# Mining History News

Quarterly Newsletter of the Mining History Association

A Publication of the Mining History Association Summer 2024


## ***Presidential Pickings – "Connections"***

I recently assembled an index, available on the association's website, of the first thirty issues of the *Mining History Journal*. I was surprised to discover only two articles published in those thirty years related to mining and transportation: Robert Trennert's "From Gold Ore to Bat Guano: Aerial Tramways in the West" (1997), and Eleanor Swent's "Mines and Airplanes: A Reminiscence" (2023). With the journal's next issue, these will be joined by Richard Francaviglia's "A Glimpse into Mining History's Connection to Maritime History: The Wreck of the Steamship *Atacama*," but only three articles in thirty-one years suggests a subject underserved.

Mining was and is often conducted in notoriously remote places, and sometimes the stories of simply getting to and from twelve thousand feet up in the Rockies or isolated desert settlements in the Great Basin or the Yukon's interior are as fantastic as the places themselves. In her memoir *Tomboy Bride*, Harriet Fish Backus wrote of her family's isolation in the Marshall Basin above Telluride, Colorado, and at Britania Beach on Howe Sound in British Columbia, the former supplied by mule trains and the latter by a daily coastal steamer. If the snow slides ran on the trail to Marshall Basin, the mule trains didn't. Then what?

Beyond sustenance, at least adequate transportation was essential to the economical extraction of minerals, the purpose of these enterprises. Assessing the situation in Arizona Territory in 1876, U.S. Commissioner of Mining Statistics Rossiter Raymond noted "the need of cheap and quick transportation, which, next to the Indian troubles, has ever been the serious drawback to the rapid settlement and profitable development of this remote territory." He reported that "at present only such gold and silver loads as would elsewhere be considered surprisingly rich can be worked to advantage, and scores of loads that would pay handsomely in California or Colorado are utterly neglected, while the great copper interests of the Territory (for copper is nowhere more abundant or of greater purity) are for all practical purposes without value." Two transcontinental railroads and their feeder lines later, problem solved. By the end of Raymond's life in 1918, Arizona had become the leading copper-producing state in the leading copper-producing nation on the planet.

The transportation problem might be subdivided into the micro and the macro: moving materials within a particular property or district, and moving them outside from or to the larger region, nationally or internationally. Locally, the first problem was moving ores from the mountainsides on which the mineral outcrops were almost invariably discovered to the concentrating works established along watercourses in the valleys below. This may have begun with burro trains, but relentless efforts to cut costs sometimes produced engineering achievements in transportation as impressive as the mines themselves. Thus elaborate aerial tramways, like the one we saw this year at the Silver King Mine constructed to move concentrate, supplies, and personnel between the mine complex and Park City, Utah.

Railroads, where practical, could move more volume over longer distances, but these, too, could be complex and costly undertakings. In 1886 investors incorporated the Gilpin Tramway as a two-foot-gauge railroad to move ores in Gilpin County, Colorado, from the mines surrounding Central City to concentrators down the hill at nearby Black Hawk. With the district's rugged topography, this meant laying twenty-six miles of track, including fifteen switchbacks, to serve an area of about three air miles in diameter.

When it came to a district's viability, however, every efficiency helped. Colorado road and railroad pioneer Otto Mears built the Silverton Railroad north from that mountain mining center to even more isolated mines on Red Mountain Pass. The eighteen-mile line featured its own sharp curves, switchbacks, and an engine-straining 5 percent ruling grade that permitted handling only a few cars per train. All of this still proved more economical than wagon-hauling supplies up and concentrates down the seven and a half miles of his "Million Dollar Highway" from Ouray.

And, of course, the purpose of concentrating ores was to reduce their volume and thereby the cost of shipping them to smelters for further processing. This was the macro; your mileage may vary. From five miles down the hill on company rails to smelters at Clarkdale and Clemenceau, in the case of the twentieth-century copper mines at Jerome, Arizona. Or forty miles from Black Hawk to smelters at Denver via the three-foot-gauge Colorado Central Railroad. Or more than halfway around the world in the case of the high-grade copper ores and mattes initially dispatched from Arizona via Cape Horn for final processing at Swansea, Wales.

As the voyage to Swansea indicates, these supply and process chains ran sometimes by land, sometimes by sea; concentrates or metals out, practically everything else required in. Some of these sea-land pathways are legendary: from Seattle up the Inside Passage to the Klondike via Skagway. Others less famous: over water entirely—for those who wished to avoid adventures on Chilkoot Pass—via the Bering Sea on a steamship, then 1,700 miles up the Yukon River to Dawson aboard a paddle-wheeler.

A few significant mining settlements subsisted exclusively by sea. The Alaska Treadwell gold-mining operation extended for two miles along the eastern shore of Douglas Island, opposite Juneau, Alaska. Vessels arriving at Treadwell's extended pier transshipped to a railroad that served five large stamp mills and a substantial company town for forty years.

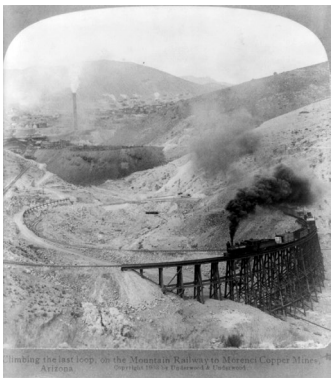
These transportation routes enabled the mines and mining, but they served other interests as well. It is no accident that the queen cities of the nineteenth-century American West were San Francisco and Denver, both manufacturing, supply, and transportation hubs for vast mineral hinterlands. Or that "Klondike Fever" helped propel that rush's "gateway" city, Seattle, into maturity. And mining historians have considered other connections worth remembering—communications, financial, technological, ethnic—that link this industry and these often-isolated locations that fascinate us to the economy and society of the wider world.

(Harriet Fish Backus, *Tomboy Bride* (1969); J. Michael Canty and Michael Greeley, *History of Mining in Arizona* (1987); Sheila Kelly, *Treadwell Gold* (2010); Robert LeMassena, *Colorado's Mountain Railroads* (1984); Lisa Mighetto and Marcia Montgomery, *Hard Drive to the Klondike* (2002); Robert Ormes, *Tracking Ghost Railroads in Colorado* (1980); Rossiter Raymond, *Statistics of Mines and Mining in the States and Territories West of the Rocky Mountains* (1876); photos from the Library of Congress.)

Eric Clements,
Cape Girardeau, Missouri

This pier and railhead were the lifeline that sustained the Alaska Treadwell operation on Douglas Island that once supported over two thousand workers and their families and produced 3.3 million troy ounces of gold.


A burro train removing ore from a mine at Ouray, Colorado. The burros were tough and sure-footed, but not very efficient.



The macro: a train hauls supplies into the Morenci district, Arizona.

## 34th Annual Conference


Thanks to the hard work, door knocking, and dogged determination of Mark and Lynn Langenfeld and their Conference Committee, the Association was welcomed early, often, and in many ways during our 34th Annual MHA Conference. Quite simply, our conference and its amazing tours would not have been possible without the many connections made by Mark and Lynn, Chris Merritt of Utah SHPO, and the Friends of Ski Mountain Mining History; the financial support of our many sponsors; and the willingness of tour site hosts to open their doors for us.

Thank you to the following financial supporters of our conference: **Rio Tinto Kennecott; Tintic Consolidated Metals/Osisko Development; Park City Museum and Friends of Ski Mountain Mining History; the Utah State Historic Preservation Office; Charles Redd Center, Brigham Young University; Utah Historical Society; Utah Humanities; Logan Simpson; Ivanhoe Electric; Park City Chamber of Commerce; Rudy Davison; and Mark and Lynn Langenfeld**. Thank you all for giving us the opportunity to experience Utah's mining heritage.

Park City Mayor Nann Worel, the Park City Museum, and the Friends of Ski Mountain Mining History each welcomed us to Park City in their own way at Park City's Miners Hospital on Wednesday evening. The Miners Hospital, built in 1904 and now serving as a Park City community center, provided a perfect setting for the Association's members to reconnect over fabulous food and drinks.

On Thursday, attendees experienced some of Park City's mining history by visiting the Spiro Tunnel, Silver King Mine and Mill, Daly West Headframe, and the Ontario Mine and Shaft No. 3.

The Spiro Tunnel, begun as a drainage and exploratory tunnel by Solon Spiro in 1916, produced no ore for its original owner. Spiro was forced to sell his properties, including the Spiro Tunnel, in 1924. Shortly after the purchase, the new owners struck good ore only forty feet from the end of Spiro's diggings. The tunnel eventually extended 13,650 feet into the mountain. Now closed to the general public, water from the mine and tunnel working provides 25-30% of Park City's water supply. We were able to enter the tunnel and briefly explore thanks to the Silver City Owners Association and Park City Municipal.

Spiro Mine Tunnel at Silver King, Park City, UH

Using ski lifts that roughly follow the route of the Silver King aerial tramway, tour participants toured the Silver King hoist house and boiler room and viewed the Silver King Mill. Having done so, the Friends of Ski Mountain's dedication to preserving the area's mining history was readily apparent.

Tour participants had additional opportunities to observe the work of Friends of Ski Mountain when they visited the restored Daly West Headframe and the former Ontario No. 3 Mine. The Daly West Headframe collapsed in 2015 due to a mine subsidence. The Friends of Ski Mountain, working in collaboration with many other partners, eventually re-raised the headframe in its current location on July 1, 2022.

The Ontario No. 3, sitting in the middle of Ontario canyon, was one of Park City's longest operating mines, operating from 1872 to 1982. The site was eventually converted to an educational museum and tourist attraction. The Silver Mine Adventure attraction shut down in roughly 1999. No longer open to the public, we were privileged to explore the remaining exhibits, shaft area, and hoist house.

Our program committee (Brian Leech and Jen Dunn) worked overtime to incorporate a larger than expected number of presentation submissions into our program. As usual, presentation topics spanned North America, if not slightly beyond. Utah, however, rose well above what one speaker described as its "subaltern position in Western mining history" as our presenters identified some of Utah's early mining pioneers; examined specific mining districts, towns, and metals; and explained mining, milling, and smelting operations throughout the state.

Nate Foster, Rio Tinto Kennecott's Managing Director, provided our keynote address. As part of his presentation, Nate continued to elevate Utah's position in Western mining history by detailing how copper mining and ore processing initially conducted by Utah Copper Company and eventually by Rio Tinto Kennecott in Utah changed decade by decade. One of those changes is an evolved sense of corporate stewardship as Rio Tinto continues to innovate and manage environmental risk.

Thank you to Nate for his remarks and Rio Tinto's sponsorship of our conference.

**Mark your Calendars for Our Next Conferences:**

**June 11-16, 2025: Gunnison, Colorado**

**June TBD. 2026: Pittsburg, Kansas**

## *Mining History Association Awards*

The MHA establishes various committees to annually review applications and nominations and to decide whether to issue certain awards. The process culminates with the announcement of award winners at the MHA Awards Banquet. At this year's conference, the following awards were presented:

The ***Rodman Paul Award*** is given in honor of scholar and mining historian Rodman Paul whose influence in the field of Western mining research inspired a generation of future mining historians. The Award is given for outstanding contributions to mining history. This year's ***Rodman Paul Award*** was presented to **Dr. Eric L. Clements** "for his study and promotion of mining history of the American West and elsewhere, as well as his longtime editorship of *The Mining History Journal* which has resulted in the publication of numerous mining history articles." Eric's dissertation, written in furtherance of his Ph.D. at Arizona State University, formed the basis for his full-length book, *After the Boom in Tombstone and Jerome, Arizona: Decline in Western Resource Towns,* published by the University of Nevada Press in 2003. As our journal editor, "he has been responsible for getting numerous mining history articles published that may not have been [published] otherwise." The quality of the *Journal* and Dr. Clements speak for themselves.

The ***Ed Hunter Distinguished Service Award*** recognizes individuals who have made extraordinary contributions to the MHA. An ***Ed Hunter Distinguished Award*** was presented to the dynamic duo of **Mark and Lynn Langenfeld** for their years of dedicated service to the MHA.

The ***Beselme-Orrell Heritage Award*** recognizes outstanding contributions to the understanding and appreciation of mining heritage including the preservation and interpretation of mining architecture and landscapes. This year's ***Beselme-Orrel Heritage Award*** was given to Park City's **Friends of Ski Mountain Mining History.**

The MHA created the ***John Livermore Award*** to honor John Livermore and recognize individuals, contractors, suppliers, and companies that have gone beyond what is required to preserve, reclaim, conserve, and/or document mining heritage and the natural environment surrounding mining operations. This year's ***Livermore Award*** was presented to **Michael G. Nelson,** Professor emeritus of mining engineering, University of Utah.

John Townley published the Association's first issue of the *Mining History Journal*. The ***John Townley Award*** is given in honor of this achievement to the author of the best essay published in the *Mining History Journal* in the previous issue. This year's ***John Townley Award*** is given to **Mark Aldrich** for his article "Conserving Resources, Saving Lives: Strip Mining Coal in America, 1880-1945."

The ***Keith Long Presentation Award*** recognizes the service of past President Keith Long and is given to the presenter of the best presentation at the Association's annual meeting. This year's ***Keith Long Presentation Award*** was presented to **Michael G. Nelson** for his presentation "Smelters and Smelter Smoke in Utah."

Please visit our website for more information about these and our other awards.

## Research Grants

The Mining History Association supports mining history research through the peer-reviewed *Mining History Journal* and by providing grants to researchers to conduct archival research. The MHA awards up to four research grants per year. This year's research grant recipients are:

**Dennis Patrick Halpin**, Associate Professor at Virginia Tech University, Project: *"'I am Not the Villain Which I was Made to Appear': Henry Jones and the Bloody History of Navassa Island."* Trip to Wichita State University.

**Ernest Sewordor**, Postdoc. Department of History, University of Basel. Project: *"Africans in the Making of the Williamson Diamond Mine (Mwadui) Tanzania Since 1940."* Trip to the British National Archives in London.

**Benjamin Shultz**, University of Texas at El Paso, PhD Candidate, Project: *"Extracting the Sky Island: How mining transformed the Ecological and Social Landscape of Grant County, New Mexico (1912-1952)."* Trip to Silver City and Santa Fe, New Mexico.

**Katherine (Kari) Thomas**, Ph.D. student at Carnegie Mellon University, Project: "*The Coal Employment Project and Gendered Memories of the Trade Union Movement."* Trip to Eastern Tennessee State University in Johnson City, TN.

# Post Conference Tours

## **Eureka / Tintic** (Sunday Tour)

MHA's Eureka / Tintic Tour provided participants with a curated tour of central Utah that included guided explorations of Eureka and Mammoth, a visit to the Tintic Mining Museum, and the opportunity to visit mining sites not generally open to the public. Thank you to Ian and Doug Wright for sharing their passion for local history with us as part of our tour.


After our initial rolling tour of Eureka, participants had the opportunity to visit The Tintic Mining Museum and explore the downtown area in Eureka. Of course, most of us spent most of our time at the Mining Museum. Thank you to the Tintic Historical Society for opening the museum especially for us.

We also had the opportunity to visit historic mining sites including the Eagle and Blue Bell Mine (above) and the Burgin Mine (below). We extend our thanks to our hosts at each site and an extra special thank you to Osisko Development for their hospitality at the Burgin Mine site.

## **Helper / Hiawatha Coal Tour** (Monday)

On Monday, tour attendees had the opportunity to explore Utah's coal mining past by visiting the Western Mining and Railroad Museum in Helper and exploring the remains of Hiawatha and its surrounding coal mining areas. Hiawatha did, indeed have a post-apocolyptic feel to it.


"King Coal" logo still displayed on a company building in Hiawatha.

Coal was discovered near Hiawatha in 1909 and a mine was soon built. Needing to move its coal to market, the Consolidated Fuel Company organized the Southern Utah Railroad in 1907 and extended a 20-mile line into East Hiawatha in 1909. The Rio Grande eventually assumed operation of the branch and others in the area with control of the mine and town eventually being assumed by the United States Fuel Company.

The town's population dwindled as coal production dropped in the 1940s, falling to 439 in 1960 and 43 in 1990. The city was disincorporated on November 20, 1992. Left behind were the remnants of the town and coal mining that we were privileged to visit and explore as part of our visit to Carbon County.

Abandoned mine entrance (No. 2 – 1914) and tipple


The Nuggets program will restart in August and run through November. Barbara is still looking for presenters so please reach out to her if you are interested in presenting. The dates and meeting ID for each session is listed below. Check our Facebook pages for updates on individual presentations.

August 20, 2024
Nellie Goes North: The Farther Adventures of Nellie Cashman
Eric Clements

September 17, 2024

October 15, 2024

November 19, 2024

Topics can include a visit to a historic mining site or town or an interesting little topic that you happened to find out about. Send an email to mininghistoryassociation@gmail.com if you would like to present an MHA Nugget or if you have questions about the process.

## Calling All MHA Authors

The Mining History News includes a section in the Fall issue highlighting mining books written by our members during the past year or two. These announcements supplement but do not replace the traditional list of publications and book reviews in *The Mining History Journal.*

In order to participate, please send the complete bibliographic information (author, title, publisher, publisher location and year, number of pages, binding, price and ISBN) plus a 100-150 word summary to Paul Spyhalski at prspyhal@yahoo.com. Please include "MHA" at the start of the subject line. The deadline for inclusion in the Fall issue is September 1st.

## *Notes from the Board Meeting*

The Board continues to monitor the Association's finances and membership numbers. The treasury remains in good hands and condition. Our membership continues to fluctuate and lags below our Facebook "follows" by far. We are also roughly 100 members below where our membership stood 10-15 years ago. After discussing some potential options, the Board formed a membership recruitment committee to create recruitment and retention plans. Barbara Clements will serve as chair with Virgina McLemore and Ron Brown joining her on this important committee.

The Board also reviewed how we fund and plan our conferences. Not surprisingly, the cost of putting on conferences keeps increasing. That, combined with our relatively fixed number of actual attendees, means that financial sponsors are becoming an essential component in our continued ability to offer conferences with tours. On that note, Mark and Lynn reviewed their projected numbers for the Park City conference and felt they were close to breaking even. Stephen Hart provided an update on the 2025 conference in Gunnison, noting that some costs, including the main venue, should be cheaper.

After an updated presentation and discussion, the Board accepted the proposal from Pittsburg, Kansas, to host the 2026 conference. The conference will focus on coal and lead-zinc mining and may include a trip to Pitcher, OK.

## American Heritage Center Announces Remote Research Option

The American Heritage Center proudly presents RRAD (Remote Research and Discovery), on ongoing service that allows researchers to access our materials from wherever they are. By combining the power of Zoom with a dedicated research assistant, you can study anything in the AHC's collections you wish. Schedule by the hour and our research assistants will help you analyze documents, examine photographs and pictures, and skim through multiple collections as you search for the materials you need. Once you discover what you need, your research assistant will work with you to digitize the materials if needed and send them to you. For more information or to consult an archivist, contact AHC Research Services via email (ahcref@uwyo.edu) or phone ((307) 766-3756), to get answers to all of your getting started questions. You can also visit the Center's website at www.uwyo.edu/ahc/ for more information.

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## Upcoming Events

**Australasian Mining History Association**
Leonora, Western Australia
September 9-13, 2024

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

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

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

**Mining History Association Conference**
Pittsburg, 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
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