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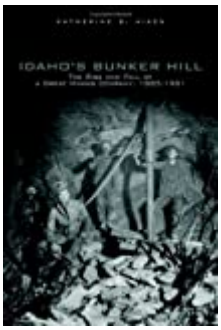

Katherine G Aiken. *Idaho's Bunker Hill: The Rise and Fall of A Great Mining Company, 1885-1981.* Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2005. ix + 284 pp. $29.95 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-8061-3682-0.

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A Corporation, a Community, and the Legacies of Industrial Mining in Northern Idaho

In the late summer of 1885, Noah S. Kellogg chased after his newly acquired donkey that had scrambled up a mountain while he slept. Upon reaching the animal, the exasperated miner sat down to enjoy his pipe when he spotted the outward signs of a vein of silver and lead. So goes the most colorful explanation for the discovery of the Bunker Hill claim. Historian Katherine G. Aiken attempts to disentangle and assess the relative veracity of the disparate stories that all claim to offer true details of the original discovery. But Aiken quickly leaves the well-worn narrative ruts provided by mining history's many entertaining anecdotes about discoveries. Actually, the real story of Idaho's Bunker Hill lies in the symbiotic evolution of an industrial corporation–the people who managed this business, the employees who performed the dangerous and difficult work that made the enterprise possible, and the fluctuating fortunes of communities whose fates remained tied to local industry. Thus, as Aiken establishes early, on many levels, the history of Idaho's Bunker Hill mirrors the larger history of the growth and decline of American industry and its environmental and socioeconomic legacies.

Each of the book's six chapters covers a particular chronological segment in the company's history. In the first chapter (1885 to 1903), Aiken recounts the orebody's discovery, the organization of the corporation, and the company's transformation and ensured survival under the capable management of Frederick Bradley. After a period of early instability, Bradley stepped into the management void and, despite intentions of leaving after a year's time, ended up becoming synonymous with the Bunker Hill mine. Hired in 1893, Bradley confronted a depression, labor strife, and legal wrangling over the company's claims to ore bodies. However, the new manager proved worthy to each challenge. According to Aiken, his leadership not only righted a sinking ship, but Bradley actually turned the Bunker Hill into a company that many in the mining world began to both emulate and envy for a variety of reasons. One of the reasons Bradley became so popular in management circles stemmed from his iron-fist approach to negotiations with organized labor. Aiken's analysis of Bradley's dysfunctional and unethical use of anti-Irish, anti-Catholic, and anti-Populist sentiment to discredit and undermine a variety of labor initiatives provides an insightful window on to the ways

that government and industry colluded in unsavory ways in northern Idaho's volatile mining districts during the Gilded Age.

But, if Bradley was admired for his intransigence, his peers also respected his perpetual ability to address the future needs of his company. In chapter two (1903 to 1917), Aiken describes how he helped the corporation vertically integrate their operations by directing their purchase of a smelter in Tacoma that allowed them to reduce and concentrate much of the ore produced by the company's mines. Another reason for the success of the Bunker Hill was the promotion of Stanley Easton, to the post of mine manager, who quickly forged a strong professional bond with Bradley that endured for many years. Bradley and Easton worked hand-in-glove to undermine the influence of the Western Federation of Miners and eventually did the same to later union foes. They also hired detectives to spy on and infiltrate the ranks of their underground workforce and created a company union as an attempt to discourage solidarity and radicalism. Bunker Hill also kept the county coroner on their payroll as the official company doctor to affect the outcome of lawsuits filed in response to workplace accidents. In addition, World War I aided Bradley and Easton's opposition to organized labor as the country's jingoistic mood made Americans less tolerant of radicalism.

Aiken also explores how and why the corporation decided to build a new smelter in Kellogg. In chapter three (1917-28), she continues her discussion of the company's new smelter as part of a larger trend towards vertical integration. Next, Bunker Hill purchased the Seattle Lead Company, which manufactured finished products for the plumbing industry. And, despite the insistence of Bradley and Easton that workplace injuries and occupational diseases were risks assumed by employees who knew the dangers they courted in working for the company, an increasing public outcry about the environmental and health effects of industry made management more proactive in informing the workforce about the health risks of lead exposure and even went so far as to build a solarium where ill workers could convalesce.

The end of an era occurred in 1933 with the death of Frederick Bradley, who had not only saved the company forty years earlier from probable failure, but also provided a pillar of stability for the company to rely upon in times of crisis. Chapter 4 (1928-49) examines the challenges brought by the Great Depression, World War II, and the anti-communist hysteria that gripped the nation in the late forties. Aiken explains how two factors mitigated the Depression's negative impact on the Bunker Hill. First, the expiration of a smelting contract with American Smelting and Refining Company (ASARCO) allowed the company to cut costs and integrate further by concentrating all of its own ores. Second, the discovery and development of a new ore body allowed the company to plan for both present and future needs. However, the New Deal and the war forced the company to recognize the rights of organized labor. Nevertheless, by war's end, the company immediately began to exploit the increasing fears about communist infiltration as a way to discredit key union officials and undermine labor's influence in the community.

Chapter 5 (1949 to 1968) and chapter 6 (1968 to 1981) bring the Bunker Hill into a modern era where new realities confronted the business operations of the company at every turn. As ore reserves continued to dwindle, the company struggled to find alternative sources of raw materials. This development coincided with the increasing focus on pollution and lead-poisoning that affected more than simply the company's employees; it also affected the surrounding community and environment. In addition to these issues, the takeover of Bunker Hill by a Texas corporation, Gulf Resources, spelled the beginning of the end for Kellogg, Idaho's largest employer. Aiken also uses these final chapters to explore the integration of women into the workforce. Throughout the book, women remain central to stories about both the organization of labor and the opposition to alleged communist infiltration. In addition, Aiken discusses how women worked temporarily for Bunker Hill during World War II in order to replace the men who had left to serve in the military. With the hiring of women on a permanent basis in the late sixties and early seventies, though, the company witnessed a profound change in the homogeneity of its workforce. Aiken describes the resentment of many male workers to the new presence of women.

But the revelation that exposure to industry pollutants had made a number of women sterile and was poisoning many more male workers as well as the increasingly strict pollution controls demanded by the EPA, lawsuits filed against the company by local residents for lead-poisoning caused by smelter smoke, and the growing influence of government agencies like OSHA created no end of new problems for the company. The demands of labor and the absence of protective tariffs further eroded the competitiveness and profitability of an industry that relied on efficiency and economies of scale in order to succeed. Add to this a new corporate master who had no ties to the small town of Kellogg and it becomes easy to

see why the Bunker Hill closed its doors in 1982.

Aiken's conclusion succinctly elucidates the ambivalent legacies of the Bunker Hill for the residents of Kellogg and the surrounding area. She illuminates a key dynamic in the creation and retention of identity. In a place where pollution became synonymous with continued employment, many local residents persist in combining feelings of resentment, injustice, pride, and disbelief when trying to make sense of their home in a post-Bunker Hill world. But Kellogg remains similar to other former mining districts in another sense, too. Like the Berkeley Pit, the Milltown Dam, or the Carson River, the area around Kellogg now represents a major superfund site because of the environmental damage caused by mining and smelting.

Aiken has provided us with an impressive feat of scholarship, and the chronological organization of her narrative demonstrates the many advantages of taking a long-view of our historical subjects. However, this strategy also has its drawbacks. Aiken's desire to cover so much ground often means sacrificing stories along the way. When discussing workplace accidents and how the ensuing court battles and settlements colored relations between management and labor, Aiken tells some rich stories that animate her narrative, but these moments are the exception rather than the rule. There is no question that a company history as expansive as Bunker Hill's presents a number of challenges and forces one to choose their battles carefully. Even still, an integration of more individual stories about the workers throughout would give the narrative an immediacy that it lacks in much of the detailed analysis of the inner-workings of the corporation and management's legalistic view of human tragedy. In a similar vein, the chronological organization of the book when combined with the absence of chapter subheadings or page-breaks makes the narrative difficult to digest for long stretches. The University of Oklahoma Press could have done a much better job editing these chapters and offering alternatives to the book's uninterrupted and all-too-linear arrangement.

Regardless of these minor problems, Aiken should be congratulated for her accomplishment. *Idaho's Bunker Hill* meticulously chronicles the changing fortunes of a company and the community it helped create. Historians of industry and its socioeconomic and environmental legacies more generally will appreciate the book's thorough research, careful analysis and timely insights.

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