

in which the telephone made but rare appearances and rail transportation was still only a promise. Mails were being hijacked and stage travel was beset by accidents and heavy snows. The logistical problems of operating in that high and remote location were severe during the summer, but deep snows made it impossible to continue mining through the winter. Yet through all of this, Olcott retained his enthusiasm for the harsh but magnificent area in which he worked. In a November 1978 letter to his sister Katherine, Olcott wrote: "Sometimes I have wished that I had selected a different occupation, but then look what I would have missed."

Both mining and non-mining readers will enjoy this book. The only disappointment came from not learning more about the actual challenges of mining the North Star. Perhaps in a sequel volume Smith will grab his hard hat, buckle on his lamp belt, and mine out any of Olcott's letters that describe those details.

Ed Hunter

Victor, Colorado

Stephen B. Castor and Gregory C. Fendock. *Minerals of Nevada*. Reno: University of Nevada Press (Nevada Bureau of Mines and Geology, Special Publication 31), 2003; 560pp., cloth, \$75.

Francis Bacon put it best: "Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested; that is, some books are to be read only in parts; others to be read, but not curiously; and some few to be read wholly, and with diligence and attention."

Regional mineralogies fit into the first and last categories. Usually one does not simply sit down and read one from cover to cover. They are meant to be used as reference books to which one refers for specific information. Need it be said that reference reading is an activity of diligence? That said, I wish it weren't so. As a nearly fanatical young mineral collector, I do have fond

memories of reading Ed Eckel's *Minerals of Colorado* from cover to cover.

It is not, however, my intention to pan *Minerals of Nevada*—I mean to praise it! It serves Bacon's purposes admirably and will serve yours if you need a good reference to the minerals of the Silver State. And since no truly comprehensive state mineralogy had ever been published before *Minerals of Nevada*, you do need it if you are a student of geology, mines, mining history, and minerals. Nevada is acknowledged by all as one of the nation's most important mining states, so this book will be a welcome and useful addition to many a library.

The book is easy to use, as all of the species are listed alphabetically. As with all such works, the bulk of the information is in the form of a catalog of articles on the mineral species found in the state. The articles consist of a discussion of color, crystal habit, crystal size, mode of occurrence, associated minerals, and other items of interest for that species as found at that locality. Each locality at which a species is found is listed according to the appropriate county in which that locality is situated. The sources for information are cited in standard scientific format, and a complete bibliography is included. There is a good index for most of the "other" subjects brought up in the text.

The species-by-species presentation doesn't stray into the more technical mineralogical data that is easily obtained elsewhere. There is a short paragraph at the start of each article that provides a good introduction to the species. Sometimes I found myself wishing that a little more had been included in that paragraph. And I certainly wish that more information had been included in the discussions of the various districts, but sometimes authors have to limit things.

There are several succinct introductory chapters containing information on various aspects of the history and nature of mining the minerals of the state. Again, I often wanted more information, but the purpose of these chapters is to introduce the context of the mineralogy, not to tell everything

about each deposit.

The only real shortfall that I can point to is that more maps with more detail would be really helpful. I found it impossible to resist pulling out a map or two from one of the classic references while reading the sections on the Comstock Lode and the Goodsprings District. Ultimately this is the supreme compliment for such a reference—it makes you seek more information.

Finally, there are 103 excellent color photographs of very good to excellent specimens. And I must say that I'm glad the authors of this volume didn't get bogged down in debates about whether some of the photos should show specimens that are typical of what a collector could expect to find in the field. That really happened when Friends of Mineralogy updated Eckel's *Minerals of Colorado*. In the years since, no one has ever come up to me and said, "I sure am glad you photographed some crummy rocks."

Ed Raines

Ward, Colorado

Carrie Papa. *A Mile Deep and Black as Pitch: An Oral History of the Franklin and Sterling Hill Mines*. Blacksburg, VA: McDonald and Woodward, 2004; 378pp., paper, \$24.95.

"Oral history is only a means to an end, not an end in itself . . . but what really counts is the potential of oral history for accomplishment, for a contribution to the historical record."—Kyvig and Marty, *Nearby History: Exploring the Past Around You*, 1982.

The definitive history of the New Jersey Zinc Company has yet to be written. Carrie Papa, however, has made a noteworthy contribution toward that end with her compilation of mine and company town oral histories, *A Mile Deep and Black as Pitch*. Those interested in NJZ, the mines and unique mineralogy of Franklin and Sterling Hill, New Jersey, hard-rock mining east of the Mississippi River, or the character and dynamics of mining-company towns, will find this book a welcome addition to their

bookshelves.

After a prefatory summary of the more than 150-year history of the Franklin and Sterling Hill mines, Papa introduces by brief cameo each of the people whose recorded recollections provide the substance of the book. And it is here that the reader begins to sense the work's central (and likely inevitable) shortcoming: even taken together, the informants' accounts penetrate nowhere near a "mile deep" into this rich history. Few of the miners interviewed worked in the mines before the 1940s, and childhood reminiscences rarely predate 1930. How much more valuable would this book be had the effort behind it started in the 1950s or 1960s (a question Papa has undoubtedly asked herself)?

Further, Papa's selections of home town recollections sometimes seem a bit parochial, likely to resonate more with those having closer contacts with the landmarks and people of Franklin and Sterling Hill than with most readers. In those instances the book more closely resembles a typical local history project than a work aimed at a broader readership. Papa attempts to achieve a larger context by including occasional contrasting photos and vignettes from mines and company towns in the eastern coal fields and the copper country of Michigan's Upper Peninsula. Unfortunately, those efforts generally prove more distracting than illuminating.

Having addressed these mostly minor shortcomings, let me hasten to add that *A Mile Deep* will likely remain a seminal and sought-after work on living with and working for New Jersey Zinc. Papa's labors rescued two generations worth of invaluable testimony on those subjects that almost certainly would have otherwise been lost. While readers seeking a broader history of the Franklin and Sterling Hill mines themselves might wish to supplement their libraries with one or both of Pete Dunn's monographs, Richard Hauck (president of the Sterling Hill Mining Museum Foundation) altogether correctly compliments Papa for