

Ores to Metals: The Rocky Mountain Smelting Industry is not quite as comprehensive as its subtitle suggests. Smelters located in Montana and Utah only come into the story as they pertain to events in Colorado. Within the state, Fell makes no mention of the smelters at Florence and at Colorado City that sustained the Cripple Creek District during its first two decades, the latter being the flash point for the notorious Cripple Creek strike of 1903–4. Still, Fell's mastery of the intricacies of the industry, from the furnace floor to the board room, means that *Ores to Metals* retains its value in mining literature and is an important addition to the Timberline series.

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Jan MacKell. *Red Light Women of the Rocky Mountains*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2009; 458 pp., 81 b&w illus., append., notes, ind., cloth, \$35. ISBN: 9780826346100.

Put your Stetsons on, sit back in a comfortable chair, and get ready for a great read! Storyteller and lecturer Jan MacKell's *Red Light Women of the Rocky Mountains* is a rousing story of a topic often ignored and tabooed. However, this is not a book that tells tales of debauchery or shows racy photographs. It is based upon years of research for her first book—*Brothels, Bordellos, and Bad Girls: Prostitution in Colorado, 1860–1930* (University of New Mexico Press, 2004)—and expanded to cover the entire Rocky Mountain region. It is a well-written book about women's history, U.S. history, and western lore, not a rehash of other books.

MacKell explains that at different times prostitutes had an important economic role in a community, exerted political influence, and, in ways not acknowledged or much studied, contributed to the growth and stability of the locale. The changing acceptance, visibility, and influence of prostitutes in the territories and states during

the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries added a new dimension to the development of the Rocky Mountain region.

Many of these women hid their true identities in an effort to protect themselves and their families. The amount of stories and sources that MacKell has uncovered is remarkable. At the same time, one must caution the reader that some of these "tales" may indeed be tales, oral histories that have been embellished. This does not detract from MacKell's efforts to conduct a well-research and extensive history of prostitution in the West. In the preface she calls attention to around-the-table discussions with old timers in many locales. If you doubt a madam's story, research it for yourself and write a book! Her vignettes are compelling, filled with emotion, respect, and history. It is a book well worth the time to read.

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Jonathan H. Rees. *Representation and Rebellion: The Rockefeller Plan at the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company, 1914–1942*. Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2010; 344 pp., 12 b&w illus., append., notes, bib. essay, ind., cloth, \$35. ISBN: 9780870819643.

Colorado's coalfield war of 1913–14 has attracted much attention from historians. In fact, the Mining History Association's 2009 Clark Spence Award went to Thomas G. Andrews' *Killing for Coal*, which dealt with that topic, as well as with the half century of labor difficulties that led up to the Ludlow Massacre in 1914. In part, Jonathan Rees' *Representation and Rebellion* continues that discussion as it looks at the Rockefeller Plan for labor representation, which John D. Rockefeller, Jr. instituted in the aftermath of the coalfield disaster.

As with the coalfield war, authors have explored the Rockefeller Plan before, and most have been critical. Ben M. Selekman and Mary Van

Kleeck who examined the plan for the Russell Sage Foundation in the 1920s, found it lacking in real worker benefits. Much more recently, Howard Gitelman's *Legacy of Ludlow* explored the relationship between John D. Rockefeller, Jr. and Mackenzie King as they worked to develop the plan. Gitelman argues that Rockefeller wanted the workers' complete acquiescence to the plan.

Rees, however, sees the Rockefeller Plan in a much more positive light. He wants to correct what he sees as unbalanced interpretations, and he uses the workers' own words to do it, at least as those words were revealed in the company's files. Unlike Gitelman, who relied on documents from King and Rockefeller, Rees drew upon local records recently made available through the Colorado Fuel and Iron archives in Pueblo.

Rees starts with Rockefeller's motivation to find a new way to deal with labor. He does make Rockefeller sound a little self-serving, mentioning that he wanted a plan to repair his family's damaged name, but Rees also sees a benevolent and caring man, saying that Rockefeller wanted to bring a "spirit of brotherhood into industrial relations" (5).

To craft a new labor plan, Rockefeller turned to Canadian labor expert Mackenzie King, who, Rees believes, "truly cared about fixing the problems" (47). As King developed the Rockefeller Plan, he tutored Rockefeller on labor relations. And on the whole, Rees admires the plan that King produced. Unlike the company unions later vilified in the 1930s, Rees sees King and Rockefeller's efforts as much more noble. In fact, Rees resists using the expression "company union" because of its negative connotations, preferring "Employee Representation Plan" or ERP.

As Rees explores how the plan worked in the mines and steel mill, he makes a fairly convincing case for its positive benefits. He argues that the workers' representatives turned the plan into a "successful bargaining vehicle" (114), and that they chipped away at "management's prerogatives" (123). For instance, representatives gained

a strong voice in determining who was dismissed. Rees also points to the good wages miners and steelworkers made. In the latter case, wages were "on average 31% higher than those of comparable workers in the mills back East" (144).

Rees, however, knows the plan had negative points, and he often qualifies his positive comments with the negative. He states that not all workers benefitted, especially the less skilled, who were most often ethnic minorities. Many other workers ignored the ERP, either from apathy or fear of company retribution. Others always wanted more than the plan offered, yearning for a fully independent union.

The miners' acceptance of the Industrial Workers of the World in 1927 "constituted an explicit rejection" of the plan, and opened the door for the United Mine Workers to organize the coalfields in 1933 (162). While this ended the ERP in the coalmines, Rockefeller's vision held on in the steel plant until 1942, when the National Labor Relations Board ruled against it.

As Rees reflects on it, he argues that the Rockefeller Plan provides an "important lesson in industrial relations" (208). He believes that sincere company unions, such as Rockefeller's ERP, should have a place in labor relations today. As he correctly points out, few workers have an organized voice in management's decisions, and an ERP could fill that void. Also, it could lead to a fully independent union. While company unions are commonly vilified as tools of management, Rees sees them as a means to reviving organized labor.

Rees' argument is fairly compelling. Labor historians usually damn the Rockefeller Plan, and this book provides a nice corrective. It is clearly written, and well organized. It may not appeal to all mining historians, however. It is a labor history, as most books on coal mining are, and it deals only with the CF&I. Hence, its appeal may be limited, but I enjoyed it.

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