

Karen A. and Mark A. Vendl with the San Juan County Historical Society. *Mines around Silverton* (Images of America series). Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2015; 127 pp.; numerous b&w photos, 1 map, bib., paper, \$22. ISBN: 9781467132862

Many readers will be familiar with the “Images of America” series produced by Arcadia Publishing, founded in 1993. This catalogue of local and regional photographic essays of historical topics or locales now numbers more than 7,500 in all, in excess of 150 devoted to Colorado subjects. Each slim volume includes chapters consisting of a few paragraphs of text followed by numerous photographs that both illustrate the subject and provide more information through extended captions. The quality of these books has varied, depending upon the expertise of the author and the quality of the photographs, either as originals or as reproduced.

At its best, however, this series is a great idea, and Karen and Mark Vendl’s *Mines around Silverton* a fine example of that.

The Vendls, knowledgeable and entertaining guides to the region, have divided *Mines around Silverton* into chapters on Silverton, the Red Mountain Mining District, the Las Animas Mining District, Howardsville, Gladstone, Mineral Point, Animas Forks, and Eureka. The book includes a two-page introduction by Duane Smith, the dean of Colorado mining historians and a collaborator with the Vendls on other projects. It also contains a brief bibliography and some of the chapter introductions include suggested readings. The photographs, the heart of the undertaking, are numerous, fascinating, varied, and handsomely reproduced except for a couple of images too dark.

*Mines around Silverton* is enjoyable reading of itself, and certainly will be a useful companion for summer explorations of the area, with some of these sites being easily reached over either paved or good-quality dirt roads.

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Don Paulson. *Mines, Miners and Much More: A Guide to Historic Mining in Colorado’s San Juan Triangle*. Chicago: Twain Publishers, 2015; 162 pp., numerous b&w illus., 4 maps, notes, bib., paper, \$20. ISBN: 9780692411292

During the summer months, tens of thousands of people visit the Colorado towns of Ouray, Silverton, and Telluride, an area known as the San Juan Triangle. Over \$250 million in gold and silver—\$9 billion in today’s dollars—was extracted from this area between 1878 and 1944.

Many of these visitors, however, are not aware of the fascinating history of gold and silver mining in this area. According to Don Paulson, his book

is intended for those who want to see, explore and understand the historic sites remaining from the glory days of Colorado mining. The book paints a broad picture for the curious who are not familiar with mining. It is also intended for those who drive the local roads, pull over to see one of the many deserted mining structures, and wonder what the purpose an old building served in its glory days.

The book starts with a historical overview and discusses the Ute tribe that inhabited the area

when Euro-American prospectors arrived in 1860. This is followed by short chapters on prospecting, mining entrepreneurs, and the miner's life. The saloons, dance halls, and prostitution houses that provided entertainment away from the mines are discussed in Chapter 6, titled *Bars, Brothels, and Bibles*.

Mining in the San Juans during the nineteenth century was very dangerous work. Among the hazards discussed in Chapter 7 are mining accidents, avalanches, and lung disease. In Chapter 8, titled *Turning Ore into Gold and Silver*, the author describes the processes of mining, milling, and smelting. Good transportation was a key element in a successful mining district. Chapter 9 describes the various modes of transportation used in the San Juans, such as burros and mules, wagons, aerial trams, and railroads. Labor relations are also discussed in this chapter, as well as mining in the twentieth century.

A short chapter tells the story of Otto Mears' Million Dollar Highway between Ouray and Silverton, traveled today by thousands of visitors annually. This highway was listed in *USA Today* as one of the twelve most dangerous roads in the world in 2013, and as one of the ten best U.S. road trips in 2015.

The final chapter contains a list of mining sites that you can visit. This list is divided into

mining sites that are visible from paved or good gravel roads, those visible from four-wheel-drive roads, and those that can be visited on hiking trails. The book does not include maps showing these sites, but good maps and hiking guides may be purchased locally.

Over 130 nicely reproduced, black and white images compliment the text in the book. Many are from the Ouray County Historical Society's extensive collection of local photographs, a number of which have not been published before. A suggested reading list is provided for those who wish to explore the region's history in more detail.

Don Paulson retired to Ouray in 2006 and is a board member of the Ridgeway Railroad Museum, and a board member and the curator of the Ouray County Historical Society and editor of the *Journal of the Ouray County Historical Society*. In *Mines, Miners, and Much More*, he has very effectively accomplished his goal of providing an informative book that "paints a broad picture for the curious who are not familiar with mining." Even those who have an understanding of mining in the San Juan Mountains will find the book interesting as well. This book is highly recommended.

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