

# MINING WRANGELL HISTORY

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

Volume 1, Issue 2  
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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



## Mary, Anna and Mr. Taylor



**Can you believe it? Shortly after I started emailing and mailing out the first newsletter, Mr. Bob Ballou remembered more photographs of Mary and Anna! This photo was taken between trains at Ash Fork, AZ as they were changing trains between Kingman and Phoenix in February 1923. Left to right: Mary T. Elmer, Anna E. Durkee, and A.B. Taylor Mr. Taylor was the secretary and treasurer of the Dardanelles Amalgamated Mines, Inc. He lived in Maine. ☺**

## Patent for Parting Compound Obtained in 1915

I really did not think that I would ever find the patent that Anna spoke about in a few of her newspaper interviews. I felt certain that this just wasn't hype to attract investors, but it was so old of a patent that it was going to be hard to find. At least for someone who doesn't know their way around that stuff.

Enter Walt who works with the Patent Library material at the Minneapolis Public Library. I submitted my query at "Ask the Librarian" and was told that it had been forwarded to Walt. He quickly contacted me and I sent him basic information that I had. In a cou-

ple of days he sent me the Patent number, the US Patent Office web site where I could search for the patent based on the number and instructions on how to view the patent. Wow! It pays to have someone who knows how to locate that kind of information!

I was so thrilled to see the patent. Even though there are no drawings or pictures, it proves that Anna was pretty smart to figure out a benefit for the garnet waste. I checked to see if it is still being used today but have not been able to find any information yet. ☺

## Still Searching for information

I continue to search for more information on Anna. What started out to be just a search for information on the garnet mine to write about the history of the garnet ledge has evolved into a research project to tell Anna's story, too. I have found a lot of information about her activities in Arizona. It may be that she was involved in two or three other mines. I am currently waiting for the State of Arizona Corporation Commission to get back to me on my research request.

It has been interesting reading the information in the files. I just wish that I had access to their financial records. What has been in the files has been interesting. There was money being made but

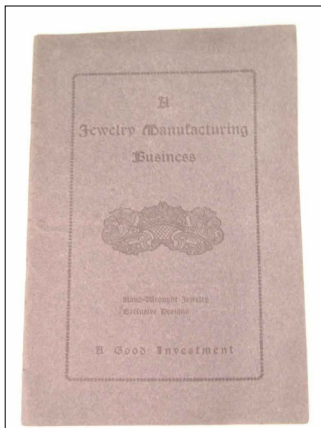
towards the end, they were barely able to pay their annual filing fees. A lot of that was due to the depression and then the war which closed the mines.

I am waiting for documents from Chautauqua County to arrive. Hopefully information in the court documents will shed some light on Anna's earlier years.

Nothing more on Mary other than the annual reports that she signed for the Dardanelles Amalgamated Mines, Inc. I have hopes of finding more information as I uncover more about Anna.

I am still hopeful that I will find information on the other women who were partners in the garnet mine. ☹

## Finding AGM&M Co. on eBay!



Cover of the prospectus from the AGM&M Co.  
Sold on eBay!

Amazingly, I have been able to find two items on eBay that came from the AGM&M Co.! The first find was the garnet in the envelope from the 1915 Panama Pacific International Exposition held at San Francisco. The most recent item was the prospectus put out by the women to promote their company to potential investors. No, I didn't have the winning bid, but thankfully it went to someone who understands what it represents and was willing to make a copy for me. While I would have loved to have the original, the information in the booklet is what is important to me.

I also learned that the person who

purchased the booklet has a similar envelope and garnet from the 1909 Alaska-Yukon-Pacific Exposition! He didn't know what it was until I told him about my envelope. One more piece of the puzzle has been added.

The great thing about the prospectus is that it shows the women took this venture very seriously. M.D. Rothschild provided information about garnets compared to other gems. He was a well-known and highly regarded jeweler from New York. His name used in connection with this company added a great deal to its credibility. ☹

## 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 which I hope to be able to find more information on those people. ☹

## Mistress of 20 mines...

Anna was certainly a busy woman. State of Arizona's Library, Archives holds a treasure trove of information on the mining activity of Anna. It also provides additional information about her financial status.

I think that most people have thought that the garnet mine was not a successful venture for the women. It operated over ten years along with two leases to Canadian companies to mine the garnets for the abrasive market. With Anna's patent using garnet waste, it was more than likely that money was being made.

One has to keep in mind that Anna was the majority stockholder in the garnet mine. A lot of the profit was going into

development of the mine but I am sure that there was still profits being shared by the investors. It's just that Anna was receiving a larger portion than the profit.

*"Aside from the garnets the mines in Alaska are netting an income because of a by-product, now patented, discovered by Miss Durkee while working with a chemist. It was noticed that garnets, when melted, did not fuse with iron or brass and following this up she found a new use for the waste garnet, of which the mines controlled by the women contain thousands of tons."* — Mistress of Twenty Mines Says She Isn't a 'Success' Yet, New York from June 20 (1922) Special Correspondence, *Christian Science Monitor*. ☞

## South Dewey Mining Company

Anna was listed as the Manager of the South Dewey Mining Company in 1903. The office was located at 429 Andrus Building in Minneapolis. I recently found out that the company was incorporated in South Dakota in 1903. When I received the copies of the corporate documents, the names of the people were difficult to read. I posted to the Idaho list and not only received info on the cities but about the mining area. That led to checking out the state's Corporate Division and imagine my surprise to find that they had incorporated in Idaho as well!

Those documents were requested and

were later posted online that same day! At no charge!

I'm still researching the company. Their mine was located at Thunder Mountain which is near Cascade, Idaho. There was a lot of mining activity going on at that time. Making it more difficult to research is the fact that Col. Dewey was also involved in mining in the area.

I'm hoping that the Idaho State Archives will be able to provide more information. In addition, I will do further research on Anna's time in Spokane. It's possible that she used Spokane as her home base while she was doing mining in Idaho. ☞

## Lydia Pyle Simpkinson, Vice-President of Dardanelles

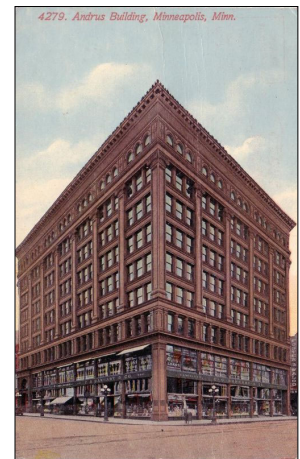
Lydia Pyle Simpkinson was listed as the vice-president of the Dardanelles Mining Company when it was organized in 1916.

I stumbled onto who the vice-president was when the State Archives from Arizona sent the mining claims and index to the records to me. I then had her full name! A bit of research in the US Census and online historical newspapers provided me a bit of a glimpse into her life.

Lydia was born in Kentucky. She lived in New Mexico at the time of the 1910 US

Census working as a stenographer. By 1920, she was living in Pasadena as the manager of the Simpkinson Hotel. It's also been listed as apartments.

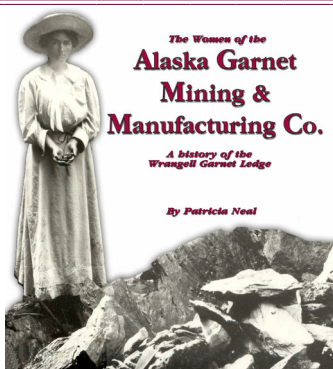
Lydia died in California in 1963 at the age of 91. A story about Lydia from the Los Angeles Times appears online at the Dardanelles People page. The Pasadena Museum of History provided additional information on Lydia which provided a better look at who Lydia was. She appears to have been a woman similar to Anna Durkee; someone to definitely be reckoned with! ☞



4279. Andrus Building, Minneapolis, Minn.  
**Andrus Building  
 Minneapolis, Minnesota**

The first newsletter generated a lot of positive feedback, more information, photographs and also corrections. I am so pleased that everyone who has read it has found it interesting and wants to learn more about the women. It has taken 25 years of working at this one piece at a time. It is so nice to finally see things coming together. Many of the descendants that I have contacted did not know about the garnet mine connection. They have been able to add to their family history and put a connection to why they have garnets. Others knew about the garnet mine but not a lot more. It has been great to be able to share the story with the descendants of these women. I would love to find more descendants. I'm not sure that will be possible, but I continue to work on it.

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



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**WE'RE ON THE WEB!**  
[WWW.WRANGELLGARNETLEDGE.COM](http://WWW.WRANGELLGARNETLEDGE.COM)

My thank you's continue. I have been so blessed to have such terrific people out there who are willing to help. Thank you to **Kathleen** who volunteered to look up death certificates. Also, to **Penny** who has also been helping to look up death certificates. **Connie**, the Minnesota List Mom has also been helping when she sees a query on the list. Then there are the archivists at the Arizona State Library, Archives and the Pasadena Historical Society. **Nancy** found the claims that Anna filed and **Lian** was kind enough to look for information on Lydia Simpson. Both were great finds! Another great find was the patent that Anna obtained. My thanks to **Walter**, the Patent and Trademark Librarian, at the Minneapolis Public Library. (He also found a patent from Jeanine's father!!!) **David** at the Arizona Corporation Commission has been great! It has taken some time to figure out names of the Dardanelles mines and there actually may be an earlier one that may have provided the clue for Anna. Unfortunately the only thing in their files was the articles of incorporation. David has been very patient with my questions.

Between purchasing mining books on eBay and the Inter-Library Loan, I have been able to gather a lot of resources. The **Coos Bay Public Library** has been great and now that I can request books online without having to go there or call them, it is even better! The \$2.00 charge is minimal...although I have had to pay one library \$10.00 to read one of their books!!!

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! Thank you for your help! *Trish*

## Corrections...

One of the reasons for sharing these newsletters with every one is to correct information. It is important to provide correct information. **Ann Rose:** While Ann Rose was listed as "Anna Rose" in the corporate papers, her name was Ann Eliza Crandall Rose. Minnie Rose Towler and her daughter Mertianna went to Berkeley in 1920, to follow their son and brother, Edward Towler. Edward did not attend U.of C. Berkeley and was an Oakland businessman. Thank you to Marjorie Rose Towler Witt for providing these corrections. I appreciate her taking the time to set me straight! ☺

## Fred H. Colvin, President of Dardanelles

Fred H. Colvin, President of the Dardanelles Mining & Milling Co. and the reorganized Dardanelles Amalgamated Mines, Inc. is the Fred H. Colvin who was the emeritus editor of American Machinist. He ended his editorship of that magazine in 1941 when he went to work for the Navy Bureau of Aeronautics as a production engineer during World War II.

He was the recipient of many awards during his career and wrote several books on his own and in col-



*Fred H. Colvin*

laboration with others.

Mr. Colvin was married and had two sons. He died in 1965. ☺

## Arizona Mines

A last minute item...the Comstock Parallel Mining Co. and the Arizona Comstock Mining Co. may also prove to be mining companies that Anna was involved in. I just received information that there are documents in the files. So...there goes another check for more copies! So stay tuned for more! ☺

*The web site is updated regularly as I obtain new information!!!*