

piles, and the impact of erosion and attempts at revegetation. The dominant social class structure—owners, managers, miners—and ethnic diversity are also visible on the mining landscape through residential, commercial, and church architecture. The author concluded that mining towns tended to be densely settled but rather prosperous and truly cosmopolitan and civic-minded locations.

Because settlement patterns and the resulting landscape are closely tied to the geologic structure of the ore body, nearly all mining areas were isolated at the time of discovery and development; most remain secluded today. This isolation dictates that diversified revitalization was a major factor in the survival of many communities after the mines closed. Aspen became a ski resort, Deadwood legalized gambling, and others perpetuated their images as ghost towns. Francaviglia concludes with a brief discussion of historic preservation and mining museums that offer underground tours and reconstructed towns.

Perhaps the most valuable aspect of this book is its collection of seventy-nine excellent photographs, maps, and diagrams. The text would not mean as much to the nonspecialist without this visual assistance. Although the author did a commendable job of providing examples from all sections of the country, most readers of this journal will concentrate on Minnesota's Iron Ranges, the Upper Peninsula copper country, and the lead mining regions of Missouri. Scattered references are made to Galena and southwestern Wisconsin; the coal mining landscape surrounding Buxton, Iowa, receives a mere casual comment.

The author of this interesting study presents a wide variety of personal experiences and interdisciplinary perspectives. The reading audience may be equally diverse but somewhat limited. A study of the cultural and physical landscape is far removed from the mainstream of mining history; on the other hand, few examples are developed thoroughly enough to appeal to local and regional historians. Historical geographers, architectural historians, and historic preservationists will be most attracted to this readable narrative.

*Woman from Spillertown: A Memoir of Agnes Burns Wieck*, by David Thoreau Wieck. Carbondale: Southern University Press, 1992. xiv, 280 pp. Notes, index. \$32.50 cloth.

REVIEWED BY DENNIS A. DESLIPPE, UNIVERSITY OF IOWA

Despite the outpouring of community and workplace studies in the past twenty years by labor historians, most authors of labor history

biographies still focus on national leaders such as Eugene Debs, John L. Lewis, and Sidney Hillman. For that reason alone, David Thoreau Wieck's *Woman from Spillertown* is a valuable contribution to the biographical literature of lesser-known regional working-class activists. The author, Agnes Wieck's son and a retired philosophy professor, draws on his own notes; his parents' papers housed at Wayne State University's Reuther Archives, and published labor proceedings and reports to provide a chronological account of his mother's career. This book will be especially instructive to labor historians, women's historians, and scholars of the Midwest in mapping out the political networks of union leaders operating outside of large, urban centers during industrial America's heyday.

From her son's account, Agnes Burns Wieck (1892–1966), known as “the Mother Jones of Illinois,” led a varied and active life. Born into a family of Irish and German miners in the Illinois coalfields of District 12 of the United Mine Workers of America (UMW), she cared for her family after her mother's early death in 1902 and began teaching at the age of seventeen. Responding to an advertisement in a UMW publication, she attended the “School for Women Organizers” sponsored by the National Women's Trade Union League in Chicago. From there, a host of union-related jobs followed, including writing for labor papers, organizing women into the Telephone Operators' Union in Boston, and traveling to the White House as part of a peace delegation to visit Woodrow Wilson. Agnes Wieck returned to Illinois with her unionist-turned-scholar husband Edward Wieck in the early 1930s in time to lead the militant Women's Auxiliary of the Progressive Miners of America in their battles against mine operators, hostile law officers, and the UMW's John L. Lewis. Wieck's narrative of his mother's activism makes for exciting reading and helps bring a little-known account of this renegade union back to historians' attention.

The book has several shortcomings, however. Most disappointing is its fundamental lack of engagement with current scholarly themes relating to the working class and gender. Employing such literature in this work might have helped the author close some glaring analytical gaps. While Wieck informs the reader, for example, that his parents were independent leftists, apart from Agnes Wieck's attraction to the social gospel message and the implicit understanding in the book's descriptive passages that coal field wage labor led to a high level of class consciousness, the author does not examine the formative process of her early political sympathies—and *why* they changed. As a result, Wieck misses a valuable opportunity to contribute to the efforts of John Laslett and others to explore the roots of political variations within UMW District 12 communities. His parents' frequent

moves and their recorded experiences may be illuminating in this regard, but Wieck chooses instead to portray Agnes and Ed Wieck as almost detached from the social moorings of their neighbors. Finally, in examining the sources of his mother's activism, the author suggests that a young Agnes Wieck left the coalfields due to a lack of a nurturing working women's culture only to return to help lead coal miners' wives already engaged in a defense of the working class. What had happened in the interim to these working-class women who had prompted Agnes Wieck to move away in her early years because "she had no community, no pals, with whom to share her thoughts" (31)?

Others more attuned to these issues can use this story of an important historical figure to address the issue of how women activists attempted to forge coalitions and work for social justice in a gendered working class. While Wieck's *Woman from Spillertown* will not take its place next to the best of social history biography, it does, as the publisher's claim suggests, "move Agnes Burns Wieck from her status as a historical footnote to her proper place in the labor and women's movements."

*Community of Suffering and Struggle: Women, Men, and the Labor Movement in Minneapolis, 1915-1945*, by Elizabeth Fae. Gender and American Culture Series. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991. xviii, 295 pp. Illustrations, tables, figures, maps, appendixes, notes, bibliography, index. \$39.95 cloth, \$14.95 paper.

REVIEWED BY LYNN Y. WEINER, ROOSEVELT UNIVERSITY

How to explain the growing alienation of women from organized labor during the first third of this century? Elizabeth Fae looks at labor history in Minneapolis to suggest that there was a shift in the American labor movement from community-based forms of solidarity (which through the 1930s included the active participation of women) to a male-centered bureaucratic unionism that emerged by the end of the depression. By that time, women were made marginal by a movement that "failed to acknowledge the connections between productive and reproductive labor and the importance of women's work to the family economy" (xiv). Fae builds her case from the close study of Minneapolis, site of significant labor militancy during the 1930s, to generalize about the movement as a whole. She explores the representations of men and women in the iconography and language of the labor press through cartoons, advertisements, and other visual expressions and convincingly argues that these reinforced the notion

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