspen Valley Land Trust, working with Redstone Historical Society, acquired the land on which the coke ovens sit. Now restored, a visit to the coke ovens and adjacent miners' memorial provided a fitting end to a great conference.



Coke ovens at Redstone

MHA Nuggets to Return in January

The Nuggets provide educational opportunities for members and opportunities for members to connect outside of our annual conferences. Currently on summer break, social media chair Barbara Clements announced at the membership meeting that the Nuggets program would remain on hiatus through the fall as well.

New Nuggets will begin after the New Year, and 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.

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

Preliminary Call for Presentations 2026 Conference in Pittsburg

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. Travel grants may also be available. More information on travel grants will be included in the Fall Newsletter.

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. Editor Eric Clements reports that the 2025 *Journal* is on track and nearly complete, but he is in need of additional articles for the 2026 issue.

As such, *The Mining History Journal*, the annual literary publication of the Mining History Association, is seeking 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

Check Your Membership Status

The Mining History Association offers many membership perks including its Nuggets program, *The Mining History Journal*, and inclusion and access to the MHA's membership directory. To be listed in the directory and receive a copy of the *Journal* and directory, you must be a current member. As such, please review the mailing label on your newsletter. If your mailing shows “2024” and any year prior, it is past time for you to renew your membership. If you do not renew before September 1, you will be culled from the mailing list and will not receive the next issue of the *Journal*. Please visit the membership page on our website for more information on renewing your membership:

<https://www.mininghistoryassociation.org/member.htm> or contact Barbara at mininghistoryassociation@gmail.com if you have any questions.

Save the Dates for Pittsburg, KS, May 28-31, 2026

Also Seeking Conference Proposals For 2027 and Beyond

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

Upcoming Events

Australasian Mining History Association

Broken Hill, Western New South Wales
September 1-5, 2025

Soc. for Industrial Archeology Fall Tour

Knoxville, TN
September 25-28, 2025

Western History Association

Albuquerque, NM
October 15-18, 2025

Mining History Association Conference

Pittsburg, Kansas
May 28-31, 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:

Fall issue: September 1st

Winter issue: December 1st

Spring issue: February 1st

Summer issue: July 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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