

NEWSLETTER

Archive Archaeology

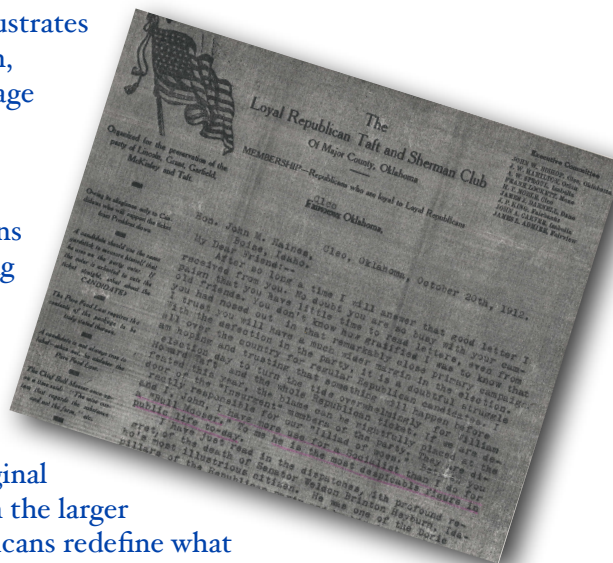
by Jennifer Stevens

Did you know that SHRA blogs on our website, www.shraboise.com? Every two weeks, we highlight something that is timely, a find from the archives or a general interest story with a historical twist. Recently, we published a piece about the upcoming Presidential Election, comparing the current rhetorical climate to that of the 1912 Presidential contest, which featured a three-way race that included former president (and former Republican) Theodore Roosevelt and his new break-away Bull Moose Party.

A letter discovered in the Idaho State Archives inspired the blog. Oklahoma resident John W. Bishop wrote to future Idaho Governor John M. Haines on October 20, 1912 on The Loyal Republican Taft and Sherman Club stationery, an Oklahoma club that was “organized for the preservation of the party of Lincoln, Grant, Garfield, McKinley and Taft,” and whose membership was made up of “Republicans who are loyal to Loyal Republicans.” Mr. Bishop’s tone could not have been icier toward the iconic yet “insurgent” historical figure of Roosevelt:

“I have more use for a Socialist than I do for a ‘Bull Mooser.’ [Roosevelt] is the most despicable figure in public life to-day.” [sic].

This 1912 letter illustrates the strong partisan, unequivocal language that continues to characterize our political process. Today’s Republicans might not be facing a breakaway party, but certainly there is dissension in the ranks in both parties. Marginal movements within the larger parties help Americans redefine what they stand for and move public discourse to the left and to the right. Once again, a visit to the archives underscores that, in American politics - as in life - “everything old is new again,” and we invite you to visit our blog from time to time to catch up on more “Archive Archaeology” and other features.



WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO

SHRA is a full - service historical research firm with special expertise on land use and water history relating to environmental disputes, as well as historic preservation. Our historians, led by Dr. Jennifer A. Stevens, conduct primary research to illuminate and analyze a wide range of historical, preservation and legal issues for corporate and government clients, as well as individuals. Our clients often request analysis and full reports, although we can also provide basic document collection. We begin with the archival material and provide critical interpretation of that material in our reports. We also provide expert witness services for our clients when needed. For more information on our services, visit our website www.shraboise.com.

Contact us today!

SHRA

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Staff News

SHRA is pleased to announce the additions of Kerry Davis, M.S., and Stephanie Milne, M.A., to our research staff. Kerry Davis is a historic preservation specialist with a Master of Science degree in Historic Preservation from the University of Vermont. She comes to us from the Midwest and has experience executing cultural resource management work across the United States, including in California, Idaho, Vermont, Iowa, Kansas, and New Hampshire, among other states. Kerry owned the business Preservation Solutions before her relocation to Idaho. Here at SHRA, Kerry will continue to engage in and expand her preservation work, utilizing our staff's extensive knowledge of American history, which will serve to benefit preservation projects that demand in-depth historical context.



Kerry Davis, M.S.



Stephanie Milne, M.A.

Stephanie Milne holds a master's degree in Applied Historical Research from Boise State University. Notable among Stephanie's research and survey experience is the documentation of the historic Jensen Farm, originally slated for demolition. Her work culminated in the incorporation of the farm's preservation into the Boise City Department of Parks and Recreation master plan as a historical interpretive site. In addition to preservation work, Stephanie is an experienced investigator with experience doing primary research in various archives, library and corporate repositories, as well as conducting oral histories and writing historical abstracts.

In other staff news, Dr. Jennifer Stevens has been appointed to the National Council on Public History's Consultants Committee. The Committee promotes the interests of NCPH members who provide historical services as consultants or contractors and assists the organization in keeping other public history practitioners informed about consulting activities and issues. Dr. Stevens has also been appointed as a member of the graduate faculty of Boise State University, which allows her, among other things, to advise graduate students in history with their thesis work.

Project Spotlight

The State of Washington and the Colville Confederated Tribes hired SHRA to provide expert rebuttal testimony in the *Joseph Pakootas, et. al v. Teck Cominco Metals, Ltd.* litigation, which began in the early 2000s. The case revolved around cleanup liability at Lake Roosevelt in the Columbia River Basin, Washington. Teck owned and operated a zinc and lead smelter in Trail, British Columbia that discharged smelting waste for many decades during the 20th Century. The company mounted a divisibility defense, in which it argued that myriad other mining entities in the lower Columbia watershed should bear liability in the cleanup costs. SHRA examined the records used by the opposing expert, determined other records that might exist and were overlooked, and used those to rebut his report. On April 4, 2012, the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Washington dismissed Teck's defense, Teck conceded important factual issues and the trial lasted a single day in late September. A fuller account of the recent case history, written by the attorneys representing the Tribes, can be found in the May 2012 edition of *Environmental & Land Use Law*, which is available online.

Thoughts from the Western History Association's 2012 Conference

by Jennifer Stevens

In early October, I attended the first of three professional conferences that I will be attending in the next six months. History conferences always reinvigorate my own work, and the scholarship at the Western History Association's annual meeting, held October 4-7 in Denver, CO, was not only interesting but also relevant to the work SHRA does for its clients. Remaining abreast of recent scholarship also lends currency to our testimony when serving as experts on a case.

This conference featured a few topics of general interest to you, our colleagues and clients. On one panel, scholars of water history presented papers highlighting the complexity facing policy makers and judges who are tasked with decision-making duties. One presenter provided an analysis of 1960s Bureau of Reclamation Commissioner Floyd Dominy, and claimed that Dominy presided over a Bureau that "lost its way" during this era, as it juggled the need to economically justify reclamation projects by chasing hydro power to generate revenues. Hydro power, after all, was not part of the 1902 Reclamation Act's mission, but neither did that law anticipate the financial difficulties that would plague irrigation districts in the postwar period. The paper probed the idea of a "reclamation empire" but begged the question of how the Bureau managed to survive in the face of these difficulties.

Another paper highlighted the ironic dilemma facing the Salton Sea in California. Dr. Traci Brynne Voyles described the 1905 creation of the Salton Sea, formed when man's efforts to reverse the course of the Colorado River at its mouth failed five times in a single season, and caused the river to deposit its entire flow into what we now know as the Salton Sea. Today, the sea supports an immense amount of avian wildlife, but has no outlet, and no regular source of water to refresh it, save a highly polluted stream that contributes only a small volume annually. Today, policy makers are faced with a toxic, man-made body of water that has been the site of numerous bird and fish die-offs, yet continues to be an important part of the Pacific flyway. Do we let the sea die, or do we continue to make efforts to keep this non-natural body of water "alive?"

Discussions such as these, and academic conferences in general, serve to remind me of the many vexing questions that remain to be explored in our field, and reinforce the importance of history to the contemporary disputes in which our clients are involved. The opportunity to discover current research and engage with the researchers allows SHRA to broaden and develop more deeply the analysis and context of the expert reports and testimony that we provide for our clients.



**WESTERN
HISTORY
ASSOCIATION**

WHA's 52nd Annual Conference
"Boundary Markers and Border Crossers"

UPCOMING EVENTS

January 3-6 2013

The 127th Annual Meeting of the American Historical Association - New Orleans, LA

Dr. Stevens be part of a panel on The Entrepreneurial Historian, which will promote a discussion of for-profit history, exploring the fundamental question currently confronting the historical profession: how can we expand career options to enable more historians to practice their craft?

April 17-20, 2013

**2013 Annual Meeting of the National Council on Public History
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada**

SHRA

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Want more on SHRA? Check out our website www.shraboise.com, and follow us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/SHRABoise.

We've Moved!

SHRA has once again outgrown our previous offices, and in the late summer we moved to the historic Fraternal Order of the Eagles building in Downtown Boise. Our new address is 223 N. 6th Street, Suite 205, Boise, ID 83702. We are excited to have found a new home in a beautifully presented legacy building located in part of downtown known as Old Boise.

Photo sourced from oldboise.com

