



Mining History News

Quarterly Newsletter of the Mining History Association

A Publication of the Mining History Association

Summer 2023

Presidential Pickings

The annual MHA conference has left us with wonderful memories of interesting presentations and delightful conversations. Socorro proved to be a superb location, and the New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology was a welcoming host. The program featured marvelous activities, such as Bob Spude's informative walking tour of historic Socorro, a congenial reception at the New Mexico Bureau of Geology and Mineral Resources, and an enlightening visit to Dicalite Management Group's nearby perlite mine.

Many folks also enjoyed the world-famous green chili cheeseburgers in nearby San Antonio. I could not join the field trip to Kelly and Magdalena, but I am confident that it was fantastic. Overall, the 33rd gathering was excellent. Many thanks to the planning committee – Barbara Clements, Jane Bardal, Virginia McLemore, and Bob Spude – for executing a well-attended and memorable conference.

I was especially delighted to introduce Henry Macon Rives during my Presidential Address. Known as “Mr. Mining,” Rives led the Nevada Mine Operators' Association from 1915, two years after its founding, until his death in 1952. During his 37-year tenure, Rives established the association as the state's most influential trade organization. After his death, Nevada's mine operators reorganized into the Nevada Mining Association (NVMA), and NVMA is proud to commemorate its 110th anniversary this year.

The pattern established by Rives influenced the expectations for every subsequent NVMA leader. Rives represented Nevada's mining industry on the national stage with the American Silver Producers Association and the International Chamber of Commerce. At home, he served on the Nevada Tax Commission; lobbied the Nevada Legislature; and was the go-to source for any reporter working on a mining story. His diaries (preserved at the University of Nevada, Reno) document his relationships with Nevada's political and business leaders.

The diaries also record his daily habits of drinking and gambling, two activities closely associated with mining. Searching for “gambling” and “whiskey” in the *Mining History Journal* yielded several references, such as those in “Sin, Sobriety, and Speeding: Victorian Mining Towns' Struggle for Respectability” (2003) by Duane A. Smith. Social histories of mining towns also discuss the close relationships among mining, gambling, and liquor. Elliott West's *The Saloon on the Rocky Mountain Mining Frontier* (1979) and Kelly J. Dixon's *Boomtown Saloons: Archaeology and History in Virginia City* (2005) are important sources on the topic. Lysa Wegman French's excellent bibliography includes *The Golden Elixir of the West: Whiskey and the Shaping of America* (2017) by Sherry Monahan with Jane Perkins. MHA's resources offer an important starting point for any lit review.

Whisky and mining are still entwined. During my town's recent Independence Day celebration, the importance of whiskey to mining came up at (where else?) the local bar. This popular event exponentially increases my small town's population to 100 or more, many of whom work in Nevada's modern mining industry. Chatting with a friend about her career, we both laughed at her recollection of some early advice from a legendary female mentor in this still-male-dominated industry: “if you're going to make it in mining, you'd better learn to drink whiskey.”

Mining, gambling, and liquor have shared a long relationship. The diaries of Henry Rives lay bare how complicated and messy those relationships could be. They also offered a great opportunity to engage an audience during a presentation!

Like many diarists, Rives used codes to save time and space. Most of his codes – abbreviations, really – are easy to understand, but the two codes associated with gambling and drinking are not obvious to this 21st century reader. I decided to crowd-source them with the MHA audience.

“P.E.” was Rives’s abbreviation for his favorite casino game. Nevada legalized gambling in 1931, and Reno quickly became its center. Reno was also home to the Nevada Mine Operators’ Association and the Rives family. The Association’s office was next door to Harold’s Club, and the Riverside was conveniently located along Rives’s walk between work and home. The diaries record numerous stops at the Riverside.

The diaries also meticulously record Rives’s gambling wins, which were few, and losses, which were many. Entries are filled with despair at his miserable luck and his repeated determination to stop gambling. Yet he continually returned to “P.E.” only to lose again and again. No one at the Socorro conference suggested a plausible interpretation of the code, but I hope to have the mystery solved by the time we meet in Park City.

Rives’s abbreviation for his cocktail of choice was “BB.” (Sharp-eyed readers will note the use of periods in P.E., but not in BB. That is how Rives wrote them.) Participants at the Socorro conference enthusiastically offered several interpretations of “BB,” two of which seem the most plausible.

Several people suggested that “BB” stood for brandy and Bénédictine, a cocktail that became popular in the twentieth century with people who were (or aspired to be) among the social elite. The *New York Times* explained in 2009 that this concoction of equal parts brandy and Bénédictine liqueur swept the country in the 1930s. The mixture was then bottled together and labeled “B&B.”

Henry Rives lived in Reno’s finest neighborhood; his office was in the town’s premier business building; and he socialized with U.S. Senators and Governors. His wife, Marguerite Raycraft Rives, had a privileged upbringing in Carson City and participated in Reno’s most elite female social circles. Mr. and Mrs. Rives were clearly among Reno’s upper crust, and it is quite possible that Henry chose a cocktail to signal his social status.

But Henry Rives was also a miner. Many MHA members are certain that “BB” stood for bourbon and branch water, a mixture that was easily available at any mining camp. While preferred by working men, the cocktail was also chosen by leaders. A Washington, D.C., political gossip columnist reported in 1950 that President Harry Truman favored “[b]ourbon and branch water – the President does not drink to excess, but he does enjoy a highball at lunch – sometimes two or three of them; also a little relaxation in the late afternoon.” Henry Rives also followed that schedule. But additional exploration of Rives’s diaries is required to determine which interpretation is the most accurate.

One of the great joys of attending the MHA conference is the opportunity to explore all aspects of mining history, including gambling and drinking. Such conversations are especially enjoyed with a beverage in hand! I’m already looking forward to the next such opportunity at MHA’s 34th annual conference in Park City in 2024. Bring your friends!

Dana Bennett, MHA President 2023-2024
Midas, Nevada
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Conference Recap



Thank you to Barbara Clements, Bob Spude, Jane Bardal and Dr. Virginia McLemore for organizing another great MHA Conference. The weather was, thankfully, not Sloss Hot, but the welcome and New Mexico hospitality certainly was. The Association's thanks are also extended the New Mexico Bureau of Geology & Mineral Resources for their organizing assistance, hosting of our Thursday evening reception, and opening the doors of its Mineral Museum to attendees throughout the conference.



Mike Bowen, Executive Director, NM Mining Association

Mike Bowen, Executive Director of the New Mexico Mining Association, formally welcomed us to New Mexico's mining territory Friday morning. Mr. Bowen then introduced Dr. McLemore as a newly elected member of the New Mexico Mining Hall of Fame. Dr. McLemore then provided us with an overview of the many connections between mining and the Socorro area.



Dr. Virginia McLemore, NM Board of Geology and Mineral Resources

The Program Committee did a great job (once again) of organizing varied and interesting papers and presentations into our educational program. Geographically, we covered a lot of ground crisscrossing the country from Oregon and on to Pennsylvania with stops in New Mexico and Texas. The topics were equally diverse with gold, silver, uranium, copper, lead, zinc, coal, oil, perlite, and investor mining serving as the backdrop for topics that included mine and mineral processing and development, community development, methods for conducting that research, and examples of how we can honor the memory of those who worked in mining.

Rick Hendricks, a former New Mexico State Historian and current State Records Administrator for the New Mexico State Records Center & Archives, served as our Saturday banquet speaker. Rick outlined for us an (as yet) unwritten book detailing how the Spanish entered the territory that became New Mexico seeking precious metals and how mining was an integral part of that Spanish colonial enterprise. Let's hope that the book gets written someday.



Rick Hendricks, NM Records Administrator

Called "Coronado's Treasure Chest," the Mineral Museum's amazing collection of mineral specimens illustrates the many minerals that attracted the Spaniards. The Museum's amazing collection also demonstrates the mineral wealth of New Mexico's many mining districts including the Magdalena and Santa Rita.



On Saturday, attendees had the opportunity to visit Socorro's Hammel Museum and Dicaparl Mineral Corporation's perlite mine. In addition to brewing Export Lager and Magdalena Beer, William Hammel's Illinois Brewery Company opened New Mexico's first ice plant and soda pop bottling company.

Perlite is an igneous rock that "pops" when rapidly heated. The actual uses of perlite depend on the sizing of the product, but it is often used as a soil additive and in construction materials such as acoustical tiles and insulation boards. Dicaparl mines the perlite using open pit methods and processes the ore by crushing, drying, and sorting.



Perlite Mine



Perlite Processing Plant

Sunday's tour focused on the past, present, and future. The past included the Kelly Mine in the Magdalena District.



The present, and future included a visit to the Very Large Array.

2024 Conference in Park City, Utah June 5 – 9

Please join us for the MHA's first (and long-overdue) visit to Utah!

On the docket is a field trip to historic mining sites in and around Park City (led by our hosts, the Friends of Ski Mountain Mining History), and a full-day outing to the storied Tintic Mining District and Eureka (led by representatives of Utah's Cultural Site Stewardship Program). Under investigation is a potential post-conference field trip to significant coal mining and railroading sites in the Helper and Price environs. We have negotiated attractive room rates at our conference hotel – the Park City DoubleTree – Yarrow Resort. In combination, this will be an event not to be missed.

A sample of some of the sites we will see:



Daly West Headframe after repair at Park City, Utah

Watch here for updates and registration information in future issues of the Newsletter. Meanwhile, please direct your questions and comments to Mark & Lynn Langenfeld at mha2024utah@gmail.com.

See you in Park City in 2024!

Mining History Association Awards

The MHA establishes various committees to annually review applications and nominations and to decide whether to issue certain awards. The process culminates with the announcement of award winners at the MHA Awards Banquet. This past year's award winners were:

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 **Dr. William W. Culver** "for his study and promotion of copper mining history and hydrometallurgy in South America, and its origins in North America." A past president of the MHA, Bill began exploring the international politics of natural resources while teaching at SUNY (Plattsburgh). Eventually Bill's interests shifted as he transitioned into an in-depth study of 19th-Century copper mining in Chile. He traces the development and application of hydrometallurgical processes utilized in Chile to Harvey Hill (Quebec), Phoenixville (PA), and Ore Knob (NC). Now retired from teaching, Bill continues to write and present widely on James Douglas and his involvement in hydrometallurgy including an upcoming presentation as the Fathi Habashi Lecturer at the Historical Metallurgy Luncheon at the Canadian Conference of Metallurgists.

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 **Geoffrey C. Lybeck** for his article in the 2022 issue titled "The Needs of the Nation and the Technology of Tomorrow: The Illinois Coal Industry, 1945-1969."

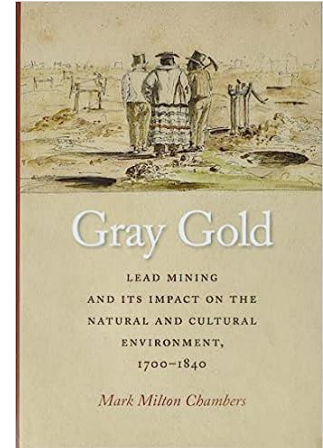
The **Keith Long Presentation Award** recognizes the service of past President Keith Long and is given to the presenter of the best presentation at the Association's annual meeting. This year's **Keith Long Presentation Award** was presented to **Eric Clements** for his presentation "Looking for Laura: A Mining Camp Mystery."

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 covers of the winning books are to the right.

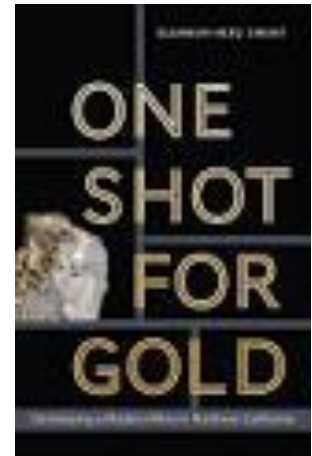
The **Clark Spence Award** Committee also extended an honorary recognition to **Rudy Davison** for his book *Rudy's View: A Driving Guide from Telluride to the Top of Imogene Pass*, 3rd ed. (Albuquerque: Rudy Davison, 2021)

The **Besleme-Orrell Heritage Award**, **Chery Hunter Award**, **John Livermore Award**, and **Ed Hunter Award for Distinguished Service** were not presented this year. Please visit the MHA website to learn more about those awards and nominate worthy individuals and organizations throughout the year.

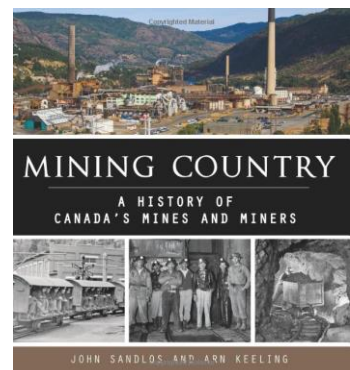
A **Clark C. Spence Award** was presented to **Mark Milton Chambers** for:



A **Clark C. Spence Award** was presented to **Eleanor Herz Swent** for:



A **Mary Lee Spence Award** was presented to John Sandlos and Arn Keeley for:



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:

Nate Endo, a MA student at Midwestern State University, was awarded \$950 to perform research in Austin, Texas for a project entitled "The Birmingham of the Southwest."

Dr. Duncan Money, an independent scholar and Research Associate in the International Studies Group at the University of Free State, was awarded \$745 to perform research in Makhanda in South Africa, for a project titled, "Dust, Disease and Death: Health and Healthcare in South Africa's Gold Industry."

Taylor Rose, a PhD student at Yale University, was awarded \$1,000 to perform research in the Washington, D.C. area for a project titled "Strategic and Critical Minerals: Magnesium Light Metal and the Re-Development of the Hardrock West."

Phoebe Springstubb, a PhD student at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, was awarded \$1000 to perform research in New York City, Ottawa, and Providence, Rhode Island, for a project titled, "Nature's Deep Freeze: Hydraulic Mining in the Deep Past in 20th-Century Beringia."

We look forward to seeing the results of their research at a future conference or in an article in the *Journal*.

Initial Call for Nominations 2024-2025

Stephen Hart, Peter Maciulaitis, and Richard Reid currently service as the MHA's Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee is charged with filling the following positions in the coming year: Vice President (President Elect), three Council seats, and a position on the Nominating Committee. They would be delighted to receive any nominations including self-nominations at stephen_hart45@msn.com.

Notes from the Board Meeting

The MHA's treasury is in decent shape especially considering the many disruptions caused by the pandemic. Attendance at the Birmingham conference was lower than usual, but local grants from the Alabama Department of Tourism and the University of Montevallo History Program helped offset some of the conference costs. Attendance at the Socorro Conference is comparable to the conference attendance pre-COVID.

The Langenfeld's updated the Board and Membership on potential plans for the 2024 Conference in Park City. Be prepared for a potential post-conference trip to Helper, Utah. After hearing Stephen Hart's proposal, the Board selected Gunnison, Colorado, as the host site for the 2025 MHA Conference. Look for more information on both in upcoming issues.

As we all know, the cost of nearly everything is rising. Each member of the Association receives the newsletter and a copy of the *Mining History Journal*. The cost of paper, printing, and shipping increases each year (or issue, it seems). We use a bulk mail permit to reduce our postage costs, but bulk mail requires a minimum of 200 items to be shipped.

A related issue is the organization's membership as it tends to fluctuate throughout the year even in normal times. More recently, the MHA's membership, like many organizations, has been trending downward. Ironically, the MHA's Facebook page lists 1,552 members, but our paid membership has been trending closer to the minimum number needed for bulk mailing.

As such, there will be a renewed focus on membership and membership value along with consideration of ways we can reduce costs in the coming year. We will also be culling the mailing lists for both the *Journal* and newsletter during the year. One potential cost-saving measure is switching to electronic delivery of the newsletter. There will be no change before the next conference, but we would like the membership's input on whether you value a pre-printed, mailed copy on your renewal notice.

Also, please see page 7 for a handy reference you can use to determine whether your dues are paid for this year. If not, please renew your membership. If you are not renewing, please let us know why.



MHA Nuggets

August 15
September 19
October 17
November 14

8:00 pm Eastern
7:00 pm Central
6:00 pm Mountain
5:00 pm Pacific

5 minutes of social time
20/25 minute presentation
Questions/social time

Zoom Meeting, Passcode: MHA
OR
LiveStream on YouTube
Mining History Association channel

MINING HISTORY ASSOCIATION

MHA Nuggets will resume in August. We are currently scheduling speakers and have openings in the Fall and Spring. Topics do not need to be academic in nature. Topics can include a visit to a historic mining site or town or an interesting little topic that you happened to find out about.

Send an email to mininghistoryassociation@gmail.com if you would like to present an MHA Nugget or if you have questions about the process.

August 15, 2023
Popular Coal-ture: The Portrayal of Coal Mining in North American Movies and TV
Brian Leech

September 19, 2023
Colorado's Crystal Mill
Jane Bardall

October 17, 2023
OPEN

November 14, 2023
"The British Hollow Lead Smelter in Grant County, WI"
Tracey Roberts

The presentations will also be livestreamed on YouTube during the presentation and recorded for later viewing on the Mining History Association YouTube channel. To utilize the chat features or ask questions during or after the program, you should login using Zoom.

Help Wanted

Mark and Lynn need help with registration and coordinating vendors and the venue for the Park City Conference. If you have time to help, contact Mark and Lynn at mha2024utah@gmail.com

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 in the Fall issue is September 1st.

2025 Conference in Gunnison

Gunnison, Colorado will be the host site for the 2025 MHA Conference. Potential tours include the Gunnison Pioneer Museum, the Lake City area, Crested Butte, and Marble. Block your calendars now to be in Gunnison from June 11 to 15 in 2025.

Your Membership Status

There have been many questions about paid memberships and membership status. You can find your paid through membership year on the mailing labels for the newsletter and MHA Journal. It is the number under your name. You are paid up through December of the year shown.



If you need to renew your membership, please go to the Membership page on the MHA website. You can print off a membership form to pay by check or click on a link to our online membership form and pay by credit card.

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Upcoming Events

Society for Industrial Archeology - Fall Conference

Akron / Cleveland, OH
September 20-22, 2023

Australasian Mining History Conference

Reefton, South Island, New Zealand
October 15-22, 2023

Western History Association

Los Angeles, California
October 26-29, 2023

Mining History Association Conference

Park City Utah
June 5-9, 2024

Mining History Association Conference

Gunnison, Colorado
June 11-16, 2025

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 15th

Winter issue: December 15th

Spring issue: February 15th

Summer issue: June 15th

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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