



Mining History News

Quarterly Newsletter of the Mining History Association

A Publication of the Mining History Association

Winter 2020

MHA Update / Elko Goes Virtual

The Elko Planning Committee recently met to discuss the ability to safely conduct a meaningful in-person conference in Elko in June of 2021. It probably comes as a shock to no one that it is impossible to predict whether the current vaccines are effective against the recently identified COVID-19 variant and, if so, whether the current vaccines will be widely distributed in time for attendees to travel in June. Factoring in the inability to predict whether we would even be permitted to gather at the Red Lion Hotel & Casino and whether any tour providers or tour hosts would be ready or willing to receive us unfortunately led the Committee to recommend moving the Conference to an alternative format.

The Council and the Planning Committee will continue to investigate the best platform and format for hosting a virtual conference. At this time, the plan is to host the virtual conference between June 9th and 12th and the conference is expected to include a number of the research presentations and may include an on-line social hour and, perhaps, even a few virtual tours of the area. It will be interesting to see if allowing virtual attendance will increase participation from International participants particularly with the International Mining History Conference having cancelled their conference.

The Spring Newsletter will have more information on the registration for the Conference. Given the on-line format for the conference, the deadline for submitting research presentation proposals has been extended to March 15th. If you have previously submitted a proposal, please contact Eric to discuss technology needs for a presentation in a virtual world or to remove your proposal from consideration if, for any reason, you are unwilling to present in a virtual format.

The MHA also needs to complete the elections process. Candidate biographies for the offices of Vice-President; MHA Council and Nominating Committee begin on page 4. The ballot is found on page 5. If you are a member of the MHA, your ballot must arrive by February 28, 2021 to be counted.

In the meantime, please check out the MHA Nuggets information on page 2 for more information on MHA virtual presentations. Feel free to visit and like and follow our Facebook Page “Mining History Association” and / or visit our web page (www.mininghistoryassociation.org) for additional updates on the conference

Stay safe everyone.

More MHA Nuggets!

We will continue the MHA Nuggets on Zoom in 2021. We are still sorting out the agenda, but it will be 7:00 - 7:20 pm Central, for social time and the 20-30 minute presentation will begin at 7:20. There will be time for questions at the end. The videos will be posted on the MHA YouTube channel, Mining History Association. The passcode for all meetings is 290357.

Tuesday, 19 January - "Leadville Members of the Denver Club, 1880-1890" Meeting #:852 0695 6279

Tuesday, 16 February - "Gold Mining Heritage in India: Kolar Gold Fields, Karnataka state, India"
Meeting #: 890 8847 8687

Tuesday, 16 March - Meeting #: 824 2985 4716

Tuesday, 20 April - Meeting #: 882 7888 7726

Updates will be posted in the MHA Facebook Group.

Call for Additional Presentations

Mining History Association Conference
Elko, Nevada – June 2021

The Program Committee of the MHA invites additional proposals for individual presentations or complete sessions (including a chair) on any topic or aspect of mining history. If your proposal was accepted for presentation to the 2020 Conference, you do not need to resubmit your proposal but we do ask that you contact Eric to indicate whether you are available to make your presentation virtually at the 2021 Conference and indicate any special technology needs as we plan for a virtual conference.

Sessions normally include three papers of twenty minutes each. *All Presenters must register for the conference.* There are no temporal or geographic limits to topic material. Presentations that address mining history of the Elko County area or Nevada in general are, however, particularly welcome given the location of the Conference.

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 send the written proposals via email attachments to Erik Nystrom (eric.nystrom@asu.edu) by March 15, 2021. Submission by email is required.

2023 and Beyond

The current plan is to hold the 2022 Conference in Birmingham as planned. No decision has been made on the location for the 2023 Conference. Ordinarily the location would be discussed at the Council Meeting during the Annual Conference. The Council needs a firm commitment to host the conference including some details on potential cost, host facilities and potential mining related sites / tours in order to decide between potential proposals. For more information on potentially hosting, please contact Jay Fell (james.fell@ucdenver.edu)

Candidates for Office – Mining History Association

Vice President / President-Elect:

John C. Stewart. A native of Lincoln, Illinois, John Stewart received his Bachelor's Degree in History and his Law Degree from the University of Illinois. John started his legal career in Chicago, but after only a few years heard Colorado calling and has now called Denver home for 40 years. His first job in Denver was with a mining company, and John developed a deep interest in mining history. While still practicing law, John decided to add a Master's Degree in History from the University of Colorado at Denver. His thesis topic became the subject of his first book (so far), a biography of mining millionaire Thomas F. Walsh. When not engaged in either the law or writing, John spends as much time as possible with his family (wife Carol, daughter Emilie, granddaughter Madeleine), and volunteers at his church, his Rotary club, and with various groups who promote the understanding of history and historic preservation.

MHA Council:

Robert McQueen, MS RPA has a graduate degree in Industrial Archaeology from Michigan Tech University and for over 25 years has specialized in studying and interpreting Nevada's mining heritage. Mr. McQueen is employed as Principal Investigator with Summit Envirosolutions, Inc., a private cultural resources management firm in Reno. Rob has worked on a broad range of inventory and data recovery projects in California, Nevada, Utah, and the Midwest. He has authored or contributed to hundreds of cultural resource reports, has designed interpretive materials, hosted historic tours, and has written several articles and a book on Nevada's Cortez Mining District. He is a Registered Professional Archaeologist and has given talks at numerous professional conferences and to the general public.

Lynn Langenfeld, now retired, spent most of her career as a vice president and trust relationship manager with U.S. Bank in Madison, Wisconsin. She received her B.A. in Finance and banking at the University of Wisconsin – Madison. With her husband, Mark, she enjoys researching and documenting the quickly vanishing heritage of the Upper-Mississippi Valley Zinc/Lead District of Wisconsin, Illinois and Iowa. Lynn has been active in the Mining History Association for 27 years and served on the Association's Nominating Committee (1994) and its Council (2006-2009). She and Mark also organized the annual conferences in Galena, Illinois (2013) and Marquette, Michigan (2019).

Eric Clements, expatriate Coloradan and long-time member of the association, has edited its Mining History Journal since 2001. Besides occasional contributions to that serial, he is the author of *After the Boom in Tombstone and Jerome, Arizona: Decline in Western Resource Towns* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2003, paperback 2014), and "The One-Chance Men: The Hastings [Colorado] Mine Disaster of 1917," *Colorado Heritage* (Spr. 2017).

Ron Brown studied with Clark Spence at the University of Illinois. He was a member of the interdisciplinary group that organized the MHA, served on the Executive Committee in the early years, is currently a member of the Editorial Board and chair of the Spence Awards Committee.

He is the author of books on mining labor and medicine in mining communities. He is a former president of the MHA and has attended most of the annual conferences. He continues working on copper mining entrepreneurs Daniel Jackling and James Douglas. He is a professor of history at Texas State University in San Marcos, Texas, and is learning about on-line instruction in the era of COVID. Though Ron is willing to serve on the board, he encourages members to vote for his younger colleagues as the Mining History Association needs to pass to new “working stiffs.”

Nominating Committee:

Steve Hart is a geological engineer with 45 years in government employment and private consulting. His education at the Colorado School of Mines and Texas A&M University was followed by 12 years with the U.S. Geological Survey and Colorado Department of Natural Resources. His work as a reviewer of Mined Land Reclamation and Radioactive Source Material permit applications led to consulting on radioactive waste cleanup projects at uranium mines and mills, Superfund lead-zinc silver smelter remediation projects, and coal mine subsidence mapping. Steve’s work has taken him to every Western state, including Alaska, and to Asia and South America. In the late 1990’s, Steve taught a graduate course in “Case Histories in Engineering Geology and Hydrogeology” as a part-time adjunct at the Colorado School of Mines. He retired from URS Corporation (now AECOM), the world’s largest engineering design firm, and then worked as an independent consultant through 2010.

2020/2021 Mining History Association Ballot

**Mail Ballot by February 28, 2021 to:
Mining History Association
P.O. Box 6356
Boise, ID 83707**

Vice-President / President Elect (vote for one)

John C. Stewart _____ (write in)

Council (vote for up to four)

Robert McQueen _____ (write in)

Lynn Langenfeld _____ (write in)

Eric Clements _____ (write in)

Ron Brown _____ (write in)

Nominating Committee

Stephen Hart _____ (write in)

Another reading opportunity while shut-in

Taconite: New Life for the Minnesota Iron Range, by the Erie Mining Company History Project Team, published by the Donning Co., ISBN: 978-1-68184-244-8, hardcover, four-color, available from the St. Louis County Historical Society, \$45, includes all taxes, shipping, and handling,
<https://www.thehistorypeople.org/productpage/erie-mining-book-1>

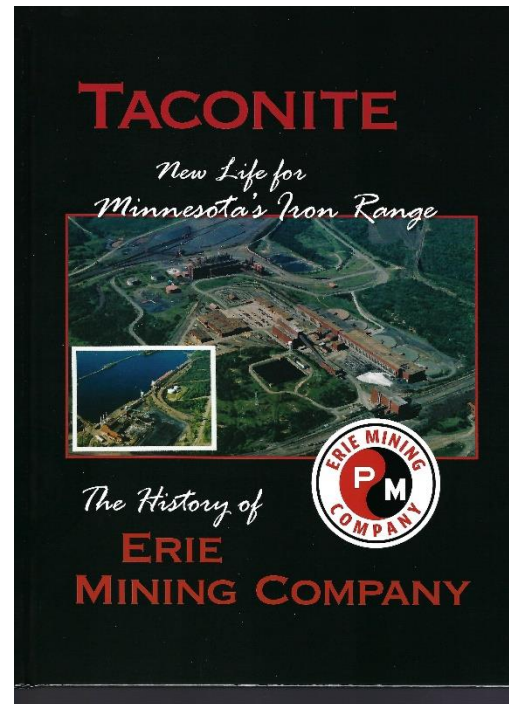
This book is a history of the Erie Mining Company in Minnesota. Written by former employees over a period of five years, it tells the story of Erie Mining, from its formation in 1940 to its closure in 2001, and examines the vast amount of pioneering work involved in developing an economically feasible method to mine and process a previously worthless low-grade iron ore called taconite.

By turning taconite into a high-quality product, the development of Minnesota's mineral resources was made possible. This ensured Minnesota's continued prominence as the major supplier of the iron ore critical to the nation's security and the advancement of its standard of living.

Research using samples of taconite from the eastern Mesabi Range began in 1912 at the University of Minnesota by Edward Davis and others. This proved that the fine iron particles could be separated from the taconite at a laboratory level. However, it would be up to mining companies, such as Pickands Mather, to develop the commercial-size equipment necessary for full-scale mining.

Beginning with the early experiments, the book follows the construction of both the Erie Preliminary Taconite Plant and the Commercial Plant. Using the oral histories of former employees, the book details the operations of the plant, its growth and expansion, the union and people of Erie Mining, and the closure of the company. A gatefold includes the key operating statistics for the operating life of the mine/plant as well as a timeline of key events from inception to closure.

“It was a joy,” said Dan DeVaney, an Erie history project team member. “Some of the guys were hourly, some were salaried. Luckily, we had someone from every department at Erie, so we had knowledge of every department when we started writing the book.” Ronald Hein, who led the Erie history project, noted that goal was to make sure the younger generations had the opportunity to learn more about the rich history at Erie and be inspired by it. The St. Louis County Historical Society in Duluth handled the financial aspects of the project, and local historians Marvin Lampaa and Pam Brunfelt reviewed and critiqued the project.



An Alabama Sojourn

Tired of being locked in, my wife and I gambled on a short vacation this past December. Having just completed a writing seminar on Civil Rights at Minnesota State University – Mankato, we settled on the Birmingham area to explore first-hand some of the sites related to the Civil Rights Movement (at least those open due to the holidays and COVID). I took the opportunity to visit a few mining history related sites as well.

As noted below, the Fairfield Works recently re-started steel making. Without permission to be on the property, I settled for a quick shot of the Fairfield Southern working between the Fairfield Works and Tubular Operations. Other potential iron related sites include the American Cast Iron Pipe Company (ACIPCO) and U.S. Pipe and Foundry in Bessemer.



We didn't spend much time poking around active industrial sites as my goal was to visit the Tannehill Ironworks (fka Roupes Valley Ironworks) and Iron and Steel Museum of Alabama. Unfortunately, the Iron and Steel Museum was closed due to COVID. The Museum's outdoor exhibits include a slag pot car from the Ensley Works and casting equipment including charging pans, pouring spouts and molds.

The three furnaces at Tannehill date to between 1859 and 1862 and could produce close to 22 tons of pig iron a day with most of the output destined for the Confederate arsenal at Selma. Union forces attacked the site in 1865. The restored Tannehill Ironworks site is significant as not only a surviving example of early iron making in the Birmingham area but also as the location of experiments in iron making using Alabama's more common red ores in 1862.



We finished out the mining portion of the trip with a tour of the Sloss Furnaces at Birmingham. The original Sloss Furnace was the second furnace to be blown in in Birmingham. The site underwent significant mechanization between 1927 and 1931. Production lasted at the site until 1970. The site is opened a museum in 1983.



Steel Making Returns to Fairfield, AL

The electric arc furnace at U.S. Steel's Fairfield Works clicked to life this past October. The EAF project was shelved in 2015 due to unfavorable market conditions. The EAF project cost \$412 million.

Start up of the EAF returns steel making to the Fairfield Works after a long delay. The Fairfield Works at one time employed as many as a 2,000-person workforce. The Fairfield Works expected to build to a 700-person work force.

The Anthracite Heritage Foundations Announces Events for Heritage Month

Joined by many co-sponsors, the Anthracite Heritage Foundation announced many programs honoring Anthracite Mining Heritage Month. WVIA Public Radio will be posting links on their page as all events will be offered online. January 17th will include a Memorial Mass for the Knox Mine Disaster. The National Industrial History Museum will host a presentation on Anthracite Today: A Photographic Narrative on January 19th. King's College will host a presentation "Remembering The Lattimer Massacre of 1897. The Luzerne County Historical Society will feature a program on Family Life in the Coal Region on January 22. The Anthracite Heritage Museum will host their Annual Knox Mine Disaster Commemoration on January 23. AIME-Anthracite Division will host a presentation on the Carnegie Hero Medal in NE Pennsylvania Mining on January 25. The Lackwanna Historical Society will host a presentation on the Miners of the DL&W RR during the Civil War Era on January 27. For more information, please visit the event sponsors pages or visit paenvironmentdaily.blogspot.com for a link to all events.

Sinking of Third Shaft Resumes at Turquoise Ridge

Progress continues on the construction of a third shaft at Turquoise Ridge. The \$300 million project is expected to be operational by 2022. The new shaft will improve efficiency by reducing haul time and improve ventilation within the workings. Shaft number 3 is expected to bottom out at 3,250 feet and will feature a surface cage with the ability to move 30,000 pounds of gear. There will also be two skips and a cage that can hold three people.

Nevada Copper Resumes Operations

The Pumpkin Hollow Mine at Yerington, NV, returned to operation following a COVID-19 related shutdown in August with an initial shipment of 1,322 tons of concentrate. Development on the site continues with copper brought to the surface through the ventilation shaft while the main shaft and hoist are completed. 150,000 tons of stockpiled ore was awaiting shipment by early August. In August, Pumpkin Hollow also announced the meeting of development milestones including final configuration of the East Main shaft and installation of the permanent production hoist system.

Tailings are dry stacked on a liner to save water in the Mason Valley. Eight to ten trucks of loaded concentrate are expected to be shipped once full production status is reached. The concentrate will be trucked 65 miles from Yerington to Nevada Copper's Tahoe Reno Industrial Center for transloading for rail shipment.

Needing additional financing to complete the ramp-up phase of operations, Nevada Copper and KfW IPEX-Bank entered into terms for a new \$15 million loan.

Mining History Association
P.O. Box 6536
Boise, Idaho 83707

Upcoming Events

Mining History Association Conference
Virtual – Elko Themed
June 2021

Australasian Mining History Conference
Burra, South Australia
September 27 – October 1, 2021

Western History Association Conference
Portland, Oregon
October 27-30, 2021

St. Barbara's Day
December 4, 2021

International Mining History Conference
TBA

The *Mining History News* is published quarterly by and for the members of the **Mining History Association**. Submissions for the newsletter are encouraged.

Deadlines: Spring issue: February 15th
 Summer issue: June 15th
 Fall issue: September 15th
 Winter issue: December 1st

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 Rebecca Lange, Membership Chair, at the following address:

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