

Even agriculture in California followed a different pattern than Turner's progressive small farms. The author limits his discussion to rancheros in the south, who exploited grasslands to keep vast herds, but lost everything to drought, disease, and debt. Bonanza farming in the Central Valley he only mentions in passing, focusing instead on the agrarian land grab in northern California that dispossessed the Modocs and triggered their futile but deadly war. In this Euro-American triumph of extractive technology, Native Americans were exploited along with the landscape, losing their hunting lands as well as their freedom in a nineteenth-century "enclosure movement" that left Indians as the industrial proletariat. Only as the century drew to a close was wilderness "invented" by Romantics in reaction to this "industrial resource exploitation."

Though this book covers different turf than the title implies, the author's empirical analysis of the hydraulic process and of the damage it caused is set in an ecological framework well worth pondering by anyone interested in mining history.

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M. M. Anderson. *The Mining Camps: Salina and Summerville*. Boulder, CO: Junction House, 2005; 442 pp., photos, notes, index, inserted map, cloth, \$37.

Author M. M. Anderson states on her book jacket that *The Mining Camps: Salina and Summerville* is a history of two Boulder County, Colorado, mining camps, beginning with their settlement in the 1870s and ending when the last rail of the Switzerland Trail of America was hauled away in 1920.

This comprehensive book actually covers much more. It is a definitive social history and blends anecdotes about people with facts about

mine workings, mills, and mine accidents. The 442-page, 8 1/2 x 11-inch hardback tells where and how miners and their families lived, worked, and died, and even shows how they thought and felt. Descendants will discover a wealth of information. But those interested in Colorado mining history will soak up a bygone era, almost as if they, too, had experienced these Boulder County communities' ups and downs.

Anderson quotes generously from newspapers, whose writers, like the author, had a flair for detail. One of my favorite glimpses of everyday life was published in the *Boulder County Miner* in 1912. The reporter wrote that, "at her father's residence, Miss Pearl Cooke entertained the Spinsters' Club Monday morning. Refreshments were served after which the guests listened to the excellent rendition of her own composition, 'Alone at the Washtub.'"

Miners at work in the mines and mills, however, is a major part of the book. The first 122 pages give a chronological account of people, the railroad, and the mines, again pulled mostly from newspaper articles of the time. ("At the Chivington, Harry James struck a good body of ore and was less than thrilled to find that it was mostly silver.")

Following this historical background are chapters of in-depth biographies of Salina and Summerville families. A chapter on mine accidents is complete with a poem written in 1908 on an explosion in the Ingram Mine that killed three miners. Their eulogy began,

Straight in the throat of the stope they  
crawl,  
these three men tired and true.  
Swift like a star while we watch it fall,  
fall through the ether blue.

The final chapters of the book give specifics on the houses in the two mining communities, then follow the lives of many of the residents after they gave up mining-camp life and moved

to Boulder.

Anderson lives in Salina and is the archivist at the Carnegie Branch Library for Local History in Boulder. Her information is accurate, and the years she spent pouring over primary source materials are more than evident. The 223 photos are excellent in both content and quality, and the index is thorough.

To order *The Mining Camps: Salina and Summerville*, mail a check to Marti Anderson; 175 Gold Run Road; Boulder, CO 80302. The author states that the book is a limited edition of five hundred and will not be reprinted. The cost is \$37 (+\$1.75 tax in Colo.) + \$5 for mailing. For more information, call Anderson at (303) 449-2262 or email her at mmasalina@msn.com.

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Ralph Roberts. *A Passion for Gold: An Autobiography*. Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2002; 232 pp., ill., cloth, \$29.95.

*A Passion for Gold: An Autobiography* by Ralph Roberts is the sort of memoir readers dread or relish. Perhaps every grandchild eventually wishes for a grandparent's written recollections, but that does not mean they should be published. Two factors warrant printing a memoir. Either it has to be extraordinarily well written or the importance of the subject has to be considerable.

Ralph Roberts was a U.S. Geological Survey geologist who participated in some of the more remarkable mid-twentieth-century mineral discoveries in the American West. Born in 1911, he was the right person at the right time to help transform the extensive government geological surveys of the 1800s into the following century's intensive analysis of western mineral potential. Working in central Nevada and Utah, Roberts helped predict the existence of the Carlin Trend, assisting the industry to understand the geologi-

cal background of a region well known for its remarkable deposits of precious metals. Besides recounting his involvement in documenting the geological resources of the American West, he also describes his work on the Arabian Peninsula. Among his interests there was the search for the Ophir, the fabled Mine of Solomon.

Roberts' memoir is a humble literary effort. It does not pretend to be fine literature, but at the same time, it has a charming quality that draws in the reader. The well-produced volume also includes many illustrations that are both welcome and valuable. Nothing in the presentation of this book, however, will propel it to a bestseller's list. It is crafted for the specialized audience of mining history enthusiasts, and with that objective in mind, *A Passion for Gold* does extremely well.

Roberts may not be the most important geologist of the twentieth century, but his career has clear significance and his memoir consequently has value. Mining historians are fortunate that he went through the effort to document what he witnessed and accomplished. Its worth will increase with time, as his generation passes and later historians attempt to understand what these giants achieved. Imagine, for example, how we would cherish a similar document written by the prospector who found Solomon's Mine.

In the final analysis, we must thank Roberts for committing his memories to writing. His book is a welcomed addition to our library of western mining history. We can hope that it will inspire others to follow in his literary footsteps just as they have benefitted from the traces of his career in geology.

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