

# MINING WRANGELL HISTORY

## *The Women of the Alaska Garnet Mining & Manufacturing Co. and the History of the Wrangell Garnet Ledge*

Volume 1, Issue 3  
January 1, 2006

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The Alaska Garnet  
Mining and  
Manufacturing company,  
which has been  
incorporated with a capital  
stock of \$1,000,000, is the  
first mining company in  
the world to have only  
women for officers.  
Sunday Pioneer Press,  
December 30, 1906



### It is 2006—where has the time gone?

As you know, I had hoped to have traveled to Minnesota and to California this summer but my savings were eaten up by research fees. I also wasn't able to drive to Arizona.

The research fees were well worth missing the traveling for as I have found a wealth of information about the mines in Arizona. In fact, I have found more than I thought I would.

Anna E. Durkee was certainly a busy woman!! Not only was she buying up claims and forming mining companies, but she still had not given up on strik-

ing it rich in Alaska. She continued to keep the garnet mine going even though she was leasing the property out.

From what I can tell, the garnet mine was generating enough revenue for her to be traveling to Arizona and California as well as back to New York. Investors in the mines in Arizona helped get those going and there was money being made—at least for a while.

So while I haven't been able to go anywhere physically, I've certainly been able to do a lot of "traveling" coast to coast on the Internet and through email and mail. What has been great is meeting new people and making new

### Jean Anderson and Maria Crane FOUND at last!

I had almost given up hope of finding out who Jean Anderson and Maria Crane were. Thanks to Beth in Seattle who had access to online info that I couldn't access, she did some digging and came up with two real good candidates. Both had been a consideration but census information I had didn't fit for what I thought should match. But, keeping an open mind, I hung on to that information.

I finally broke down and signed up for Ancestry last June and the rest, as they say, is history! Not only did I find Maria, but I found Jean, too. Plus, through some luck, I managed to find descendants of Jean's brother, William.

When you have searched for 25 years and not found anything and then

suddenly not only have the pieces but find family, too, it is simply beyond words! William had a son, Calder, and he appeared in the 1930s census along with his wife and a son. It was through that clue that I was able to track down her family.

Inside you will find a bit about Jean Anderson and a photo. I am thrilled beyond words to have her family help in bringing Jean to life for me. I have hopes of finding descendants of the other women, too.

To date, I have found family of Anna and Julia Durkee; Mary and Julia Elmer; Ann Rose, Minnie Rose Towler; Rebecca Bausman; and now Jean Anderson. I am missing information on Pearl Hewitt Roberts, and Pearl Gunders. I also have information on Letitia Crafts

## The Travels of Anna, and of course, Mary

One of the hardest parts of this research has been trying to track Anna. She never stayed in one spot long enough for the census people to find her. If it hadn't been for one stint in Seattle with Julia and another in Minneapolis with Lettie Crafts, I would have been hard pressed to find anything about her.

In all the time that she spent in California and Arizona, she doesn't appear in the U.S. Census—although that could still happen as more census records are indexed.

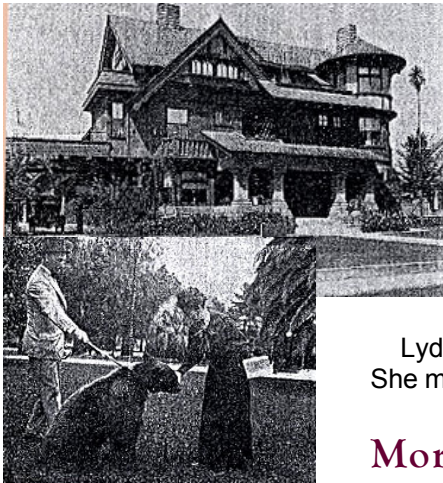
Finally, in 1930 we find her again only by searching for Mary T. Elmer. The material that I have been receiving has helped document her travels and I have been able to confirm that Anna and Mary not only lived in San Francisco for a time, but also used

Pasadena as their home base. I believe that they also spent time in Arizona, but have not been able to find that piece of information yet.

Only through the documents of the Dardanelles mining companies was I able to document their living in New York City area prior to the 1930s. A court document puts her as living at Wrangell, no doubt at the mine. A letter written by Mary Elmer provides more information on where they lived.

I have a full subscription to Ancestry now through June 2006, and access to HeritageQuest so I have been doing periodic searches of the databases to see what may be new information. By the way, if you need look ups, please don't hesitate to contact me. I would be glad to help. ☺

## Arizona Mine: Lydia Pyle Simpkinson



Lydia Pyle Simpkinson was listed as the vice-president of the Dardanelles Mining Company when it was incorporated in 1916. Lydia was from Pasadena where she operated the Simpkinson Hotel on Colorado Street. Since Pasadena was one of Anna's bases of operation, it is no doubt that the two women met there.

Lydia was born in Kentucky in 1872. She married Dr. Charles W. Simpkinson,

a dentist, in 1894 and later divorced.

Lydia lived in New Mexico for a time and then moved to California in 1914 where she started the Simpkinson Hotel by renting a fine old home and turning it into a tourist destination.

It appears that she was a lot like Anna E. Durkee and the other women who formed the AGM&M Co. So it is not surprising that she was sought as an investor in the Dardanelles Mining Co. ☺

Lydia Pyle Simpkinson petting bear owned by a showman who stopped by her hotel. Upper photo is home she turned into hotel. — Newspaper copy from Pasadena Historical Society.

## More Names for the Dardanelles Mine Connection

One thing about it, the more research I do the more names I come up with! I am now looking for information on some of the people who had shares of stock in the Dardanelles. There were several letters to the State of Arizona regarding shares in the company. Unfortunately, only a few names were given.

Harry and Harriet Crafts were partners with Lydia Simpkinson in claims that they sold to Anna. They lived in San Francisco but I have not been able to determine if they were related to Letitia Crafts or not.

Those with shares in the corporation include: Henry M. Lucas, Cleveland, Ohio; Harry C. Page, Bucksport, Maine, General Hardware; Ernest L. Edell, Rhineback, NY (Dutchess Cnty); Mrs. Rose Stanforth, Bronx, NY; and Florence Halsey, New York.

Mr. Lucas was involved in the corporation while the rest were investors.

There are also several names involved in the transfer of claims to the corporation and I hope to be able to find more information on those people. ☺

## Jean Anderson, bookkeeper for AGM&M

Finding Jean Anderson—finding the RIGHT Jean Anderson—was not an easy task. She has eluded me for 25 years. It is only because of the Internet and the information that is online that this was possible. And that includes the “White Pages” which make it possible to search for names, addresses and phone numbers!

Thankfully, Beth in Seattle, was able to pull up information that led me to Seattle and eventually to the Anderson relatives.

Jean Anderson was born in Pennsylvania. She died in Seattle in 1953. Like several of the women of AGM&M, Jean never married. At times she lived with her sisters Ellen and/or Grace.

While there were several Jean Andersons listed in the census records and city directories, I felt that she was a bookkeeper since she was the treasurer when the company was formed. It just seemed a pretty sure thing that Anna would have made sure that the person who was the treasurer would have a background in accounting. So it was not a surprise to find that Jean had been a bookkeeper.

She worked for C.A. Couch and Company in 1889-1891. During that time she was listed as living with her brothers and sisters. She later worked as a stenographer.

Jean, her brother, William and his family, and sister Ellen moved to Seattle. They are found living there in the 1910 US Census. It's quite possible that they moved there a few years before that as Ellen

won a medal for an entry in the 1909 Alaska Yukon Pacific Exposition held in Seattle. The

AGM&M Co. had an exhibit booth in the same expo. So it is quite possible that at least Jean and possibly Ellen helped out in the booth. We already know that Anna and Julia were also living in Seattle at that time.

William worked for Puget Sound Art Glass as a partner in which

they made custom-type stained glass. Jean continued working as a bookkeeper. Ellen had her own design business. She also painted china for which the family thinks she may have won the AYPE Silver medal.

Family members have stated that both Jean and Ellen were “private” people. It came as a complete surprise that Jean was involved in the AGM&M Co. And then it fit as to why they have garnets sitting in a curio cabinet. It is possible that Ellen may have been the 5th partner in the AGM&M Co. ☞



Elizabeth Anderson, Ellen Anderson, unidentified, Jean Anderson, and Janet McLeod Anderson Charette—photo courtesy of the Anderson family.

## AGM&M Co.: Maria A. Crane

Maria A. Crane was another of the women who eluded me. Thanks to Beth in Seattle, I was able to find her as well. While I know a bit about Maria, there is little documentation about her. Finding family members has been difficult.

Maria was the adopted daughter of David and Laura Aiken. Moses and Maria had no other children. David D. Aiken, a native of New York, and his wife, Laura Tilden Aiken, born in Connecticut, lived two or three years in Painesville, Ohio and went to Chardon, Ohio on the appointment of Mr. Aiken to the office of clerk for Geauga county Ohio, in 1828.

Afterwards, he was elected an as-

sociate judge of the court of common pleas for the county, and held the office until the change of the judiciary under the new constitution. A few years later he moved back to Painesville, where he resided till the end of his life. Maria Aiken, became the wife of Dr. Moses M. Seymour.

Dr. Seymour was born in Connecticut. He was the graduate of a medical college and arrived in Painesville where he had relatives; the Lockwoods. He had a successful practice in Painesville.

The marriage of the Seymours was childless. They adopted a daughter who became the wife of Mr. George Crane. They had two daughters: Maria S. and Clara S.

It is unclear just how Maria became connected with the AGM&M Co. By

1900 she was listed as a widow living in Ohio. However, at some point she and George had lived in Minnesota as Clara was born there.

Their daughter Maria S. had married Edwin Green Huntington, well-known family in Ohio. They had a daughter, Rhonda. They later divorced.

By 1910, Maria and her daughter Clara were living in Minneapolis. Quite possibly Maria had moved back there earlier. It is believed that she may have had a good inheritance from her father and her late husband. Maria died in 1938 in Minnesota at a nursing home. ☞

## Arizona Mine: E.W. Mills, Engineer

One of the "players" in the Dardanelles mining company was Edwin W. Mills. Finding information on the people who worked at the mines or on the board of directors has been enlightening. It is becoming more obvious that Anna managed to recruit the best.

Mills was a graduate of Harvard, class of 1902. One of his classmates was Joseph Clark Grew, former U.S. Ambassador to Japan. It was thru Mills' work with Grew and the Orient that Mills became acquainted with former President Herbert Hoover. (Another reason we believe that Anna and Mary were



E.W. Mills

more than just Republican supporters. We feel that they knew Hoover on a first name basis.)

During WWI, Mills served as an intelligence agent in Siberia. He later conducted mining operations in Korea and China. Returning to the United States in 1930, he operated mining properties at Jackson, CA and Chloride, AZ before taking over management of the Sheep Tanks mine near Salome, AZ which he came to own.

Mills was president of the Arizona Small Mine Operators Association and was part of other mining-related organizations during his lifetime. He died in June 1956 in Arizona. ☺

This is the third issue of the "Mining Wrangell History" newsletter. This may also be the last one that I do. I am getting ready to update my notes and then start working on putting everything together.

I was telling someone the other day that when I started this project it was before the Internet and before email. I wrote letters and then waited for a response. I thought I was doing great when I bought my own fax machine and could fax letters or receive information back much quicker. But it was still slow. Believe me, I appreciate the resources that I have now!

I was going through old files recently and came across correspondence from **Patricia Harpole, Minneapolis Historical Society**, and **Erin Foley, Minneapolis Public Library**, in Minneapolis. I am sure they got tired of hearing from me, but they were great to answer questions and check to see if anything new had come in.

It was a time when research requests received quicker response and fees for copying was at a minimum. No one was really charging for research time. Before I left Alaska, the Internet had found its way to Wrangell but not enough of the facilities were set up to send and receive emails let alone having their own web site. Now we have "Ask the Librarian" at many of the libraries, online catalogs and you can even reserve books and request Inter-Library Loans without ever stepping foot in the library. You still have to pick up the items, but it is just a great thing to be able to do all of this from the comfort of your home at any hour.

**Michelle**, Chautauqua County Historian in New York and **Nancy** at the **Darwin R. Barker Museum** in Fredonia, NY have helped in acquiring more documents relating to Anna Durkee and her family.

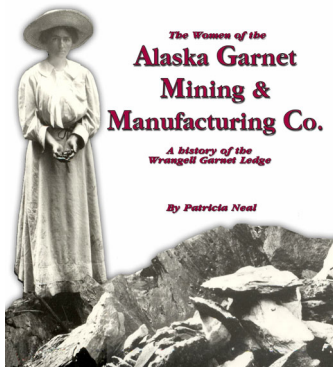
**David** at the **Arizona Corporation Commission** did a great job copying documents that were not the best of quality. It is nice to not have to guess at what things say. The documents, by the way, provided more information and more people to research of course!

If you have questions or have information you would be willing to share, you can always call me and I will call you back on my dime. My cell phone plan has nation-wide long distance so I'm not charged for calling. Weekends are the best time as I have unlimited minutes all day but any time after 7pm Pacific Time or before 7am Pacific Time works, too!

I want to take this opportunity to thank everyone for your help. I know that there were times that my query letter didn't arrive at the most opportune time. I am very grateful that you took the time to provide me with the information that I needed. Some of you have gone to the expense of copying photographs that I needed for the book. Some of you have provided research time on your own time. I certainly appreciate all that you have done.

This really has become a "community" project and the story of the women and the mine could not be told without your help. Thank you so much for believing in this project! *Trish*

THE WOMEN OF THE ALASKA GARNET  
MINING & MANUFACTURING CO. AND  
THE HISTORY OF THE WRANGELL GARNET  
LEDGE



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