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## Book Reviews

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James H. Knipmeyer. *Cass Hite: The Life of an Old Prospector*. Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2016; xi + 269 pp., 161 b&w illus., append., notes, bib., ind., cloth, \$37. ISBN: 9781607814719

James Knipmeyer's book on the life of Cass Hite (1845-1914) represents a large amount of research into the life of a colorful, but relatively unknown figure in the history of the Colorado Plateau and Glen Canyon area. It is a book that will mean much more to someone familiar with the country than to someone unfamiliar with this scenic but remote area.

Cass Hite spent almost all of his working life engaged in prospecting, promoting, and some mining. A four-year exception to this career was spent in running a saw mill and in the newspaper business, where he apparently learned all facets of the business. Perhaps as a result of this experience, he had a way with words. His writings appear frequently in publications in mining centers, such as Denver, Durango, and Salt Lake City, some under his own name, others as knowing sources. His style of writing was unmistakable. He also was not above telling some convincing but exaggerated tales, a trait not unknown among prospectors.

The book is well illustrated with photographs, both from historical files and many taken by the author.

Knipmeyer presents a scholarly work, piecing together newspaper and magazine articles, letters, court records, etc., in chronological order to give a history of the man. (A significant omission, however, was that Cass Hite, along with others, filed some of the original claims on the United Verde Mine, as revealed by Robert Spude in his talk "Re-Discovering Jerome" given at the Mining

History Association's annual meeting in Telluride, Colorado, in June, 2016.) One thing that makes this biography unusual among prospector lore is that the subject, Cass Hite, was well educated and proficient in the use of language.

Overall, the book reveals a wealth of information about the early days of settlement in the area mentioned, as well as his dealings with the Native Americans, primarily Navajo, who, at the time, were not always peaceful. Hite also shares his feelings about the Mormons who were the principal white settlers. Individuals he liked, the church as a whole he disliked, joining the majority feeling of the time.

Cass Hite was responsible for several "rushes"—for a lost silver mine, for a "major" copper find, and for discovering placer gold along the Colorado River. Physical evidence of his success in promoting alluvial gold mining along the Colorado is found at Lee's Ferry, Arizona, where remnants of gold dredging equipment lie along the river. Unfortunately, the venture failed—any gold found in the lower Colorado River is ultra-fine flour gold, too fine to recover.

Hite obviously had a mastery of the language and was an excellent promoter. In 1894 the *Salt Lake Herald* declared "Cass Hite, the genial old miner who has found more gold and made less money than any man in this section [Southern Utah]." C. Gregory Crampton, an authority on the Canyonlands and Glen Canyon, observed that "Cass Hite seems to have been a strong believer in the rule that it is easier to mine gold out of an investor's pocket than it is out of the ground." Ample evidence of this is documented in the book.

One irony is that Hite covered ground that, years later, would become valuable mining claims for an element unappreciated during Hite's life-

time—uranium. Much of the territory Hite tried to promote for silver or copper or gold became highly desirable as uranium claims during post-WWII uranium boom. Hite was also perhaps the first to identify oil seeps along the San Juan River at the location of the present town of Mexican Hat, Utah, yet he let this oil find pass un-promoted.

During his life, Hite covered a vast territory, from his birthplace in Illinois through most of the western U.S., with some prospecting forays into Canada and Mexico. Yet the Four Corners area seemed to have a hold on him and was where he chose to live out his years in his cabin on a large sand bar in the Glen Canyon area. Many people have crossed the Colorado River—Lake Powell since completion of the Glen Canyon Dam—at Hite, yet have no idea how the crossing, now a marina, got its name. This book presents an in-depth way of correcting one's ignorance and gaining knowledge of the area by reading the biography of a little-known prospector, pioneer, and promoter.

Bill Hawes

Humboldt, Arizona

Silvio Manno. *Charcoal and Blood: Italian Immigrants in Eureka, Nevada and the Fish Creek Massacre*. Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2016; xvi + 278 pp., 11 b&w photos, notes, 4 append., bib., ind., paper, \$30. ISBN: 9781943859009

On August 18, 1879, near Fish Creek, near Eureka, Nevada, a sheriff's posse shot and killed five Italian charcoal burners. This important and beautiful book tells the story of the events leading up to this tragedy, and of its aftermath. Silvio Manno provides excellent insight into the struggles and conflicts in a remote mining community in the late 1870s. As such his book makes a major contribution to the literature on early mining in the West, and on labor relations, immigrants, ethnic discrimination, violence, and law enforcement

on the frontier.

The brief Introduction summarizes the developments leading to the massacre. Chapter 1 sets the stage. It begins by discussing the economic situation in Northern Italy in the middle of the nineteenth century that led to large-scale emigration. Gold discovered in California, and silver in the Comstock and eventually at Eureka, brought immigrants, including a large number of Italians, to California and Nevada, with accompanying ethnic tensions and xenophobia. This chapter includes a clear explanation as to why charcoal burning was so critically important for smelting the rich but complex Eureka silver-lead ores, and why the process required such vast quantities of charcoal.

Chapter 2 focuses on early Italian immigration to Eureka, but includes a much broader overview of the wide variety of ethnicities living and working in the community. These groups usually co-existed relatively peacefully, with one major exception: extremely strong anti-Chinese actions. The expulsion of the Chinese led to the fateful consequence of Italian laborers replacing the Chinese for charcoal burning.

Chapter 3 consists of four distinct parts, each covering rather different topics. The first part is focused on Italian immigration to Eureka, covering the wide range of Italian immigrant social classes, from merchants and coal-hauling contractors to the destitute coal burners. At least part of the poverty of the last was due to the *padrone* labor contracting system, and to payment in vouchers redeemable only at certain stores where goods were sold at highly inflated prices. Although the *padrone* system is mentioned a few times, little or no detailed information about it is given: how extensive, widely practiced, was it? How intense, structured, was it?

The first part of Chapter 3 also includes further description of charcoal burning, both in pits and in kilns. The second part of this chapter deals briefly with ethnic discord. The third part concentrates on economic conditions in the town, with