
Book Reviews

Judy Nolte Temple. *Baby Doe Tabor: The Madwoman in the Cabin*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2007; 260 pp., b&w illus., notes, bib., cloth, \$24.95. ISBN: 0806138251

The story of Baby Doe Tabor has been the gist of many western tales. A beautiful divorcee mesmerized a wealthy, married mining magnate, who in turn divorced his wife to marry the beauty. As the second wife of silver king H. A.W. Tabor, Elizabeth McCourt "Baby Doe" Tabor was shunned by society, but extremely happy and in love with her husband and their two daughters. The couple's wealth and extravagance, and eventual fall into poverty after the silver crash of 1893, has become legendary. Tabor died penniless.

Baby Doe sought solitude in Leadville at the Matchless Mine, where Tabor earned much of his wealth. Her bazar behavior and actions garnered her the nickname "madwoman in the cabin." After Baby Doe's death in 1935, her papers and journals were locked away in the archives of the Colorado Historical Society, resulting in even more speculation about the Tabors' lives and their legend. Countless authors and researchers attempted to gain access to the locked records through various channels, but they were not released until 1967. What Lizzie Tabor's papers reveal is extraordinary.

Author Judy Nolte Temple, professor of Women's Studies and English at the University of Arizona, and a team of researchers, spent countless hours reading and analyzing Lizzie's small collection of journals and mass of disjointed rantings written on slips of paper and kept in no particular order. The mass of papers, filed in a folder titled "Dreams and Visions," reveal a heart-wrenching account of a lonely and, yes, perhaps madwoman's

life.

Temple weaves together Lizzie McCourt Tabor's life through archival records, Lizzie's writings, and the author's theoretical analysis. The academic scholarship behind this work is impressive, yet, at times, burdensome to the reader. This is a scholarly work, not another romantic legendary tale of Baby Doe and H. A. W. Tabor. However, if your interests lie in biographical accounts of the Tabors or in women's history, do not be daunted. It is a fascinating analysis of a multi-faceted woman, Elizabeth "Baby Doe" McCourt Tabor.

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Virginia McConnell Simmons. *Drifting West: The Calamities of James White and Charles Baker*. Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2007; 210 pp., 22 b&w photos, 7 illus., 11 maps, notes, bib., ind., cloth, \$29.95. ISBN: 0870818740

Zachary A. Smith and John C. Freemuth (ed.). *Environmental Politics and Policy in the West*. Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2007; 229 pp., ref., ind., paper, \$34.95. ISBN: 0870818813.

Diana L. Ahmad. *The Opium Debate and Chinese Exclusion Laws in the Nineteenth-Century American West*. Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2007; 145 pp., notes, bib., ind., cloth, \$34.95. ISBN: 0874176980.

The journal received several books for review this year that do not pertain directly to mining, but include it as an essential element of their stories. *Drifting West* follows the lives and activities of four frontier drifters, two of whom surfaced

long enough to leave slight marks upon history. Charles Baker led an unsuccessful expedition into the San Juans through the tough winter of 1860–61 that helped to establish Animas City and gave his name to the mountain park in which Silverton now sits.

Baker returned to the San Juan country in the summer of 1867 with fellow drifters James White and George Strole. White drifted around the West after leaving Wisconsin in 1861, floating from Denver to the Comstock, serving a hitch in the Fifth California Volunteer Cavalry during the Civil War, and ending up at Fort Dodge, Kansas, where he met Baker and Strole. The three men worked the Animas River diggings briefly in July, before departing to prospect down the Mancos River.

At the beginning of September 1867, White, alone, emaciated, and sunburned, floated into Callville, Nevada, on the Colorado River aboard a log raft. After he recovered sufficiently, he claimed that the party had been attacked by Indians, who killed Baker, and that he and Strole had escaped, assembled the raft and pushed off down the Colorado River. Strole soon drowned in a rapid, leaving White to complete his harrowing journey alone. If true, that would make him the first white man to voyage through the Grand Canyon on the Colorado River, two years before John Wesley Powell's first expedition.

Debate has raged over this story ever since, and Simmons spends the second half of her book discussing the various points for and against White's claim. Simmons has unearthed no new evidence, for none survives to unearth. White's account of his voyage, repeated to others, remains the heart of the evidence for his passage of the canyon—and of the fates of Baker and Strole. Sources are so scarce that Simmons is reduced to reprinting ten pages of a hearsay account of White's adventures written by journalist Alfred Calhoun, an account which Simmons herself concedes "should [be] called fiction."

Simmons declines to speculate on some inter-

esting questions, such as what route White would have taken had he come overland and entered the river below the Grand Canyon, as his doubters claim. Her points about the nature of drifting on the frontier West are well taken, but Simmons discovers and offers no definitive proof about a topic already discussed at some length, admitting in her preface that "objective scholars take a neutral stance on this issue [of White being first], as I also have been forced to do."

Environmental Politics and Policy in the West is a compilation of nine essays on environmental policy formation. These deal with how environmental policy for the West is formulated by state and federal officials amid contending ideological and economic interests and tensions between science and politics. They consider specific issues, including wildlife management, population growth, and water issues. Originally published in 1992, this revision updates the work with events and personalities of the intervening fifteen years. The most significant change is two new chapters: "Innovation in State Environmental Policy: A View from the West," and "The Politics of Dam Removal and River Restoration."

The chapter most germane here is "The Politics of Hard-Rock Mining in the American West," by Charles Davis and Sandra Davis, two political science professors at Colorado State University. They discuss the evolution of the battle over mining on the public lands of the West. At first, this contest centered around attempts by environmentalists to reform the Mining Law of 1872, which gave mining companies access to the resources of federal lands at nominal cost and without severance taxes.

This attempted legislative reform ultimately failed, thanks to the opposition of mining interests and their political allies in Congress and the western states. In reaction, environmental activists moved their attempts to curtail mining to the executive and judicial branches, through regulation by sympathetic government agencies or through litigation. These efforts successfully

employed provisions of other national and state environmental legislation—such as the Clean Air and Clean Water acts, the Endangered Species Act, and the Wilderness Act—either to prevent mining outright, or to make it so onerous as to be impractical. The Wilderness Act of 1964, for example, permitted mining in wilderness areas, but not motorized vehicles.

Environmentalists have not succeeded in reforming the Mining Law of 1872 or completely prohibiting mining on federal lands. However, they have succeeded in shifting land-use standards from the multiple-use ethic of the early twentieth century to one that emphasizes environmental preservation as its dominate value, resulting in significant curtailment of mining and other resource extraction in the American West.

This is a good, dispassionate summary of the struggle of the past fifty years over mining, environmentalism, and land use in the West. It leaves the impression, however, that environmentalists, the public, and perhaps the authors, regard mining as an optional behavior pursued largely for profit, rather than as the essential human activity that it is.

The Opium Debate traces the history of opium importation into the West, and hence the U.S., in the nineteenth century. Diana Ahmad argues that opium's deleterious effects and its association primarily with Chinese immigrants led to its prohibition being used as one of the arguments for excluding Chinese immigrants generally.

Although the West's mining towns are not the focus of her study, Ahmad drew sources and observations from a number of them, include Boise, Idaho; Butte, Helena, and Deer Lodge, Montana; Pioche and Virginia City, Nevada; and Park City and Silver Reef, Utah. The prominent western mining states included in the study are California, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, and Utah, along with mentions of Missouri, Oregon, Texas, and Washington.

This ninety-page treatise deals with the arrival of Chinese immigrants and smoking opium into

the U.S. with the California gold rush, and the resistance that soon developed, especially in the West, to Chinese immigration. This resistance centered on cultural differences, economic competition, and opium use, and led to calls for Chinese exclusion. The book provides useful background on the introduction of the narcotic into China by the British and American involvement in the opium trade that developed, then deals with the introduction of smoking opium into the United States and the practices of its use.

There follows a discussion of the American medical community's reaction to the drug's adoption by some whites in communities where Chinese immigrants resided, including an number of western mining towns. The prevailing medical opinion was that the drug was addictive physically and degenerative morally, leading medical and civic leaders to demand the exclusion of the drug, and of the Chinese immigrants deemed responsible for it.

Ahmad discusses the culmination of the exclusion movement in 1882 with Congress' passage of the Chinese Exclusion Act, which remained in force until World War Two. She concludes by noting that neither the Chinese nor smoking opium disappeared from the United States after 1882, the importation and use of the latter not being federally outlawed until 1909.

The author concedes in several places that the social-cultural opium argument was not as frequently or persuasively evoked as the economic argument for Chinese exclusion, but makes the case that it should be remembered as an important component of the exclusion debate; a reasonable, if unstartling, thesis.

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