



Mining History News

Newsletter of the Mining History Association

March 2006



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In Search of the Perfect Prospector

During my early field years, 1960s and 1970s, I frequently depended on prospectors to serve as guides, especially in mining districts that were not familiar to me. Most of those I became acquainted with were hard working, adamantly independent, rugged individualists, who loved the out-of-doors. A few were dishonest and nearly all exaggerated the size and worth of their "discoveries". Characteristically, they were dedicated, one might even say 'driven', to explore for mineral deposits that they clairvoyantly knew were out there somewhere. I met very few young or married prospectors; most were middle-aged and possessed the physical endurance of a marathoner. Having been "stung" a few times by promoters, claim jumpers, and "officials" who administer the public lands, prospectors tended to be suspicious of all outsiders; I learned very quickly not to say things like, "I'm with the government and I'm here to help you." In general, prospectors are an interesting and unique group and I would like to tell you about all of those I have known, but time and space will allow for just one.

Wilbur Wiles was unique; he had all the qualities but none of the vices of a typical prospector. Therefore, in my mind, he will always rank among the very best. It was probably the summer of 1967, or at least that was the year I started the mineral appraisal of the 1.5 million acre Idaho Primitive Area and Vicinity (IPA)¹. When I inquired about local prospectors, Wilbur's name always came up, along with seemingly mythical tales about his prospecting and cougar hunting adventures. It was several weeks before I finally meet the legendary mountain man and it probably took even longer to gain his confidence. He was a raw-boned, six-footer, probably in his late 40's and a man of few words, especially around women or

strangers. He had a cabin near the Big Creek Ranger Station, just outside the west boundary of the IPA. His cabin, dog pens and horse corral were almost as clean and well-kept as my mother's kitchen. He had another cabin on Monumental Creek, near his opal mine, situated well inside the IPA boundary. His area of prospecting included Stibnite, Thunder Mountain, the old mining camps around Big Creek and Yellow Pine, as well as a lot of under-explored areas that stretched eastward to the Middle Fork of the Salmon River. It is a region of favorable geology, impressive histories of past metal production (Sb, Hg, Au, Ag, W & Cu), and good potential for the discovery of new mineral deposits. Wilbur was a smart veteran prospector who was physically adept and familiar with most of the western half of my study area. What else could I ask for? I had found the "perfect prospector", in a "perfect area" for the discovery of new ore deposits.

Wilbur and I had some similar interests and experiences that made for an amiable relationship. He was trustworthy and honest beyond modern concepts of those terms. As a guide, Wilbur would not take money for showing me his mining claims, nor did he think it proper to show me claims that belonged to someone else. His concept of a day's pay was \$20, and since the government required \$100 worth of annual assessment work, Wilbur reasoned that was at least 5 days of hand-digging of test pits and trenches (5 days @ \$20/day = \$100) for each of his unpatented claims. He treated every other task and relationship with the same degree of integrity. I learned to accept whatever Wilbur told me as being the honest truth, as he knew it.

My project was not the only scientific study that needed Wilbur's help. Maurice Hornocker, a zoologist, and

Wilbur, the ex-cougar hunter, had a working relationship that lasted from 1964-1969. It was during the winters of those 5 years that Dr. Hornocker did his mountain lion study, which was patterned after the grizzly bear study pioneered by Drs. John and Frank Craighead^{2,3}. Maurice's study area was in a steep and rugged part of the IPA, that required the skills of a mountain man like Wilbur, plus the tracking instincts of his two redbone hounds. You can imagine Maurice having similar thoughts to my own, "he had found the perfect man and the perfect location for his study." Cougars are best hunted in the winter to allow for better tracking and easier treeing---a convenient circumstance that allowed Wilbur to have his summers free to prospect and work at his opal mine. Of course, the areas with the best cougar populations are those that are remote and roadless, with steep granite crags and deep canyons---and that's where Wilbur Wiles stumbled upon a "secret" mineral discovery.

Near the end my allotted time for the economic appraisal of mineral deposits in the IPA and vicinity, Wilbur showed me a piece of high-grade fluorspar (95% CaF₂) he had chanced upon while tracking cougars. His description that followed indicated to me a deposit of potential economic size and grade. I asked him where he had found it and he said, "In a very rugged, isolated part of the IPA, and you will never find it." That was an obvious challenge, but I didn't take it as an insult because Wilbur knew we were facing an unrealistic deadline, and besides I had officially been told not to look for new deposits. Congress was adding new study units as a buffer zone around the original IPA, faster than we could appraise their mineral potential. Some thought this was a scheme to keep the Geological Survey and Bureau of Mines from adequately exploring the interior of the IPA for undiscovered mineral deposits. I asked Wilbur if he had staked his new discovery and he said, "No, I didn't have time." That is when I made Wilbur a proposition that no typical prospector would be able to refuse. I told him, "In the morning, at first light, you and I will take the helicopter into this remote site and you can help me map and sample the deposit, and I will help you can stake the necessary mining claims. As the discoverer and sole valid claim owner you will have access to my maps, assay data and economic appraisal." Wilbur thought for awhile and then said, "If you do all of that, won't you have to publish your results?" I said, "Yes, of course" Wilbur said, "In that case, I can't do it". Frustrated because, (1) the offer I had made to him was probably against several government regulations, (2) I had never made such an offer to any other prospector and, (3) I was sticking my neck out for him, because I knew he would not lie and I trusted him. I asked, "Why?" Wilbur said, "Well, if you publish your

results, someone will eventually want to build a road to the deposit and I don't want that to happen." I said, "But as the sole claim owner, you would have control over that, and besides Congress is almost certain to classify all this area as Wilderness, with no roads allowed." To that, Wilbur said, "I can't take that chance. The area is prime mountain sheep country---rugged and isolated---I can't take the chance that someone might build a road to it."

Wilbur was right, we never found his secret mineral deposit. If it was because of lack of time or respect for Wilbur's wishes that kept us from finding it, you will never know. I did, however, ask Wilbur for a description of the deposit which I published, without speculating on its location or its potential value⁴. That was the first and only time I published "hearsay" information about a mineral deposit, but you don't question the honesty and integrity of the "perfect prospector."

Bob Weldin, February 7, 2006

References Cited: 1) Cater, F.W., et al., USGS & R. D. Weldin, et al, US BuMines, 1973, Mineral Resources of the Idaho Primitive Area and Vicinity, Idaho, U. S. Geol. Survey Bull. 1304, illust., 431 pp. 2) Hornocker, Maurice G., 1969, Stalking The Mountain Lion- To Save Him, Natl. Geog., Nov. 1969, Vol. 136, No. 5, pp. 638-655. 3) Craighead, Frank & John, 1966, Trailing Yellowstone's Grizzlies by Radio, Natl. Geog., Vol. 130, No. 2, pp. 252-267. 4) Weldin, R. D., et al, 1973, Economic Appraisal, Idaho Primitive Area and Vicinity, Idaho, USGS Bull. 1304, pp. 52-390; Fluorspar, pp. 62-63.

2006 Election Results

Vice President

Lee Swent, Piedmont, California

Council

Barbara Clements, Cape Girardeau, Missouri
Mark Langenfeld, Madison, Wisconsin
Bob Otto, Spearfish, South Dakota

Nominating Committee

Jeremy Mouat, Athabaska, Alberta
Duane Smith, Durango, Colorado

Globe Conference

By now you should have already been planning your trip to the Mining History Association annual conference. This year we will meet in Globe, Arizona. A registration form is included in this newsletter listing the activities and events of the conference. A conference schedule is also included providing the program and activities planned for the period of June 1 - 4, 2006 in the rich copper mining region of Globe and south central Arizona. Your early registration would be greatly appreciated. Please note that a few of the tours require early registration so that final clearance, approval and accommodations can be obtained. Direct conference questions to James McBride, by e-mail at james.mcbride@asu.edu or by telephone at (480) 838-2825.

Registration opens Thursday, June 1 at 2 P.M. in the motel wing hallway at the Apache Gold Casino Resort. A map is included in the newsletter providing general directions to Globe and the Apache Gold Casino Resort. If you are arriving by airplane in Phoenix, when leaving Sky Harbor Airport, take I-10 east to Highway 60 (exit 154) and then take Highway 60 east to Globe. Continue through Globe and as you leave town Highway 60 turns north. Stay to the right and take Highway 70 to the Casino. The Apache Gold Casino Resort is located about six (6) miles east of Globe on Highway 70. Allow about two hours for the trip from Sky Harbor to Globe. If you are coming via Phoenix there are places you might want to leave time for visiting coming to and from Globe. The Arizona Mining and Mineral Museum will have free access to the museum and is offering special behind-the-scenes tours to those who identify themselves as MHA members. For the tour ask for Nyal Niemuth. The museum is at 1502 West Washington Street (the northwest corner of Washington and 15th Avenue). From Sky Harbor Airport go north to Washington Street and then west to 15th Avenue. Washington is a one way street most of the way. Free parking is available on the north side of the museum. From the museum, the easiest route to Globe is to drive south on 15th Avenue one block to Jefferson Street, go east on Jefferson (a one way street) to 7th Avenue. Take 7th Avenue south to I-10 and go east. The museum may be contacted at (602) 255-3795. If calling within Arizona their toll free number is (800)446-4259 and its web site is www.admmr.state.az.us

Enroute to Globe on Highway 60 you will pass by two interesting sites worth visiting: the Boyce Thompson Arboretum and the adjacent Picket Post House Museum.

The Picket Post House was the home of William Boyce Thompson while he developed the Magma mine in Superior. He built the adjacent arboretum to house his collection of exotic plants from all parts of the world. Arboretum hours are 8 A.M. to 5 P.M. but they stop admitting people at 4 P.M. so that they have sufficient time to view the plant collection. The admission fee is \$7.50 for adults and \$3 for ages 5-12. There is a guided tour at 1 P.M. daily. The entrance to the arboretum is at milepost 223 on Highway 60. They can be contacted at (520) 689-2811 or <http://arboretum.ag.arizona.edu>. The Picket Post House is the next exit east of the arboretum. Built in 1923 by William Boyce Thompson, and known originally as the "Castle on the Rock," it has been restored to its original state. It is 7,021 sq. ft. in size and cost over one million dollars to build. The grounds around the house are different than the grounds of the arboretum. The tour should take about 1 1/2 hours.

Normally tours of the Pickett Post House are not offered in June, but if enough of our members are interested, they will offer us a special tour. The fee is \$10 for adults and \$5 for ages 5-12. There is no limit, but they conduct the tour in groups of 22 that leave every 15 minutes. We can arrange the special tour for either Sunday June 4 or Monday June 5. To arrange this I must know N/L/T **May 1** who would like to take a tour and which day they would prefer. The tour fee will be collected at the house.

SPECIAL TOUR REQUIREMENTS

Several of the tours have special requirements. These are the T. Roosevelt Dam, Phelps Dodge Rod Plant, Pinal Creek Remediation, and Morenci Mine Tours.

The T. Roosevelt Dam tour on Sunday is limited to 25 people. T. Roosevelt Dam was completed in 1911 and is the largest masonry dam in the U.S. It provides most of the water and electricity for the Salt River Valley (Greater Phoenix). The T. Roosevelt Dam tour has dress, physical condition, and security requirements. You must wear closed-toe shoes. Because much of the tour will be outside you should wear a hat or cap with visor. You must be able to walk up and down extended flights of stairs. **Most important you must have a security check prior to the tour. This means you must send a copy of your driver's license or other picture ID along with your registration for the tour.** To give Salt River Project officials enough time to check your status I must have your registration and identification N/L/T **May 6**. The first 25 peo-

ple to have requested this tour, and included payment and identification by that date (based on postmark date), will be accepted for the tour. I will notify those accepted as soon after May 6 as possible, so please include some means of contact, preferably e-mail, so that I may do this.

The tour of the **Phelps Dodge Rod Plant**, because of the nature of the plant, requires that you wear closed-toe shoes, long pants and long-sleeved shirt. **There is a maximum number of thirty (30) people allowed on this tour.** The first thirty people to submit requests and payment (based on postmark date) for this tour will be allowed. Again include some means, preferably e-mail, for me contact you.

The Pinal Creek Remediation Tour will be partly outdoors, and you should wear sturdy shoes, no open toes, and no shorts. This tour can accommodate fifty people so we do not anticipate a cutoff of registration.

The Morenci Mine tour will be a carpool tour on Sunday, which will take all day. The distance from Globe to Morenci is about ninety miles. Phelps Dodge is providing lunch and a guide for a special behind-the-scenes tour, which will last about 3 to 3 1/2 hours. All going must wear closed toe shoes and long sleeve shirt and pants. **There is a maximum number of thirty (30) people allowed on this tour.** The first thirty people to submit requests and payment (based on postmark) for this tour will be accepted. Again, include some means of contact (preferably e-mail) so that I may notify those accepted.

Primary lodging for the conference is the Apache Gold Casino and Resort (a Best Western Motel) which is giving conference attendees a special rate of \$55.00 plus tax for the conference. They have 147 rooms with sixty (60) rooms blocked out for us until May 1st. For those RVing they have an excellent RV Campground adjacent to the Casino with a daily rate of \$12.00. If you are a golfer their course is rated one of the best public courses in Arizona. Contact the Resort at **1-800-APACHE-8 (1-800-272-2438)** or **www.apachegoldcasinoresort.com**. Our reference number is **801486**.

Additional accommodations are available in Globe at the following motels:

Travelodge
2119 W Highway 60, Globe
(800)578-7878; (928) 425-7008
www.travelodge.com
Group rate. Single \$58.50, double \$67.50

Comfort Inn at Round Mountain Park
1515 South St, Globe
(877) 424-6423; (928)425-7575
www.choicehotels.com

Days Inn
1630 E Ash St, Globe (Hwy 60 and Prickley Pear)
(800) 329-7466; (928) 425-5500
www.daysinn.com

Super 8 Motel
637 E Ash St, Globe
(800) 800-8000; (928)425-7124
www.super8motel.com
Group rate Single \$54.99+tax, Double \$59.99+tax

Motel 6
1699 E Ash St, Globe
(800)466-8356; (928) 425-5741
www.motel6az.com
Single \$42.99+tax, Double \$49.99+tax

Copper Hills Inn & Suites
4805 E Highway 60, Miami
(928) 425-9232

El Rancho Motel
1300 N Broad St, Globe
(928) 425-5757

El Rey Motel
1201 E Ash St, Globe
(928) 425-4427

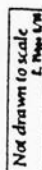
Pinal Mountain Country Inn
1244 S. Jess Hayes Rd
(928)425-2562
www.pinalmtinn.com Minimum stay one week

Bed and Breakfast locations are:

Noftsgar Hill Inn
425 North St, Globe
(877) 780-2479; (928)425-2260
Check web site for complete information w/pictures. Received excellent recommendations from locals on this location.
www.noftsgerhillinn.com

Cedar Hill B&B
175 E Cedar St, Globe
(928)425-7530
www.cedarhill.biz

The Hide Away
7719 S Ice House Canyon, Globe
(888) 692-3369; (928)402-0454



Conference Agenda

THURSDAY, JUNE 1

2:00 pm - 5:00 pm. Conference Registration: Apache Gold Casino Resort
5:30 pm - 8:00 pm. Reception and Barbeque: Gila County Historical Museum

FRIDAY, JUNE 2

8:00 am - 5:00 pm. Conference Registration: Apache Gold Casino Resort
7:30am - 8:15 am. Introduction and Welcome (Geronimo Room)
8:30am - 9:45 am. Session 1: Globe-Miami - Session Chair - Duane Smith (Geronimo Room)
 Keith Long, *Life-cycle of a Technological System: The Inspiration Copper Mine, Miami, AZ*; Jim McBride, *Globe: Arizona's Gibraltar of Labor*; Bill Hawes, *Miami Life*
10:15am - 11:45 am. Session 2: Arizona - Session Chair - James McBride (Geronimo Room)
 James Andrews, *The Magma Mine Disaster, Superior, AZ*; Richard Francaviglia, *Arizona's Copper-Hauling Railroads in Historical Perspective*; Bob Spude, *E. B. Gage, Wyatt Earp and the Tombstone Mines: A Discussion about Fame in Arizona's Mining Camps*
12:00pm - 1:45 pm. Presidential Lunch James McBride on Boyce Thompson
2:00 pm - 3:15 pm. Session 3: Considering the Career of James Douglas - Session Chair - Roger Burt (Geronimo Room)
 Bill Culver, *The Education of a 'Practical' Mining Man: James Douglas in Quebec to 1875*; Jay Fell, *James Douglas: From Phoenixville to Phelps Dodge: A Career in Crisis, ca. 1875-1885*; Jeremy Mouat, *James Douglas and the Rise of American Mining Engineering*
3:30 to 5:00pm . Session 4: Mining in the Southwest - Session Chair - Ron Limbaugh (Geronimo Room)
 Donald Buddecke, *Big Bend, Texas: Shafter silver, Terlingua quicksilver, and Jim Bowie silver scam*; Phylis Martinelli, *Hidden Out in the Open: European Spaniards in Arizona's Copper Mines, 1900-1930*; Andrew Johnston, "Quicksilver Landscapes: Spanish and British Colonial Structures in Mercury Mining in California, 1840-1890."
5:00 pm - 5:30 pm. Business Meeting (Geronimo Room)
7:00 pm. Awards Banquet- Robert Bigando on Early Globe

SATURDAY, JUNE 3

7:30 am—8:15 am. Board Meeting (small room next to buffet dining area)
8:00 am - 12:00 pm. Registration
Concurrent Sessions
8:30 am - 9:45 am. Session 5: Mining in the West - Session Chair - Bob Weldin (Cochise Room)
 Rudy Davison, *Bulkley Wells, A Glamorous Man.*; Ed Raines, *Telluride Minerals: Rare, Unusual, and Often Unrecognized in the early Colorado Mining Districts*; Eric Nystron, *Models in the Courtroom: Visual Tools in the Jim Butler vs. West End Consolidated Apex Suit, 1913-1918*
8:30 am - 9:45 am. Session 6: Mining in General -Session Chair - Dawn Bunyak (Geronimo Room)
 Fred Barnard, *Ingots: Footprints in Metal-Mining History*; Peter L. Siems, *Daniel Tilas: a Swedish Administrator of Mines and the first Mining Geologist*; Sally Zanjani, *On the Verge of Fortune: The Groshes and the Comstock Lode, 1853-1857*
10:15 am - 11:45 am. Session 7: Historic Preservation and Remediation - Session Chair - Eric Clements (Geronimo Room)
 Chip Parfit, *97 Years of Mining History at the Gold Road Red Top Mining Co., Goldroad, AZ*; Montgomery Watson, *HERZA, Removing the Old Dominion Waste Dump*; Jay Spehar, *Pinal Creek Clean-up*
Lunch: On your own.
Afternoon Tours:
2:00 pm - 5:00 pm. Pinal Creek Clean-up. Bus. Limited to 50 persons
2:00 pm - 5:00 pm. Phelps Dodge Rod Plant. Bus. Limited to 30 persons
2:00 pm. Walking Tour of Bars and Brothels in Globe. Limited to 50 persons.
Dinner: On your own.
7:00 pm. Special Event - Miami

SUNDAY, JUNE 4

Tours:
8:30 am - 5:00 pm. Morenci Open Pit Tour. Your own car. Limit 30 persons.
8:00 am - Noon. Roosevelt Dam. Bus. Limited 25 persons.

MHA 2006 Conference Registration Form

Globe, Arizona, June 1-4, 2006

Attendee Information (Please print or type)

Today's Date: _____
 Name (for name badge): _____
 Spouse's Name (for name badge): _____
 Address: _____
 City / State / Zip / Country: _____
 Telephone: _____ Email: _____

☐ I am a current member of MHA (check mailing label for "2006")

Conference Registration

Event	Cost per Attendee	Number Attending	Total per Event
Conference Registration: MHA members (no charge for spouse)	\$35*		
Conference Registration: Non-Members (no charge for spouse)	\$40*		
Thursday Reception	\$10		
MHA Presidential Luncheon	\$16		
MHA Annual Banquet	\$24		
Saturday Tour Pinal Creek Remediation	\$28		
Saturday Tour Phelps Dodge Rod Plant See dress requirements	\$28		
Saturday Walking Tour Globe	\$5		
Sunday Tour Roosevelt Dam See special requirement for security clearance	\$30		
Sunday Tour Morenci Open Pit Mine Car Pool See dress requirements	\$10		
Total Payment			

* \$5 discount for registrations post-marked 4/29/06; children 12 and under are included with parents' registration and half-price for tours and meals.

Payment Information

Make checks payable to: Mining History Association (All payments must be made in U.S. dollars only)
 Mail completed registration form and payment to:

James D. McBride
1223 E. Manhattan Drive
Tempe, AZ 85282-5525

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

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Mark and Karen Vendl, newsletter editors

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

Submissions for the newsletter are encouraged and should be sent to Mark and Karen Vendl, 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 any changes to your address to Robert Sorgenfrei, membership, Mining History Association, Colorado School of Mines Library, 1400 Illinois St., Golden, CO 80401.