

This book is presented in five chapters which offer an in-depth history of coal mining in the regions studied, especially Texas. Beginning with the Mexican foundations of coal mining immigrants, the author discusses foreign capital penetration into Mexico, the labor conditions there—wages, discrimination, and labor organizations—and the important fact that there was a steady flow of intellectual and political ideas, many born of socialist, anarchist, and liberal critiques of the Porfirian regime on both sides of the border. Mexican workers began to migrate within Mexico in pursuit of economic opportunities, and when they came they built new communities, developed strategies of mutual aid in an era when governments and companies offered little or no assistance, and experienced repressive political climates and exploitative employers. They brought what they learned from those experiences with them to Texas, where they found some of the same problems, especially the dual wage system and racist management practices that precluded their promotions despite their skills.

After portraying these Mexican origins, the author turns to the “contours” of the mines in Texas and Coahuila and the marketing of the product. He explains the geology of the coalfields, the locations of the lignite and bituminous deposits, the thickness of the seams, methods of extracting the coal, and the social and historical implications of this geography. The non-expert may find the material regarding coal mining operations too technical, the histories of the various companies somewhat tedious, and the local histories unnecessarily detailed; someone interested in precisely these things will be glad to find them here and these could be the most useful parts of the book, depending on one's interests. In addition, the information presented regarding the operation of American owned mines in Mexico, like that of the Mexican Coal and Coke Company which used American methods throughout its plant (the only difference was labor),

provides an interesting historical parallel to more contemporary relationships between American capital and Mexican labor.

A detailed picture of the demographics of the main mining communities in south Texas in Maverick and Webb counties informs the reader on age, gender, education, and other measurable aspects of miners' lives. Those statistics are brought to life by discussion of working conditions and labor activity on both sides of the border. Once in the United States, Mexican coal miners joined both the Knights of Labor, during the 1880s, and the United Mine Workers (UMWA) until its decline in the 1930s. The one area it appears the UMWA failed to unionize coal miners was in the lignite fields, but the reasons for that remain unclear. What is clear from reading this book is that Mexican laborers were productive and profitable, and actively organized to secure a fairer share of the wealth they generated despite the obstacles they faced. With this work, Calderón tells a multi-layered story that is wide-ranging, well-researched, and an extremely informative contribution to industrial, labor, and social history in Texas and Coahuila in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

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Charles L. Keller. *The Lady in the Ore Bucket: A History of Settlement and Industry in the Tri-Canyon Area of the Wasatch Mountains*. (Salt Lake City, Utah: University of Utah Press, 2001.) Photographs, maps, notes, bibliography, index. xi + 426 pp.

When I saw the title of this book, I assumed that Charles Keller had written a history of mining in the canyons east of Salt Lake Valley. He did that, but he also wrote about other economic activities and some recreational activities as well. The canyons in question are Mill Creek, Big Cotton-

wood, and Little Cottonwood, the three canyons south of Parley's Canyon, the route by which Interstate 80 enters into the valley.

Instead of offering an interpretive overview into which he wove the details of development, Keller, a "retired engineer" and "avocational historian" presents the reader with a narrative full of detail and anecdotes. From that offering, readers are expected to tease out their own generalizations.

Keller's narrative begins with a chapter on the entry of Euro-Americans into the region. The reader then follows mountain men, overland migrants, and members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (the Mormons) into the area. Mormons who came in 1847 began extensive explorations of the canyons. By the early 1850s, they had named the major canyons and some of the most prominent features. Loggers, miners, artists, and travelers bestowed names on many of the lesser features much later.

Contrary to oft-repeated folklore, the Mormons did find trees in the Salt Lake Valley. These, however, grew sparsely and along watercourses. Moreover, they were ordinarily species such as cottonwoods that were unsuitable for most construction. The settlers began quickly to exploit the extensive stands of Douglas fir, spruce, and fir in the canyons. Several people supplied lumber from sawpits before Scottish immigrant and Mormon bishop Archibald Gardner constructed a sawmill. Gardner first drew his timber from Mill Creek Canyon, but he and others operated mills in the other canyons as well.

Until 1874, the Salt Lake County Court, the nineteenth century equivalent of the present-day county council, granted access to the canyons. In general, the court permitted individuals to charge a toll for removing timber. In return, the grantee agreed to construct and maintain a road. As Keller has shown, "this was not, as has often been charged, a monopolization of the canyons, but rather a practical way to provide access to the

timber that benefited everyone." (p. 35)

As Gardner and others exploited the timber in Mill Creek and neighboring Neff's Canyon, a consortium of Utahns headed by Brigham Young, Frederick Kesler, Abraham O. Smoot, and John Sharp logged in Big Cottonwood Canyon. Kesler superintended the operation, and he also allowed others to cut timber for a series of mills that he operated in the canyon. In 1861 Young disbanded the company and a group of businessmen headed by Mayor Daniel H. Wells took over the business.

Mountain streams powered these early mills, but in 1864, Charles Decker installed a steam sawmill in Lambs Canyon, a south-trending fork about seven miles east of the mouth of Parley's Canyon. Thereafter, although lumber companies still operated water-powered mills, steam mills also entered the Wasatch.

All these operations ran by territorial custom and statute. The federal government did not open a land office in Utah until 1868, and although the canyons were public lands, federal officials took little interest in managing them until 1874. Then, however, land office Register Oliver A. Patton decided to confiscate timber cut in the canyons. A legal battle ensued, and Patton, a rabid anti-Mormon, and Wells, a high-ranking church official, fought each other in the newspapers and in the federal courts. In spite of Patton's bluff and bluster, Wells won the battle both in the federal courts, which blocked Patton's efforts, and in the political arena, because the administration removed Patton for malfeasance and uncooperative behavior. Similar lumbering took place in Little Cottonwood Canyon, though it was not as significant.

Although the book narrates various activities, four of the book's fourteen chapters consider mining. Various stories tell of early discoveries, and the Wasatch Mountain Mining District, predecessor of at least ten other districts in the three canyons, was organized in November 1963.

Miners did not discover silver-bearing lead ore, the mainstay of Wasatch mines, until the summer of 1864. Soldiers from California under the command of General Patrick Edward Connor made the first discoveries in Big and Little Cottonwood Canyons. In addition to the soldiers, most of the prospectors came from the Utah Territory, the United States, and Great Britain. Investors came from the same locations, including Great Britain, which supplied a sizeable proportion of the investment capital. Some British capital, as in the case of the infamous Emma Mine, was ill spent.

Development proceeded much as in districts elsewhere in the West. Miners established various towns, and they used a wide range of technologies to get the minerals out of the ground and to market. In addition to the dangers of mining itself, avalanches and fires posed a constant threat. Processors built a number of smelters in the canyons. Although miners removed much of the ore from the canyons by wagon over poor roads, some slid the ore in leather pouches, and a number removed the ore by gravity tramways. In 1875 the Wasatch and Jordan Valley Railroad opened service to Alta in Little Cottonwood Canyon.

After considering lumbering and mining, Keller offers chapters on other topics. Chapters consider recreation and hydropower; and the final three chapters offer a narrative on the location of geographic features and their history. Readers who want details on the development of economic activities during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in one of Utah's most important nineteenth century areas will find this book extremely useful.

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Kevin Krajick. *Barren Lands: An Epic Search for Diamonds in the North American Arctic*. (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 2001.)

Xiii, 442 pages, notes, index. \$26 hardback.

Avarice, ambition, adventure, anguish—*Barren Lands* portrays it all. Many people probably never realized that the North American Arctic, within the past twenty years, witnessed a search for diamonds that rivaled anything in world history.

It might be sung "that diamonds are a girl's best friend," but diamonds brought out some of the worst in men and women in this tale. More to the point is the comment by the Roman poet Virgil, substituting diamonds for gold, "O accursed craving for gold!" After completion of this book, the reader wonders who won. In a somewhat typical scenario, it was the companies that profited not the men, many of whom greatly suffered and sacrificed to find the diamonds.

Kevin Krajick is a crackerjack storyteller and he easily matches the adventure yarn he sets out to tell. An experienced, prizewinning journalist, he did his homework and visited the sites, and then takes the reader with him through the historic background of humans' love affairs with those pieces of crystal carbon, down to the development of Canada's diamond mines.

The first third of *Barren Lands* traces the history of diamonds and the fraud, murder, greed, and deceit that generally followed as the search went forth. Some readers might find this section a little long, but it is worth the reading and definitely sets the stage for what follows.

Krajick follows the careers of Chuck Fipke and Stew Blusson in their fanatical, ruthless pursuit of diamonds. A strange pair they were and they met some even stranger individuals in their journeys. They searched from the United States into northern Canada, and it is a story worth telling. Others were soon on their trail as the story unfolds. These people are an obsessed, eccentric group driven by personal ambition, greed, and mania. There are real heroes and real bums among the group and not always do the good people win.