



Fall 2012

# *Mining History News*

Quarterly Newsletter of the Mining History Association

## **The Books We Prize**

In the summer 2012 issue of the *Journal of Arizona History*, good friend and editor Bruce Dinges published "A Centennial Gathering of Essential Books on the Grand Canyon State." Not really an essay, it is an annotated list of 100 books, with plenty of commentary about related publications under each title. The Mining History Association published a similar list of "essential" mining history books in the July 1998 newsletter. I enjoy scanning such lists and learning from them. They tell as much about our time and our view of what is important as they provide a list of well written books.

The MHA has more than a few members that are avid book collectors and voracious readers of mining history. This is good. The MHA supports the continued researching of topics through its grants, encourages the sharing of research at its annual conferences, and publishes a journal that can provide a testing ground for articles that are later fleshed out into book length treatments – to be devoured by those hungry readers.

Each fall this newsletter also provides space for members to showcase their recent publications. This not only, hopefully, helps members to advertise their works to our specialized target audience, but helps other members learn about these interesting new books about a variety of mining topics. Many such books published by small or unfamiliar presses can easily be overlooked and the MHA encourages members to submit a notice about their book. I must admit I have every book listed in each fall newsletter, but that's my addiction – and the books have all been worth the price of admission.

In addition, the MHA recognizes good scholarship and writing through its Clark C. Spence Award. Clark Spence helped the association during its first wobbly days and served as our first president, after our provisional period under Duane Smith. He is also a scholar and writer of exemplary mining history. His publications include *British Investments and the American Mining Frontier, 1860-1901*; *Mining Engineers and the American West: the Lace-Boot Brigade, 1849-1933*; *The Conrey Placer Mining Company: A Pioneer Gold Dredging Enterprise in Montana, 1897-1922*; *The Northern Gold Fleet: Twentieth-Century Gold Dredging in Alaska*; and *For Wood River or Bust: Idaho's Silver Boom of the 1880s*. His other works range from the coming of steam cultivation in Great Britain to Salvation Army farms in the U.S., from a history of Montana territorial politics to a textbook of the economic history of the United States. Because of the high quality of their documentation and narratives, his works are worthy of emulation.

David Wolff chairs the Spence award committee and each year sends out the call for submissions (see page 2 of this newsletter). Every other year the committee made up of David, Keith Long, and myself, makes the difficult decision while also having the pleasure of recognizing a mining history book published over the previous two year period. We hope the recognition will encourage others to continue working on their own book projects and see them through to publication – and submission for the Spence award.

*"Books We Prize..." (continued on page 2)*

"Books We Prize..." (continued from page 1)

And more work is needed. In a quick scan of the 100 books on Arizona mentioned above, only one could be called mining history: James Byrkit's *Forging the Copper Collar: Arizona's Labor-Management War of 1901-1921* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1982). I think most would agree with the commentary that Byrkit "does not mince words; the companies were the bad guys, the workers were the losers." One might expect a more balanced approach to the topic today, but, more importantly, it is an unfortunate statement that in what was once called the "Copper State" of Arizona, only one mining history book is included in the 100 essential books!\* We need to encourage more work on the topic of mining history not just in Arizona but across the country, aid research where we can with grants, and applaud publications, either in article or book form.

Robert L. Spude  
Santa Fe, New Mexico  
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\* To be fair to the *Journal of Arizona History's* list, many of the books do touch a bit on mining history, including the recollections of Raphael Pumpelly, the biography of Charles Poston, the travelogue of J. Ross Browne, the state histories, and many others. And the listed books on Wyatt Earp all include the obligatory story of the discovery of silver at Tombstone.

## Future MHA Meetings

Galena, Illinois: June 6-9, 2013

Trinidad, Colorado: June 5-8, 2014

Virginia City, Nevada (The Comstock Lode): June 2015

## Nominate Books for 2011-2012 Spence Award

The Clark C. Spence Award Committee of the Mining History Association is accepting nominations for the best book published on mining history during 2011-2012. The committee considers books that meet the documentation and narrative standards set by the works of Clark Christian Spence, professor emeritus, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign.

To be considered, the book must focus on the history of a specific mining region, or a mining-related theme or topic, especially within the American West, or an individual or individuals prominent in the history of American mining. There are no temporal limits on subjects. The book must be published either in the year 2011 or 2012. A \$500 cash prize will be presented to the winning author or authors at the 2013 Mining History Association Annual Meeting.

Authors or publishers should send three copies of the nominated work to:

David Wolff  
MHA Spence Award  
301 Yellowstone Pl.  
Spearfish, SD 57783

Two books shared the award for the best book in mining history published during 2009-2010. Congratulations to Ronald Limbaugh for *Tungsten in Peace and War, 1918-1946* published by University of Nevada Press and Duane Smith for *The Trail of Gold and Silver: Mining in Colorado, 1859-2009* published by University Press of Colorado. Sheila Kelly also received special recognition for her book *Treadwell Gold: An Alaska Saga of Riches and Ruin* published by University of Alaska Press.

# **FINAL Call for Papers**

## **2013 Mining History Association Annual Conference**

**The Mining History Association will meet in historic Galena, Illinois, June 6-9, 2013.** The Program Committee (Duane Smith and Mark Vendl) invites proposals for individual presentations or complete sessions (including chair) on any topic or aspect of mining history. Sessions include three papers of twenty minutes each. There are no temporal or geographic limits.

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 note, speakers must register for the conference in order to give their presentations. **Please send written proposals to the program session committee by November 15, 2012, though later proposals may be considered.** Submissions should be made by email attachment.

Mark Vendl, for the Program Committee  
mkvendl@gmail.com

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## **MHA Conference Student Travel Grants**

The Mining History Association has available a limited number of **travel grants for student presenters** at the Annual Conference in Galena, Illinois, June 6-9, 2013. If you are a graduate or upper-division undergraduate student and would like to be considered for a travel grant, please e-mail a cover letter, addressed to the MHA Grants Committee, along with your presentation proposal (abstract and biographical information) by the deadline. In the cover letter, an applicant should estimate his/her travel costs to the conference (Galena, Illinois, June 6-9, 2013) and explain what he/she hopes to gain from the conference. This award is intended to help defray some of the direct travel costs to the conference.

The MHA Grants Committee determines the number of awards and their amounts. The grant also includes a waiver for the basic conference registration fee. Criteria for selection include travel distance and travel costs, an evaluation of how much the participant will benefit from the conference, and the significance of the presentation to mining history.

Grant Applications and questions should be sent by December 1, 2012 to: Brian Leech at **BrianLeech@augustana.edu**

# Mining History at an Industry Conference: A Report from HydroProcess 2012

Bill Culver

The 4th International Seminar on Process Hydrometallurgy, *HydroProcess2012*, took place in Santiago, Chile this past July 11-13. Like most technical meetings of mining professionals, mining history is at best an afterthought. Nonetheless the organizers, GECAMIN, demonstrated openness to the humanities and the social sciences by accepting my historical presentation. GECAMIN organizes a number of such conferences every year; ten were held in 2012, mostly in Chile. This year they have one in Brazil. Their procedure includes peer review of proposals and the final paper, with a strict timeline so that all work is ready and published for distribution at the conference.

This year's hydrometallurgy meeting had some 55 presentations/articles with 330 attendees. Most of the women and men at the conference were Chileans, along with 75 people from other countries. Some 35 students attended as well. All in all GECAMIN is making Chile a center for sharing technical experience and research and in-service training. Several of the presentations came from Freeport-McMoRan metallurgists working at Bagdad and Morenci – this made the 2012 MHA visit to Bagdad that much more meaningful. GECAMIN offers all spoken presentations with simultaneous translations – Spanish, Portuguese and English. Almost all of the written PowerPoint presentations were in English – British spelling required.

One topic covered in several presentations was how the mining industry, and especially the metal mines, should respond to the growing public concern over environmental implications as mines move towards ever lower grade ores, and the necessary use of extraction processes involving water. These presentations emphasized the need for the industry to participate in dialogue with people from outside the industry.

This made me think of our Mining History Association meetings where we find a common ground between mining professionals, historians (academic and independent), lawyers, investors, and an interested public.

The apparent roadblock to greater cross-disciplinary dialogue in Latin America stems from a situation where a good portion of academic historians hold views hostile to corporate capitalism – specifically to the large players in modern mining. And in my experience, many in the mining industry in Chile, Peru, Bolivia, Argentina, and Mexico seem uncomfortable listening to criticism from the "left" and engaging in dialogue that might include nationalization as an alternative policy.

My own experience at the conference was rewarding. My presentation involved the Whelpley and Storer "wet" copper process from the 1860s – the precursor to the Hunt and Douglas copper process. At the peer review stage, one reviewer seemed fascinated by this early effort and liked the discussion of the mid-century "low-grade sulfide problem." A second reviewer liked the paper, but wanted me to go deeper into the archaic pre-theoretical chemistry – something I am still not too sure I can handle.

For any MHA member looking to go to Chile and present a history paper with a technical angle, I suggest taking a look at the GECAMIN website, <http://www.gecamin.com>. As it is an industry event, the rates are high, but I found them willing to give me a special consideration.

### *Editor's Note--*

Have other members successfully presented mining history at technical or industry-oriented conferences or venues? Do you have a group in mind who has supported mining history in the past, as Bill Culver describes above with GECAMIN? If you are willing to share your experience or ideas with MHA members in the newsletter, please write: [eric.nystrom@rit.edu](mailto:eric.nystrom@rit.edu)

## New Books by MHA Authors

**Note:** This is the third installment of our annual Fall feature announcing new books by MHA members, with a record nine volumes listed this year. This feature is intended to help bring new books on mining history to the attention of our membership. To participate, send complete book details and a description to **Eric Nystrom, Newsletter Editor**, at [eric.nystrom@rit.edu](mailto:eric.nystrom@rit.edu).

**Bill Fountain and Sandra Mather, *Chasing the Dream: The Search for Gold in French Gulch, Breckenridge, Colorado*** (Breckenridge: Breckenridge Heritage Alliance, 2012), 104 pages; paperback: \$15.95, \$22.25 incl. tax and S&H. ISBN: 978-0985-35870-9. To order: (970) 453-9767 x2, [info@breckheritage.com](mailto:info@breckheritage.com).

*Chasing the Dream* is the story of mining in French Gulch, near Breckenridge, Colorado, where prospectors discovered gold in 1859. The book traces ownership and production from John and Catherine Sisler, newlyweds who arrived in 1865, through the twice-widowed Catherine's successful management of the operation. Catherine's sale of the properties caused the formation of the Mekka Properties and two neighboring gold dredges in the early decades of the 20th century. Numerous historic and previously unpublished photographs from private collections illustrate the story. This book will enhance your understanding of this important part of Summit County's history.

**Paul L. Hedren, ed. *Ho! For the Black Hills: Captain Jack Crawford Reports the Black Hills Gold Rush and Great Sioux War*** (Pierre: South Dakota State Historical Society Press, 2012), 297 pages; cloth: \$29.95, ISBN: 978-0-9846505-0-7.

In 1875, a young Pennsylvanian, John Wallace Crawford, joined the Dodge Expedition into the Black Hills of Dakota Territory and penned long letters to the *Omaha Daily Bee* telling of that exploration. Not content only with accompanying Dodge, Captain Jack returned to the Black Hills in January 1876, and again corresponded with the *Bee* for another six months. Crawford's forty letters, collected and introduced here by retired National Park Service superintendent Paul L. Hedren, offer a fascinating look at the earliest days of the Black Hills gold rush as Jack played the parts of reporter, plainsman, scout, and raconteur. Captain Jack provides great detail on the merits of the gulches, the vagaries and difficulties of travel in the region, the art of survival in what was essentially wilderness, the hardships of inclement weather, trouble with outlaws, and interactions with American Indians. David Wolff called the book "essential reading for all Black Hills enthusiasts."

**Christopher J. Huggard and Terrence M. Humble, *Santa Rita del Cobre: A Copper Mining Community in New Mexico***, Mining the American West Series (Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2012), 320 pages; cloth: \$45.00, ISBN: 978-1-60732-152-1.

The Spanish, Mexicans, and Americans successively mined copper for 200 years at Santa Rita, New Mexico. Starting in 1799 with the Spanish discovery of native copper, the Chino mines followed industry developments first as a network of underground mines and ultimately as part of the multi-national Kennecott Copper Corporation's international open-pit mining operations-- operations that would overtake Santa Rita, the town that grew up around them, by 1970. Huggard and Humble detail the story of these developments, with in-depth explanations of mining technology, and describe the effects on and consequences for the workers, the community, and the natural environment. Evolving from mining-military camp to presidio, to company town, and eventually to independent community, Santa Rita developed rich family, educational, religious, social, and labor traditions before its demise. Extensive archival photographs, many taken by officials of Kennecott, accompany the text, providing an important visual and historical record of a town swallowed up by the industry that created it.

**Ronald M. James, *Virginia City: Secrets of a Western Past*** (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2012), 176 pages; paperback: \$16.95, ISBN: 978-0-8032-3848-0.

Drawing on the work of hundreds of volunteers, students, and professional archaeologists, James shows how every detail--from unearthed artifacts to reports of local saloons to plans for the cemetery to surviving nineteenth-century buildings--adds to our view of Virginia City, Nevada when it was one of the richest places on earth. James recreates this unlikely epitome of frontier industry and cosmopolitan living, the thriving hub of corporate executives, middle-class families, miners, prostitutes, and barkeepers. An excavation of the history of Virginia City, a window on the heyday of the American frontier, James's book is also an enlightening look at how archaeology brings the story of the past to life.

**Ronald M. James and Robert E. Stewart, eds., *The Gold Rush Letters of E. Allen Grosh and Hosea B. Grosh*** (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2012), 272 pages; cloth: \$29.95, ISBN: 978-0-87417-885-2.

Brothers Ethan and Hosea Grosh left Pennsylvania in 1849 to joined the throngs seeking fortune in the

## MHA Authors...

(continued from page 5)

California Gold Rush. Their search for wealth took them through Mexico to San Francisco and into the gold country. Finally, they crossed the Sierra into the Great Basin, where they discovered a deposit of silver. Their letters offer vivid commentaries on the turbulent western frontier, the diverse society of the Gold Rush camps, and the heartbreaking labor and frustration of mining. Their lively descriptions also represent one of the earliest accounts of life in what would soon become the Comstock Mining District. Over four hundred notes, three appendices, and an introduction provide a context for the brothers' letters.

**Jon Lane and Susan Layman, *South Pass City and the Sweetwater Mines*** (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2012), 127 pages; paperback: \$21.99, ISBN: 978-0-7385-8893-3.

In 1868 Wyoming experienced its first and largest gold rush, also the start of the boom and bust cycle that continues to the present. The story of the Sweetwater Mines is told through rich text and photographs, and some of the images have never been published before. Thousands of prospectors, hoping to strike it rich on easy placer gold, soon found that it was mostly hard rock mining instead. They established the towns of South Pass City, Atlantic City, Miner's Delight and Lewiston. These became the centers of social life and commerce. South Pass City also played a part in the politics of the time; it was the home of women's suffrage and boasts the distinction of having the first woman to hold public office in the United States. All proceeds from the book go to the Friends of South Pass, a volunteer group that supports the South Pass City State Historic Site.

**Richard E. Lingenfelter, *Bonanzas & Borrascas: Gold Lust and Silver Sharks, 1848-1884* and *Copper Kings and Stock Frenzies, 1885-1918*** (Norman, OK: Arthur H. Clark Co., 2012), 2 vols., 461 + 586 pages, 75 illus. & maps; cloth: \$72 set, ISBN: 978-0-87062-950-1.

This is the saga of Western mining in its heyday, of all the great gold, silver, and copper bonanzas and many borrascas, of their heroes, villains and countless miners and investors, of their fortunes, failures and financial intrigues, and of their impact on Wall Street, Washington and the nation. It traces the intertwined evolution of Western mining and its financial exploitation, driven not only by new discoveries, new technologies and market manipulations, but by the broader ebb and flow of the economy and the growing demands of the country. It follows the money trail from the rich pockets of ore and the bulging pockets of investors and speculators, through

the mills and the markets in the working of both the mines and the public. It tells not only of who, what and when, but of why and how.

**Bob Weldin, *The Dry Diggin's Club*** (Spokane, WA: Miner's Quest, 2012), 303 pages; paperback: \$19.95 (postage paid), ISBN: 978-0-578-10682-3. To order: [minersquest@comcast.net](mailto:minersquest@comcast.net)

This book started as a documentary about wilderness experiences by the author and fellow field geologists. It ultimately became a historical novel when the author found it awkward to write history about characters who are still alive. *The Dry Diggin's Club* is about mining and minerals exploration during the 1960s, and some lasting sociopolitical impacts that occurred to the US mining industry during that decade. It's a story of adventure, risk taking, romance and intrigue by a group of young mining professionals. One of the protagonists is a female geologist who breaks into the all-masculine domain of exploration geology, and helps in the creation of a clandestine club that networked for pleasure and economic advantage. The book was written for historians, adventurers, risk takers, and those who might quest for lost mines and valuable mineral deposits. Some characters discover their soulmate or something within themselves that is more valuable than the riches they sought.

### New Wyoming Mining History Trail Dedicated

Laura Nowlin, coordinator of the monuments and markers program of the state of Wyoming, passed along an update on the interesting Historic Mine Byway Trail program established in that state in 2005. (See *Mining History News*, Fall 2011)

On September 29, 2012, dignitaries and volunteers assembled near Sheridan to formally dedicate the latest mining byway, the Black Diamond Historic Mine Trail. The new trail includes stops at Dietz, Acme, Carneyville, Monarch, and Kooi. These mining towns and sites were the location of important surface and underground sub-bituminous coal mines, with a history stretching from the 1890s until the 1970s.

More information about the Black Diamond trail and the other designated Mine Byways, including interpretive plans and trail maps, can be found on the program's website:

<http://wyoshpo.state.wy.us/MM/Byway.aspx>

## Calif. Mining Museum Robbed

### *Mining museums, beware!*

This is the takeaway message of a brazen daytime robbery of the California State Mining and Mineral Museum in Mariposa. On September 28, 2012, a Friday, it was nearly closing time at the museum when two thieves dressed in black threatened the museum staff with pickaxes and herded them into a side room. The robbers smashed open several cases, snatching gems, gold, and other precious specimens. The pair also targeted the famous Fricot Nugget, a 13.8 pound crystalline gold specimen found in the American River in 1864 now considered a priceless artifact of the California Gold Rush. When the thieves set off the alarm breaking into the cases, the nugget's storage vault doors automatically closed, preventing them from making off with the prize. Nonetheless, an estimated \$2 million in gold and gems was taken from the museum in the heist.

Authorities alerted mineral dealers right away, hoping that the unusual specimens stolen would be easily identified and lead authorities to the robbers. Because the museum was run by the state, the California Highway Patrol is the lead investigating agency, and any information should be passed to them.

With the price of gold near historic highs and museum staffing levels suffering due to budget cuts, the potential for artifact and specimen theft is an increasingly real threat. A display of historic gold nuggets in the Siskiyou County Courthouse, in Yreka, California, was burglarized by two masked robbers in February 2012. The thieves in that case took the largest nuggets out of a display valued overall at nearly \$3 million. The case was fitted with bulletproof glass and a silent alarm, but the alarm failed to function during the nighttime robbery.

## WMMI Given Rescue Pod Replica



*Replica of Chilean mine rescue pod, on display at the Western Museum of Mining and Industry. (Photo courtesy WMMI.)*

In August 2010, a gold and copper mine in Chile collapsed, trapping 33 miners 2,300 feet underground for 69 days. In order to attempt their rescue, a team of experts from NASA and the Chilean Navy designed and built capsules (also called pods) that were just 1.7 feet wide and 12.7 feet tall and named them Fenix (or Phoenix). One pod was lowered into a borehole to extract the miners. This pod became the iconic symbol of this daring and successful rescue mission. After a world tour, the original rescue pod was reproduced for permanent international display, and in 2012, the Chilean Tourist Board selected the Western Museum of Mining & Industry in Colorado Springs, Colorado to receive and exhibit this impressive, full scale replica weighing 1800 lbs. On November 8, 2012, at 6:00 p.m., the museum will commemorate this addition to its collection of historically significant mining equipment with an opening celebration.

*Mining History Association*  
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Sedalia, CO 80135

## **First Class Mail**

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### **Upcoming Events**

#### **Australian Mining History Association Conference**

Nov. 4-11, 2012  
Waihi, New Zealand

#### **2013 Mining History Association Conference**

June 6-9, 2013  
Galena, IL

#### **National Association of Mining History Organizations (NAMHO) Conference**

June 28-July 1, 2013  
Aberystwyth, Wales, UK

#### **2014 Mining History Association Conference**

June 5-8, 2014  
Trinidad, CO

#### **2015 Mining History Association Conference**

June 2015  
Virginia City / Comstock Lode, NV

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*. The MHA is an organization of individuals interested in the history of mining and metallurgy. Submissions for the newsletter are encouraged and should be sent to Newsletter Editor Eric Nystrom at the MHA address or by email: [eric.nystrom@rit.edu](mailto:eric.nystrom@rit.edu).

Deadlines:    Spring issue: February 15  
                  Summer issue: June 15  
                  Fall issue: August 15  
                  Winter issue: November 15

Change of Address: Please send all address changes to Diane Dudley, Membership Chair, at:

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