
Book Reviews

Carol Larkin and Randall H. McGuire (eds.). *The Archaeology of Class War: The Colorado Coalfield Strike of 1913–1914*. Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2009; 432 pp., 8 c. and 49 b&w photos, 5 b&w illus., 22 maps, 19 tabs., bib., ind., cloth, \$60. ISBN: 9780870819551.

Those wishing a comprehensive treatment of the Colorado Coalfield War will find here only a summary of this important milestone in United States' mining and labor history, although extensive bibliographic references are provided. What readers will find is a collection of chapters written by several authors who participated in various aspects of the Colorado Coalfield War Archaeology Project. The University of Denver, the State University of New York at Binghamton, and Fort Lewis College in Durango, Colorado, sponsored this multi-year project. Its goal was "to recover the memory of Ludlow and to exhume what remains of the class war . . . in the coalfields of southern Colorado." This book is about archaeology with a political message.

The archaeological digs themselves took place at the site of the Ludlow, Colorado, tent colony and at the deserted Colorado Fuel and Iron coal camp of Berwind nearby. Striking miners and their families occupied the tent colony, which became the scene of the infamous Ludlow Massacre. While a visitor to the United Mine Workers of America's memorial in Ludlow today sees little else but prairie, project archaeologists unearthed hundreds of artifacts that increased understanding about life and death in the camp. The same was true in the ghost town of Berwind, where excavations revealed clues to living conditions before and after the strike. The description of the planning and execution of the digs is fascinating

reading for anyone interested in reconstructing the history of long-abandoned mining sites.

Most of the chapters that follow describe how the archaeologists have interpreted the artifacts and the information gathered from archival sources. It is here that political undertones emerge. For example, the Berwind excavations clearly revealed that housing, sanitation, and quality of life improved in the years after the strike. One writer moves beyond those facts to speculate that rather than actual gains resulting from the strike, those improvements were paternalistic attempts by management to exert more control over miners. It is likely that both causes contributed to improving the lot of miners and their families.

Another author analyzed the ceramic artifacts from a single tent cellar at Ludlow. The sudden demise of the tent colony during the fire and massacre made the Ludlow site unusual. Rather than containing only discards, the tent cellar contained one immigrant family's entire collection of table and tea ware. Based on the types of pottery found, the author concluded that although the family had apparently been in the country for some time, during an era in which pressure on immigrants to "Americanize" was high, it continued to adhere primarily to the dining habits of its native culture. This family had only secondarily adopted the culture of aspiring citizens of the United States.

Another contributor concludes that workers are under-represented in American memory, observing that "workers' lives usually leave a less substantial material trace than do the lives of the industrialists." He points out the potential for historical archaeologists to contribute to the history and commemoration of labor by looking at company towns and camps, presumably in addi-

tion to the more durable remains of mines, mills, and smelters.

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Julie Whitesel Weston. *The Good Times Are All Gone Now: Life, Death, and Rebirth in an Idaho Mining Town*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2009; 248 pp., 20 b&w illus., notes, bib., paper, \$20. ISBN: 0806140759.

In November of 1990, Julie Whitesel Weston descended into the Bunker Hill mine at Kellogg, Idaho, for the very first time. Then 105 years old, the mine was the reason and economic foundation for Kellogg and other mining communities along the South Fork of the Coeur d'Alene River. Although raised in Kellogg, Weston had left for college in 1961 with only an abstract knowledge of the mine that made the town. Her mother had thought Kellogg "dreary and ugly," an attitude shared by the daughter who pursued a legal and writing career in the more urbane and scenic Seattle.

A Kellogg high school reunion in 1986 changed that, sparking an interest in the story of the town and its people. More than a decade of interviews and research followed, encapsulated in a memoir that skillfully interweaves the story of her family with those of other Kellogg families, the town, and the Bunker Hill.

As one miner's wife she interviewed said of Kellogg: "There isn't no better place to live than right here." Weston seeks to square this attitude with her own experience and finds that the quality of life in Kellogg centered on the people and not the scarred landscape, the grey tailings-laden water of the Coeur d'Alene River, or the piles of mining wastes. The small town these people built, free of crime but full of helping hands, would not have been possible, however, without the high wages and steady employment provided by the Bunker Hill.

Throughout the book, Weston alternates between the costs and benefits of the mine, using the imagery of an assayer's balance: "How do we weigh the value of metals as compared to the value of lives and how they are lived? Or the value of clean water and forested lands as compared to the value of jobs? These are not easy tasks."

The book begins with the demolition of the smelter stacks at the Bunker Hill on Memorial Day 1996, completing the dismantling of the Bunker Hill's surface plant. Weston then steps back to the beginning, with a short history of the discovery and development of the Bunker Hill, and the founding of Kellogg, Wardner, and other local communities. She then jumps to the 1950s and 1960s, the years of her childhood.

Her father was a physician, a native of Kellogg who gave up an opportunity to purchase a lucrative practice elsewhere to return to the town he loved. The author leads us through the story of her family, the life of a musically-inclined girl growing up in Kellogg during the Cold War metals boom, and the stories of dozens of friends, neighbors, and other locals she met during her interviews. She takes us along as she learns the difference these people made in her own life and in each others'.

This is a rare book. Miners' memoirs are few, but effective accounts of what it was like to live in a remote mining community are especially scarce. Mabel Barbee Lee's *Cripple Creek Days* is a touching story of growing up in a newly established camp. Weston's *The Good Times are All Gone Now* takes us through a mining town from its prime to its near demise, and shows how what was lost lives on in the hearts and memories of those who lived there. Her descent into the Bunker Hill in 1990 was part of a process of self-discovery, not of who she was but of where she came from. Highly recommended.

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