

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.

Silvia Pettem  
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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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