

Teller favored Indian education over military campaigns, pointing out that the twenty-two million dollars spent on military campaigns at the time he was interior secretary could have educated thirty thousand Indian children. Teller also supported the rights of legitimate settlers on public land, urging reforms that would mitigate land fraud. Smith aptly points out that Teller was no policy innovator as interior secretary, but that he advanced new and original ideas for running the department.

Teller was reelected as a senator from Colorado in 1885, and he went on to champion the free silver or bimetallism issue. One of the strengths of this book is its account of the silver issue and why it was so important for Colorado mining. But the real linchpin of the book is relating how Teller's life was so interwoven with everything that took place in Colorado in the last half of the nineteenth century. A photo essay visually documenting Teller's long political career adds context. This book is not only about Teller's life and long career, but is about the early history of Colorado, since Teller and that history are so closely entwined.

Teller's political beliefs led him to eventually abandon the Republican Party in 1900 and support William Jennings Bryan for president. In doing so he kept the support of Coloradans and, to their satisfaction, remained a stalwart supporter of Colorado's economic and political interests. In all, Teller served the federal government and people of Colorado for thirty-three years. He retired in 1909 well respected by Coloradans. Teller, while secretary of the interior, stated that: "I hope that I may so discharge the duty of my office that when I lay down the trust, no citizen of Colorado will be ashamed." That succinctly describes Teller's entire career in politics and is something any Colorado politician today would do well to emulate.

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Dan L. Mosier and Earle E. Williams. *History of Tesla: A California Coal Mining Town* (2nd ed.). Fremont, CA: Mines Road Books, 2002; 415 pp., b&w photos, drawings, maps, bib., gloss., append., ind., paper, \$29.95.

One does not usually think of California as a coal mining state, hence it is a most pleasant surprise to receive this highly enjoyable history of a largely-forgotten California coal mining town. The authors successfully and exhaustively describe the all-too-brief life of Tesla, its rise and fall. A strong personal touch pervades this history, especially in the beginning and near the end.

Coal was mined in Tesla, a good twenty miles southwest of Stockton, from 1897 until 1905, and the town developed and died over the same period. This book describes its history in forty (obviously brief) chapters, followed by a bibliography, twelve appendices, a glossary, and an index. Because the town existed for mining coal, coal mining is a core element in this history, but it is not the exclusive, nor even the main, focus—the town itself is.

The first few chapters describe the discoveries and the start of coal mining. Of particular interest to mining historians will be the fact that the Treadwells, of Alaska gold-mining fame, were a driving force behind this coal-mining endeavor. The critical importance of developing market access—meaning, in this case as in so many, the building of railroad connections—is very nicely outlined, as are the challenges involved in actually building the railroad. The intimate connection between coal mining and railroad development is described clearly.

With coal mining developed and access to markets, a town grew up named after Nikola Tesla by John Treadwell, apparently a great admirer of the a.c. genius. The growth and life of the town are documented in considerable detail in eleven topical chapters. Similarly, brief chapters deal with different aspects of coal mining,

while others are devoted to the gravel works, lime works, the Ladd Manganese Mine, clay mining for pottery, and sand mining for glass manufacturing.

Unfortunately, from a mining history perspective, essentially no information is given about the actual mining of these latter products, though the book does give coal, sand, gravel, brick, and manganese production figures. The authors do appropriately single out Tesla's importance in developing coal briquetting in the U.S., and support their case with multiple references to the technical literature of the time. Another nice touch is the identification of a number of extant buildings, notably in Stockton, San Francisco, Oakland, and L.A., that include clay products manufactured at Tesla, a nice testimonial to the people of a dead and largely forgotten town.

The book does not have footnotes, but does have an extensive bibliography and for most topics it is very straightforward to identify sources. The book is fluidly written and enjoyable, with very few typos or errors. Particularly interesting and enlightening are the numerous advertisements interspersed throughout the volume from the regional press (e.g. for Tesla coal). These are fun, but also valuable in providing insight into the use and price of coal at the time in the Bay Area and its surroundings. A list of the numerous illustrations would have been helpful, even though long. Presumably cost concerns prevented the use of a better quality paper for the photographs.

The focus of the book is clearly and unambiguously the history of the town, but broader aspects of western development are raised, at least implicitly. As mentioned earlier, the book presents a beautiful example of the intertwined development of coal mining and railroading, and it gives a superb account of infighting between railroad developers when discussing how the Union Pacific tried to prevent competition by relentlessly interfering with the construction of

a Western Pacific connection to Stockton. Tesla's infrastructure, like that of so many coal mining towns, was built by, or at least with major help from, the coal company. Some painful, if typical, examples of discrimination against Asian laborers are briefly mentioned. The critical importance of fires in Tesla's history, and especially in its demise, is very well documented.

Particularly noteworthy is that Tesla coal mining was largely destroyed by competition from southern California oil, a fuel switch that affected coal mining nationwide and worldwide half a century later. Chapters on the failure of the California Safe Deposit and Trust Company summarize with impressive clarity an astoundingly complex financial misadventure and its consequences for Tesla and San Francisco. Tesla is also an interesting case example of how a fortune won in one mining enterprise—Alaska gold mining—was lost in another.

From a mining history point of view, some unfortunate omissions occur. No information is given about how shafts were sunk, or how "tunnels" were driven. Diagrams of mine layouts and geology are beautiful and clear, but seem rather schematic. But this unquestionably "local history," with occasionally excruciating detail, more than adequately recognizes a broader context, and was written with obvious love, care, and regret. It is informative, instructive, enjoyable, and delightful.

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Dan Plazak. *A Hole in the Ground with a Liar at the Top: Fraud and Deceit in the Golden Age of American Mining*. Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2006; 288pp., illus., cloth, \$26.95.

The sixth century B.C. Chinese philosopher Lao-tsu wrote, "there is no grater disaster than greed." Geologist and engineer Dan Plazak con-