
Mining History Association News

Denver, Colorado, September 1992

P.O. Box 150300, Denver, CO 80215

Volume 3 Number 3

The Bald Mountain Mill

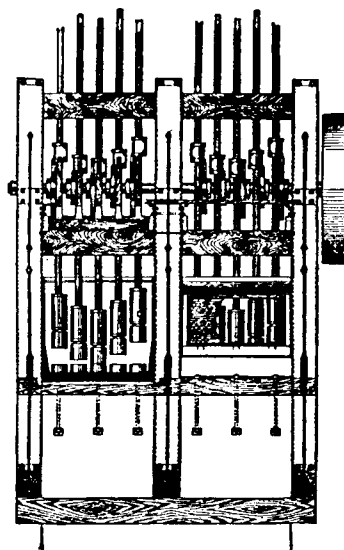
On the shady slope of Terry Peak stands the remains of the 400-ton cyanide plant of the Bald Mountain Mining Company. This past summer, Wharf Resources, the South Dakota State Historic Preservation Office, and the National Park Service co-sponsored the recording to Historic American Engineering Record standards the Bald Mountain Mill.

The gold mill was built in 1906 and expanded each decade after that until closed in 1942 by the War Production Board; it used the cyanide process with roasters, cone crushers, ball mills, dorr thickeners, etc. Joel Waterland in *Gold & Silver, Sweat & Tears* describes the operation in detail. Today, the plant is near collapse, much of its machinery is missing, and is slated for demolition. The HAER project includes large format photographs of the mill, a history of its operation and the technology used, and ink on mylar drawings of the plant's evolution, process flow diagrams, and the industrial layout. When completed the records will be placed in the Library of Congress as part of the HAER permanent collection.

For information on HAER or the Bald Mountain project contact Eric DeLony, HAER, National Park Service, P. O. Box 37127, Washington, D. C., 20013-7127. During the Fourth annual conference in Deadwood/Lead, Mining History Association members will visit the surface plant of the Homestake gold mine, a plant built in the 1930s, when the Bald Mountain mill was at its most active. The local arrangements committee is at work putting together tours to additional mine sites.

Deadwood/Lead in '93

Mark your calendars and get ready to head for the Black Hills. The Fourth annual Mining History Association conference is scheduled for July 28 to August 1 in Deadwood and Lead, South Dakota. The conference will include receptions, banquet, formal sessions, and tours. Deadwood boomed in 1876 with the rush to the Black Hills and developed into the regional center. The town has museums, a restored Main Street, the grave of Wild Bill Hickock, and gambling -- plus the "Days of '76" celebration, August 2. Lead has the Black Hills Mining Museum and the world-famous Homestake gold mine. And much, much more. Details will be in the next newsletter.



SPERRY'S WROUGHT IRON FRAME STAMP MILLS.

The President's Page

I shook the hand of many an old friend at the association gathering in Boise, June 4-7. Registrants numbered 115, as many mining enthusiasts on the banks of the Boise River as in 1864. The Student Center at Boise State University was a splendid meeting place, with roomy lounge chairs for personal conversations.

I would like to thank many of our co-sponsors. Thanks first to Bob Simms, Dean at BSU; Tom Green and his staff at the Idaho Historical Society; Will Reed, of the Forest Service; John Crowe of Idaho State Parks; and Dan Hutchinson of the Bureau of Land Management. A tip of the hat to you and your staffs.

The annual banquet speaker, Carlos Schwantes, opened our eyes to designer landscapes; Ralph Lauren should move away from trying to design cowboy duds and help the mining industry. Miners caps and pants need panache.

Unfortunately, I missed the tour of the NERCO operation at Delamar and Silver City -- an obligation to attend my 80th birthday party in Reno took me away. I hear the tour went well except for an underpowered bus that failed to carry its passengers up the hill out of Silver City. We need to check these buses better.

Russ Elliott, Reno, Nevada

Organization Notes

This year we will elect a new president, vice-president, two council seats, and the three-member nominating committee. The positions of secretary and treasurer serve at the pleasure of the council. Robert Spude is secretary and Duane Smith is treasurer. Duane Smith will step down as treasurer at the next meeting of the council and Ron Brown has been proposed as his replacement. The association owes a great measure of thanks to outgoing council member William S. Greever and president Russ Elliott. Bill helped the association wobble through its first years, and his kind notes of encouragement were much appreciated by the secretary. Russ Elliott too encouraged the younger members of the group, gave moral support, and served with distinction. Professors Greever and Elliott were "Founding Fathers" and gave credibility to a bunch of mining history enthusiasts. Tap 'er light gentlemen.

Thanks

Thanks to member David Myrick for his pithy article on the association's Boise meeting published in *Pay Dirt* July 1992. It has already attracted several new members.

Gene Gressley put together our slate of candidates for this year's election. He canvassed many people, called the candidates, and put together the list of willing campaigners; though it sounds simple anyone who has participated in such a task knows what a labor it can be. Thanks Gene.

Thanks to the Idaho State Historical Society for their "The Mining Industry of Idaho." For copies of this bibliographic guide write them at Library and Archives, 450 N. 4th Street, Boise, ID 83702.

Rodman Paul Award

During the annual conference in Boise, the society honored Merle Wells with its Rodman Paul Award. Dr. Wells has spent more than fifty years investigating Idaho's mining history, partly while a College of Idaho history instructor (1942-1946) and partly as an Idaho State Historical Society staff member (since 1956) with assignments as state archivist and as state historic preservation officer. He has led in the preservation of mining camps and ghost towns in the Gem State and has published extensively on the region's history. His *Gold Camps & Silver Cities, Nineteenth Century Mining in Central and Southern Idaho* (1964, reprint 1983) is encyclopedic.

The Mining History Association
Newsletter
Denver, Colorado

Distributed to association members; membership is open to all interested in the history of mining.

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

MHA Breakfast at WHA

The Mining History Association will hold a breakfast meeting at the annual Western History Association conference. The breakfast will be at 7 a.m., Thursday, October 15, at the Top of the Park restaurant, Park Plaza Hotel, 155 Temple St., New Haven, Connecticut (203) 772-1700. Reservations for the conference (\$30 member, \$40 non-member) and the breakfast (\$15) should be made through the Western History Association, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, NM 87131.

Stamp Mills

Mike Stirewalt of the Reed Gold Mine State Historic Site reports that their vintage 1896 stamp mill operates daily during tours of America's oldest big gold mine. The mill, though not original to the site, has a ten stamp battery manufactured at the Mecklenburg Iron Works in Charlotte, North Carolina and feeds a Wilfley type B concentration table. For more information write the park at 9621 Reed Mine Road, Stanfield, NC 28163.

The Black Copper Gold Mine's five stamp mill on private property in Taos county, may be the last standing stamp mill in New Mexico. Homer Milford of the state's Abandoned Mine Land Bureau sent a copy of the technical report on the property, which is in dilapidated shape. The five stamp battery was manufactured by the well-known McFarlane foundry of Denver; unfortunately the rest of the mill has been removed.

The Modoc mill of Boulder County, Colorado has been re-used as, of all things, a home. Silvia Pettem writes that Mr. and Mrs. Rufus Duncan bought the ruinous century-old mill and refitted part of it into living space. They carefully restored the mill, kept the 30 stamps and other machinery in place, and have made it into a delightful retreat in the hills above Boulder. Silvia adds that the mill has a special place in her heart since she and Ed Raines were married there three years ago. For the Modoc mill's history see Harrison S. Cobb, *Prospecting our Past*.

Historic Preservation

Susan D. Walter and Stephen R. Van Wormer of 2940 Baker Place, National City, CA 91950 are preparing a survey of Tumco/Hedges, a gold camp in the Cargo Muchacho Mountains of California near Yuma, Arizona. They have questions about artifacts at the site: 1) Ceramic crucibles have numbers, apparently made with a China marker or similar writing tool. Could anyone tell them the significance of these numbers? And 2) What is the large quantity of iron sheeting, which is perforated by 1/2" diagonal slits about 1/8" apart? In Tumco, large pieces of this were recycled as roofing. What was the sheet iron used for; they assume it was part of the machinery used to separate base metals from the gold? Please write them if you have information on the artifacts or on mining in the region.

The Friends of Rhyolite, Inc. is actively preserving the remains of this ghost town in the Nevada desert. The group, with the assistance of the Bureau of Land Management and LAC Minerals, has stabilized the bottle house, prepared a walking tour brochure and is raising funds for other activities. They have coins, t-shirts, and memberships (\$10) for sale at P. O. Box 85, Amargosa Valley, NV 89020. The Friends will host a Rhyolite Resurrection Festival with tours, parade, and other special activities on March 20-21, 1993. I will be there in spirit.

William H. Mulligan, Jr., project manager for the preservation of the Cliffs Shaft Mine site, sent a lengthy description of that project in Ishpeming, Michigan. The one-time major iron producer is now being redeveloped to house exhibits on the Marquette Mineral Range's geology and history. Historic structures -- shaft house, boiler and engine house and blacksmith shop -- will be preserved as well. The shaft house is unique; designed by Prairie School architect George Maher, it has an Egyptian Revival style cast in concrete. The Cliffs shaft operated from 1919 to 1955. For more information write Bill at the Economic Development Corporation of the County of Marquette, 198 Airport Road - Main Terminal, Negaunee, MI 49866.

The Mining History Association election is being conducted by mail this year. Please fill out the attached post card and mail it to the Secretary, MHA, P. O. Box 150300, Denver, CO 80215. The election results will be announced at the MHA breakfast in New Haven, Connecticut, October 15.

President for 1993:

Stanley Dempsey, geologist and lawyer, is president of Royal Gold, Inc. based in Denver. He has published, with James E. Fell, Jr., *Mining the Summit, Colorado's Ten Mile District, 1860-1960*, and sponsored the publication of guides to Georgetown and Silver Plume, Central City and Black Hawk, Durango and Silverton, and Aspen, Colorado through Cordillera Press. He is presently Chairman of the Colorado Historical Society. Stan has been an active member of the association since its founding.

Vice-President (President-elect) for 1993:

Duane Smith teaches history at Fort Lewis College in Durango, Colorado. He has published over twenty books on the West, best known by mining historians are *Rocky Mountain Mining Camps* (1967), *Horace Tabor, His Life and Legend* (1973), *Silver Saga, the Story of Caribou, Colorado* (1974), *Song of the Hammer and Drill, the Colorado San Juans, 1860-1914* (1982), and *Mining America, The Industry and the Environment, 1800-1980* (1987). Duane has won awards both for his teaching skills and writing ability. He was one of the "founding fathers" of the association.

Council Seat A for 1993-1996:

Richard Lingenfelter, a research physicist at the University of California, San Diego, is an avid student of the mining West. His best known works are *The Hardrock Miners, A History of the Mining Labor Movement in the American West, 1863-1893* (1974), and *Death Valley and the Amargosa, A Land of Illusion* (1986).

James E. Fell, Jr., though now a visiting professor of history at Colby College, Maine, has been an active volunteer in preparing the association's

newsletter and is this year's program committee chair. He taught at the University of Arizona, the Colorado School of Mines, Harvard Business College, University of Colorado, Boulder and has authored or co-authored books and articles on the mining West, including *Ores to Metals, the Rocky Mountains Smelting Industry* (1979).

Council Seat B for 1993-1996:

Richard Graeme, a mining engineer from Bisbee, Arizona, has had a broad career in the industry. He has worked to preserve the history of his hometown and retell its past through articles, the most recent is a piece in Carlos Schwantes, ed., *Bisbee*. While working for Sharon Steele, he ensured the tons of records of western mining companies -- especially the United States Mining, Smelting, and Refining Company -- held by the conglomerate be inventoried and prepared for permanent use by those researching the mining West.

Noel Kirshenbaum, metallurgist in San Francisco, has been an active supporter of the association and participant in its annual conferences. He is interested in the understanding of early metallurgical plants and has assisted preservationists in evaluating such plants as the Mariscal mercury furnaces at Big Bend National Park, Texas.

Nominating Committee for 1993 (vote for 3):

Silvia Pettem, a former small-scale mine operator, is co-owner/operator of the Book Lode, a publisher of books on mining and a purveyor of used books in Boulder, Colorado. She has written about Colorado mining; among her books is *Red Rock to Riches, Gold Mining in Boulder County, Then and Now* (1980).

Shelly Davis-King, a consulting archeologist in Standard, California, has worked to assist mining projects meet their federal cultural resource compliance needs. Shelly studies the remnants of Mother Lode technology; her article on historic mining ditches was published in Leo Barker and Ann Huston, eds., *Death Valley to Deadwood; Kennecott to Cripple Creek* (1990)

Richard Franciviglia is director of the Center for Greater Southwestern Studies and the History of Cartography, University of Texas, Arlington. He has worked in historic preservation, as teacher, and author, his most recent work being *Hard Places, Reading the Landscapes of America's Historic Mining Districts* (1991). He was guest speaker at the association's Boise conference.

Ronald H. Limbaugh is Director of the John Muir Center for Regional Studies, University of the Pacific, Stockton, California. He has been interested in the history of mining since his early days in Idaho and has published on that region's past. He has given a paper at the association's Leadville conference and in 1991 coordinated a conference on California past and present gold rushes.

CALL FOR PAPERS

**FOURTH MEETING
OF
MINING HISTORY ASSOCIATION**

DEADWOOD/LEAD, SOUTH DAKOTA

JULY 28 - AUGUST 1, 1993

The Program Committee for the Deadwood/Lead meeting of the Mining History Association invites proposals for individual papers or complete sessions (including chair and discussant) on any topic or aspect of mining in history. Sessions normally include two or three papers of twenty minutes each. There are no geographical or temporal limitations.

Proposals should include an abstract (not to exceed one page) for each paper, plus biographical information about each presenter and session participant. Please send proposals to the Program Committee chair before April 1, 1993.

1993 Program Chair:

Dr. James E. Fell
Department of History
Colby College
312 Miller Library
Waterville, Main 04901

From the Archives

Stan Dempsey sent a copy of the progress report for the "Western Mining in the Twentieth Century Oral History Series." Some 30 mining men and women have been interviewed as part of the on-going project. For information about the project and a list of oral histories, write to Professor Douglas Fuerstenau, Regional Oral History Office, Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, CA 94720.

Book Notes

The Proceedings of the Second International Mining History Conference has just been published. The work, edited by Professor Klaus Tenfelde, includes papers about technology and its impact on society -- the theme of the conference -- by scholars from around the world. The book is available from C. H. Beck'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, Wilhelmstrasse 9, 8000 Munchen 40, Germany, Postfach 400340 for 288 German Marks.

The Australasian Mineral Heritage Trust of the Australasian Institute of Mining and Metallurgy announces the publication of *The Man from ASARCO: a life and times of Julius Kruttschnitt* by Kett Kennedy of James Cook University of North Queensland and Don Chaput of the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles. Kruttschnitt was key to ASARCO's North American operations until 1930, when he led developments in Australasia, especially at Mount Isa. The book is available for \$40 Australian plus \$22.50 Australian for handling and postage from Ms. Donna Edwards, AIM&M, P. O. Box 122, Parkville, VIC 3052, Australia.

St. Elmo is the quintessential Colorado ghost town (and its present residents work to keep it looking that way). But in the 1910s it was a thriving camp with an active social life peppered with characters. Charlotte Vickerson Merrifield tells of her childhood there, 1910 to 1919, in her *Memories of St. Elmo*, written with Suzy Kelly. The 99 page book is available for \$8.95, but because it is self-published will be difficult to find; members Silvia Pettem of the Book Lode (3060

15th st, Boulder, CO 80304) or Mark Steen of Gold Hill Books (P. O. Box 1523, Longmont, CO 80502) can help you get a copy.

Mark Vendl writes that Sundance Publications Ltd. (250 Broadway, Denver, CO 80203) has recently published *The R. G. S. Story, Rio Grande Southern, Volume II, Telluride, Pandora and the Mines Above* by Russ Collman and Dell A. McCoy. Mark writes, what makes this volume so interesting is the chapter on the upper San Miguel Mining District written by William A. Graves. This is one of the few modern sources on this spectacular mining district. The chapter (204 pages) consists mostly of excellent historic and modern photographs of the mines with short histories of the major operations. Among the mines discussed are the Smuggler-Union, Sheridan, Tomboy, Black Bear, Mayflower, Lewis, Liberty Bell, and Bear Creek. Interspersed throughout the chapter are Sanborn Fire Insurance maps of the surface plants and camps. Mr. Graves, for many years, made pilgrimages to the Telluride mining area, attempting to cover on foot every mining claim and prospect hole of the Upper San Miguel Mining District.

The Nye County Board of Commissioners, Nevada deserve applause for initiating the Nye County Town History Project. The project collects oral histories, memorabilia, photographs, and other material from the region's past. Two recent accomplishments of the project are the publication of Robert D. McCracken, *A History of Tonopah, Nevada* and the briefer but more photograph-filled Robert D. McCracken, *Tonopah, The Greatest, the Richest, and the Best Mining Camp in the World*. The title is a quote from a modest newspaper editor. The volumes retell the history of Tonopah, the discovery, boom, and productive years before decline. *A History of Tonopah* includes information on post-war Nevada, statesmen and ethnic groups. *Tonopah* covers is an abbreviated history, but with more photographs; clearly the intent is to provide visitors to the region a quick graphic history in this volume, while the larger volume is for those who wish to dig deeper. The books are available from Nye County Press, P. O. Box 3070, Tonopah, NV 89049.

Book Reviews

Gold Fever: America's First Gold Rush. Ray C. Rensi and H. David Williams. Atlanta: Georgia Humanities Council, 1988. 47pages, illustrations, bibliography.

This is an extremely brief overview of aspects of the Dahlonega mineral rush, 1828-1850: prospecting; the "Great Intrusion upon the Cherokee lands"; Indian removal; the Georgia land lottery; with some attention to marriage and mining. The pamphlet purports to be a study for a 30-minute video of the subject, and having said that, the reviewer feels that all that is necessary has been said.

A substantive and scholarly history of the Southern gold rush and mining has yet to be published. This is perhaps understandable, for Southern historiography still leans too much on agriculture and "the War," and too little on the rise of industrial and mining activity in the period before 1860. Understandable, but regrettable.

Otis Young, Arizona State University.

Brushwork Diary, Watercolors of Early Nevada. Artwork by Walter S. Long. Text by Michael J. Brodhead and James.C. McCormick. Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1991. 118 pages, footnotes, illustrations.

This is a beautifully produced book of the watercolors made by amateur artist and surveyor Walter S. Long. He drew the post-card size sketches while resident of the little-known Tempiute district of central Nevada and Eureka, 1878-1880. Long came West at age 36 with the intent to reap its bounty and return home; the drawings were done as a visual diary dedicated to Miss Elizabeth Parker, a woman who's hand he never won. Long would spend his remaining thirty years in Nevada, as surveyor, petty politician, and businessman.

In the days before the Kodak camera, graphic depictions of everyday life are rare. Long's watercolors give us a glimpse of mining camp life: underground work, a Chinese cook at his stove, inside views of offices and houses, and miners' cabins. His scenes of the railroad town of Palisades and of Eureka reveal his surveyor's

tendency toward the industrial world of mines, smelters and railroad structures. He also adds streetscapes and a joss house that, though better documented by contemporary photographers, have an added dimension because of their reproduction in color.

Authors Michael Brodhead and James McCormick add to our enjoyment of the artwork by discussing Long's career and his and his work's place in the art world. Long, Brodhead reveals, was an undistinguished Civil War veteran who fit well into the small town social, political, and economic milieu of late nineteenth century Nevada. When he died in 1907 in Reno, Long was considered one of the state's pioneers, representative of the many people who followed its mining booms and busts. McCormick shows that Long's major contribution to us today are the three sketchbooks he dedicated to Miss Parker in 1878, 1879, and 1880. They are a "brushwork" diary of simple skill that depict an isolated region and little-known era.

Robert Spude, Denver

Cradle to Grave: Life, Work, and Death in the Lake Superior Copper Mines. By Larry Lankton. New York: Oxford University Press, 1991. 319 pages, illustrations, notes, bibliography.

Most Americans have now forgotten the copper industry that once flourished on the Keweenaw Peninsula of Northern Michigan, but for seventy years -- from the 1840s to the 1910s -- copper from Lake Superior -- "Lake copper" as it was known -- played a large role in American industrialization in general and the minerals industry in particular. This is the subject of *Cradle to Grave*, an in-depth history of this once-great mining region from its origins in pre-Columbian times to its final collapse in the 1960s.

The sweep of the book is broad. The author, Larry Lankton, who teaches at Michigan Tech, intended to create a "social history of technology," a book that focuses on "that particular space where machine and man meet" -- thus a volume that would be "business, labor, social, and technological history all at the same time." To a large degree he succeeded.

Cradle to Grave opens with a discussion of prehistoric mining, then moves to the great

copper rush of the 1840s. This produced an industry based essentially on pure native copper. Then after the Civil War came the development of the amygdaloid and conglomerate deposits -- and the rise of the Calumet and Hecla Mining Company -- which gave the district its staying power for much of the next century. Within this context, Lankton explores the interrelationship of technological change and economic development, the well-known paternalism in the district (hence the book's title), and the changing composition of the work force and various other factors that undermined this paternalism in the early twentieth century.

Cradle to Grave seems destined to play an influential role in mining history. For one, it expands our knowledge of the Michigan copper industry, but more important, its successful integration of technological developments with other significant issues should serve as a model for histories to come.

James E. Fell, Colby College

Bingham Canyon Open Pit Mine National Historic Landmark, Utah

Airline passengers flying into Salt Lake City can see the nation's largest excavation from the best vantage point, about 10,000 feet in the air. Too many viewers, though, don't realize what they are seeing. The Salt Lake City visitors bureau, anticipating questions about the Big Pit, satisfied the curiosity of visitors by simply putting a picture of Kennecott's Bingham Canyon open pit mine on the cover of this year's visitors guide. Kennecott, too, has helped educate visitors through its just opened, new visitor center and museum that tells the story of "The Richest Hole on Earth." The museum is well done, with modern interpretive media, a 12-minute video, and cheerful hosts. There are opportunities to see the pit from drive-to overlooks. Bingham Canyon, where grand-scale, open pit mining in the West began, is now even more worth the side-journey from Salt Lake City.

Mining History Association
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