

of western wildlife.

Howard's interest in nature pre-dated his arrival in the West and, himself naturally curious, his western travels engulfed him in desert and alpine environments entirely unlike those of his native New England. He began to collect plant and animal specimens during his days in Santa Fe and continued to do so avidly through his years in Silver City. Four species would originally be named for Howard (with two later reclassified), including the moth *Daritis howardi* and the alpine forget-me-not *Eritrichium howardii*.

The author conveys a good understanding of the subjects and issues of the metal-mining West as they affected Howard, and of fortune seekers—economic or medicinal—like him. Chronicling someone not born into celebrity, Cary is forced to speculate about much of his subject's life and motives simply from an absence of information, little of which remains about average persons a century and more after their deaths.

From a historian's perspective, Cary occasionally errs in casting such surmises as fact—e.g., at the end of his life “Howard's mind often meandered back to his motives in coming West, usually concluding that he had done the right thing” (193). Historical support for these speculations about Howard's thoughts and feelings does not always appear in the relatively spare footnotes contained in the advance copy sent to the reviewer. Understood as such, however, Cary's conjectures never seem unreasonable.

In *Accidental Argonaut: A Natural History of Winslow Howard*, Steven Cary has produced a well-written and engaging biography about both a man and a type that readers of this journal should find interesting.

Eric L. Clements

Southeast Missouri State University

Christian Wright. *Carbon County USA: Miners for Democracy in Utah and the West*. Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2019; 469 pp., 57 b&w illus., 10 tabl., 6 maps, 3 append., notes, bib., ind., cloth \$45, e-book \$36. ISBN: 9781607817314 (cloth), 9781607817246 (e-book).

Carbon County USA covers nearly one hundred years of coal mining labor history. It offers a superb overview of multiple boom and bust cycles in Utah coal mining country with its main emphasis on the labor history, particularly that of the United Mine Workers of America, although with a significantly broader information basis as well.

Chapter One focuses on the 1930s. While concentrated on developments in Utah, the coverage far exceeds that state's boundaries, regularly putting developments in Utah in the context of coal in the West and across the nation. This chapter sets the tone for much of the later book: an excellent set of highly individualized anecdotes illustrates the pre-union conditions in the coal mines: frequently stunningly rough, highly unsafe, and most unhealthy.

Particularly striking is the UMWA's concern about mine safety, combined with the very strong impression that mining companies had very little, if any, interest in safety. Similarly, the union focused on miners' living conditions, with, once again, the very strong impression that these was of no interest at all to the companies. Wright chronicles the utter sense of liberation, freedom gained, after the union countered the complete control of life by the companies. Even so, one of the major challenges, never satisfactorily overcome, was trying to organize the numerous, very small, mom-and-pop truck- and wagon-mines.

Chapter Two starts with a description of Utah Fuel's Sunnyside Mine explosion that killed twenty-three miners in 1945. This story provides a perfect introduction to an extensive discussion of the safety situation, rules and regulations, or lack

thereof, and the interactions between the miners, the union, and the company, which remain a pervasive topic throughout the book. Most notably, the author returns to the frequent disagreements between miners and the union, as well as to the long-lasting disregard of companies for safety. The 1940s also were characterized, especially near their end, by the rather rapid replacement of coal by oil and natural gas, with consequent reduction in coal mine employment that was further diminished by the swift introduction of mechanized coal mining.

Chapter Three introduces the additional complication of strip mines, with their personnel who feel little bond with the traditional underground coal miner. The ambivalent response of the UMWA to strip mining is well illustrated by its many efforts to try to prevent, or at least minimize, strip mining, while at the same time trying to organize strip mines. This chapter also includes numerous examples of union sympathizers having been fired, another topic that reappears frequently throughout the book. Also included are extensive discussions of internal operations within districts, and, particularly, of operational changes—some, at least, partially induced by declining demand for coal, hence diminished production, during the fifties.

Chapter Four deals primarily with the prophets of anti-unionism, most active in Utah and beyond during the 1960s and early seventies. This sentiment, combined with the UMWA's internal dissent, corruption, and lack of performance had a pronounced negative influence on organizing. During this period, the anti-unionism also greatly benefited from the 1947 Taft-Hartley Act and from an exceedingly employer-friendly National Labor Relations Board. This chapter includes an introduction to the beginning of the utterly corrupt Tony Boyle's rule over the union, and to the growing importance of strip mining.

The sad story of the killing of Joseph "Jock" Yablonski and his family by Tony Boyle's hired guns, certainly an extreme low point in the history

of the UMWA, opens Chapter Five. This chapter continues with the eventual, slow takeover of the Union leadership by the Miners for Democracy, under the leadership of Arnold Miller. This period also saw a dramatic increase in the West of strip-mined coal, with its numerous non-union operations, as well as pits organized by competing unions (in particular the Operating Engineers). By the mid-1970s, the UMWA was in deep trouble. Its organizing of the strip mines in the West had largely faltered, internal dissension seriously hampered multiple functions, and inadequate funding of the Health and Retirement Fund led to reduced payments, a significant weakening of one of the union's main accomplishments.

Chapter Six starts with a brief overview of the 1984 Wilberg Mine fire, the worst Utah coal mine disaster in sixty years. Included is a brief summary and overview of the numerous safety violations documented leading up to the disaster. Addressing safety concerns remained a main objective of unionization. Nevertheless, in the mid to late seventies organizing became ever more difficult and unsuccessful in the West, notably in Utah. Company policies to reduce the chance of unionization had become far more sophisticated, typically including excellent wages and benefits to greatly reduce any obvious or potential benefits from joining a union.

Chapter Seven, dealing primarily with minorities and their participation in coal mining, starts with a lynching in Carbon county. During the 1980s Chicanos, including undocumented ones, became an increasing percentage of coal miners in Utah, providing an opportunity for companies to intensify exploitation and posing a new challenge for the UMWA. This period also saw the beginning of the employment of women in coal mining.

Chapter Eight is an impressive overview of the history of women in coal mining, primarily in Utah, but again, with coverage of the West and beyond as well. This discussion extends from the rather difficult and challenging early days, to pe-

riods of relatively good acceptance, to once again more difficult challenges and times when coal mining employment experienced substantial decreases.

Chapter Nine deals extensively with the generational split in the 1980s: the lack of interest in unionization by the younger generation of coal miners, who had usually not grown up in a union environment. Also noteworthy is the far more successful approach taken by non-union companies to minimize the potential attractions of unionization.

The book's epilogue focuses extensively on the split and the differences between western strip mining and eastern underground coal mining. Resolving these different interests and priorities has remained a difficult challenge for the UMWA. The second part of the epilogue centers on very recent political developments, notably the strong support from coal miners, including those in Utah, for Donald Trump, and the growing separation between coal miners and the Democratic party. Included is a much broader discussion of what the recent past of labor and unions, very broadly, has been, and what their future might be. Highly uncertain, at best?

Wright's book presents the history of the UMWA in Carbon County and Emery County, Utah, and coal country, USA. It recounts the ups and downs of miners and of their unions, primarily in Utah, but makes substantial contributions to the history of coal in the West, and even in the nation. Interlaced with the history of coal mining, from pick and shovel, blasting and hand loading, through mechanical loading, continuous mining, and longwalling, *Carbon County USA* is stunningly well told using an astonishing set of superbly illustrative and telling anecdotes—the result of an amazing amount of research in primary sources.

The UMWA's story is often a sad and painful tale of advances and retreats, internal fighting, and fighting with the companies and various political and media opponents. However, the union has

most certainly contributed mightily, frequently against strong opposition, to safety improvements that have transformed coal mining from an extremely dangerous occupation to a relatively safe, if still rather unhealthy one.

Superbly illustrated, with a marvelous collection of photographs, and multiple informative and illustrative reproductions of various documents, *Carbon County USA* also contains helpful maps, an excellent index, and an extensive bibliography. Also impressive is the very wide range of primary source documents, indicative of the depth of the research upon which this book is based. The book also contains three informative appendices, although one wishes the chronology in Appendix A had continued at least a little bit beyond 1985. Also, the subtitle seems at least a little bit of a misnomer, since only relatively minor sections of the book deal with the Miners for Democracy, with far more coverage of the UMWA than of the MFD.

Carbon County USA should appeal to a broad range of people interested in the history of Utah or of the West, of coal mining, or of the labor movement. In this (final?) twilight of King Coal, Wright's book makes a superb contribution to its history!

Jaak Daemen
Reno, Nevada

David M. Gitlitz. *Living in Silverado: Secret Jews in the Silver Mining Towns of Colonial Mexico*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2019; 432 pp., 6 b&w illus., 17 figs., 3 tabl., 25 sidebars, 3 append., notes, bib., ind., cloth \$65, e-book \$65. ISBN: 9780826360793 (cloth), 9780826360799 (e-book).

David Gitlitz's *Living in Silverado* consists of three disparate New Spain stories: silver mining, "crypto-Jews," and the emigration of Portuguese-Spanish villagers from the Iberian Peninsula. By focusing on the cultural and religious background