

THE ANNALS OF IOWA

Georgakas' presentist attack on *A Man Called Horse* (1970) as a revisionist but flawed treatment of Indians.

Film studies is a new field of scholarly endeavor—scarcely more than a decade old in the United States. The variety of approaches in these essays suggests a healthy diversity in the field. Yet historians are likely to find most of these readings heavy on close scrutiny and light on milieu. Perhaps followers of Clio need to take a more active part in film studies and lend their expertise in cultural and intellectual history to this new endeavor. If they do, this volume will be a useful source for introducing historians to some of the most popular approaches to Western films.

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Hard Rock Epic: Western Miners and the Industrial Revolution, 1860-1910, by Mark Wyman. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979. pp. x, 331. Notes, bibliography, index, maps, illustrations. \$15.95.

Expansion of western mining produced a strong demand for workers, both native-born and immigrants. The latter came especially from Cornwall, Ireland, Germany and Italy. Only Chinese were excluded from the mines and often also from the towns. The different races occasionally clashed, but eventually reached an uneasy cooperation while at work. They stood united in demanding standard wages, not less. Very few, except new arrivals from the lead mining area of Missouri, would consent to act as strikebreakers or to accept reduced rates. Another problem was to collect the money earned. Some companies had such cumbersome management practices, complicated by long distances, that paychecks were delayed. Other mines were in financial difficulty and could not pay. Miners found the law gave little effective aid in getting what was owed them. Occasionally they threatened local managers and sometimes they agreed to continue working in the hope a new ore find would brighten their financial outlook. Perhaps they took more direct action by stealing high grade ore and smuggling it to crooked buyers.

New machines, gradually adopted in the larger mines to replace pick and shovel work, created as many problems for the workers as they solved. The first obvious evidence was the introduction of steam engines to pump out accumulated water. These encouraged larger scale

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operations and more regimentation of the employees. Burleigh's compressed air drill was far more effective than hand labor, but it produced much dust. Only gradually did miners realize this was causing a consumption in the lungs which could eventually incapacitate them and that it was best to use water with the drill to prevent dust formation. Mechanized means of hoisting workers in mine shafts at first seriously lacked any safety features and only after many deaths did they become standard practice. Dynamite was a great step forward in breaking rocks, but it presented dangers from misfires, delayed fires, non-fires, and the occasional release of dangerous gases. Electricity was a boon, but its dangers were inadequately understood or guarded against. When accidents did occur, there was at first no redress in the courts for injuries or death. Only slowly and under pressure did judges finally concede that under some circumstances an employer should be required to pay damages, even substantial ones.

Labor unions began to spread among hard rock miners in the middle 1860s and usually the impetus was resistance to wage cuts. They also provided benefits to sick and injured members. Their campaign for mine safety laws and inspectors only slowly met success. In the 1890s and early 1900s they pushed hard for the eight-hour day. Their members, frustrated by long political and legal fights for what they believed were reasonable demands, began to suspect the intentions of all employers. This led many members of the Western Federation of Miners into helping organize the Industrial Workers of the World. But the IWW proved to be too radical for the average miner and he withdrew his initial support. Clearly by 1910 the pioneer period of mining was over; the modern, more industrial, relationship between corporations and their hired hands had begun.

This thorough, scholarly study is solidly based upon exhaustive research in primary and secondary material. It is clearly and interestingly written; its conclusions are judicious. The book is a useful contribution to western, mechanical, and labor history; while others have touched on the edges of the topic, Wyman shows the impact of new machines upon the hired miner much better than has been done by anybody else.

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