
Mining History Association News

Denver, Colorado, January 1991

P.O.Box 150300, Denver, CO 80215

Volume 1 Number 3

On to Leadville

Your Association is busy organizing the Second Annual Conference to be held July 5th and 6th, 1991. Leadville, Colorado has been selected as host city. The "Carbonate Camp" boomed in the 1870s with discovery of silver-lead ores and became the quintessential bonanza camp of the 1880s. The National Mining Hall of Fame and Museum will be conference headquarters. The museum was chartered by Congress and President Ronald Reagan on November 14, 1988. The museum has display areas, the hall of fame, and meeting rooms. Many of the mines and headframes stand east of town and are part of a well marked tour. The town contains many structures from the boom years, including the Tabor Opera House, August Meyer/Daniel Healy House, and Delaware Hotel.

Duane Smith, chair of the arrangements committee, will have detailed information for the next newsletter. Michael Ostrogorsky is chair of the program committee. Individuals that wish to participate should write Michael at P.O. Box 241453, Anchorage, Alaska 99524.

Organization Notes:

At the Reno meeting of the Mining History Association the following officers and council members were elected: President, Clark Spence; Vice-President, Russell Elliott; Treasurer, Duane Smith; Secretary, Robert Spude. The council includes the above four plus William S. Greever, Otis Young, Ronald Brown, Michael Ostrogorsky, Carlos Schwantes, Elizabeth Jameson and Don Hardesty.

Crown Point Mill

Thanks to Graham Ross and the crew at the Crown Point mill for an exceptional tour. Members of the Mining History Association visited the plant during the Reno conference. Located in Gold Hill, Nevada, the mill is a closed circuit cyanide plant built in 1935 and closed in 1942 because of War Order L-208. Ross described the operation and gave articles about the mill. Afterwards, he led us to the Sutro Tunnel for a rare view of the tunnel mouth and former town of Sutro. Thanks to Don Bufkin for sending a photo of the group at the mill.

The President's Page

Two years after six "founding fathers" met in smoke-filled Room 501 of the Wichita Ramada Hotel to explore the idea, the Mining History Association became a reality in mid-October, 1990 at the 30th Annual Conference of the Western History Association in Reno.

At an early morning breakfast nearly a hundred people heard Roger Burt of the University of Exeter speak on opportunities for researching western American mining history in England. They voted to accept the By-laws and a slate of officers and working committee selected a year before at the WHA meeting in Tacoma.

They saw four members presented with the new Rodman W. Paul Award, "for outstanding contributions to mining history": Russell Elliott, William Greever, Clark Spence and Otis Young.

The new Council approved plans to schedule another breakfast at the Austin meeting of the WHA next year and for the Association to meet separately in Leadville, on Friday and Saturday, July 5th and 6th, 1991, with Duane Smith as chair of the local arrangements committee and Michael Ostrogorsky of the program committee.

They also discussed the need for preliminary planning for the international mining history conference scheduled to meet in Denver in 1993.

Two mining sessions, one sponsored by the MHA, drew substantial interest. At Virginia City on Thursday afternoon, a capacity crowd filled the 4th Ward School

classroom to hear senior citizens (now called "chronologically gifted" in current jargon) Russell Elliott, William Greever, Clark Spence and Otis Young reminisce about the profession.

Back in Reno on Friday morning the session on "The 'Other' Mining History: Coal Mining in the West," with papers by James Whiteside, Bill Bryans and Dudley Gardner, also drew an attentive audience.

Of further interest was a separate MHA Saturday tour of Virginia City, with stops at the Crown Point mill in Gold Hill, the Sutro Tunnel, and other mine and mill sites.

All those who attended will agree that Reno was an auspicious beginning for the new Mining History Association and the future looks promising.

Clark C. Spence
Champaign, Illinois

The Mining History Association
Newsletter
Denver, Colorado

Distributed to association members; membership is open to all interested in the history of the mining past.
Dues \$10 per year

Please send dues to MHA, P.O. Box 150300, Denver, CO 80215.
Submissions for publication in the newsletter are welcome. Write:

Robert L. Spude
editor

Preservation News

The Friends of Kennecott is an Anchorage and McCarthy, Alaska based group organized to preserve the history of the Copper River area, especially the old mill town of Kennecott. The Kennecott Copper Corporation had its beginnings here and the twelve story concentrator and mill town remain, though closed in 1938. The group offers for sale a print of the dramatic red and white buildings against the Alaskan landscape for \$60 plus \$8 for shipping. Please write: Friends of Kennecott, 3018 Alder Circle, Anchorage, Alaska 99508.

The study of alternatives for the proposed Keewenaw National Historical Park, Michigan is finished. The study outlines options for interpretation and preservation of the historic copper mining camps of the Upper Peninsula. Copies of the report are available by writing Central Team, Denver Service Center, National Park Service, 12795 West Alameda Parkway, Lakewood, Colorado 80225.

The State Historical Society of Wisconsin has just published On Shake Rag, Mineral Point's Pendarvis House, 1935-1970. The 56 page book describes the history and restoration of Cornish homes, part of Pendarvis Historic Site in Mineral Point, Wisconsin, heart of the lead and zinc district of the upper Mississippi. Write Pendarvis Historic Site, 114 Shake Rag Street, Mineral Point, WI 53565.

Museums

The Association is still compiling information about mining museums. Please help by sending brochures or descriptions to our P.O. Box.

Gambling

The Cripple Creek district is expecting rapid change and a better economic outlook when gambling goes into effect October 1, 1991. The voters of Colorado recently passed an amendment to the state constitution to allow limited stakes gambling in Cripple Creek, Black Hawk and Central City.

Archeology

During the past two field seasons archeologists directed by Don Hardesty of the University of Nevada, Reno, have been excavating the historic boomtown of Shermantown, Nevada. One of the major centers of the White Pine rush (excellently described in W. Turrentine Jackson's Treasure Hill), the town has little above ground remains. A third field season is planned for this summer. For more information contact Dr. Hardesty at the Department of Anthropology, University of Nevada, Reno, NV 89557-0006.

Conference

A Conference on California's Gold Rushes: Past and Present will be held at the University of Pacific, April 18-21, 1991. Write Professor R. H. Limbaugh, Director, John Muir Center for Regional Studies, University of Pacific, Stockton, CA 95211.

Book News by Duane Smith

President Clark Spence and Vice President Russell Elliott have each published books within the past year which Association members would enjoy reading. Both are highly recommended.

Spence's The Conrey Placer Mining Company (Helena: Montana Historical Society) traces the history of the dredge company which worked downstream from Virginia City, Montana, 1897-1922. This is a sharply focused, fascinating study of dredging and the author, while concentrating on one Montana company, sets the scene for the state and the nation. It, by the way, was the only dredge company in which Harvard University, "or any other university," owned a controlling interest.

Russ Elliott's Growing Up in a Company Town: A Family in the Copper Camp of McGill, Nevada (Reno: Nevada Historical Society) is an appealing and warm first hand account of a youth spent in a company (Kennecott) owned copper town from the 1910s to

the 1930s. How many members knew that Russ was a basketball star in his youth? This is just the type of study needed to give more insights into the life of twentieth century mining communities.

Help Wanted

The Book News section of the newsletter will be expanded to review books of interest to the mining history community. Please help us spread the word by sending information about recently published books and articles. We will compile a list of publications from the contributions.

In addition, the newsletter will be expanded to include lengthier articles. We are asking readers to submit pieces of interest about mining events, issues, conferences, and activities. Please mail newsletter items to the Mining History Association, P. O. Box 150300, Denver, CO 80215.

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