

The Sierra Pelona nagram



March 2023

... Member of the California Federation of Mineralogical Society Inc. ...

The Sierra Pelona Rock Club is a non-profit organization founded in 1959 with the objective to sponsor activities and promote interest and education in: mineralogy, lapidary, geology, paleontology and related subjects.



Hi Everyone,

At last month's meeting, Tina gave an interesting lecture on earthquakes. Why they occur, what changes they cause, the hazards, and more. Thank you Tina. We introduced two new members, Doug Vito and Jaclyn Wright. Welcome to the SPRC!

This month, members of the club enjoyed a field trip to Boron early in March. Sample rocks found in that area were brought to last month's meeting.

Just a reminder, bring your dollars to our meetings for the "draw" and the silent auction. There's always great things on the table for sale and it helps to support the club.

See you all at next month's meeting.

Linda Jenkins, President
Sierra Pelona Rock Club



March 4, 2023 Field Trip

Julie Tinoco, Field Trip Chairperson

On a cold and windy Saturday in early March the Serra Pelona Rock Club ventured out to North Edwards for a field trip.

There were three spots around Arial Acres where the club hadn't explored recently. You never know what you might find out there. On the way home we stopped at a great spot at Brown Butte. Colorful jasper, some with druzu were found.

There were 9 of us and it was wonderful hounding with our club members at Sierra Pelona as well as a few from the Antelope Valley Club.

See you on the next trip on March 25.



SPRC Board Meeting

March 7, 2022

Online Zoom

The meeting was opened at 7:17 by President Linda Jenkins

Attendees were: Linda Jenkins, Heidi Webber, Ron Rackliff, Greg Mazourek, Julie Tinoco, and Tina White

Heidi shared that we have two (2) potential new members: Doug Vito and Jacklyn Wright. They have both attended a meeting and a field trip, and are therefore eligible for membership, and they were unanimously voted in.

Heidi also noted that 5 members declined to renew for 2023. Accordingly, she will soon send out an email asking for updates to the Club Roster.

The Placerita Nature Center Open House is scheduled for May 13th, officially 10-2 but 9-3 for those members who want to help set up the Club's table(s). Julie will get us new/more business cards, and it was decided to NOT bring the rock-cutting/polishing material this year as there was very little interest last year.

Julie reported back that the March 3rd field trip to the Kramer Junction area (with Brown Butte as the last stop) was freezing cold and very windy - but the 9 attendees collected good material. :-)

Tina shared that she learned at the Antelope Valley club meeting that the CFMS Meeting will be June 23-25 in Lodi, Greg intends to attend. The next combined meeting of the AFMS and CFMS will be in 2024 in Ventura.

Greg will also send out his list from 2004 of topics & speakers available through CFMS.

Tina requested that the Board approve a donation to support Gregor Laughton, the rockhouser representative to the Desert Advisory Council, as he has been paying all of his own transportation/lodging/food expenses to represent our interests in the Mojave. Greg moved we donate \$100; that was approved unanimously.

Julie announced that our next field trip is scheduled for Saturday, March 25th at a location where jasper-agate (?) is found;

details will follow.

The Stoddard Wells Tailgate will be held March 10-12 from 9-5; details have been sent out in emails.

Tina shared that the Culver City club will be hosting a Parking Lot Sale on March 18th from 10-3 at 10866 Culver Blvd.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:11 p.m.

Tina White
Secretary, SPRC



March

Ruth Hidalgo
Linda Jenkins
Ed Learn
Maureen Thomas
Bill Webber

April

Lynne Alexander
Greg Mazourek
Yolanda Resnick
Michael Shane

Officers:

President – Linda Jenkins
Vice-President – Julie Tinoco
Secretary: Tina White
Treasurer –Ed Learn
Federation Director (CFMS/AFMS) --Greg Mazourek

Chairpersons:

Claim--Linda Jenkins
Donation Rock Table--Dianne Wholleben
Equipment--Bill Webber
Field Trips – Julie Tinoco
Historian -Open
Hospitality – Ron Rackliffe
Membership – Heidi Webber
Website-- Larry Holt
Pelonagram Publisher, Editor – Heidi Webber
Programs –Tina White
Publicity –Open
Sunshine--Yolanda Resnick

The Sierra Pelona Rock Club, is a member of the California and American Federation of Mineralogical Societies, Inc. (CFMS/AFMS). The general club meetings (Open to the public) are at 7:00 PM, on the 3rd Tuesday of each month at: College of the Canyons, 26455 Rockwell Canyon Rd in the Dianne Van Hook University Center, Room 209. (Go to their website for a map, It's in section 14)

Contact the Club or the Sierra Pelonagram Editor at:

Sierra Pelona Rock Club

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About a month ago I received an email from Matthew Wood, Teacher/Advisor at Learninghaven school. He volunteers for a geology study program for kids. They are currently learning about early mining methods and challenges. That's how he discovered our web page: <https://www.sierrapelona.com/links/>

He wanted to share that one of his students, Penny, found this awesome page about the history of silver mining in the US as part of their assignment. He said that he is super proud of Penny for doing some extra digging - silver mining isn't as well-known as gold mining, but it's just as interesting.

Penny suggested they share this with the Sierra Pelona Rock Club since there's nothing quite like it on our site. He asked us to share this article in our newsletter and web page. He said that he's sure that Penny would get a kick out of seeing her idea shared alongside the others on that page and that would be a great lesson to go the extra mile for the rest of their group. I agree, so enjoy this article on the history of silver mining, and I'll be emailing a copy of this month's Pelonagram to Matthew. And Penny, thank you for wanting to share this article with us. I've never done an article on silver mining before and it is high time to do so. Thank you.



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The Story of Silver in the United States

Humans have held silver dear since antiquity. In the ancient world, silver held a cultural and religious value that rivaled gold and precious jewels. The Greeks worshipped it as sacred to the goddess Artemis, the Egyptians used it in their temples, and the Chinese valued it over gold.

In the ancient world, silver served numerous purposes. It was the base for jewelry and amulets, served as the primary metal for coins and silverware, and was worshipped for its healing properties. Its usefulness led to a booming trade between such great empires as the Phoenicians, Romans, and Persians.

The demand for silver remains steady in today's world, though its uses have changed. The modern silver industry fills demands for everything from solar panels and automobile parts to medicine and jewelry.

Early History of Silver Mining in the United States

When the Spanish conquistador Hernan Cortes landed in Mexico, he found the empire of the Aztecs overflowing with gold and silver. His arrival marked the end for the Aztecs and the start of a massive silver industry for Spain.

Spain was not new to mining for silver. The country had stood as the pinnacle of silver production in Europe since the days of the Roman Empire in 300 B.C.E. In the Tudor Era of the 16th Century, Spain remained a powerhouse of silver mining, but their power only grew with the discovery and control over silver deposits in the New World.

Spain's efforts to mine the precious metals of the New World resulted in over 300 tons of silver being sent to Spain annually in the 16th Century. So rich were the silver deposits in the Mexican and South American regions that Spain all but controlled the European silver trade from the 16th to the early 19th Century.

Spain controlled most of the New World's known silver deposits, but other European colonies found silver on their land. For example, New York and Massachusetts colonists found veins of silver mixed with iron ore in the 18th Century, though the deposits were not as pure as those in the Spanish colonies.

As Spain continued to exploit the riches of its New World conquests, its demand for silver led to the growth of a more sinister industry – the African Slave Trade. By the 1550s, many enslaved people arriving in the Americas would find themselves forced to mine for gold and silver. The demand for mining enslaved people would continue until the end of slavery in the United States, as many white landowners would take their slaves with them on prospecting journeys west.

In 1821, Spain lost the Mexican War for Independence, and by 1826, most of its territories in the Americas followed. In the power vacuum left behind by Spain's departure, the United States began to get into the game of mining silver deposits.

The Silver Rush: The Search for Silver Goes West

Before the Silver Rush began, the Gold Rush had prospectors packed up their lives to head west for a slim chance at a better future. California had only just become a U.S. territory in the aftermath of the Mexican-American War, but after James W. Marshall found gold in Coloma, CA, that all changed. By 1855, California had grown, entering the Union and becoming home to cultured cities like San Francisco, thanks to the massive population growth of the Gold Rush.

Few prospectors ever found gold. But some of them would accidentally find silver. The Silver Rush period of the United States began in 1858 with the accidental discovery of Comstock Lode, a massive silver deposit in Nevada. Following the discovery of Comstock, a renewed army of frenzied prospectors headed west.

Nevada and Colorado were the capitals of the 19th Century Silver Rush in the United States. Mines produced millions of ounces of silver each year. By 1859, Colorado's largest mine in Leadville produced over \$2,500,000 worth of silver – valued at about \$57,000,000 today.

Both Nevada and Colorado remained massive influences on the Silver Rush until it inevitably died off by the 20th Century. However, even as new mines popped up in both states, other regions of the U.S. began to discover deposits of silver.

The Rise of Silver Mining in the Late 19th and Early 20th Centuries

At the advent of the Industrial Revolution, silver remained hotly in demand, but above-ground silver sources were rare. Thus, silver mining began to go underground to dig into veins of silver buried under rock and stone.

New silver lodes of Colorado and Nevada continued to draw prospectors, but other states began to discover pockets of silver and join in the mining trade. In Butte, Montana, a massive quantity of silver veins led to the development of a thriving mining town by 1882. In Utah, the transcontinental railroad transported the prospectors who would go on to find the Park City and Flagstaff mines.

Silver was booming. Its abundance in the United States gave the young country economic power, allowing the U.S. to rise above the European powers that once dominated global trade.

The production of the precious metal remained integral to the U.S. mint, which plated coins in silver until 1965, while also becoming critical to the technological advancements that marked the Industrial Era. Silver became a crucial component in the medicinal field; doctors would use silver in sutures, bandages, and eye drops to fend off infections. And the new technology of photography relied on silver in its film materials.

By the mid-19th Century, silver would become critical to some of the United States' most incredible technological advancements. By 1888, the first solar panel patents called for the use of silver in the devices. As the 20th Century loomed, silver only grew in importance. NASA used silver to purify water on its International Space Station in the 1990s. In addition, computers and electronics would drive high demand for the metal used in computer chips.

But the power of silver in the U.S. economy would not last forever. Eventually, demand for mining silver in the U.S. began to fade.

A Fading Industry: The Decline of Silver Mining in the United States

Silver mines are not extinct in the United States, but their power and preeminence have faded. Only a handful of mines continue to operate, the largest of which is the Red Dog mine in Alaska. Factors such as the importation of silver and the decreasing demand for the precious metal have spelled the demise of silver mining in the United States.

The decline of silver truly began when the U.S. adopted the Coinage Act of 1873. The act effectively demoted silver bullion as it ceased the production of silver dollars but continued to allow the production of gold dollars. The act upended the silver mining industry, and critics would go on to call it "The Crime of 73."

The attack on silver's use in the U.S. economy would continue. By 1935, no silver coins were minted in the U.S. due to the high demand for the metal. Then, in 1965, President Johnson passed the Coinage Act of 1965, which removed silver from already minted coins in the U.S.

But it was not the Coinage Act of 1873 or 1965 that spelled the decline of U.S.-based silver mining. Instead, like many industries, U.S. silver mining suffered under the effects of exporting labor and importing from cheaper sources of silver.

In the early 21st Century, the U.S. imported more silver than it produced. Under 20% of its silver consumption used silver mined in the United States, while Canada, Mexico, and a few South American countries imported the rest.

The fall of U.S. silver mining has shifted priorities in the mining industry. Only a handful of U.S. mines produce silver as their main product, including the Lucky Friday mine in Idaho and the Alaskan mines Greens Creek and Red Dog. Instead, most U.S. mines produce silver as a byproduct of copper mining in the 21st Century. The changing tides of the silver business aren't new to the industry – mining towns in the 19th Century would disappear as silver veins ran dry, and modern mines have to shift their focus to other resources to stay relevant and open.

Conclusion

All that glitters is not gold – especially when it comes to U.S. history. Like the ancient empires of old, the United States benefited from the discovery of silver in its territories. The silver trade allowed states like Montana and Colorado to thrive in their early years and drove population growth in the territories of the West. Ultimately, silver mining in the United States played a crucial role in the technological advancement of the Industrial Revolution and the 21st Century. Today, the legacy of silver in the United States remains a cornerstone of the country's modern era – the cars, solar panels, and electrical grids reliant on the metal may not exist today were it not for the 1858 silver rush that launched an industry in the United States.

Reference: Источник: <https://coatedsilver.com/resources/the-story-of-silver-in-the-united-states/>