

Riches from the Rock: Early Mining in Bisbee, Arizona (Open Channel Communications, 200, video in color & b&w), PMB#246, \$21.95, 7320 N. La Cholla #154, Tucson, AZ, 85741 (azstarr@earthlink.net or 520-797-0861).

This brief video presentation is dedicated to the late H. Mason Coggin, a Bisbee native, longtime mining specialist, and devoted friend of the Mining History Association. The narration is supplemented by commentary from such mining history experts as Richard Graeme, Gary Dillard, Boyd Nicholl, Michael Bednorz, and James McBride. Using rare and interesting historical photographs mixed with a few contemporary views of the famous Arizona mining town, the story focuses on the early period of Bisbee copper mining, running to about World War I. It includes all the major elements in camp history, starting with the discovery of the Mule Mountain silver deposits in 1877 by Lt. Tony Rucker and Jack Dunn. Grubstaked by Rucker and Dunn, George Warren soon appeared on the scene. Speculating in claims, drinking, and gambling, Warren eventually lost what would have been a fortune in a race with a horse. With the discovery of the Copper Queen Glory Hole, which produced \$5 million in 18 months, outside capital became necessary for the production of copper through underground operations. Labor also became necessary, and immigrants, especially from Europe, came to work the mines. The story also is told against the background of difficult working conditions and safety hazards.

In 1881 Dr. James Douglas arrived in Bisbee to evaluate the mine for Phelps Dodge. Douglas quickly bought up the Atlantic claim and two years later masterminded the merger with the Copper Queen to form the Copper Queen Consolidated. As the town grew thereafter, it came to possess all the conditions typical of a booming camp—a smelly, smoky place, with environmental hazards galore, a wild Brewery Gulch, and natural disas-

ters (floods caused by the destruction of vegetation). The building of the El Paso & Southwestern Railroad assured an outlet to market, made the mining companies profitable, and assured that Bisbee would be one of the premier copper camps in Arizona.

Safety, environmental issues (silicosis), and labor difficulties led to the rise of labor unions. With huge company profits sparked by World War I, the miners and their unions demanded better wages. Strikes followed. These factors eventually led to the infamous Bisbee deportation of 1917, when hundreds of radical workers (mostly Industrial Workers of the World or “wobblies”) were rounded up and taken in railroad cattle cars to New Mexico. Although a major event in Bisbee’s history, the story of the deportation is told briefly and without reaching any controversial conclusions. The videotape ends with the introduction of open-pit mining at the end of World War I. Nothing is said about the decline of copper mining at Bisbee that followed, and the collapse of the industry at mid-century.

From a historian’s point of view this video account is incomplete, and attempts to cover too much territory in a short amount of time (27 minutes). It does give a solid overview of Bisbee’s history, but leaves out important details. There is no mention of racial discord, nor is much said about the unseemly side of life in the town. None of the other companies are mentioned either. Finally, the film is intended as something of a chamber of commerce promotional effort, rather than as a critical analysis. Nevertheless, numerous fine photographs are featured and the story makes sense. As an introduction to Bisbee and the world of copper mining, it achieves its purpose.

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