



Mining History News

Quarterly Newsletter of the Mining History Association

A Publication of the Mining History Association

Summer 2020

Presidential Pickings

“Toto, I have a feeling we’re not in Kansas anymore.” Not only are we not in Kansas, we are not in Elko, Nevada, either, sharing knowledge, comradery, tours, tall tales, and a few beverages together. I had hoped to see you all in Elko, to share the work that the association has been doing over the past year, but that was not meant to be. 2020 will be remembered as the year of cancellations big and small. I don’t know about you, but my calendar has not been this empty since about 1st grade.

We had hoped to have the new dates for next year ready to announce, but we are waiting for the International Mining History Association to finalize their plans for 2021. We want to coordinate with them as much as we can to allow our members to attend both conferences if they so choose.

So, what do we do now? Other than the obvious (washing hands, staying home as much as possible, keeping a social distance when we do have to go out), here are some things to think about. As a member of the history organization brother/sisterhood, I am very aware of the many hardships that history groups are encountering this year. Some of you may remember that Ralph and I participate in historic re-enactments during the summer, most of which are put on by museums and historical societies. The cancellation of these events has multiple ramifications, especially for small organizations. The loss of attendance and ticket revenue are the most obvious, but how about revenue from museum gift shops and donation boxes? These local events also typically allow for new member recruitment.

I am borrowing the following from an article that was in our paper last month. Many of you may have seen something similar. What can we do to help art and history organizations? **1.** Purchase/renew membership in a local museum or arts group. This provides critical operating funds. **2.** Donate your ticket. If you have a ticket to a performance or an exhibition that has been cancelled, consider donating the value of that ticket back to the organization. **3.** Lobby for government support of the arts and humanities. Government budgets at all levels are going to be squeezed hard this year. Do your best to remind them that without the arts and humanities, our civilization will be a much poorer place. **4.** Buy from a museum catalog or on-line store. Unique gifts for every occasion can be found in these great shops. **5.** Vote in your upcoming elections.

On a related soap box, I would like to make a pitch for the MHA’s Beselme/Orrrell Heritage Award. This is one of our newest awards, and so far, has the distinction of being the least

awarded. This award recognizes excellence in historic preservation, museum exhibition, document and image preservation, oral history, and documentary film/video projects. The nomination process is pretty painless, and the committee would love to have new projects to consider. Visit the website for more information, under the “Awards” tab.

Thanks again to all of the board and council members for your thoughtful comments and insights that have gotten us to this point. We will get through these times together. See you on the other side in Elko. Stay well!

The Mining History Journal

As an organization dedicated to research on the history mining and metallurgy, the Minnesota History Association publishes *The Mining History Journal*. Each member of the MHA receives a copy as a benefit of their membership.

The Mining History Journal, the annual literary publication of the Mining History Association, seeks 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

Our thanks also go out to the Editorial Board of the *Journal* that includes Ronald Brown, James Fell, Ronald Limbaugh, Jeremy Mouat, Silvia Pettem, Duane Smith and Mark Vendl. Barbara A. Clements serves as the Compositor.

Preliminary Call for Presentations
30th Conference
Mining History Association
Elko, Nevada – June, 2021

The Program Committee of the MHA invites *additional* proposals for individual presentations or complete sessions (including a chair) on any topic or aspect of mining history. Sessions normally include three papers of twenty minutes each. *Presenters who were already accepted for the 2020 Conference do not need to resubmit their presentation.*

There are no temporal or geographic limits to topic material. Presentations that address mining history of the Elko County area or Nevada in general are, however, particularly welcome given the location of the Conference.

Proposals should include the title of the presentation, an abstract (not to exceed one page) for each presentation plus biographical information about each presenter, including mailing/email address. Please send the written proposals via email attachments to Erik Nystrom (eric.nystrom@asu.edu) by January 1, 2021. Submission by email is required.

2020/21 Research Grants

There were quite a number of submissions to our MHA Research Committee for assistance in funding mining related research. The Committee winnowed the applications down to three that will be funded during this year:

Allie Penn

Affiliation: PhD student at Wayne State University

Project: *The Visiting Nurses of the Cleveland-Cliffs Iron Company*

Erin Broberg and Nick Hubbard

Project: *The Price of Gold, Oral histories and photographic portraits of people who worked for Homestake in Lead, South Dakota.*

James Harry Morris

Affiliations: Assistant Professor at University of Tsukuba (Japan) and Associate Researcher at the Center for the Study of Religion and Politics at the University of St Andrews (UK).

Project: *The Ashio Copper Mine Incident: Socio-Political Causes and Reactions*

Calling All MHA Authors – Publicity Opportunity:

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 serve as an additional a 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 in the Fall issue is September 1st.

MHA Officers

As part of the postponement of the Elko Conference, the decision was made to keep the existing officers in place through the 2021 Conference. This was done in part to give anyone interested in the Vice President position one more year to prepare for the position.

In addition to the Vice President position, there will be a minimum of four Councilor positions to be filled in 2021 (two three year terms and two two year terms). There will also be two positions open on the Nominating Committee (one three year term and one two year term).

The MHA relies entirely on volunteers to keep the organization active and alive. We need a variety of folks who bring their own particular expertise and experience to serve for the good of the group as a whole. The Council meets face-to-face once a year at the annual conference, and via email or zoom the rest of the year as needed. Please consider putting yourself forward as a candidate.

The current plan is for nominations and ballot to be distributed to the membership prior to December 31 for election prior to the 2021 Conference in Elko. Please contact Barbara Clements (bclements@clemrick.com) if you have questions or would like to volunteer. On behalf of everyone in MHA, thank you.

The MHA does many things to support mining history and research including publication of *The Mining History Journal* and awarding research grants. Please visit the membership section of our website www.mininghistoryassociation.org to join, renew or update your membership information.

How I Spent My COVID-19 Staycation

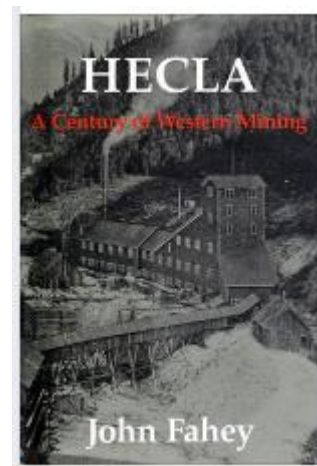
Captain Virgil “Cooler King” Hilts spent his time in isolation in the *The Great Escape* with ball and glove in hand. Some members of the MHA shared how they have been spending their time in the COVID-19 cooler.

Robert McQueen provided: During Nevada’s shelter-in-place order, my working-from-home has included research on central Nevada’s Bullion Mining District and the Modarelli Iron Mine. The Bullion District started as a typical 1880s silver-lead camp, but in 1905 lode gold was discovered. An early 20th century rush to the district ensued, with the town of Tenabo popping up overnight to host several hundred people and numerous businesses. In typical fashion, hype proved more lucrative than mineral deposits, and by 1911 the town and mines flopped. Then in 1915 placer gold was found. Although never capitalized on a large scale, placer miners worked the district for the next 20 years, including through the Great Depression. Nevada has a strong history of small scale Depression-era tramp miners reentering old districts and mines hoping to scratch out a living. Because of a lack of water, most of the placering at Bullion/Tenabo was done with dry washers and other simple devices, but one company imported a dredge! The dredge ran for two years with moderate success. I have been to the district and it is one of the driest places in Nevada (no trees anywhere) – I cannot fathom a dredge operating there in any capacity.

The Modarelli Iron Mine had its success during the Cold War. Nevada is never thought of as an iron producer, and does not have large deposits, but the state’s location near the west coast made it economically viable to mine the ore and ship it to Japan, who in the 1950s was desperate for raw iron and paid handsomely for the product. When Japan finally secured better iron from closer countries, the Nevada mine shuttered. In the 1950s Nevada was exploring options to diversify away from a reliance on precious metals, and for a brief moment the Modarelli Mine offered hope in that direction.

Webmaster **Michael Kaas** created a series of “*Virtual Mining History Tours*” including some from past MHA meeting locations. So far he has uploaded six virtual tours including: Leadville, CO; Bagdad and Jerome, AZ; Franklin and Sterling Hill, NJ; Alaska Gold and Copper; Pennsylvania Anthracite; and the Minnesota Iron Ranges. In order to take a virtual mining tour of any of these locations, type the following URL in to your browser: <https://www.mininghistoryassociation.org/VirtualMiningTours.htm>

Mark Langenfeld posted on Facebook that: With the Elko Conference on hold, I have turned to my bookshelves to help “scratch the itch.” [Hecla: A Century of Western Mining](#) by John Fahey has proven exceptionally worthwhile.



Among other things, I was surprised to learn that – because an early controlling interest in the company was held by Milwaukee investors – this Silver Valley giant’s business was often conducted from the Pfister Hotel in downtown “Brew City.” I have stayed in that fine old hostelry on numerous business trips without ever suspecting that connection.

Attention Potential Vendors

The MHA will be meeting in Elko, NV during of June 2021. Persons interested in being a vendor should contact Richard Reid at richardreid.geo@gmail.com

"A Little Journey in the Birmingham District" by Paul Spyhalski

I spent some time reading The Birmingham District: An Industrial and History Guide during Minnesota's stay at home order. My interest in the MHA started during my research on the Soo Line Railroad's Cuyuna Range iron ore related operations so I was surprised by the compactness not only of the iron and steel manufacturing areas in the Birmingham District but also the closeness of the furnaces to not only the iron ore but also to the coal and flux mines.

Based on my reading of The Birmingham District there are a lot of interesting potential sites and topics to be covered during our 2022 conference. As I continued to tinker away at small topics to investigate if I were able to get to Birmingham for another planned conference (that was ultimately cancelled), I came across a pamphlet entitled "*A Little Journey in the Birmingham District*" in one of the online archives.

It turns out this pamphlet was given out to attendees of the Lake Superior Mining Institute annual conference that was actually held in Birmingham in 1917. The Lake Superior Mining Institute had for many years held an annual conference in or near one of the iron or copper ranges of the Lake Superior District. The Twenty-First Annual Meeting of the LSMI was to be held on the Menominee Range per custom but the committee advocated for a trip to an iron and steel district in the south.

As I read through the proceedings of the 1917 LSMI, I was once again impressed by the compactness of the district upon reading of some of the field trips. To give you an idea of the types of operations and compactness of the Birmingham District, a portion of the published tour itinerary from pages 293, 294 and 296 of the Proceedings of the Lake Superior Mining Institute of 1917 is reproduced below:

Tuesday, March 13, 1917.

A special train will leave the Louisville & Nashville station at 9:15 o'clock Tuesday morning. Shortly after leaving the station, Alice furnace is passed on the right. It was at this plant that basic iron was first made as a market product. The annual capacity is 80,000 tons.

About four miles south of the station, the red ore mines may be noticed on the mountain side. Active operations are conducted on a line approximately twelve miles long. The ore body is continuous throughout this distance. The Tennessee Company, Woodward, Sloss, Republic, and Gulf States have mines in this territory. The large plant on the right, opposite Wenonah mine, is that of the Grassehill Chemical Company.

In ascending the mountain, the first mine reached is No. 8 Wenonah. The boiler house, hoisting engine and air compressor plant rest on the right, while on the left the store, office and camp may be observed.

Continuing from Wenonah the train gradually ascends until Ishkooda No. 13 is reached, having passed in the order named.

Wenonah No. 9 mine, T. C. I. & R. R. Co.
Wenonah No. 9½ mine, T. C. I. & R. R. Co.
Wenonah No. 10 mine, T. C. I. & R. R. Co.
Songo mine, Woodward Iron Company.
Ishkooda No. 11, T. C. I. & R. R. Co.
Ishkooda No. 12, T. C. I. & R. R. Co.
Clinton mine, Gulf States Steel Co.

(The outcrop of the ore may be seen here).

Ore Mine—A stop of thirty minutes will be made at No. 13, affording an opportunity of viewing the surrounding country. The elevation of the mountain at this point is 950 feet. During fair weather Birmingham may be seen lying to the northeast, Ensley stacks may be seen to the north, further to the left is the Woodward Iron Company, and, at the extreme left, are the Bessemer furnaces of the Tennessee Company.

From this point the train descends the mountain, making the next stop of fifteen minutes at Wenonah No. 8 ore mine. Leaving Wenonah, the train will proceed to Muscoda ore mines. Before reaching Muscoda, the Sloss-Sheffield Steel & Iron Company's Sloss mines will be passed on the left. A stop of thirty minutes will be made at Muscoda, where electric driven hoist and air compressors will be seen at No. 4 mine. From this point the ore mines of the Republic Iron & Steel Company at Raimund can be observed one mile to the southwest.

Barbecue—Leaving Muscoda, the train will proceed to Bayview

via Bessemer, where a barbecue will be served. The interesting plants passed en route are:

Bessemer 1 and 2 furnaces, Tennessee Co.
Bessemer rolling mill, Tennessee Co.
Bessemer 3 and 4 furnaces, Tennessee Co.
Furnaces, Woodward Iron Co.
By-product and benzol plants, Woodward Iron Co.
American Steel & Wire Co.
By-product plant of the Tennessee Co.
The Harbison-Walker refractories plant.
No. 5 mine of the Tennessee Co.
Steel Cities Chemical Co., manufacturers of sulphuric acid.
Edgewater mine of the Tennessee Co.

At Bayview a slope mine is now under development. The slope is in sandstone and is inclined 26½ degrees.

Electric power will be used for all mining operations, the current coming from the Ensley works power stations.

Area of territory, 2,300 acres; average height of clean coal, 53 inches; quantity, 15,000,000 tons; proposed daily output, 2,000 tons; proposed average number of men, 750; vertical depth of coal, 240 feet; main hoisting slope "double track" 7 feet by 20 feet, 565 feet; manway 7 feet by 12 feet, 551 feet; air shaft 14 feet diameter, 240 feet deep.

Coal Mine—Leaving Bayview, the next stop will be at Edgewater. At this point may be seen the surface plant of the largest mine in the state. The more important buildings are the hoisting and boiler houses, machine shop, supply house, bath house, store, and on the

left of the railroad may be seen the school house, church and kindergarten. The central pumping station is also located here.

Coal Worked; Pratt Seam—Area of territory, 4,000 acres; average height of clean coal, 56 inches; quantity, 30,000,000 tons; proposed daily output, 3,600 tons; average number of men employed, 850; vertical depth of coal, upper landing, 238 feet; lower landing, 380 feet; bottom of shaft, 420 feet; main hoisting shaft concrete lined, airshaft, 12 feet; manway 7 feet by 12 feet, 800 feet.

By-Product Coke Plant—Leaving here the train stops 25 minutes at the by-product coke plant.

Wire Mill—The last stop is made just across the track at the new plant of the American Steel & Wire Company. This plant has daily capacity as follows: Rods, 400 gross tons; wire, 400 net tons.

Wire is manufactured into various products as follows: Galvanized wire, nails, barbed wire fencing, woven wire fencing, staples; average number of employees 1,200.

Billets for this mill are furnished by the Ensley works of the Tennessee Company, as are also electric power and water.

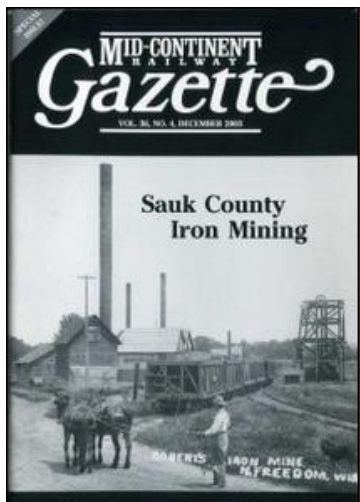
Freedom Mine Registered as a Historic Place

One of the many fine presentations at our Marquette Conference was Tamara Thomsen's presentation on the underwater investigation of the Freedom Mine near LaRue, Wisconsin. Prior to her team's explorations, little was known about subterranean operations of mines in the Baraboo Iron Range.

Continued exploration of the Freedom Mine site gives archeologists the unique opportunity to study early twentieth century mining in Wisconsin. As such, the Freedom Mine was placed in to the National Register of Historic Places on June 11th. The national listing follows a listing by the State of Wisconsin in the State Register of Historical Places on February 14, 2020.

For anyone wishing to learn more about the Baraboo Iron Mines or view some of the underwater explorations, Tamara and Mark Langenfeld participated in a Wednesday Night Lab for Wisconsin PBS in January of 2018. A browser search including the terms "Baraboo iron mines PBS" will be far easier and should locate a video of their presentation.

The Mid-Continent Railway Museum has also published a history on Sauk County Iron Mining:



Allegiance Secures Loan to Restart New Elk Mine

Allegiance Coal secured a loan in March to potentially restart the New Elk coal mine in Colorado. Originally developed as the Allen Mine, CF&I took over mine operations in 1951. The MHA visited the mine on June 12, 2014 as part of our Trinidad Conference.

If placed in service, coal mining will use the room and pillar method. With no direct rail connection, saleable coal will be trucked 34km prior to rail loading. Coal will be shipped overseas from the Bay of Houston.

Huber Breaker Society Gets its Lokie

On June 12th, the Huber Breaker Preservation Society made the final payment on a former Pennsylvania lokie found in Michigan. Once back in Ashely, PA, the lokie will join other artifacts in telling the story of the heyday of mining and railroading in the area.

The lokie, best known as Wanamie 9, once worked the narrow gauge tracks at the Wanamie and Loomis Collieries. The lokie was built by the Vulcan Iron Works in Wilkes-Barre. With no tender, the coal box on the Wanamie 9 was filled from anthracite piles along the tracks.

Couer Rochester, Inc. Obtains Expansion Approval for Rochester Mine in NV

The BLM approved expansion of the Couer Rochester and Packard Mine sites in Pershing County, Nevada in late March. The expansion will include moving or expanding mining operations including heap leach pads, waste rock dumps, haul roads, access roads and water pipeline and processing facilities. The expansion is projected to extend the life of the mine until 2033.

With the postponement of the 2020 Conference, your MHA Officers, Council, Board and Committee Members are officially:

Officers

Stephanie Saager-Bourret, President
Eric Nystrom, Vice President/ President-elect
Peter Maciulitis, Past President
James E. Fell, Treasurer
Brian Leech, Secretary

Council Members

Terry Reynolds	2017-2021
Catherine Spude	2017-2021
Stephen S. Hart	2018-2021
David Valentine	2018-2021
Fred Barnard	2019-2022
Lorena Campuzano-Duque	2019-2022
John Koerth	2019-2022

Board Members

Eric Clements	Journal Editor
Barbara Clements	Journal Composer / Social Media
Rebecca Lange	Membership Chair
Michael Kaas	Website Coordinator
Paul Spyhalski	Newsletter Editor

Nominating Committee

Barbara Clements
John Baeten
Ginny Kilander

Budget and Finance Committee

Jay Fell, Chair ex officio
Lynn Langenfeld
Bob Spude
John Stewart
Mark Vendl
Stan Dempsey

MHA Distinguished Service Award Committee

Ed Raines, Chair
Mark Langenfeld

Editorial Board / John Townley Award Committee

Duane Smith, Chair
Silvia Pettem
Ron Brown
Jay Fell
Ron Limbaugh
Jeremy Mouat
Mark Vendl

Rodman Paul Award Committee

Johnny Johnson, Chair
Duane Smith
Karen Vendl

Clark Spence and Mary Spence Award Committee

Ron Brown, Chair
Robert Spude
David Wolff

Cherry Hunter Award

Mark Langenfeld, Chair
Lynn Langenfeld
Mark Vendl
Karen Vendl
Silvia Pettem

Besleme-Orrell Heritage Award Committee

Robert Spude, Chair
Ginny Kilander
Stephanie Saager-Bouret

Research Grants Committee

Brian Leech, Chair
Mica Jorgenson
Eric Nystrom

Thank you to all who are willing to serve the MHA as officers, board members and committee members. The MHA's grateful thanks also go out to those that have completed their terms and the many that continue to serve the MHA in so many ways.

Mining History Association
P.O. Box 6536
Boise, Idaho 83707

Upcoming Events

Mining History Association Conference
Elko, Nevada
June 2021

International Mining History Conference
Laurentian University, Sudbury, Ontario
June 2021

Australasian Mining History Conference
Burra, South Australia
September 27 - October 1, 2021

Western History Association Conference
Portland, Oregon
October 27-30, 2021

Mining History Association Conference
Birmingham, Alabama
June 2022

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

Deadlines:	Fall issue:	September 15 th
	Winter issue:	December 15 th
	Spring issue:	February 15 th
	Summer issue:	June 15 th

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 Rebecca Lange, Membership Chair, at the following address:

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Boise, ID 83707