

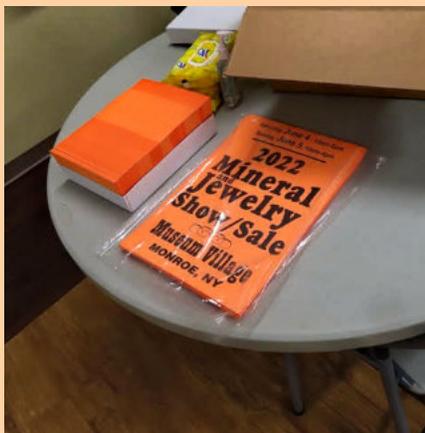
June 2022



# OCMS SHALE MAIL



**No meeting Friday  
June 10<sup>th</sup>!**  
**See you all at  
Museum Village at the  
OCMS Annual Show!**



## What's Inside?

President's Message & Minutes!	2
Women of the mining camps and Boom Towns	3
Orange County Mineral Society, Inc. Officers:	9



## Mailing Address:

254 Rt. 17K, Suite 204, Newburgh, NY 12550-8300

# President's Message & Minutes!

By: Mike Tedford

3 weeks until we meet to set up for the Mineral sale at Museum Village. These last 3 weeks often have an increased rate of vendor applications. The meeting minutes outlines some of our preparations. Please like and share our pages and mention our website in your posts to build awareness. You will not find a more scenic location for an outdoor mineral sale than Museum Village in June! Hoping to see you all there.

Also please remember that our rock barbecue in September will be pot luck- everyone brings a dish, dessert or salad, and will be in Chester to simplify the logistics.

Doc Bayne joined us at the Senior Center May 13<sup>th</sup> for an exciting overview of the history at Sterling Forest followed by an in depth summery of the Sterling Mountain Railway.

## Minutes

Meeting hall and OCMSNY attendance sheets were completed, Name tags were issued. 26 attendees.

Chester senior center COVID 19 precautions were observed including sign in, hand sanitizers, social distancing, and some attendees wore optional masks.

Meeting preparations included refreshments, mineral book and journal swap table, Name badges, and the raffle table, There was no zoom component to the meeting,

OCMSNY president Mike Tedford called the meeting to order at approximately 6:30 PM, welcoming the attendees.

Members confirmed they are receiving the emailed Shale Mail, and accepted the minutes therein.

Ron Nelson read the balances of the main checking account and show account. The Treasurers report was accepted.

Ron Nelson reported the Annual Mineral Show and Sale June 4 & 5, 2022 at Museum Village continues to increase in vendor registration, now at vendor total 45 and increasing rapidly. More Sale and Show flyers were distributed to members. Our website and Facebook page continue to be updated. Please review and suggest any more updates. The members agreed to assist with set up and running the mineral show similar to last year.. The Start time for Friday set up is not yet certain. Members will be notified probably either 1pm or 4pm. Several members will be

needed to escort vendors to their locations beginning around 6:30am Saturday. We will probably have an admissions desk by the gift shop entrance and a separate club table for club refreshments and activities. Mike Tedford will submit a list of materials on hand for the show. Ron Nelson has arranged a second credit card reader for the club use during the show. The Museum Village snack bar and kitchen will be open during the show. We do not have an additional food or refreshment vendor for the show. Mike Tedford will bring coolers and ice for members that want to bring their lunches or refreshments.

Ron Nelson has reserved the Chester barbecue pavilion for our rock barbecue on the Saturday following Labor Day weekend, We were reminded we will not have a business meeting or speaker both in June or September, instead having the mineral show and rock barbecue respectively,

Gary, Ron and Mike discussed the options for ordering patches and hats in a side meeting to arrive in time for the mineral show.. Mark and Gary will attempt to place orders this Monday 5/16/22.

Discussions ensued regarding a possible one day show and sale possibly on the third weekend in August. Ron and Gavin will be exploring the possibilities.

Our next speaker at the July meeting has not yet been determined. The possibilities of field trips were discussed briefly. More than one person can be an event. Keep an ear out for tagging along on a trip with any other club.

Mike showed the members the plastic bag containing letters to Orange County resident William Horton, MD from many of his mineral collecting cohorts in the 1830s. We are looking for someone to care for the documents and investigate the contents.

This business portion of the meeting adjourned around 7 pm for the presentation, refreshments and subsequent raffle.

Thank you to Doc Bayne for presenting the history of the Sterling Railroad in the context of the Sterling Forest area history and iron mining history. Doc also presented the founding and goals of the Friends of Sterling Forest. and showed us some of the visitors center.

The mineral raffle included 15 unique items, including many local finds from areas now closed, and three specimens donated by Willie Stedner from Lodes of Nature.

# WOMEN OF THE MINING CAMPS AND BOOM TOWNS

By: Keith Chip Allen

Women were not allowed to work in the mines or mills. The ratio was 9 to 1 when it came to men and women. Some women would follow their husbands. It was said if you were a woman in a mining camp or town, you were a wife or a prostitute. But this wasn't always the case, in fact many women would make a name for themselves or were successful with earning a good living.

The women that followed their husbands, either worked in his business, or if the mine was successful enough they came as a house wife and mother. Others found success as cooks or doing laundry (laundry actually was a very successful business). One woman was said to make \$36,000 in less than 6 months selling picks, shovels and gold pans, a large sum of money back in the day. But I wanted to share a handful of stories of a few women that truly left their mark on the Old West and mining days.

Nellie Cashman: I think no other woman left a mark on the mining world than Nellie. Her work and charity can be found in the Yukon of

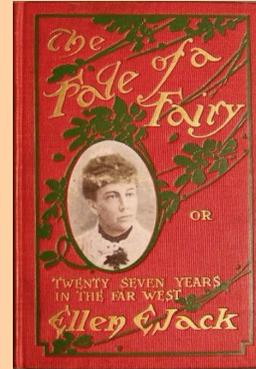


Canada, the mines of Arizona and the Klondike of Alaska.

Born in Middleton, Co. Cork in 1845, during the first year of Ireland's Great Hunger, Ellen (Nellie) Cashman went on to build quite the life and legacy for herself in the US as a helper, a healer, a savior, and a gold prospector.

In 1850, Cashman, her mother, and her sister Fanny departed Ireland for America. They first settled in Boston, and in 1865, when Nellie was 20, they made the long journey to California.

After her sister married, Nellie set off for the



brawling mining district of Pioche, Nevada, to run the Miner's Boarding House. But it was prospecting that lured Nellie to the Silver State — she would go wherever a strike looked promising. And as soon as she arrived in town, she set about opening a restaurant and boarding house, providing food and shelter to miners.

The Irish native had a head for business and prospecting as she traveled, but what she became notable for was her compassion. She opened and ran many boarding houses and restaurants, and was known for aiding miners down on their luck. While prospecting in British Columbia in 1874, she heard of miners struggling to survive in a snow-laden mining camp. Cashman joined a small group that came to their rescue, tugging 1,500 pounds of food and supplies.

When Nellie decided on a project, it was as good as done. The Sisters of St. Ann in Victoria, British Columbia, decided to build a hospital, so Nellie persuaded her fellow prospectors to open their bags of gold dust and donate to the cause. St. Joseph's Hospital became her haven through the years. Nellie often visited the sisters when she needed a respite from the stark living conditions of mining camps.

# WOMEN OF THE MINING CAMPS AND BOOM TOWNS - CONT.

Her interests in gold, silver and adventure brought Cashman to Tucson in 1877, where she opened a successful restaurant that established her reputation as a smart businesswoman. Over the next 21 years, Cashman would open and run numerous restaurants and businesses in Tucson, Tombstone and Bisbee, but it was her devotion to charitable causes and people in need that earned her the devotion and respect of residents.

She operated The Nevada Boot & Shoe Store in Tombstone as well as the Tombstone Cash Store, which provided fresh fruits and vegetables. That October she opened the Arcade Restaurant & Chop House.

Before long she was soliciting donations to build a Catholic church and county hospital for the town. The Tombstone Epitaph proclaimed in September 1880, "We ... will bet that there is a Catholic church in Tombstone before many days if Nellie has to build it herself." On Nov. 28, 1880, Sacred Heart Church of Tombstone held its first services. The county hospital saw its first patients the following year.

Selling the Nevada Boot & Shoe Store along with the Arcade Restaurant, Nellie next headed to the copper mines of Bisbee, opening the Bisbee Hotel in July 1881. But the town did not flourish as anticipated and she was back in Tombstone by September running The Russ House Hotel and Restaurant.

In 1898, Cashman joined the Klondike gold



rush, a successful foray that eventually helped

fund a new hospital in Fairbanks, before the establishment of the Territory of Alaska. In winter, she'd often return to Arizona to spend time with family. She died Nov. 24, 1925, in a British Columbia hospital she helped establish a half-century earlier.

Mary Fields "Stagecoach Mary": A number of young African American women came west as mail order brides for men who were in mining camps and doing other types of work. This invitation to the west was just what they needed to escape terrible home situations.

Born Mary Fields in around 1832, Fields was born into slavery, and like many other enslaved people, her exact date of birth is not known. Even



the place of her birth is questionable, though historians have pinpointed Hickman County, Tennessee as the most likely location.

Mary ended up in a convent in Ohio. There, Fields worked as a groundskeeper. Her gruff style and penchant for cursing raised eyebrows in the quiet convent. When asked how her journey to Toledo was, she reportedly told one of the nuns that she was ready for "a good cigar and a drink."

Though Fields struggled to adjust to the sheltered life of the convent, she did make a friend: Mother Amadeus Dunne. Dunne was called to missionary work by her bishop and headed to Montana where she founded an Ursuline convent there in 1884. In 1885, Fields got word that the beloved nun was gravely ill, and headed to Montana to help her.

# WOMEN OF THE MINING CAMPS AND BOOM TOWNS - CONT.

The West suited Fields, who nursed Dunne back to health and began working for her new convent near Cascade, Montana. But though she faithfully served the nuns in the harsh, sparsely populated community, news of her subversive behavior reached the bishop, who raised serious concerns about Fields' habits of drinking, smoking, shooting guns and wearing men's clothing. When Fields and the convent's male janitor pointed guns at one another during an argument, it was the final straw.

Kicked out of the convent, Fields was on her way and she set about living a life that was shocking by 19th-century standards. She took in laundry and did odd jobs, started businesses at a mining town and became known for liking hard liquor and gunfights. Not adjusting to ordinary jobs her tough reputation ended up paying off. In 1895, she got a contract from the postal service carry mail on a stagecoach.

"Stagecoach Mary" or "Black Mary," as she was nicknamed, carried a rifle and a revolver. She met trains with mail, then drove her stagecoach over rocky, rough roads and through snow and inclement weather. And though she intimidated would-be thieves with her height and her tough demeanor, she became beloved by locals, who praised her generosity and her kindness to children.

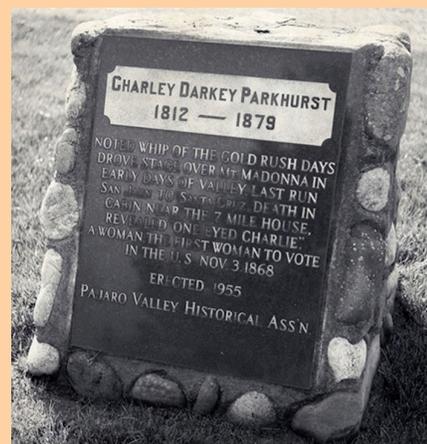
For eight years, Fields protected and delivered the mail. Eventually age caught up to her and she retired. The community rallied to support her, despite occasional dust-ups with neighbors. Local restaurateurs gave her free meals; saloon regulars chatted with her until bars became forbidden to woman due to a town ordinance. When she died on December 5, 1914, her funeral was one of the largest the town had ever seen.

Charlotte Parkhurst "One Eyed Charley": It wasn't till Parkhurst died in 1879 at age 67, near Watsonville, Calif., of cancer of the tongue, a doc-

tor discovered that the famous stagecoach driver "One Eyed Charley" was biologically a woman. Charley, it turned out, had been short for Charlotte.

This Charley was born Charlotte Parkhurst in Lebanon, New Hampshire and grew up in an orphanage. Dressed in boy's clothing Parkhurst left the orphanage and according to one account, met Ebenezer Balch, the owner of a livery stable in Rhode Island, who took him in as his own son. Balch taught the young child to ride horses and drive wagon teams giving him the skills needed to later drive stagecoaches throughout California. He quickly mastered the profession and made the perilous long journey all the way across the country to work as a whip (the term then for a stagecoach driver) on the Pacific Coast.

When the almost 40-year-old Parkhurst arrived in the Santa Cruz Mountains in 1850, he fit right in with the other rough and tough drivers. Known as "One-eyed Charley", he wore a black patch over his left eye, lost when attempting to shoe a horse. His lips were stained from constant tobacco chewing and as the years wore on he talked less and less earning him another nickname, Silent Charley. When Parkhurst did speak, he didn't hesitate to sling around swear words in a gruff voice. The only part of his appearance that was out of place was his clean-shaven face, an odd choice for a man in those days.



# WOMEN OF THE MINING CAMPS AND BOOM TOWNS - CONT.

Parkhurst proved himself in California not only in skill with a team of up to six horses but in handling bandits. A bandit called “Sugarfoot” and his crew held up Parkhurst’s stagecoach and forced him to hand over the wagon’s strong box (used to hold all of the passenger’s valuables). He calmly acquiesced while keeping all his passengers safe, but before they left, he warned the robbers that he’d “break even with them.” Sugarfoot unwisely stopped his stagecoach again, and this time, Parkhurst shot him dead. As the story goes, Sugarfoot crawled back to a miner’s cabin and, before he died, told the miners he’d been shot by the famous driver, One-eyed Charley.

Because Charlotte was thought to be a man, she was able to vote, making her the first woman to vote in the U.S.

Sing Choy “China Mary”: America outlawed the immigration of Chinese laborers. Chinese immigrant laborers having played a major role in building the transcontinental railroad, by the late 1800s fear of Chinese people taking American jobs as well as sullyng American racial “purity” was so rampant that the government enacted its first major law that stopped immigration to America based on race.

The Chinese people who still made it to American soil and chose to remain were predominantly men relegated to Chinatown slums where they worked largely in the laundry and restaurant businesses. The limited number of women allowed into the US were due to the sensationalized belief that all Chinese women were cunning sex workers who would tempt American men with opium and the flesh. In reality, Chinese women were often sold into the sex trade or lured into it under false pretenses. Chinese sex trafficking was big business in mining towns and immigrant enclaves.

Arriving in Tombstone, Arizona’s “Hoptown” (or Chinatown), around 1880, Mary’s story is a

mix of legend and history. Mary had the reputation for being a bold, savvy business woman who favored lavish silk brocade clothing and piles of jade jewelry.

The daughter of a Chinese gold miner in California and originally from Guangdong province, Mary, her husband, and Quong Gu Kee – another notable Chinese person from Tombstone history – ran the famous Can Can Restaurant, the hang-out for Wyatt Earp and his gang. More than a restaurant owner, Mary was also trusted by both Chinese and whites alike for her ability to find reliable Chinese laborers.

A smart investor and popular amongst all the residents of Tombstone, she came to be something of the “Godfather” of Hoptown. Running a general store that stocked both Chinese and American goods, as well as investing in restaurants, laundries, and various other businesses around town, Mary was also a reputable money lender who had absolute faith in her own abilities to deduce whether a borrower would cross her. And you never wanted to cross Mary.

Running gambling houses (open to both Chinese and white Americans), opium dens, and brothels, it was clear that Mary understood that there were ways Chinese people in America could make good money, so she exploited it.



# WOMEN OF THE MINING CAMPS AND BOOM TOWNS - CONT.

Accounts tell of her never turning away someone in need of food or medical care. A popular tale tells of her bringing a wounded cowboy who showed up at her door to the nearby boarding house and paying all of his bills until he recovered. Furthermore, if there was a dispute between the Chinese residents of Tombstone and the white leaders, she helped negotiate. Such was her influence.

When Mary died of heart failure in December of 1906, she was given a extravagant Chinese-style funeral, attended by most of Tombstone, complete with a carriage procession to Boothill Cemetery in order to throw evil spirits off her trail. Breaking with Chinese tradition to have her bones sent home to China after one year, Mary supposedly asked that her bones stay in Tombstone.

Ellen Elliott "Captain Jack": Captain Jack was born in England in 1842 as Ellen Elliott. Later she traveled to the United States, meeting Charles Jack aboard her ship. They married and had children, but the kids and Charles died. Ellen headed west, opening Jack's House, a cafe in Gunnison, then prospecting in Gilpin County where she owned the Black Queen Mine. She eventually ended up owning a boarding house in Cripple Creek in the late 1890s before moving down the mountain and mining tourists at a



lodge on the crest of the High Drive.

Ellen adopted her late husband's Civil War rank and called herself Captain Jack. She dressed in a wool skirt, loose cotton blouse, lace-up boots, and always carried a mining pick and loaded six-shooter tucked into her belt. Captain Jack was a true eccentric in the early 1900s, renting cabins, cooking fried chicken, posing for photos with tourists, and living with a burro, parrots, and cats.

Captain Jack wrote about her life's adventures in *The Tale of a Fairy or Twenty Seven Years in the Far West*. She detailed gun fights, how she fought off "amorous" Utes, traveled over avalanche-ridden mountains, and how she fired at Utes in Gunnison despite a hatchet wound to the head. The Captain was adept with pistols and rifles, and always carried a loaded firearm.

She wrote: "I do not fear man or devil; it is not in my blood, and if they can shoot any straighter or quicker than I, let them try it, for a .44 equalizes frail women and brute men, and all women ought to be able to protect themselves against such ruffians."

Ms. Elliott died in 1921 in Colorado Springs after being confined to a hospital bed. She was buried in Evergreen Cemetery with her head facing her beloved home on the High Drive and today's Captain Jack Trail.

Alice Ivers Tubbs "Poker Alice": The best known female poker player in the Old West, Alice Ivers Tubbs, better known as "Poker Alice", hailed from England. Born on February 17, 1851, in Devonshire, she was the daughter of a conservative schoolmaster who moved the family to the United States when she was still a small girl. First settling in Virginia, Alice attended an elite boarding school for young women until the family moved again in her teenage years, to the silver rush in Leadville, Colorado.

# WOMEN OF THE MINING CAMPS AND BOOM TOWNS - CONT.

While there, Alice met a mining engineer by the name of Frank Duffield and the two married when she was 20. Gambling was a way of life in the many mining camps of the Old West and when Frank, an enthusiastic player, visited the many gambling halls in Leadville, young Alice went along with him rather than stay home alone. At first, the pretty young girl stood quietly behind her husband, simply watching the play. However, a quick study, it wasn't long before she was sitting in on the games.

A few years after their marriage, Alice's husband, who worked as a mining engineer, was killed in an explosion and she was left alone with no means of support. The few remaining jobs available to women in a mining camp did not appeal to Alice and she soon decided to try to make a living with her gambling skills. Though she preferred the game of poker, she also learned to deal and play Faro and was soon in high demand, both as a player and a dealer. At this time, Alice was a petite 5'4" beauty, with blue eyes and lush brown hair. A "lady" in a gambling hall that wasn't of the "soiled dove" variety was rare in the Old West and bedecked in the latest fashions, she was a sight for the sore eyes of many a miner.

Traveling from one mining camp to another,



the talented young beauty soon acquired the

nickname "Poker Alice." In addition to playing the game, she often worked as a dealer. As time went on, Alice began to puff on large black cigars, while still in her fashionable frilly dresses; however, she never gambled on Sundays because of her religious beliefs. She also carried a .38 revolver and wasn't afraid to use it. As her reputation grew throughout the west, she always found willing players and she attracted men looking for a challenge. As such, she was quickly welcomed in gambling halls because the crowd she drew was good for business.

Sometime later, during Prohibition, Alice opened a saloon called "Poker's Palace" between Sturgis and Fort Meade that provided not only gambling and liquor but also "women" who serviced the customers. While here, a drunken soldier began to cause havoc in the saloon, destroying the furniture, and causing a ruckus. Alice responded by pulling her .38 and shooting the man. While in jail awaiting trial, she calmly smoked cigars and read the Bible. She was acquitted on grounds of self-defense, but her saloon was shut down in the meantime.

She continued to run a "house" of ill-repute in Sturgis during her later years and was often arrested for drunkenness and keeping a disorderly house. Though she paid her fines, she continued to operate the business until she was finally arrested for repeated convictions of running a brothel and sentenced to prison. However, Alice, who 75 years old at the time, was pardoned by the governor.

In her later years, Alice claimed to have won more than \$250,000 at the gaming tables and never once cheated. In fact, one of her favorite sayings was: "Praise the Lord and place your bets. I'll take your money with no regrets." At the age of 79, she underwent a gall bladder operation in Rapid City but died of complications on February 27, 1930. She was buried at St. Aloysius Cemetery in Sturgis, South Dakota.

**OCMS members** are covered by Society-sponsored insurance.

**OCMS Disclaimer**

*The editor and the OCMS are not responsible for the accuracy or authenticity of information in the articles accepted for publication, nor are the opinions expressed therein necessarily those of the officers of the OCMS or the editor.*



**Clickable Interactive Directory**

[OCMS Sponsored Mindat Page](#)

[OCMS sponsored Town Page](#)

[Geology](#)

[Wildacres](#)

[OCMS Facebook](#)

[OCMS Website](#)

[Duke Labs](#)

**Orange County Mineral Society, Inc. Officers:**

President:	Mike Tedford	(845) 542-6441	<a href="#"><u>Click to email Mike</u></a>
VP/Programs:	Gary Kerstanski		<a href="#"><u>Click to email Gary</u></a>
2 <sup>nd</sup> VP:	Alex Kerstanski	(845) 978-4141	<a href="#"><u>Click to email Alex</u></a>
3 <sup>rd</sup> VP:	Ryan Richardson	(845) 629-5120	<a href="#"><u>Click to email Ryan</u></a>
VP Emeritus/Historian:	Frank Clyne	(845) 361-4710	<a href="#"><u>Click to email Frank</u></a>
Treasurer/Facebook:	Ron Nelson	(845) 469-9080	<a href="#"><u>Click to email Ron</u></a>
Min.Show Chairman:	Ron Nelson	(845) 469-9080	<a href="#"><u>Click to email Ron</u></a>
Membership Com Chair	Brigitte Nesteroke	(845) 386-4119	<a href="#"><u>Click to email Brigitte</u></a>
Secretary:	Position Open		<a href="#"><u>Click to email</u></a>
Shale Mail Editor:	Alison Pacut	(845) 902-8562	<a href="#"><u>Click to email Alison</u></a>
Webmaster:	Heather Shields	(845) 649-9623	<a href="#"><u>Click to email Heather</u></a>
Field Trip Leader	Frank Vigilante	(570) 618-2770	<a href="#"><u>Click to email Frank</u></a>