



# Mining History News

Newsletter of the Mining History Association

December 2004



Volume 15, Number 4

## MHA 2005, Scranton, Pennsylvania

**P**lanning continues for the upcoming Mining History Conference in Scranton, Pennsylvania. Reserve the dates June 16-19, 2005 on your calendar to visit the famous anthracite coal mining region.

Our preliminary schedule will start off Thursday afternoon with registration at the Electric City Trolley Museum. It is located right next to the Steamtown National Historic Park parking lot. Many rail buffs are going to want to come early to see Steamtown and other rail sites in the vicinity. The Scranton Iron Furnaces are also a worthwhile site to see that is not part of our program. Thursday evening will be our welcoming reception at the Trolley Museum. Besides food, drink, and fellowship, we will have a program performed by Van Wagner, a local song-writer and underground coal miner.

Friday morning will feature two tours on the west side of town at McDade Park followed by a box lunch. The underground Lackawanna Coal Mine tour features descending a 1,300 foot slope in a man-car to access the underground guided walking tour. We will also tour the adjacent Pennsylvania Anthracite Heritage Museum.

In order to keep costs in line, we then move our venue away from downtown to the Lackawanna Heritage Valley Center (LHVC) in Mayfield, north of Scranton towards Carbondale. The Center has all of the features to meet the remaining needs of our meeting. Following an afternoon of paper sessions we will have our annual Awards Banquet in

the Atrium of the Center.

Saturday will be a day of presentations with the Presidential Luncheon and the annual business meeting. Dinner will be on your own, but we may have a special program later that evening.

For metal mining enthusiasts, we will meet buses Sunday morning at the LHVC and ride about 1-1/2 hours to the famous New Jersey Zinc Mining District. We will divide into groups and spend most of the day touring the Sterling Hill Mining Museum and the Franklin Mineral Museum. You will be in the Fluorescent Mineral Capital of the World. Just wait until you see the museum minerals and fluorescence underground. Dick Hauck and his knowledgeable staff have a lot of fine mining equipment on display at Sterling Hill and will serve us lunch. We will return to Scranton at a reasonable hour.

There will be an optional post-Conference tour on Monday that the Huber Breaker Preservation Society is hosting. We plan to start the morning with a tour of the Huber Breaker site in Ashley, Pennsylvania, a little south of Wilkes-Barre. We will then caravan over to Plymouth Township and take a walk to see the Avondale Colliery Grounds, site of the 1869 Avondale Mine Disaster, the largest in the region where 108 men and boys died in a fire. We will finish the day driving to tour Eckley Miners Village located in the Eastern Middle Coal Field. This will introduce you to some of the other districts and cultural features. You must be physically

Continued page 3...

## Cherry Hunter (1929-2004)



Cherry's art work has been on display in various galleries in the Cripple Creek area. She also illustrated several books including *Hardrock Gold*, *All in a Day's Work*, *Guide to the Cripple Creek-Victor Mining District* as well as covers for *The Old Cripple Creek Stage Road*, *Cripple Creek Railroads*, and *A Quick History of Creede*.

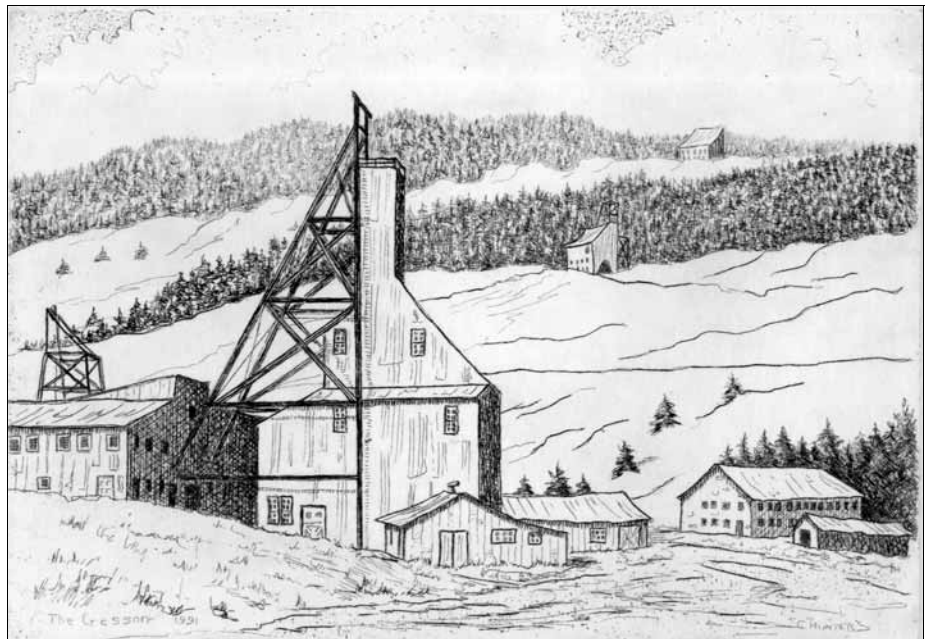
Both Cherry and Ed were active volunteers at the Western Museum of Mining and Industry in Colorado Springs. A memorial fund has been set up at the Museum to purchase mining art for its collection in honor of Cherry. Contributions, made out to the Western Museum of Mining and Industry, can be sent to:

Cherry Hunter Art Fund  
c/o Linda LeMieux, Director  
Western Museum of Mining and Industry  
1025 North Gate Road  
Colorado Springs, CO 80921

Cherry Hunter, a dear friend to all of us at MHA, passed away suddenly Monday, November 29, 2004 in Colorado Springs. Cherry lived with her husband Ed (past MHA President) in Victor, Colorado. Ed and Cherry were our wonderful hosts for the recent MHA meeting held in Cripple Creek. Cherry was born and raised in Philadelphia and attended Mount Holyoke College. After leaving the east, Cherry and Ed lived in a number of western mining camps including Nome, Alaska and Silverton, Colorado before ending up in Victor.

Cherry fell in love with the mining camps of the American West where she found inspiration for the art work for which she became well known. Her art media included etching, pen-and-ink, pastels, oils, watercolors, and more recently, digital photography.

Our prayers and sympathy go out to Ed, and his son, Andrew Thompson and three daughters, Katerine Sailer Hunter, Nancy Bowman Hunter Parker and Elizabeth Cherry Hunter-Ball.



The Cresson, pen-and-ink, 1991

...from Page 1

able to do some walking, stairs, and uneven footing for the first two stops.

Weather in the Mid-Atlantic area in mid-June is likely to be hot and humid, with a chance of afternoon thunderstorms. We will be near the Pocono Mountains, so that will cool things off a bit. Most folks will need to provide their own transportation, so a rental car is needed. The area is rather spread out. For a limited number of folks who really need transportation, we will make arrangements to get them from event to event.

Low-cost Southwest Airlines services Baltimore, Philadelphia, and Albany, New York. Other airlines serve the major New York airports as well. Obviously, being on the East Coast gives you many options for sightseeing before or after the conference. Destinations such as New York, Philadelphia, and Washington, D.C. are worthwhile, and only several hours travel from Scranton which is located at the intersection of interstates 81 and 84 and the Pocono extension of the Pennsylvania Turnpike. There is also a Wilkes-Barre/Scranton International Airport ([www.flyavp.com](http://www.flyavp.com)) that features express connections affiliated with some of the major airlines through larger airports.

There are a number of lodging choices including several B&B's. We will not have one conference hotel, however thus far we have made arrangements for group rates at two local motels. These motels are located north of town, close to I-81. We have a block of 30 rooms set aside at the Days Inn for \$75 + tax per night. The Days Inn is located at 1946 Scranton-Carbondale Hwy, I-81 exit 191A, telephone 570-383-9979; cutoff date is June 1, 2005 for the conference rate. We have a block of 10 rooms at the Fairfield Inn for \$79.99 + tax per night. We may be able to get more if needed. The address is 949 Viewmont Drive, Dickson City, PA, telephone 570-346-3222, off I-81 exit 190; cutoff date is 1 month prior to the conference. Both motels feature at least continental breakfasts, swimming pools, and other amenities. There are several more motels off of exit 194.

Families and children will be welcome at the

scheduled events and there is plenty else for them to do around Scranton during the presentations if so desired. We should not experience any numeric limitations on the tours since they are used to handling large numbers of the public and school groups on tours. We will do our best to plan our bus transportation for the Sunday tour to meet the needs of our group based on various bus sizes and options, so registering early will be particularly helpful.

### **About Scranton**

Scranton, population some 80,000 in 1990, is the seat of Lackawanna County in northeastern Pennsylvania. Located in a mountain region on the Lackawanna River, it was settled in the 1700s and incorporated in 1866. Named for George W. Scranton, it is a commercial and industrial center for the surrounding anthracite coal region. Iron was first forged there in 1797. Coal-mining machinery, locomotives, and rails were early products, but mining decreased significantly after World War II. A successful citizens' program for industrial development and improvement largely offset the unemployment that resulted.

### **Historical Points Concerning Anthracite Mining**

Anthracite is a high rank coal, hard, high in carbon and low in sulfur, and therefore clean-burning. The geological pressures that formed it have folded and faulted the sedimentary rocks of northeastern Pennsylvania, yielding beds of steeply dipping coal that are difficult to mine. Anthracite mining methods have historically been labor-intensive and more closely resemble the techniques used in hardrock mining. Gravity, timbers, and chutes have been applied since mechanization is more difficult when compared to bituminous mining.

The same forces created slate from shale, and thus huge wooden breakers or collieries were constructed by anthracite mining companies for the manually-intensive separation of impurities from the coal. Young boys often started their careers as "slate pickers." The region featured numerous steam railroads fueled by the hard coal, and interesting features such as mine slopes and tunnels,

mules working underground, and canal transportation of coal to urban heating and industrial markets. Most of the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century industrial landscape has disappeared, but one can still find and identify a number of features.

Irish, Welsh, and other ethnic immigrants flocked to company towns at various times, and the area became known for labor and ethnic strife, political corruption, violence, and mine disasters, as well as positive cultural developments. In other words, the anthracite region has all of the features of an interesting mining district, including towns slowly consumed by underground mine fires such as the one in Centralia. One of the most interesting disasters was the 1959 flooding of many of the interconnected Wilkes-Barre coal mines when the Knox Mine broke into the Susquehanna River.

Anthracite was first discovered and used in the 1760s, with mining from surface outcrops near the Susquehanna River commencing about the time of the Revolutionary War. As additional discoveries of coal were made and the area matured, local heating uses were complemented by industrial uses in the forge and iron industry, and by the 1820s anthracite began to be shipped out of the region. Employment peaked in the region at 180,000 workers in 1914, with anthracite coal production peaking at over 100 million tons in 1917. Production declined steadily after that for a number of reasons. There are only a few surface and small underground mines operating today, but a fair amount of anthracite is being recovered from the old culm banks.

Several books which cover various aspects of the rich anthracite mining history include: Robert, Kenneth & Nicole Wolensky's *The Knox Mine Disaster, The Final Years of the Northern Anthracite Industry and the Effort to Rebuild a Regional Economy*, published in 1999 by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission; *The Death of a Great Company, Reflections on the Decline and Fall of the Lehigh Coal and Navigation Company*, by W. Julian Parton, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition published in 1998 by the Canal History & Technology Press at the National Canal Museum in Easton, PA; and, *When the Mines Closed, Stories of Struggles in Hard*

*Times*, by Thomas Dublin, published in 1998 by Cornell University Press. Reading books such as these should spark your interest and enhance your understanding of this fascinating subject in preparation for the Scranton Mining History Conference.

- Johnny Johnsson

## Clark Spence Award

The Clark Spence Award Committee, consisting of Ron Brown, Betsy Jameson and Bob Spude, is pleased to announce that Laurie Mercier is the winner of the Clark C. Spence Award for best mining history book for 2001-2002, for her book *Anaconda*, published the University of Illinois Press.

Publishers and authors are encouraged to submit their nominations for the 2003-2004 award, plus three copies of the book by **January 31, 2005** to:

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

## MHA Journal

The 2004 issue of the MHA Journal was mailed to MHA members in October. If you did not receive your copy, please contact our Journal editor, Eric Clements. The 2005 issue is due out October 2005, and Eric would like submissions for that issue by February 1, 2005. Also, back issues of the Journal can be ordered directly from Eric.

Eric Clements  
Mining History Journal  
Southeast Missouri State University  
Department of History MS2960  
Cape Girardeau, MO 63701  
eclements@semovm.semo.edu

# Iowa Hill Hydraulic Mine

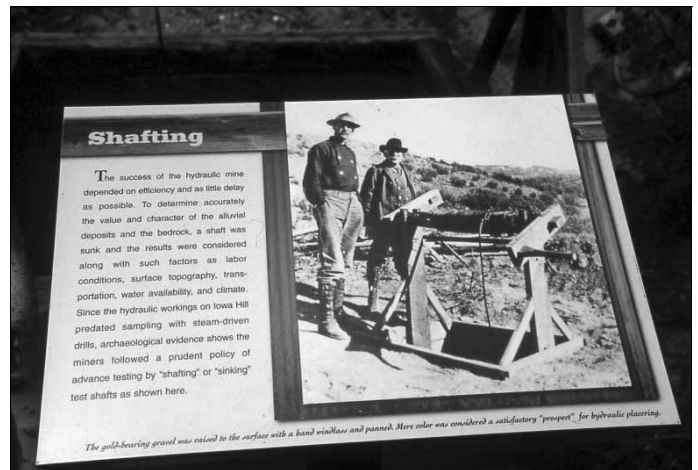
This past summer, the newsletter editors had the pleasure to hike the moderate one-mile loop Iowa Hill Hydraulic Mine trail located near Breckenridge, Colorado. According to the sign located at the trailhead, the Iowa Hill trail winds through 145 years of mining history. Dating back to the Pike’s Peak Gold Rush, virtually all of the key innovations in placer mining (pan, rocker box, long tom, sluice box, undercurrent sluice, water ditch, water flume, “giant”, hydraulic derrick, shafting, and bank blasting) occurred on Iowa Hill. Today, this extraordinary site boasts one of the best hydraulic mining exhibits in the world. Actual artifacts along with numerous interpretive signs (most with historic photographs) are used to describe the various hy-

draulic methods. In addition, the park contains a two-story, log boardinghouse which was built in 1876 to house miners who worked at Colonel A.J. Ware’s Iowa Hill Placer Gold Mine. The Town of Breckenridge owns the historical walking park.

**Directions:** From Blue River Plaza in Breckenridge, take State Highway 9 north (toward Frisco) approximately one mile north to Valley Brook Road. Go left (west) on Valley Brook to Airport Road, turn right (north) onto Airport Road and then, at the Iowa Hill Trail sign, turn left (west) onto a gravel road. Drive a very short distance on the gravel road and park at the entrance to the Iowa Hill Trail.



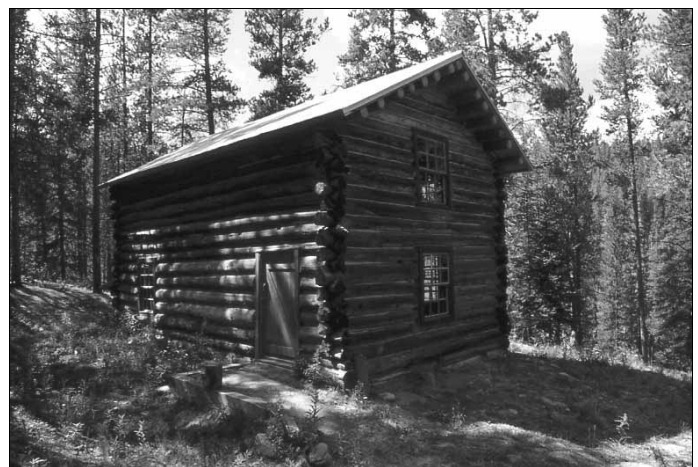
*Shafting exhibit*



*Interpretive sign*



*Hydraulic "Giant"*

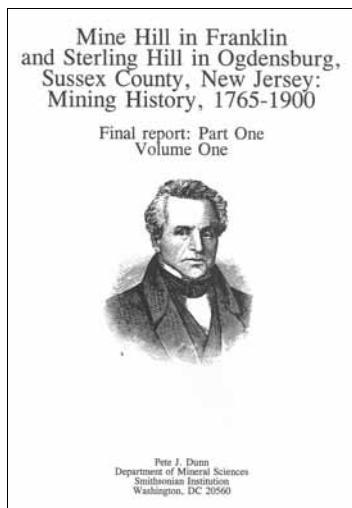


*Iowa Hill boardinghouse*

# New Books

## Mine Hill in Franklin and Sterling Hill in Ogdensburg, Sussex County, New Jersey: Mining History 1765-1900

by Peter J. Dunn



A new publication on the history of iron and zinc mining in Franklin and Ogdensburg has been completed in seven volumes (1102 pages) and is indexed in great detail. The title is *Mine Hill in Franklin and Sterling Hill in Ogdensburg, Sussex County, New Jersey: Mining History 1765-1900* by

Dr. Pete J. Dunn of the Smithsonian Institution. This study complements his earlier 1995-1996 seven-volume scientific monograph describing the mineralogy of these deposits.

These volumes describe in detail the mining history of iron (1765-1882) and principally zinc (1833-1900) at two enigmatic, twin, mineral deposits in northern New Jersey. Mining for zinc continued until 1986, but this study is limited to the years before 1900, with some few 19<sup>th</sup>-century efforts being continued into the early 1920s.

The iron part of the great story details the local iron-mining scene, the context for it in colonial times and during the Revolutionary War, the role of the ironmaster in detail, the iron-centered village, and their interactions, together with the decline of the eastern iron industry as the Midwest deposits were opened, and the emergence of steel.

This new history treatise covers an extraordinary period as the zinc mines were intensely fought over, on the land, under it, and in 40 years of litigation. The study is a documentary one, literally, and

includes a great many documents and quotations, all cited for sources. The principal characters are strong men, including some with ties to railroads (Oakes Ames, Moses Taylor, William Scranton, John I. Blair, and William E. Dodge), as well as men of scientific bent (Samuel Fowler, George Cook, James D. Dana, Benjamin Silliman, and others), entrepreneurs such as Thomas Edison, men of industry (Samuel Wetherill, Charles August Heckscher, John Price Wetherill, etc.), men of politics (from aldermen to members of Congress in Washington, D.C.), and some real scoundrels and rogues (Ames among them). The mining companies are discussed in great detail, together with the growth and emergence of the American zinc industry, the birth and growth of the zinc-paint industry, exports to Europe, the Civil War, the eastern Pennsylvanian zinc interest, 40 years of litigation leading to new mining law which was then carried to the West, the creation of Palmerton, PA., a brand-new smelter town, and much more! The index is 75 pages.

This study is available from **only** two sources, listed below. The cost is \$15 per volume or \$75 per set, plus postage.

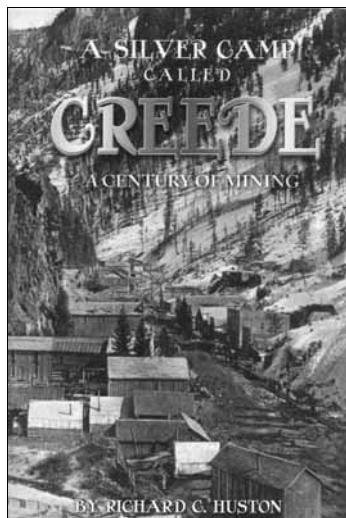
Sterling Hill Mining Museum  
30 Plant Street  
Ogdensburg, NJ 07439  
972-208-7212, SHMM@sterlinghill.org

Franklin Mineral Museum  
Evans Street, P.O. Box 54  
Franklin, NJ 07416  
973-827-3481 info@franklinmineralmuseum.com

Order forms can be obtained from Johnny Johnson via e-mail: johnnyj@qis.net

## A Silver Camp Called Creede, A Century of Mining

by Richard C. Huston



**D**uring the hundred years or so it was in operation, Creede Camp was one of the giants of the mining industry and was responsible for the excavation of approximately 182 miles of underground mine workings. Located near the center of the San Juan Mountains in Colorado, Creede has produced more than 700 million dollars worth of precious metals by the time it was finally shut down for good.

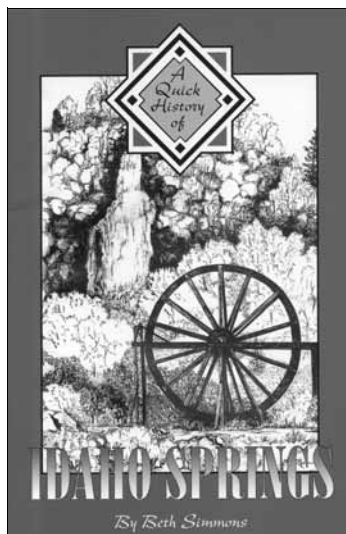
The author, Richard C. Huston, is a retired mining and civil engineer who graduated from the Colorado School of Mines in 1953. His first experiences

in the mining industry were garnered at Creede where he worked as both a mucker and a miner during his summer vacations from college. His time at Creede helped propel him toward an extensive mining career that had him working at job sites all over the globe, including South America, Europe, Russia, China, and Mongolia. Huston's interest in Creede was rekindled during a conversation he had with a fellow retired miner, who expressed concern that Creede's rich mining history might be lost unless it was recorded on paper. Huston decided to do that very thing, and *A Silver Camp Called Creede* is his labor of love, with all the net profits being donated to the Creede Historical Society.

2004, ISBN : 1-932738-10-X, \$32.95, shipping free, 539 pages, 121 photographs and illustrations, 19 maps, size: 6x9, hardbound with dust jacket, Western Reflections Publishing Co., 219 Main Street, Montrose, CO 81401, 800-993-4490, Fax: 970-249-7181, westref@montrose.net, www.westernreflectionspub.com

## A Quick History of Idaho Springs

by Beth Simmons



**A**s the casual observer whizzes by today on Interstate 70, it is hard to imagine Idaho Springs and Clear Creek County as the place in the wilderness where the Colorado Gold Rush of 1859 began. However, tales of men who made millions in the golden era of mining around Idaho Springs are as abundant as the remains of the gold

mines that liberally dot the landscape around the town. In addition, today's visitors still take pleasure

in its hot mineral springs and wonderful scenery.

Idaho Springs is now a National Historic District and much of the legacy of a time gone by still remains in both the town proper and its nearby mines. Beth Simmons writes of another era through the liberal use of historical photographs and reports. Her story makes it obvious why the area has been referred to as "The Buckle of Colorado's Mineral Belt."

2004, ISBN : 1-932738-08-8, \$9.95, shipping free, 86 pages, 46 photographs, 4 maps, size: 6x9, softbound, Western Reflections Publishing Co., 219 Main Street, Montrose, CO 81401, 970-249-7180, 800-993-4490, Fax: 970-249-7181, westref@montrose.net, www.westernreflectionspub.com

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

**FIRST CLASS MAIL**



---

## *Mining History Association*

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. Annual membership: general \$25, international \$35, sustaining \$50, patron \$100, and corporate \$500. Send check or money order payable in U.S. funds to the Mining History Association, Colorado School of Mines Library, 1400 Illinois St., Golden, CO 80401.

Website: [www.mininghistoryassociation.org](http://www.mininghistoryassociation.org)

Submissions for the newsletter are encouraged and should be sent to Mark and Karen Vendl, email: [mkvendl@earthlink.net](mailto: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 any changes to your address to Robert Sorgenfrei, membership, Mining History Association, Colorado School of Mines Library, 1400 Illinois St., Golden, CO 80401.

Ron Brown, president  
Robert Weldin, vice-president  
Ed Hunter, past-president  
James E. Fell, Jr., treasurer  
Robert Sorgenfrei, membership  
Ruth Ann Gardner, council member, 2002-2004  
James McBride, council member, 2002-2004  
James Sell, council member, 2002-2004  
Silvia Pettem, council member, 2003-2005  
Duane Smith, council member, 2003-2005  
Robert Trennert, council member, 2004-2006  
Erik Nordberg, council member, 2004-2006