Mining History News

Quarterly Newsletter of the Mining History Association

A Publication of the Mining History Association Fall 2024

Presidential Pickings: **Your *Mining History Journal***

Well, you knew you'd get this sermon from me, didn't you? Given my dual role this year, it seems worthwhile to use one of my pickings to talk about the purposes and practices of the *Mining History Journal*. The journal has had three editors from its origination in 1994: John Townley, Chrisopher Huggard, and me (hereafter: we). It has evolved some over its thirty years—adding as a stalwart Lysa Wegman-French's excellent annual bibliography of publications in mining history, for example—but in most ways has remained consistent in its outlook and habits.

An initial determination made by the organization's elders and the journal's editors concerned the scope of the journal's coverage. Was it to confine itself to "American" mining history or should it serve larger purposes? Given the composition of the association's membership, thus the journal's readers, its focus has been mostly on North American mining, but its mandate has always been "any subject in mining and metallurgical history in any era or region." This breadth sometimes taxes the capacities of its editor, but leavens the journal's content for the better.

Another early decision was to maintain the quality and rigor of the journal's offerings. The *Mining History Journal* is peer reviewed. Each manuscript is submitted to a reviewer with relevant expertise who returns a judgment to publish, to publish after revisions, or to decline to publish. That said, the journal's acceptance rate is fairly high, perhaps 80 percent. That is partly due to the high quality of the manuscripts our contributors submit, but also to the journal's eclectic nature.

For a journal serving as many constituencies as the association itself, "rigor" is complicated. Roughly speaking, the association consists of persons involved with mining (either within the industry or academically), anthropologists, and academic, preservationist, and amateur historians. Historians generally do not write with scientific rigor, nor do scientists necessarily follow the conventions of historical writing. Since we value and try to include as many perspectives on mining history as possible, this can create some interesting contrasts within an issue, but that is the price of a genuine diversity of perspectives and opinions.

So, how does a manuscript become an article in the journal? Once vetted by a reviewer, it passes to me as editor. My mother—an M.A. in English and a copyholder at Doubleday before she was a mother—once said that an editor needs "the soul of a file clerk." True. A degree of ignorance is also useful, at least to one's authors. What an author wants is an editor with a degree of knowledge and sophistication about the author's subject comparable to that of the publication's general audience. Points confusing or obscure to that audience will thus confuse the editor and can be clarified before reaching that audience.

From the author's perspective, the editor's role is to discover mistakes and potential misunderstandings. From the journal's perspective, the editor's role is to maintain consistency—

not of style or opinion, but of formats, usage, citation, and such. Per its masthead, the journal adheres to "formats specified in the *Chicago Manual of Style*." In practice, however, what might be called a *Chicago*-house style has emerged. This has occurred because I've evolved certain conventions for the journal over a quarter of a century that *Chicago* has abandoned during that interval; or because of a need for standards particular to our journal's subject matter (the U.S. Bureau of Mines' *Dictionary of Mining, Mineral, and Related Terms* is our shadow style guide); or, in a few instances, because no definitive resolution exists.

As an example of the last, I once spent much of an afternoon trying to determine whether or not one should capitalize the M in "Vulture Mine" or "Carlton Mill." *Chicago* offered no decisive answer, nor did perusal of numerous publications in the field of mining history discover any consistency on the subject. Eventually, I decided by fiat that the journal's house style would be to capitalize, as is standard with such as Brooklyn Bridge or Tabor Hotel.

In part to provide some oversight of such editorial fiats, the MHA Council established an Editorial Board for the journal in 2007. The board discusses and resolves the important strategic questions that the journal occasionally faces—e.g., the scope of its subject matter, its participation in online databases. The board also helps to resolve tactical problems that the journal's editor is not competent to decide by himself. And it decides the annual winner of the John M. Townley Award for the best article in each issue of the journal, an evaluation in which the editor does not and should not participate. Members of the original 2007 board were Ron Brown, Jay Fell, Ron Limbaugh, James McBride, Jeremy Mouat, Silvia Pettem, and Duane Smith, joined over the years by Mark Vendl, Mark Langenfeld, and Paul Spyhalski. My thanks to you all, and to our manuscript and book reviewers.

The magic of production begins when Barbara Clements, our compositor deluxe, renders the edited manuscripts and illustrations into journal articles. Her artist's eye—and her patience and fortitude while jousting with the computer compositing program—and our authors' excellent illustrations produce a historical annual of great visual interest. We have always emphasized illustrations as key elements in interpreting mining history, perhaps the most important reason for the journal's full-sized format.

The most important contributors to the process, however, first and last, are you the members, who write most of the articles. The range and depth of your knowledge is impressive. As I mention every year at our conventions, your first-person accounts are especially valuable: your experiences in the industry, in environmental remediations, in preservation efforts, in education. If you've never considered yourself an author but have such a story to tell, we can work together to do so, either through written drafts or via interviews, as we did to recount Ruth Gardner's pathfinding career in the 2015 issue.

Whether your subject is scholarly or personal, please keep those manuscripts coming. It is my privilege to serve as your journal's editor. And thank you for the education.

Eric Clements,
Cape Girardeau, Missouri

Your Membership Status

There have been many questions about paid memberships and membership status. You can find your paid through membership year on the mailing labels for this newsletter and the MHA Journal. It is the number under your name. You are paid up through December of the year shown.

Get Yourself to Gunnison for the MHA Annual Conference, June 11-15, 2025

"Gunnison Country: Gold, Silver, Uranium, Molybdenum, Coal, Granite, and Marble"

The importance of minerals from the Gunnison Valley in the late 19th-century cannot be overemphasized. Although gold and silver brought the first prospectors into Ute lands on Colorado's Western Slope, the region also provided gray Aberdeen granite for the Colorado State Capitol and Yule marble for the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. It was also a major metallurgical-coal mining district for the Colorado Fuel & Iron Company, so important to CF&I that the mine at Crested Butte was called simply "The Big Mine". In 1952, coal mining ended in Gunnison Valley just as a new boom began--uranium! The ore was mined near Cochetopa Canyon, then milled in Gunnison at the location of the current Gunnison County Airport. In 1977, a new mineral was discovered just west of Crested Butte at Mt. Emmons--molybdenum. But opposition from locals in the by-then ski town of Crested Butte delayed the start of mining by Climax Molybdenum. The conclusion of that decades-long battle between the company and the town came on August 29, 2024 when a mineral extinguishment was signed by Mount Emmons Mining Company.

The town of Gunnison developed as the center of commerce for the many mining districts and locus of two narrow-gauge railroad lines from the 1880s to the 1950s. In 1880, there were no railroads west of the Continental Divide in Colorado. Only two years later, Gunnison had two railroads–the Denver & Rio Grande Western from Salida over 10,800' Marshall Pass and the Denver, South Park & Pacific through the 11,600' Alpine Tunnel, the world's highest at that time. Both railroads were pushing toward the rich gold and silver districts of the San Juan Mountains, but only one would make it. For the DSP&P, coal mines near Gunnison were the end-of-the-line, while the D&RGW continued to haul passengers through the Black Canyon of the Gunnison until 1949 and coal from Crested Butte to Pueblo until 1952.

Today, the region's mining past can be seen in Lake City, Pitkin, Crested Butte, Ruby-Irwin, Gothic, Anthracite, Quartz, Crystal, Whitepine, and Powderhorn and railroad towns like Gunnison, Sargents, and Cimarron. And in its people, many descended from those prospectors, metal miners, and coal miners, even in the ski resort town of Crested Butte.

During the 2025 MHA Annual Meeting in Gunnison, several of the historic mining districts will be included on field trips. The Lake City-Henson Creek silver-lead district and the Lake City caldera in the San Juan Mountains will be visited on the Wednesday field trip, with a tour of the preserved Ute-Ulay mine and mill. The Aberdeen Quarry that provided the State Capitol's gray granite will be toured on the Thursday morning field trip. The historic CF&I coal mining town of Crested Butte and adjacent site of the now-extinguished Mt. Emmons moly project will be visited on Saturday afternoon. And the CF&I "model" company town of Redstone and recent coal company town of Somerset, together with the Yule Marble Quarry will be visited on the Sunday field trip.

Call for Presentations

35th Annual Conference Mining History Association
Gunnison, Colorado - June 11-15, 2025

The 2025 Program Committee of the Mining History Association invites proposals for individual presentations or complete sessions (including a chair) on any topic or aspect of the history of mining, its associated industries, and its communities. There are no temporal or geographic limits to topic material, but presentations that address mining history near the Gunnison area or Colorado in general are, however, particularly welcome given the location of the conference. Sessions normally include three papers of twenty minutes each. All presenters must register for the conference. Proposals should include the title of the presentation, an abstract (not to exceed 500 words) for each presentation, and biographical information including mailing/email address for each presenter. Please send the written proposals via email attachments to Eric Nystrom at enystrom@unr.edu by Friday, January 3, 2025. Submission by email is required.

The program committee also gives out two conference travel grants of $750 each to defray the costs of attendance at the MHA conference. Current students (including graduate students) and former students are potentially eligible for a travel grant. To be eligible, former students need to have graduated within three years of their application for funding. ***Travel grant recipients must give a presentation at the conference***. To be considered for a conference travel grant, submit a cover letter addressed to the MHA Gunnison Program Committee, along with your proposal by Friday, January 5, 2024 to enystrom@unr.edu. In that cover letter, the applicant should express their interest in the grant opportunity, what they hope to gain out of their conference attendance, and what significance their presentation is to mining history as a field.

The Ute-Ulay Mine on Henson Creek (Part of Wed. Tour)

MHA Officers and Nominations

Each year, the Nominating Committee is charged with nominating a Vice President / President-elect, a number of positions on the Council, and at least one position on the Nominating Committee. Peter Maciulaitis, Bill Carlson, and Karen Jass currently service as the MHA's Nominating Committee.

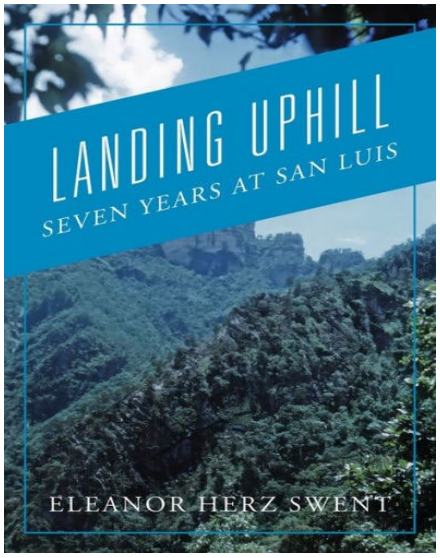
To survive, the MHA needs volunteers like you that bring their own expertise and ideas forward for the good of the organization. The Council meets face-to-face once a year at the annual conference and via email or zoom the rest of the year, as needed.

The Nominating Committee is currently accepting nominations for MHA Vice President taking office in Gunnison and assuming the Presidency in Pittsburg, KS; two positions on the MHA Council (each are three-year terms); and one position on the Nominating Committee (also a three-year term). Please consider nominating someone or putting yourself forward as a candidate.

If you have any interest in filling any of the open positions, please contact Peter Maciulaitis (pmaciulaitis@aol.com) with any questions you may have about the positions. He will also gladly accept any nominations you have to offer.

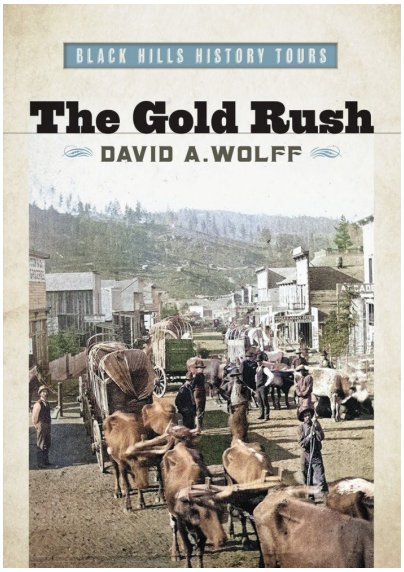
Recent Publications by MHA Authors

Eleanor Herz Swent, ***Landing Uphill: Seven Years at San Luis,***Outskirts Press, 2024. 208 pages, Hardcover, $42.95, Paperback, $28.95,



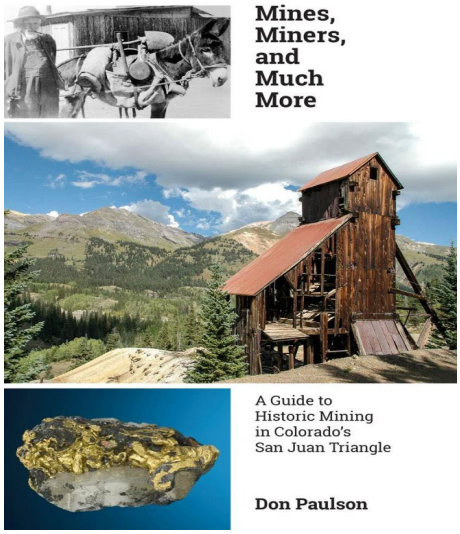
Award-winning historian Eleanor Swent writes about going as a young bride in 1947 to a remote silver mine in Tayoltita, Mexico, landing in the mountains inland from Mazatlan, in a canyon with a tilted landing strip. Drawing primarily from letters to family and friends, she recounts the challenges and rich rewards of life in a Mexico unseen by most visitors - a Mexico of deep personal connections across cultures and generations. She weaves together her letters and later recollections, her husband's oral history from UC-Berkeley, other first-person accounts, and historical documents to present a history of silver mining in Mexico, early Spanish settlement of California, and her own experience as a newcomer. She describes operations at the three mines where her husband worked, and her visits to them: San Luis, Santa Rita, and Contra Estaca, accessible only by riding a mule for several hours.

David A. Wolff, ***Black Hills History Tours: The Gold Rush***, South Dakota Historical Society Press, Pierre, SD, 2024, 204 pages, 49 photos, 16 maps, paperback, $19.95, ISBN: 9781941813508



The Gold Rush is the first of six books in the forthcoming *Black Hills History Tour* series by MHA member and Black Hills State University Professor Emeritus David A. Wolff. Designed as a self-guided tour, this volume takes readers through the Black Hills, following the path of the gold rush, from the discovery of gold at French Creek to Deadwood Gulch. Besides covering the rush, this location by location history discusses boomtowns, mining companies, mining scams, camp violence, Black Hills' myths, and just about every other historical event that is encountered along the tour's path. The book concludes by summarizing how the gold rush changed over time and how the current mining activities in the region can be seen as directly connected to the events that began in 1874.

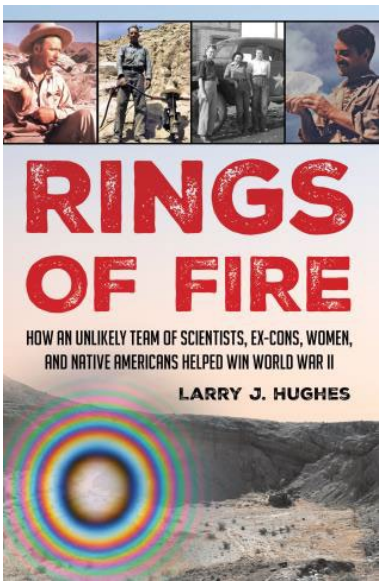
David Paulson. ***Mines, Miners and Much More: A Guide to Historic Mining in Colorado's San Juan Triangle***, 2nd edition, Ouray, CO: Ouray County Historical Society, 2024, 176 pages, paperback, $24.95, ISBN 978-0-9747932-3-8



Colorado's San Juan Triangle between Silverton, Telluride and Ouray produced more than $9 billion, adjusted to today's currency, in gold and silver during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The second edition of the book *Mines, Miners and Much More* paints a broad, colorful picture of the history of gold and silver mining in the San Juan Triangle towns of Ouray, Silverton and Telluride. It is intended for those who want to see, explore and understand the historic sites remaining from the glory days of Colorado mining. The second edition includes two additional chapters: The Environmental Legacy of 19th Century Mining and Preserving the Mining Heritage of the San Juan Triangle. There are also more photos in the new edition as well as new material.

The book can be purchased directly from the author. Please contact Daivd at drpaulson@ouraynet.com for pricing information with shipping for your location.

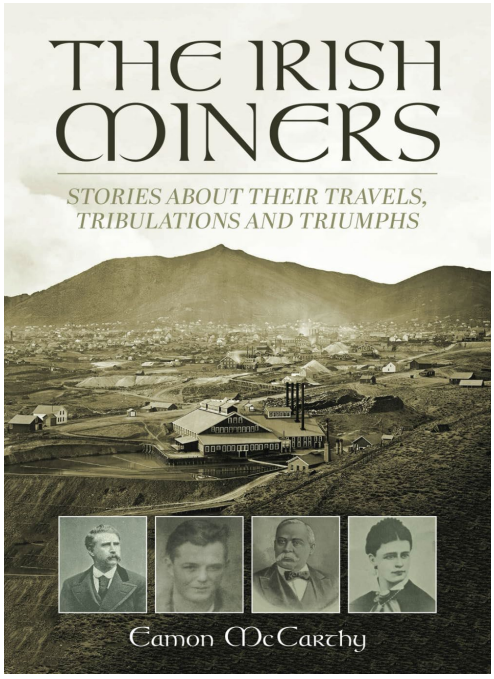
Larry J. Hughes, ***Rings of Fire: How an Unlikely Team of Scientists, Ex-Cons, Women, and Native Americans Helped Win WWII***, Rowan & Littlefield, 2024, 600 pages, hardback, $34.95, ISBN 9780811773898



Rings of Fire is the compelling story of American ingenuity, determination, and grit – told through the personal stories of the amazing people who transformed insight into gunsight. From scientists to ordinary Americans to drifters and ex-cons characterized as "the underbelly of America," they crossed cultural barriers to tackle a shared crisis. Included among the many personal perspectives are those of a calcite prospector, various miners, a mining claim holder, and those involved in processing calcite crystals.

Teamed together, they overcame enormous personal obstacles to produce ring sights for Navy ships, aircraft, and Army bazookas. And afterwards, their product went from aiming the guns of war to the cameras of peacetime – for television and on the helmets of skydiving videographers. And then, all the way to the Moon, aiming NASA's space cameras, culminating with perhaps the most influential photograph of all time, Earthrise.

Eamon F. McCarthy, ***The Irish Miners: Stories about their travels, tribulations and triumphs***, amazon.com, 2024, 310 pages, paperbook or ebook, $19.99 for paperback and $9.99 for ebook, ISBN:9798326437198



The Irish miners were not as well known as the Cornish, but for much of the 19th century, they were the largest ethnic group in the American mining workforce. They were prospectors, developers, miners and owners as well as the leaders of the emerging organized labor movement. It took many over a year and multiple difficult journeys to get to the mines, so mobility and ambition were dominant character traits. While generally thought of as wild, single men, most were settled family providers in search of the American dream. Their stories are in turn epic, tragic, sad, funny and amazing. Some achieved great success, a circumstance that the contemporary media ascribed to 'the luck of the Irish'. Their economic contributions to America, Australia and other countries where they migrated were enormous and deserve recognition.

The Nuggets program restarted in August and will continue through November before taking a short break for the holidays. Barbara is still looking for presenters in 2025 so please reach out to her if you are interested in presenting. Topics can include a visit to a historic mining site or town or an interesting little topic that you happened to find out about. Email Barbara at mininghistoryassociation@gmail.com if you would like to present an MHA Nugget or if you have questions about the process.

The dates and meeting ID for the remaining sessions in 2024 are listed below. Check our Facebook pages for updates on individual presentations.

October 15, 2024
The Dewatering of South Crofty Mine
Keith Russ
Meeting ID: 844 7945 5182
https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84479455182?pwd=nBKdBwnqIQ6Z7wsUbBbsFstcInQtVI.1

November 19, 2024
Reexamining the Legacy of the Comstock: Miners, Mills, Saloons, and Assessments
Hans Muessig
Meeting ID 835 1024 7202
https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83510247202?pwd=Y7erNNxLPrwMEeSJTu0nhRuAFZVGBo.1

Attention Potential Conference Vendors
Vendor tables will be available on Friday and Saturday, June 13 & 14, at $35 per table. Potential vendors should contact Stephen Hart: stephen_hart45@msn.com or (720) 448-3387 by April 1, 2025, for more information or to RSVP.

Mining History Association
PO Box 1536
Cape Girardeau MO 63702-1536

Upcoming Events

Association for Industrial Archeology
Cardiff, Wales
October 4-6, 2024

Western History Association
Kansas City, Missouri
October 24-27, 2024

National Miner's Day
December 6, 2023

Mining History Association Conference
Gunnison, Colorado
June 11-16, 2025

Mining History Association Conference
Pittsburgh, Kansas
June TBD, 2026

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

Revised Deadlines:
Fall issue: September 1st
Winter issue: December 1st
Spring issue: February 1st
Summer issue: July 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 Barbara Clements, Membership Chair, at
mininghistoryassociation@gmail.com
or
Mining History Association
PO Box 1536
Cape Girardeau MO 63702-1536