
1998 Review of Mining Archaeology and Historic Preservation

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The current year brought with it plenty of evidence that mining archaeology and historic preservation activities are alive and well. Most of the indications come from papers presented at professional conferences, published journal articles and books, and unpublished reports coming from a variety of federal and state government agencies, universities, and the private sector. Several professional conferences and journals included papers or reports on mining archaeology. The annual conference of the Society for Historical Archaeology, for example, included papers on the archaeology of historic copper mining in Michigan and frontier saloons on Nevada's Comstock Lode. Mining archaeology papers given at the annual meeting of the Society for American Archaeology ranged from the remote to the recent past. They included papers on goldsmiths in Medieval Europe, mining claims and the landscape learning process, metal production and exchange in the Mesopotamia colony of Hacinebi in Turkey, iron production in early Viking Iceland, and early copper production in Albania. The journal *Current Anthropology* reported the discovery of an extensive specular hematite mine complex in the Kalahari Desert of Botswana in southern Africa. The mine dates to A. D. 800-1000 and is associated with a hunter-forager settlement.

Archaeological field schools at mining sites during the year included Michigan Technological University's continuing excavation of the Carp River Forge in Negaunee, Michigan. The forge began in the late 1840s and smelting the first iron ore from the Marquette iron range, beginning the iron industry in Michigan's Upper Peninsula.

Several cultural resource management companies continued to play an active role in the archaeological

study of mining sites. Kautz Environmental Consultants, Inc. (KEC) of Reno, Nevada, is typical. They completed a two year archaeological and historical study of the Eureka Mining District in north central Nevada. The study focused on mining settlements dating between 1870 and 1890, the district's boom period. KEC also completed an archaeological survey of mining sites in the Cloverdale Mining District in the southern Shoshone Range of Nevada. The survey documented the townsite of Golden, which was occupied between 1906 and 1913. Finally, they updated the National Historic Landmark documentation for the Gold Rush town of Columbia, California.

Published reports of mining archaeology come from several places. The journal *CRM* published an entire issue (volume 21, number 7) on "America's Mining Heritage," which contained a wide variety of articles on mining history, archaeology, and historic preservation. Another issue of *CRM* (volume 21, number 9) included an article on the Klondike's Gold Rush heritage. Most recently I received a copy of a book about mining archaeology at a colonial site in Nicaragua, published in 1996 by the UNESCO Instituto Nicaraguense de Cultura and written by Patrick S. Werner. The book's title is *Los Reales de Minas de la Nicaragua Colonial y la Ciudad Perdida de Nueva Segovia*. (The Royal Mines of Colonial Nicaragua and the Lost City of Nueva Segovia.). Finally, the journal *Montana* devoted an issue (volume 48, number 3) to the important historic preservation issue surrounding the city of Butte. As with my earlier reviews, of course, this summary is not intended to be complete or exhaustive but simply to illustrate the variety and range of activities in mining archaeology and historic preservation.