

an African American way of life (156)."

*Boomtown Saloons* offers much detail drawn from the material culture remains of these four Comstock resorts. Much of it at first seems commonplace, such as the sorts of condiments offered to patrons or the odd objects dropped by patrons and preserved under floorboards. Dixon acknowledges that common reactions to historical archaeology can be skeptical or dismissive, terming it "an expensive way to study history (164)." She demonstrates, however, that archaeology does not simply "ground truth" the documentary record. Instead, it helps "make pasts" for those who lived and worked on the fringes of what was well-documented: women, minorities, and even children.

This volume offers tangible indications of what the saloons' diverse populations ate, drank, wore, and did within these establishments' confines. *Boomtown Saloons* is less revisionist than expansionist in what it adds to our understanding of diverse mining-town society. As such, it is a solid addition to the body of literature, stretching back to Elliott West's *The Saloon on the Rocky Mountain Mining Frontier* (1979), which has established western watering holes as something more complex and significant than squalid, violence-ridden, proto-honky tonks. And, as a bonus, Dixon affords the reader a vivid and committed sense of the hard work and pleasures of historical archaeology.

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Robert E. McHenry (comp.). *Chat Dumps of the Missouri Lead Belt: St. Francois County*. Adrian, MI: Bob McHenry, 2006; 400 pp., 8 x 11 inches, extensive b&w photos, maps, ind., cloth, \$65 (includes S&H; contact the author at: mcgolf@localdialup.com).

*Chat Dumps*, as the name implies, are the immense waste piles that dominate the mining landscape in the towns of Flat River, Bonne Terre, Rivermines, Desloge, and Elvins in southeast Missouri. Many members will recall seeing these dumps during our MHA convention in Farmington, Missouri, in 2004.

This volume is a compilation, from many sources, on the history of this preeminent lead mining area, which at one time was the world's leading lead producer under the St. Joseph Lead Company until mining ceased in 1974. In that year all operations moved to the newly discovered lead-zinc ore bodies in the New Lead Belt in south-central Missouri.

Beginning with French explorations in the eighteenth century, the author traces the history of the small operations that mined during the early years, followed by the first real investments in deep-shaft mining in the mid-nineteenth century. Through articles in local newspapers, material from the University of Missouri Western Historical Manuscripts, St. Joe Lead company publications and family histories, along with interviews with retired mining employees of the St. Joseph Lead Company, the author does an excellent job of piecing this complex puzzle into an historical mosaic of excellent photographs, time lines, and sixty personal memories.

The book highlights the making of these immense chat dumps (from the early aerial tramways to the conveyor systems), the history of the area, the growth and acquisitions of the players in the lead mining business, mining methods and machinery, ore dressing, the underground mules, and the impact of mining on the development of the area. This is no doubt the only in-depth look at the Old Missouri Lead Belt published to date. *Chat Dumps* is a book worthwhile having in your library, as it depicts the mining history of an area long neglected, considering the stature that it once enjoyed as a premier lead-producing district.

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