

Liston E. Leyendecker, Christine A. Bradley, and Duane A. Smith. *The Rise of the Silver Queen: Georgetown, Colorado, 1859-1896*. Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2005; 310 pp., 175 photos, maps and tables, notes, bib. essay, ind., cloth \$55, paper \$22.95.

The Rise of the Silver Queen is a biography of Colorado's earliest significant silver mining town, undertaken by esteemed Colorado historian Liston Leyendecker shortly before his death in 2001. Leyendecker completed much of the research and wrote several of the chapters. Clear Creek County archivist and historian Christine Bradley and Colorado mining historian Duane Smith finished the project.

The book's first two chapters recount Georgetown's early history as a failed gold camp and during its early silver mining days up to its incorporation in 1868. Topical chapters follow that cover the promotion and development of Georgetown's mines and the difficulties involved in processing the area's ores, creation of Georgetown's economic and social institutions and infrastructure, and technological and legal developments up to the arrival of the Colorado Central railroad in the district in 1877. The next several chapters examine "a year in the life" of the town, 1878, including "the silver question" and local economic and social developments; continuing community developments into the early 1880s, as the blush of Georgetown's prosperity began to fade; then Georgetown's displacement as the "Silver Queen" of Colorado by Leadville, and its decline as a mature mining district. The book ends with considering continued community development in the face of the rising silver crisis of the 1890s, culminating in panic and depression in 1893 and the end of the silver era with the election of 1896.

As a town biography, *Rise of the Silver Queen* does well highlighting Georgetown's historical particulars, while using the town's circumstances to discuss many elements typical of the mineral

West. These include such familiar problems as attracting investment, gaining affordable transportation, and inventing the sophisticated metallurgical processes needed to treat the district's refractory silver ores. The book contains a very helpful discussion of the issues and events surrounding the silver question. It relies heavily on mining journals and area newspapers for its contemporary sources. Some chapters are written almost exclusively from newspaper items.

Part community history, part social history of a Victorian mining town in the American West, *Rise of the Silver Queen* is equally an extensive photo essay supplemented by useful maps and illustrations. Taking advantage of the extensive photographic evidence of the town's history that exists in archives and private holdings, the book features six photo essays. These document the town's early years, its recreations, its mining and milling processes, its personalities prominent and obscure, its built environment, and its celebrated railroad. The Georgetown Loop, completed to Silver Plume in 1884, became an almost instant tourist sensation. Thus, even while still mining, Georgetown began her transition to working the tourist trade.

The authors meant their work for a general historical audience as much as for scholars in western or mining history. The book is a useful addition to the literature on Colorado history and mining, and will satisfy both of its intended audiences. *Rise of the Silver Queen* started as a labor of love by Liston Leyendecker, who worked to preserve Georgetown's architecture, to rebuild the Georgetown Loop railroad, and who owned a home in the town. It ended as a measure of devotion to his memory by his colleagues and friends in Colorado history, Christine Bradley and Duane Smith.

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