
1997 Review of Mining Archaeology and Historic Preservation

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It is well known that mining archaeology and historic preservation sometimes have different goals, practitioners, and constituencies. The mining initiative of the Historic American Engineering Record (HAER) of the National Park Service, however, illustrates the potential of a cooperative relationship between the two. This summer, HAER is recording the Mariscal quicksilver works in Big Bend National Park in Texas, from which I have just resumed. Architects, architectural historians, and photographers are documenting the physical remains of a large Scott furnace and associated mercury mining and processing technology with detailed architectural drawings, photographs, and archival research. But in addition, NPS park archaeologists are mapping the archaeological remains of the nearby settlement of mostly Mexican miner and mill workers. HAER's goal of documenting this nation's industrial past for posterity has been expanded to include not only the physical remains of industrial technology but also the remains of the industrial community - the houses they lived in, the roads and pathways along which they traveled, and the refuse that contains information about their behavior and lifestyles.

As in previous years, information about current research in mining archaeology and historic preservation comes mostly from reports of archaeological field schools, papers presented at professional conferences, and published journal articles and books. Unpublished technical reports making up the world of "gray" literature remains, unfortunately, a mostly unknown source of additional information. Archaeological field schools actively studied the physical remains of mining during the year. They include a field school conducted by the University of Alaska, Fairbanks, at the site of Dishkaket, which includes historic Athabaskan and Euroamerican mining

components dating to the 19th and early 20th centuries, in the Innoko Wildlife Refuge. Also, the University of California, Riverside, sponsored a field school in the Teels Marsh region of Mineral County, Nevada. Excavations focused upon the physical remains of the first full-scale commercial borax mine in the American West, where the legendary Francis Marion "Borax" Smith got his start in 1871. In addition, Dickinson State University (North Dakota) conducted an archaeological field school at the site of a 19th century Chinese miners camp in Idaho's Payette National Forest. Outside the American West, Michigan Technological University conducted a summer field school in archaeological methods at the site of the 1840s Carp River forge in the Marquette Iron Range. In a similar project the previous summer, the State University of New York at Plattsburgh sponsored a field school at a bloomery forge site at Clintonville in the eastern Adirondacks of upstate New York.

Other reports of mining archaeology during the year come from a variety of federal and state government agencies, universities, and the private sector. The Alaska state office of the Bureau of Land Management reports inventory and evaluation work on mining-related sites along the Denali Highway in the southeastern portion of Alaska's interior, including the last three standing wooden buildings in the town of Denali. Denali National Park and Preserve sponsored archaeological research on a 1920s prospector's rock cabin on the upper Sushana River. Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park also sponsored archaeological research at the site of the Pantheon Saloon in Skagway. California Department of Parks and Recreation reports a program of archaeological excavation at the site of the power house of the Mohawk Quartz Mill at Plumas Eureka State Park. The power house contained a Knight water wheel and two or more steam engines. Elsewhere in the world,

Trinity University completed excavations at the site of a 17th to early 18th century inn and other residential structures at a thermal spring near the mining center of Potosi, Bolivia. In Victoria, Australia, Graham Pernam is recording the remains of the site of the Bombay Mine, which supplied all of Britain's antimony during World War One.

Published reports of mining archaeology come from several places. *Madam Felix's Gold: The Story of the Madam Felix Mining District, Calaveras County, California* (The Calaveras County Historical Society and Foothill Resources, 1996), by William P. Fuller, Jr., Judith Marvin, and Julia G. Costello, is an excellent example of how to combine archaeology, oral history, and documentary history into a popular book. The University Press of Florida published a book, edited by Peter Schmidt, on *The Culture and Technology of African Iron Production*. Graham Connah reports (British Institute of Eastern Africa Memoir 13) archaeological and documentary research on the salt producing site of Kibiro in Uganda and the role of salt production in the rise of the Bunyoro Kingdom. The journal *Archaeometry* included articles on the Early Bronze Age tin processing in Anatolia and the results of chemical analyses of metal ores from prehistoric sites in Cyprus, Britain, and Ireland.

Finally, several mining archaeology papers were presented at the annual meetings of professional societies. The Society for Historical Archaeology sponsored a session on cultural resource compliance at the California Gulch Superfund Site, Leadville, Colorado, at its 1997 annual meeting in Corpus Christi, Texas. Another session on industrial landscapes included papers on landscapes associated with Post-Medieval metal industries in England, placer mining in California, the Ohio Trap Rock Mine in Michigan's Upper Peninsula, and the charcoal iron industry in northern New York state. Also presented at the meeting were papers on water conveyance systems in three nineteenth century Idaho placer mining districts and on early Spanish mining in southern Texas. Papers presented at the Society for California Archaeology's 1997 annual meeting at Sonoma State University in Rohnert Park, California, included a paper on mining landscapes. The Great Basin Anthropological Conference at King's Beach, California, included papers on saloon archaeology and the archaeology of gender in Virginia City, Nevada and on the 20th century mining town of Wahmonie, Nevada.