



December 2006

Mining History News

Quarterly Newsletter of the Mining History Association

More on Oral History and the Working Miner

The past several months have been eventful ones, both for the activities of our Association and for my continuing focus on and research in oral histories of working miners.

For those who were not able to attend the Western History Association meeting in St. Louis, our breakfast meeting, while small in number, did result in a number of items being discussed which merit thought and attention. I think the biggest item is the continuing discussion of a possible MHA Convention in Alaska. This has been brought up before, with no resolution. The obvious difficulty is the distance and cost for most members. However, it was decided at the breakfast that we would again check into the merits of an Alaskan meeting in one of two cities, Juneau or Fairbanks. But we also need input from the membership. What are your thoughts? Please let us hear, pro or con. We should decide this by our next meeting.

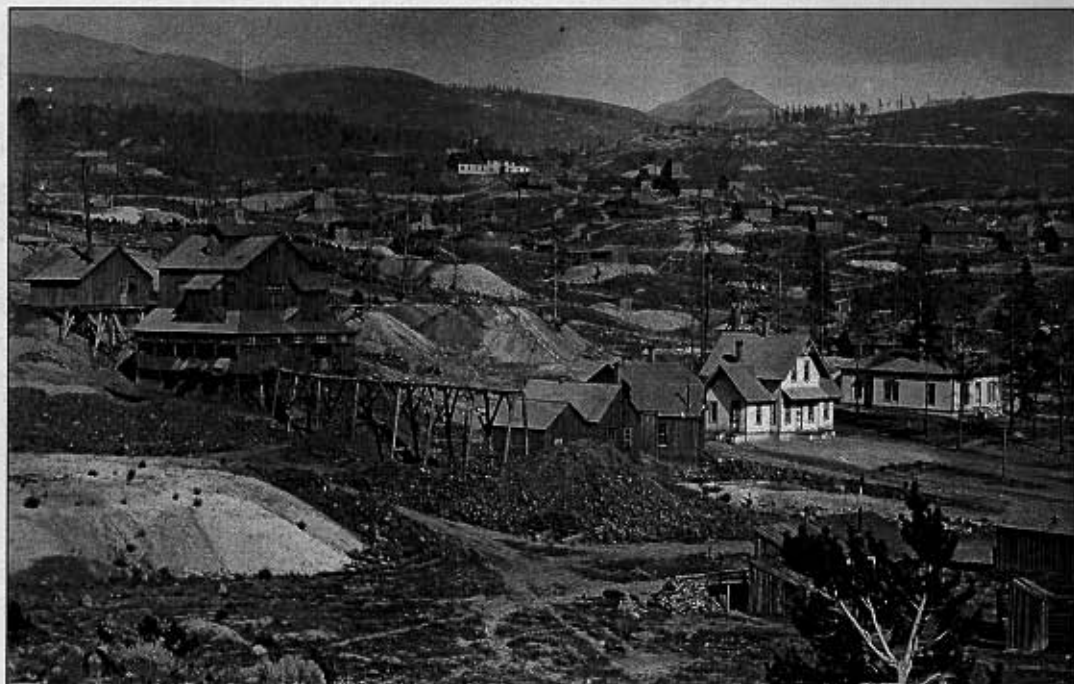
Another topic of discussion was whether to depart from our usual conference arrangements and have a pre- or post-conference workshop on oral history at the Leadville meeting in June. Since then I have been in touch with officers of the Southwest Oral History Association and we are working on setting

up a four- or five-hour workshop on Thursday June 7th, probably in the afternoon. This would allow time for both presenting the process, the preparation, actual interview, as well as post interview work, such as creating materials, including release and other necessary forms, etc.

This would mean those wishing to attend the workshop would need to arrive in Leadville on Wednesday. Again, the plans are not final and I would like your feedback on this.

Since the WHA meeting, I have been devoting as much time as possible to identifying oral history materials on miners, primarily here in Arizona. And I'm

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The start of Horace Tabor's fortune was here, the Little Pittsburg mine. William Henry Jackson photograph, Dave Bunk collection. Join us next year in Leadville. See page 3 for more information.

Oral History

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finding much more than I had anticipated. Virtually all of the sources I've contacted have made some effort to gather stories of working people, usually of their community or area. In most cases the accounts are still not transcribed, transcription being the greatest expense in doing oral history. The Bisbee Mining Museum has about thirty oral histories but only a few have been transcribed. The two sources in Jerome, the Historical Society and the Jerome State Park, both have interviews. However, neither indicates the work of the individual.

Each of the universities has collections of oral histories but they usually don't identify the focus of the interview. In many cases however, the content is obvious, such as the Los Mineros Oral Histories and the Mammoth Oral History Project in the Hayden Library at ASU. And in most cases large depositories, such as universities, have the technology for making much of what they have digitized, and available by computer. Lee Swent reminded me of

the Regional Oral History Office website at Berkeley, which is actually two sites which have over sixty volumes of interviews. These can be accessed at <http://bancroft.berkeley.edu/ROHO/projects/mining/> or <http://bancroft.berkeley.edu/ROHO/collections/subject-area/natres/mining-western.html>.

Finally, coming back to Arizona, or rather the Southwest, while this is maybe more ambitious than we should consider, the work being done by the Miners Story Project at the University of Arizona shows us what might be worth thinking about. Their website is available at www.minersstory.org. Take a look. We could, should, with our wide-spread membership, be doing something along the same line.

I'm looking forward to your feedback and input on this, especially as to whether we should proceed with the idea of having a workshop at Leadville. Please let me hear from you.

Jim McBride
MHA President

Seventh International Mining History Congress

The Seventh International Mining History Congress will be held in Bhubaneswar, in the state of Orissa, India, from 13 to 16 December 2007. This meeting is one of a series that began in Melbourne in 1985 and was held most recently in Japan in September 2003. (Some MHA members will recall that the Congress also met at the Colorado School of Mines in June 1994.)

An International Organizing Committee was established at the meeting in Japan, comprising Roger Burt, Mel Davies (long-time secretary of our sister organization in Australia), Bill Culver, and myself, Jeremy Mouat. We recently encountered a potentially embarrassing problem, when what purported to be an official message was circulated, saying that the 7th International Mining History Congress would be held in Belgium in October 2007. This was not sanctioned by the International Organizing Committee for the 7th International Mining History

Congress. We had previously contracted with the Indian Minister for Mines to run the 7th Congress in Bhubaneswar, Orissa, India.

How did this situation develop? Three years ago, in 2003, the Belgian organizers submitted an application to run the 7th Congress in 2006. At the end of 2005 it became apparent that they had done nothing to promote this Congress and consequently the International Organizing Committee asked Belgians to withdraw - which they did, agreeing that they had done nothing and would therefore be unable to conduct the meeting as originally agreed. The Committee then contacted people in India, since they had also applied to run the Congress in 2006. They were informed of the situation and they requested permission to run the event in Bhubaneswar in December 2007. They have worked assiduously to meet their obligations and will be putting out a web page providing the details within a month or so.

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18th Annual Mining History Association Conference June 7-10, 2007 Leadville, Colorado

hosted by the
National Mining Hall of Fame and Museum

A fascinating array of papers has been received for the Leadville conference. Conference attendees are guaranteed of finding several or more sessions that will surely interest them. Progress is also being made on tours, special events, and a host of other things to see and do.

Please sure to mark out the dates on your calendar.

Duane Smith
Fort Lewis College



Proposal for 2009 MHA Conference at Creede

I propose to hold a Mining History Association Conference in Creede, Colorado during the first or second week of June, 2009. I will be glad to run the conference, as I have spent a great deal of time in Creede, written and spoken about the district, and participated in several field trips to the area.

The Creede Mining District is located in Mineral County in the eastern portion of the San Juan Mountains of southwestern Colorado. The original mineral discoveries were made in 1876, but the area did not become well-known until Nicholas Creede discovered rich silver deposits on East Willow Creek in 1889. Additional discoveries in the area initiated the last of Colorado's great silver booms.

As one of the "rip-roaringest" frontier boom towns, Creede was home to many infamous western characters performing colorful acts on a regular basis. Local newspaper reporter Cy Warman even penned verse to describe the town as a place where "it's day all day in the daytime, and there is no night in Creede." The end of the boom came with the Silver Panic of 1893, and Creede settled down to a more normal existence. Silver, lead and zinc production continued until around 1990 when the last of the mines shut down. Ruins of the district's former glory days are well preserved along West Willow Creek. The setting for these remains is easily one of Colorado's most scenic.

Several facilities are presently available for the actual conference meeting, banquet, Presidential Luncheon, and welcome picnic (the Underground Mining Museum and the School). By 2009 the town expects to have completed a new recreation center, which would also be suitable for functions. Several small hotels, motels, beds and breakfasts are located in town, larger dude ranches and resorts, and a large RV park, and campgrounds extend up and down the Rio Grande River all the way into South Fork (20 minutes away). The Chamber of Commerce and the Creede Historical Society (one of the few local history organizations that holds a MHA membership) have both expressed a willingness to work with us. Additionally several fine restaurants in the area are available for catering and our only problem will be in narrowing down our choices--Creede has very good food! We should be able to handle between 150 and 250 attendees without any problem.

Tours could include the Creede, Summitville, Lake City mining districts, as well as a tour of the town of Creede. If we go to Lake City, the drive over Slumgullion Pass is one of state's most spectacular. I will put together a printed guidebook for field trips. From the point of view of a regular MHA Conference attendee I think that a Creede meeting could be one of our most memorable. A formal proposal will be furnished to the other MHA council members at a later date.

Ed Raines, MHA Council Member



2007 Mining History Association Ballot

Vice-President/President Elect (one-year term beginning June 2007)

Vote for one:

☐

Ron Limbaugh

☐

(write-in)

Council (two positions, 3-year term beginning June 2007)

Vote for two:

☐

Chris Huggard

☐

Keith Long

☐

Mark Vendl

☐

(write-in)

Nominating Committee (one position, 3 year term beginning June 2007)

Vote for one:

☐

Eric Clements

☐

Jeremy Mouat

☐

(write-in)

Biographies are on the next page.

Mail Ballot by January 15, 2007 to:
Mining History Association
Colorado School of Mines Library
1400 Illinois St.
Golden, CO 80401

Candidate Biographies

Ron Limbaugh, Gualala, California - An Idaho native, Ronald H. Limbaugh retired in 2000 after 34 years teaching American history at the University of the Pacific. A western regional specialist, he has written, co-authored or edited 8 books, 54 articles, and 59 book reviews on a variety of topics, including Idaho territory, California history, John Muir, gold rush technology, mining engineers, and family history. In 2004 the University of Nevada Press published *Calaveras Gold: The Impact of Mining on a Mother Lode County*, a book he co-authored with Willard P. Fuller, Jr. Currently he is working on a corporate mining history tentatively titled *Tungsten in Peace and War: Charles H. Segerstrom and the Nevada-Massachusetts Company*.

Chris Huggard, Fayetteville, Arkansas - Chris Huggard is a professor of history and honors program director at Northwest Arkansas Comm. College. He has published numerous journal articles, book chapters, and other works on the history of mining. He served as the *Mining History Journal* editor from 1994-2001, and book review editor, 2001-2004. He is a Rodman Paul award winner.

Keith Long, Tucson, Arizona - Keith is a mineral economist and economic geologist for the U.S. Geological Survey in Tucson, Arizona. His interest in mining history goes back to childhood when his family would make camping trips along Highway 49 in California. During college, he worked summers for various mining companies which got him underground at the Darwin mine near Death Valley, and roaming around historic mining districts in Montana and Nevada. After earning his doctorate in Mineral Economics at the University of Arizona in 1988, Keith went to Bolivia for the USGS, following the 16th and 17th century trails of Spanish prospectors in the Altiplano. From 1995 to 2000, he did considerable research on the history of milling and tailings disposal in the Coeur d'Alene mining region of northern Idaho, a paper from which he won the John M. Townley award in 2001. Since then he has been investigating the history of technical innovation in the Globe-Miami mining district as a type-example of technological advancement in copper mining and mining in general. He gave a talk on that topic last June at the Globe MHA meeting, which Keith helped organize.

Mark Vendl, La Grange Park, Illinois - Mark is a geologist interested in Colorado mining history and mineralogy, and has authored or co-authored several articles and book reviews in the *Mining History Journal*, the latest of which was an article about Ben Revett's Breckenridge gold dredges. Along with his wife Karen, Mark organized the 1999 MHA conference in Ouray, Colorado. He is a charter member of MHA, and has served as the MHA secretary (2002-2003), newsletter co-editor (2001 to present), and website coordinator (2001 to present). In 2006 he received the MHA Special Service Award.

Eric Clements, Cape Girardeau, Missouri - Eric Clements has been active in the association since 1991. He edits the *Mining History Journal*. An expatriate Coloradan, he teaches history and public history at Southeast Missouri State University, and his research interests include transportation and mining in the American West.

Jeremy Mouat, Athabaska, Alberta, Canada - Professor Mouat teaches at the University of Alberta, Camrose and is chair of the Social Science Department. He has published on mining history on Canada, Australia and New Zealand as well as comparative works on mining technology, especially flotation. His best known work is *Roaring Days*, a history of Rossland and the British Columbia gold.

Mining History Congress

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As noted above, the Indian Congress is supported by the Indian Minister for Mines and his department, and has also attracted a number of sponsors. Mel Davies has just visited the conference venue in Bhubaneswar, where he met with the local organizing committee. He was very impressed with the planning and the venue. Any attempt to run the Belgian meeting as an International Congress will possibly jeopardize the efforts of the Indian committee who are keen to host the next Congress, and will also sabotage the credibility of the International Committee.

The International Organizing Committee has no objection to Belgium running their meeting as a national or regional conference devoted to mining history. However it objects strongly to the illegitimate and unsanctioned use by Belgium of the title the '7th International Mining History Congress.' All our attempts to persuade the Belgian committee to withdraw the title have so far fallen on deaf ears. As a last resort, the committee is bringing the situation to the attention of mining historians everywhere (hence this item in your newsletter). We would ask you to support the Seventh International Mining History Congress, to be held in Bhubaneswar, India.

Thanks very much,
Jeremy Mouat
on behalf of the International Organizing Committee

Treasurer's Report

The Mining History Association is in a strong financial position. At the end of October, we had \$33,597.92 in the treasury. There should be no material change in this figure between now and the end of 2006 when the first dues renewal checks begin to come in. At the request of the President and the Council, I have investigated where to put the bulk of these moneys so as to generate an income stream from them, and made a brief presentation to this effect at the Mining History Breakfast at the Western History Association meetings in St. Louis in mid-October. I'm awaiting their recommendation as to whether to put the bulk of these moneys -- at least \$25,000 -- in a Certificate of Deposit or a money market fund. We need to have the remainder readily available to write checks for ongoing functions and

services, such as the MHA website, and for the upcoming June conference in Leadville as vendors will begin requiring deposits for their services early in the year.

Jay Fell, MHA Treasurer

HELP NEEDED !!!

This is a repeat from our September newsletter; we are getting desperate. Please read and consider. We need to hear from you. Jim McBride, MHA President

Without some response very soon we may well be without a quarterly newsletter. One of the most important, yet least appreciated tasks in the successful operation of the Mining History Association is the quarterly newsletter. Over the years the Association has been extremely fortunate to have long-term editors. First Bob Spude and then, for the past five years, Mark and Karen Vendl. However, Mark and Karen now need to give up that position. They will be stepping down in June 2007. Fortunately they have given us ample notice to find a replacement. Whoever takes over will have plenty of time for a smooth transition and lots of help.

Although it is not an extremely demanding task it does have certain specific requirements and needs. Following is a description from Mark and Karen based on their work over the past five years. "The newsletter is published four times a year. As Bob Spude told us when he gave up the job, each newsletter takes about a weekend's worth of work (that seems about right). Putting out the newsletter entails: obtaining submissions from various sources (including the President, and other MHA officers), setting up the newsletter in an appropriate publishing program; taking it to a printer, placing mailing labels and postage on each newsletter, and then taking it to the post office. Mailing labels are provided by Robert Sorgenfrei on request. The newsletter editor needs access to a computer with an appropriate desktop publishing or word processing program."

I can't over emphasize the importance of this need. Despite the straight forward, detailed description of the job, those of you who have been receiving the Newsletter for any period of time know that it also requires imagination and dedication. They have done an excellent job. I would like someone to step forward and follow in the footsteps of Bob, Mark and Karen. Big shoes to be filled. Who will volunteer? ✕

Upcoming Events

18th Annual MHA Conference

June 7-10, 2007

Leadville, Colorado

www.mininghistoryassociation.org

Western Mining Artifact Collector's Show

June 16, 2007

Ouray Community Center, Ouray, Colorado

For more information contact: Steve Rush

(970) 249-6828, nevsmith@ridgwayco.net

47th Annual Western History Association

October 3-6, 2007

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

www.umsl.edu/%7Ewha/conf/confinfo.html

7th International Mining History Congress, India

December 13-16, 2007

Contact: Mel Davies, Secretary IMHC

Mel.Davies@UWA.EDU.AU

The *Mining History News* is published quarterly by the Mining History Association. It is sent to MHA members who also receive the annual *Mining History Journal*. MHA is an organization of individuals interested in the history of mining and metallurgy. Submissions for the newsletter are encouraged and should be sent to Mark and Karen Vendl at MHA address or by email: mkvendl@earthlink.net.

Deadlines: March issue: February 15
 June issue: May 15
 September issue: August 15
 December issue: November 15

Change of address: Please send changes to your address to Robert Sorgenfrei, membership chairman at:

Mining History Association
Colorado School of Mines Library
1400 Illinois St.
Golden, CO 80401
www.mininghistoryassociation.org