



Mining History News

June 2006

Vol. 17, No. 2

Thoughts for the Coming Year

When I was contacted about being a candidate for President of this association my initial thought was "surely they dialed the wrong number"; in fact I think my initial comment was "There are a number of other, better, certainly younger, people who you should be considering". Even when convinced they were serious I was still certain that I was not the person for this position. Despite the fact that I have been a member since the beginning (I need to check to be positive but my recollection is I'm a charter member), I do not think of myself as a "mining historian". I came into mining by accident, through a secondary shaft if you will, doing an M.A. thesis on mine labor, specifically, "The Western Federation of Labor in Arizona".

However, it did not take me long to realize that if I was to understand organized mine labor I had to know at least a little about mining and the working conditions of miners. This began a study which has lasted to the present day. The deeper I dug the more I became fascinated with the special working conditions of miners and the arduous life which led them to form unions. Working deep within the bowels of the earth, never seeing the sun, is not a normal existence and I'm convinced requires a special sort of individual, not necessarily unique but certainly different.

Although times and working conditions, and relationships, have changed and the miner of today does not exist in the same physical or cultural environment as the miner of a century ago, I strongly believe that the fabric of mining history must be more than a tale of exploration, geology, mineralogy, technology, machinery, corporations and economics of scale. It must include a prominent thread devoted to miners and their life. And, as I see it, our focus to date has been more of the discovery, development, and refinement

of the mining process than of the role of the human element.

Initially that was not the case. The early history of mining in North America from the 49er on was of the "rugged individual", the hardy placer miner who headed west to strike it rich, the man "off to see the elephant" and who collectively established the rules and conditions under which he labored. Their history has been richly and abundantly told, as has the next phase when lode mining and the dominance of corporate mining became the history of mining. During this process the individual disappeared and the history of mining became one of machinery, technique, and process. The changing life of the miner during this period is described in great detail in our own Ron Brown's *Hardrock Miners: The Intermountain West 1860-1920*.

Early in this period miners began to form together in organizations and unions strong enough to provide for their needs and protect their interests. This is thoroughly described in Lingenfelter's *The Hardrock Miners: A History of the Mining Labor Movement in the American West 1863-1893* and continued in Jensen's, *Heritage of Conflict: Labor Relations In The Nonferrous Metals Industry Up To 1930*. There are a number of other accounts, most more localized, but all providing resources to lay the foundation for more focus on the workers in our coming conferences.

In addition I think the movement eastward in the past two years has been a positive one. Certainly it has broadened my perception of mining and made me more aware of how little I know of the life of the miner east of 100° west longitude. These are the items I want to focus on during the coming year.

Jim McBride, MHA President

Clark C. Spence Award

The Clark C. Spence Award Committee of the Mining History Association is now accepting nominations for the best book published on Mining History during 2005-2006. The committee considers books that meet the documentation and narrative standards set by the works of Clark Christian Spence, professor emeritus, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign.

To be considered, the book must focus on the history of a specific mining region, or a mining-related theme or topic, especially within the American West, or an individual or individuals prominent in the history of American mining. There are no temporal limits on subjects. The book must be published either in the year 2005 or 2006.

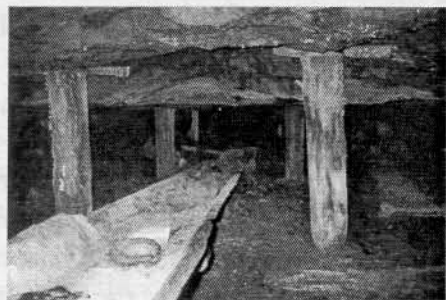
Authors or publishers should send three copies of the nominated work to the Mining History Association office:

Robert Sorgenfrei
attn: MHA Spence Award
Colorado School of Mines Library
1400 Illinois Street
Golden, Colorado 80401

Congratulations to David Wolff for his *Industrializing the Rockies, Growth, Competition and Turmoil in the Coalfields of Colorado and Wyoming, 1868-1914* published by University Press of Colorado, winner of the Clark C. Spence Award for best book in mining history published during 2003-2004.

Support Your Association's Journal

THE MINING HISTORY JOURNAL



The Twelfth Annual Journal of
The Mining History Association

The Editor of *The Mining History Journal* invites you to submit manuscripts on various aspects of mining history that will inform our membership. Manuscripts should be submitted in typescript, double-spaced with endnotes on an IBM compatible computer disk, in addition to a paper copy. Microsoft WORD or Wordperfect formats are required. Illustrations should not be imbedded in the article (their location should be marked in the article text). All articles are required to follow style formats as specified in the Chicago Manual of Style (14th edition). Manuscripts should be submitted to:

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

Call For Presentations

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

National Mining Hall of Fame and Museum Leadville, Colorado

The program committee (Duane Smith, Mark Vendl, Karen Vendl, Ron Brown) for the Leadville conference invites proposals for individual presentations or complete sessions (including chair) on any topic or aspect of mining history. Sessions normally include three papers of twenty minutes each. There are no temporal or geographic limits.

Proposals should include title of presentation, an abstract (not to exceed one page) for each presentation, plus biographical information about each presenter, including mailing/email address. Please note, speakers must register for the conference in order to give their presentations. Please send the written proposals to the program committee chair by **November 30, 2006**.

Duane Smith, Program Chair
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National Mining Museum Acquires Matchless Mine

Leadville Colorado's famous Matchless Mine has been acquired, through a donation, by the National Mining Hall of Fame and Museum.

The Leadville Assembly Inc., a non-profit community service organization, has operated the Matchless as a museum and tourist attraction since 1953. According to Marge Doyle Wagner, Vice Chairman, the burden of running the operation with a small cadre of volunteers has become difficult.

Richard Moolick, Board Chairman of the Mining Museum, expressed his gratitude for the donation of the property. "We will proudly improve and develop the Matchless, under the wing of the National Mining Museum, as a means of continuing to preserve the history of mining in Leadville, Colorado, and the nation," he said.

The Matchless is located at the east end of 7th Street on Fryer Hill. It is adjacent to the Robert E. Lee Mine, which the Museum currently owns.

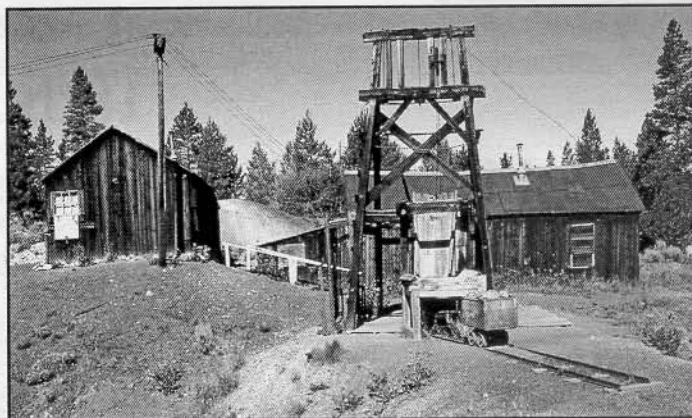
In recent years the Matchless has operated at irregular intervals, causing visitations to drop while expenses mounted. The Mining Museum normally refers several hundred visitors to the Matchless over the course of a summer. The Museum, open all year, attracts more than 24,000 people annually.

Executive Director Sam McGeorge said plans call for the Matchless to be open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. beginning this summer. "We will be open daily while expanding facilities to make it attractive to visitors," he said.

The Matchless, purchased outright by legendary mining king Horace Tabor in 1879 for \$117,000, within a year was producing \$2,000 a day in gold and silver. By 1892 the mine had given up \$1.5 million in silver.

A stonecutter from Vermont, Horace Tabor and his first wife, Augusta, joined the "Rush to the Rockies" gold rush in 1859. While he prospected, she ran a general store supplying the miners and took in boarders.

They made some money, moving from one mining camp to another, including two in California Gulch (near present-day Leadville) before settling in the stirring silver camp of Leadville in 1877.



Matchless Mine, Leadville, Colorado

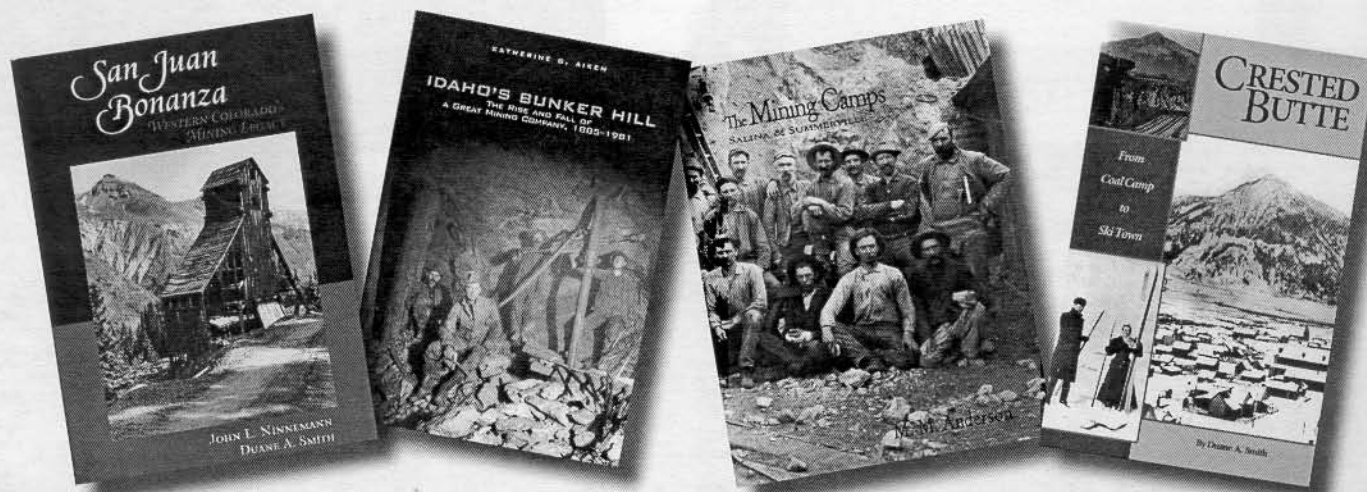
A flamboyant promoter, Horace Tabor grubstaked many would-be miners in exchange for a substantial share of whatever the prospectors discovered. In this fashion he acquired, among others, the "big three" bonanzas of Fryer Hill: the Little Pittsburgh, the Chrysolite, and the Matchless. But he was proudest of all of the Matchless, which he owned outright.

Tabor became a leading citizen of Leadville, was elected Mayor, and built the Tabor Opera House in 1879 for \$31,000. He invested his wealth in mining, banking, gas lights, telephone systems, real estate, newspapers - becoming known as "Colorado's Entrepreneur".

Leadville's son became Denver's patron, buying stock in businesses in 1881, building the Tabor Grand Opera House as part of the Tabor Block, which cost him \$850,000. Horace Tabor also figured in politics, using his wealth and position to be elected Lieutenant Governor of Colorado (1878-1882) and serving a brief, unexpired term in the U.S. Senate in 1883.

Divorcing Augusta, Tabor married an attractive young divorcee, Elizabeth Bonduel McCourt (Baby Doe). Their marriage in the nation's capital created a society sensation. Tabor's empire collapsed with the Silver Panic of 1893, and his health declined, dying in 1899. Baby Doe's frozen body was discovered in the cabin at the Matchless Mine where she lived in March 1935.

Tabor was inducted into the Mining Hall of Fame in 1989.



New Books

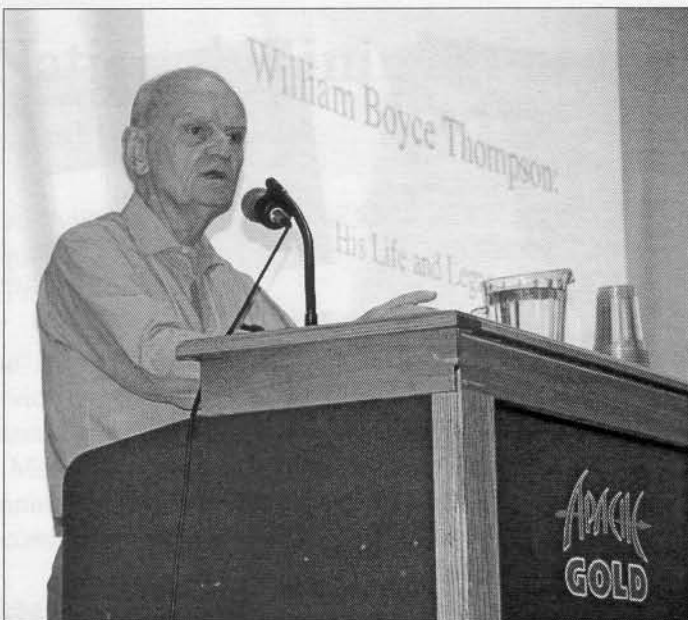
San Juan Bonanza: Western Colorado's Mining Legacy, by John L. Ninnemann (Photographer), and Duane A. Smith (University of New Mexico Press, 2006, 101 pages, 71 halftones, hardcover, \$24.95, ISBN 0-8263-3578-0, 800-249-7737, www.unmpress.com). Colorado's San Juan Mountains are home to some of the most historic, and notorious, gold and silver mining towns in the West: Ouray, Silverton, Telluride, and Creede. Probably above all else, the San Juan Mountains' legacy will be tied to the mining camps and towns that littered their terrain. John Ninnemann's photographs illustrate the text and include the natural, and sometimes harsh, beauty of the area, narrow-gauge railroads, and mountain trails. Duane Smith, recognized historian of Colorado's mining areas, provides the history of the San Juan Mountains, the mining camps, boomtowns, and ghost towns.

Idaho's Bunker Hill: The Rise and Fall of a Great Mining Company, 1885-1981, by Katherine G. Aiken (University of Oklahoma Press, 296 pages, 2005, cloth, \$29.95, ISBN: 0-8061-3682-0, 800-627-7377, www.oupublish.com). For nearly a century, the Bunker Hill Company was one of the premier mining and smelting corporations in the United States. Located in Kellogg, Idaho, in the remote Coeur d'Alene region, Bunker Hill played a key role in the nation's industrial development. But at the same time it was the catalyst for unprecedented labor strife and environmental desecration. And today it is one of the EPA's largest Superfund sites. In this richly detailed history,

Katherine G. Aiken traces Bunker Hill's evolution from the discovery of the mine in 1885 to the company's closure in 1981.

The Mining Camps: Salina & Summerville, by M.M. Anderson (Junction House, Boulder, Colorado, 2005, 448 pages w/ 223 illus., \$37.00 + \$1.74 tax (Colorado residents only, shipping add \$4.00 (media mail) or \$9.00 (priority mail) Limited Edition printing of 500 copies, ISBN No. 0-9772230-0-0). To order mail check to Marti Anderson, 175 Gold Run Road, Boulder, CO 80302, 303-449-2262, mmasalina@msn.com. This newly published book about two of Boulder County, Colorado's mining camps represents twelve years of research and describes the lives of the men, women, and children who lived in the camps.

Crested Butte: From Coal Camp to Ski Town, By Duane A. Smith (Western Reflections Publishing Co., 2005, 215 pages, softbound, \$13.95, ISBN: 1-932738-06-1, 800-993-4490, www.westernreflections.pub.com). Like many old mining communities, Crested Butte began life in the feverous excitement of a Colorado gold and silver mining camp, only to see the rich discoveries quickly disappear. In order to survive, Crested Butte refocused its efforts toward mining huge local deposits of top-quality coal. Through both good times and bad, coal mining in Crested Butte was carried on until the 1950s. Then Crested Butte slid quickly into "ghost town" status, only to be revived a decade later by the ski industry.



James McBride, MHA President and conference organizer, gave the luncheon talk about Boyce Thompson.

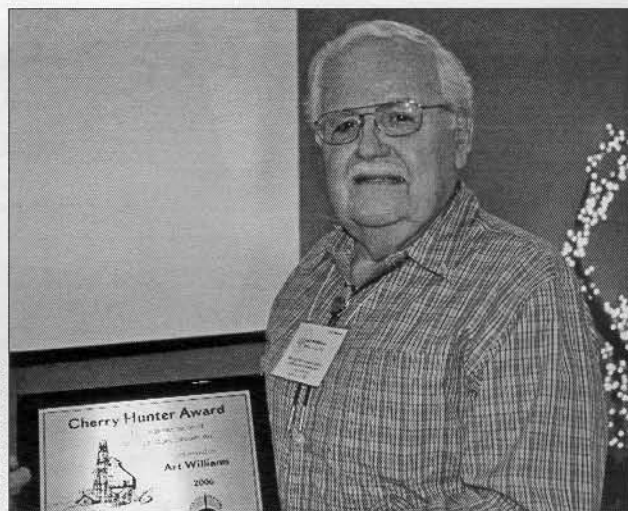
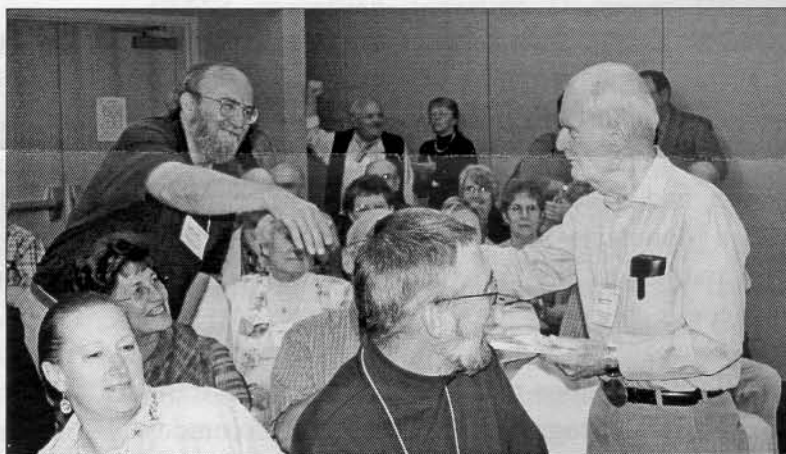


Photo: Silvia Pettem

Art Williams was awarded the the 2006 Cherry Hunter Award.

2006 MHA Conference Globe, Arizona



James McBride receiving the Rodman Paul Award from Bob Spude.



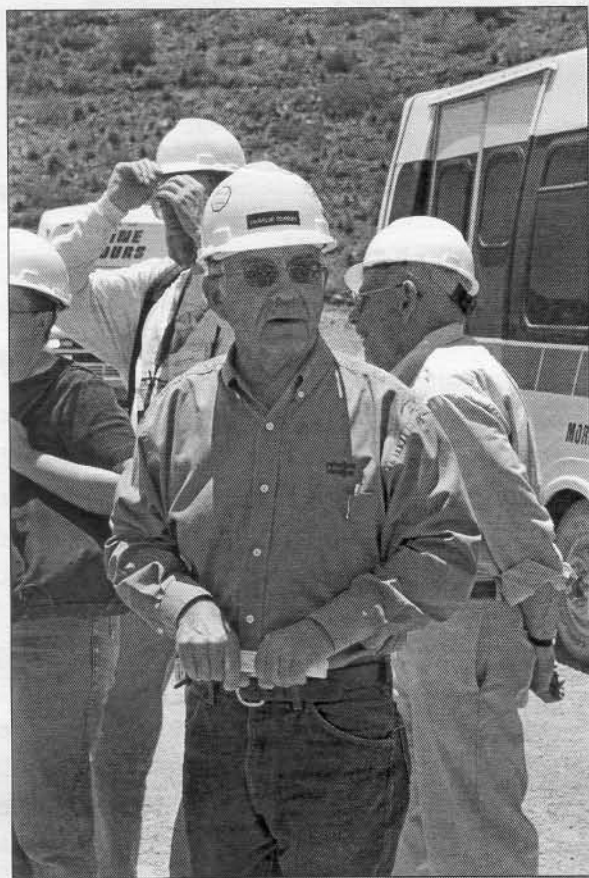
Photo: Silvia Pettem

Morenci mine processing plant.

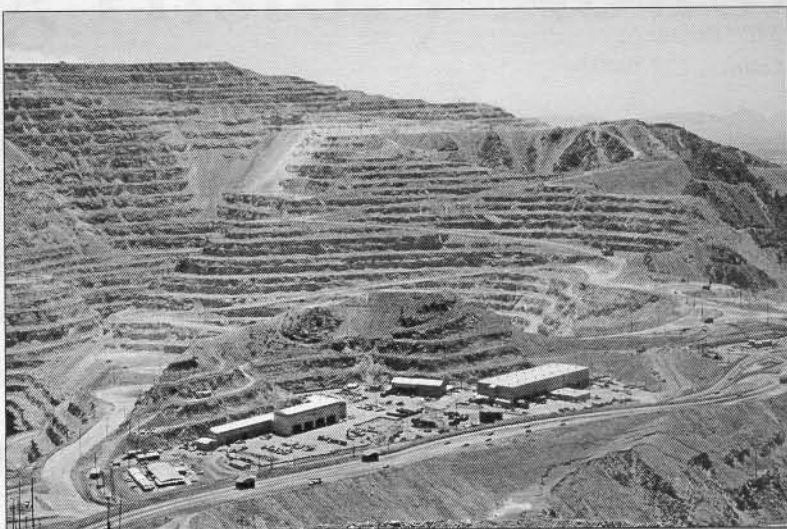


Photo: Silvia Pettem

Overlook at Morenci mine.



Charlie Torres, our Phelps Dodge tour guide.



Morenci open pit copper mine.

Morenci Copper Mine Tour



Slivia Pettem shows off her new vehicle.