

Archaeology and Capitalism

From Ethics to Politics

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CHAPTER 15

Ethics, Objectivity and Emancipatory Archaeology

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Part of the challenge facing an ethical and socially responsible archaeology is to square traditional, time-honored commitments to 'objective' scholarly inquiry with the politically interested motivations of an emancipatory archaeology. Emancipatory archaeology has been defined in different ways (eg, Duke and Saitta 1998; Layton 1989; Leone and Preucel 1992; Wilkie and Bartoy 2000). In the view taken here, emancipatory archaeology is dedicated to expanding the conversation about what it means to be human by illuminating variation in the forms and consequences of social relationships that have organized human life across time and space. By 'expanding' I mean taking archaeological knowledge to audiences – native peoples, the working poor – who historically have had little use for archaeology as traditionally practiced. The organizational variation at issue in this conversation is, of course, contingent; that is, it is shaped by time, place and circumstance. Things could always have turned out differently. Emancipatory archaeology aims, through its conceptual frameworks and public outreach initiatives, to foster critical thought about the determinants of *contemporary* lived experience in hopes of impelling positive social change. Emancipatory archaeology is an archaeology of hearts and minds; it is a moral as well as scientific enterprise.

The challenge of an emancipatory archaeology is especially profound as concerns study of the very recent, 20th-century past. Here, capitalist relationships are known to lay behind the differential distributions of wealth and poverty observable in the material record. Thus, investigation of this past inevitably involves us in contemporary cultural critique. In this paper I describe how the ethics of objective inquiry and the ethics of an engaged, emancipatory archaeology come together in research on the 1913–1914 Colorado Coal Field Strike. This episode constitutes perhaps the best example of open class warfare in American history. It began when 90% of Colorado Fuel and Iron Company coal miners left the shafts and their company town homes for makeshift tent colonies on



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the Colorado prairie in September 1923. One of Colorado's largest employers, CF&I produced coking coal for blast furnaces that supplied rails for the expanding American transportation network. The miners were striking for higher wages and safer working conditions, among other concerns. The strike climaxed when the Colorado militia, in a last ditch effort to break the strike, attacked the Ludlow tent colony on 20 April 1914. The so-called Ludlow Massacre claimed the lives of 25 people, including two women and 11 children. The events of 1913–1914 have powerful, continuing symbolic importance in contemporary struggles between Capital and Labour. I detail how archaeology at Ludlow contributes to this political struggle while broadening our scientific understanding of American labour history.

A PRAGMATIST ETHIC

The Colorado Coal Field War Archaeological Project is dedicated to producing new knowledge of American labour history, disseminating this knowledge to multiple audiences, and engaging working class interests as a way to educate for social change (Ludlow Collective 2001). Participants in this work come to it for a variety of reasons and with a variety of expectations (Walker and Saitta 2002; Wood 2002a). My particular involvement in this work is informed by pragmatist philosophical commitments. As formulated by John Dewey nearly 90 years ago, pragmatism turns from the 'problems of philosophy' to the 'problems of men' (Dewey 1917). It applies itself less toward knowing or 'getting things right' (in terms of capturing some final transcendental truth) than toward living or 'making things new' (Rorty 1989). For pragmatists, making things new requires that we improve our ability to respond to the views, interests and concerns of ever larger groups of diverse human beings; to expand the scope of who counts as 'one of us' (Rorty 1989, 1999).

I take pragmatism as seamlessly dovetailing with the dialectical thrust of a critical archaeology (Saitta 1989), and with the kind of sensibility that equips us for using our craft (*sensu* Shanks and McGuire 1996) to address human needs. Pragmatism does so without abandoning time-honored and still useful concepts of truth, experience, and testing. Instead, it reformulates these concepts in a way more sensitive to meeting human need. In so doing, it responds more directly – and perhaps more coherently and honestly – to the widespread consensus that archaeological work occurs in a political context, and that we must therefore be aware of how the results of our inquiries are used within that context. A brief summary of these core commitments follows.

The first core pragmatist commitment is to an antifoundational notion of truth – the idea that there are no fixed, stable grounds on

which knowledge-claims can be established. Truth is not an accurate reflection of something non-human (Rorty 1998); rather, it is a matter of intersubjective consensus among human beings, one mediated by currently available theories, methods, and data. This notion produces a warrant for aggressively experimenting with theory and method in order to arrive at true beliefs. Experimentation is crucial for improving and expanding the conversation between and among interested parties of scientists and citizens. It is the vitality of this conversation that moves archaeology and its constituencies toward the sorts of 'usable truths' that can serve human need.

The second core commitment is to the idea that truth-claims must be evaluated against a broader notion of experience. Specifically, they must be evaluated in terms of their concrete consequences for life today – for how we want to *live* as a pluralistic community. Instead of simply asking whether a claim about the past is empirically sufficient in light of available data, pragmatism asks *what difference the claim makes to how we want to live*. What are the implications of theoretical claims from evolutionary archaeology, interpretive archaeology, Marxist archaeology or, indeed, any other current framework for understanding society and history for how we think about, and how we might intervene in, human social life? To what extent does a truth-claim expeditiously meet the human needs at stake in, say, reburial or repatriation controversies; ie, to what extent does it facilitate putting human souls to rest and human minds at ease? 'Experience', in this view, is relational, interactive, and creative; it acknowledges our status as social and historical beings; it is genuinely reflexive (Kloppenber 1996). Defining experience in this way means that we must subsume the usual realist 'criterial' rationality for judging truth-claims (ie, criteria emphasizing logical coherence and correspondence between theory and data) under something that is still broadly criterial but much more qualitative and humanistic.

A third commitment is to a particular notion of 'testing', specifically as it relates to the evaluation of truth-claims produced by different standpoints, perspectives, and cultural traditions. Especially germane to archaeology these days are those truth-claims that divide scientific and various 'descendant community' knowledges of the past, including indigenous, immigrant, working class, and other 'folk' knowledges. In contrast to the mainstream scientific view where competing ideas are tested against each other in light of the empirical record, pragmatism stipulates that we test the ideas of other cultures and descendant communities by 'weaving' them together with ones we already have (Rorty 1989). Testing is a matter of interweaving and continually reweaving webs of belief so as to increasingly expand and deepen community and, perhaps, create new fields of possible action

(Rouse 2003:101). It prescribes a 'measured relativism' (Appleby *et al* 1994) that balances a commitment to evaluation with the parallel belief that cultural pluralism is our best recipe for civil cohesion (Menand 1997:xxviii).

The specter of objectivity haunts these core pragmatist commitments. What does objectivity mean in this context? The notion of objectivity embraced by pragmatists, as alluded to above, is one that Megill (1994) describes as *dialectical*. Dialectical objectivity takes a particular stance toward the subjectivity of the knower. Whereas other kinds of objectivity seek either to exclude subjectivity (*absolute* objectivity) or contain it (*disciplinary* objectivity), dialectical objectivity adopts a positive attitude toward subjectivity. Subjectivity is seen as indispensable to the constituting of objects, as necessary for objectivity. As Heidegger (1927) notes, objects first become known to us through action in the world. Knowing is thus acting, and human acting is always acting in company (Fabian 1994). These arguments close the loop to a concept of 'objective truth' as a matter of intersubjective consensus (solidarity) among human beings, rather than as a matter of accurate reflection of something non-human.

This pragmatist notion of objectivity differs from 'realist' notions that are widely embraced in contemporary archaeology. Realist objectivity stipulates that there is an independent reality, that alternative accounts map it differently and that, while hope and bias complicate the picture, systematic exploration of similarity and difference can establish credible knowledge-claims and produce more complete understandings of the past. Binford (1982) in his defense of middle range theory, characterized this kind of objectivity as 'operational objectivity'. This qualified notion of objectivity is today invoked by archaeologists across the paradigmatic spectrum. Thus, processualists embrace 'mitigated objectivity' (Clark 1998), contextualists 'guarded objectivity' (Hodder 1991), and feminists 'embodied objectivity' (Wylie 1995).

The rub is that such notions of objectivity, no matter how well qualified, might not be best for regulating a more democratic, civically engaged archaeology. Zimmerman (2001) argues that within archaeology there is no clear epistemology for 'coalescing' descendant community and mainstream scientific understandings of the past. Others have also advocated a rethinking of epistemology now that previously disenfranchised groups have places at the table (eg, Schuldenrein 1999). The democratic practice of archaeology, like that of history, still lacks a philosophical grounding that is compatible with its affirmations (Appleby *et al* 1994). Kitcher's (2001) so-called 'modest realism' moves us a bit closer, although it still qualifies objectivity little differently than the other realisms at work across the sciences.

Alternatively, pragmatism's ideals better dovetail with those indigenous epistemologies that are concerned with living as well as knowing (Saitta 2003). Pragmatism's commitment to 'testing' the beliefs of other cultures by interweaving and continually reweaving them with beliefs that we already have is clearly in keeping with Watkins's (1998) sensible suggestion, offered in response to Clark (1998), that we settle differences between scientific and indigenous knowledges by finding a 'path between trees', rather than by bulldozing the forest or circumventing it altogether. The navigational guide in these encounters is something fully human – wider, deeper, stronger, and better community – rather than some independent object that we seek to accurately represent in theory.

In summary, pragmatism emphasizes ways of living instead of rules for knowing, the 'weaving together' of knowledges instead of their 'validation against' experience, and the social utility of narratives instead of the absolute truth of laws and theories. These governing ideals neither forsake reality, nor undermine the possibilities for learning, nor capitulate to relativism. Pragmatism subsumes Enlightenment criterial rationality and nomothetics to more humanistic – but no less explicit and compelling – regulative ideals. In so doing, it converges with the epistemologies of subaltern groups – native peoples, working classes – for whom the social causes and consequences of scientific knowledge-claims can be of great concern. This in turn promises a more collaborative and democratic, and less authoritarian, archaeology.

At the same time, pragmatism usefully breaks with *both* the analytical and continental philosophical traditions that so many have found wanting as underpinnings for the theoretical and applied aspects of processual and postprocessual archaeology, respectively. The desirable outcome of pragmatism's advocacy of these particular notions of truth, experience, and testing is stronger community – richer and better human activity – rather than some singular, *final* truth about the past or some imagined 'more comprehensive' or 'more complete' account of history. The loyalty in pragmatism is to other human beings struggling to cope, rather than to the realist hope of getting things right; moral and ethical progress is viewed as an expansion in the number of people among whom unforced agreement can be established through free and open encounters (Rorty 1991).

Pragmatism's ethical imperatives overlap with those enunciated by scholars seeking an ethical archaeology (eg, contributors to Lynott and Wylie 2000). These include the need to be self-conscious of one's subjectivity, accountable for one's presuppositions and claims, and responsive to the various constituencies having an interest in the past. Pragmatism's ethical imperatives especially resonate with Martin Hall's (2004) redefinition of ethics as 'principles of engagement'

whereby we, as contributors to public knowledge, use our knowledge to serve the public good – whatever we take ‘public good’ to mean. Whether these ethical principles are best theorized as universal or situational is a matter of debate. I lean toward Rorty’s (2001) position that community-building is best served by situationalism or, in his terms, ‘ethnocentrism’: that there is more to be gained by replacing the Enlightenment rationalist commitment to universal moral obligations with the rather more modest idea that we – as Westerners, intellectuals, archaeologists, or whatever – merely have some instructive and possibly persuasive stories to tell that might help to build trust across the boundaries that divide us from others. In the next section, I consider how archaeology in the Colorado Coal Fields is contributing to such wider ethical and emancipatory goals.

EMANCIPATORY PRACTICE

Archaeologists have always been ambivalent about applying their knowledge in political or emancipatory projects. Even with today’s widespread awareness that our work is political, the activist strain in archaeology is at risk of disappearing as the more pointedly critical concepts used by archaeologists to understand the past – power, hierarchy, class, and so on – are appropriated and domesticated by those lobbying for allegedly more ‘scientific’ approaches. Several commentators have recently worried about how such appropriations blunt archaeology’s critical/activist edge (eg, Thomas 2000).

Elsewhere, I have considered the dulling effects of theories that describe subject societies with concepts that rest on a foundational belief in continuous rather than categorical variation; eg, descriptions of ancient societies as ‘small-scale’, ‘middle range’, ‘transegalitarian’, ‘intermediate’, and ‘heterarchical’ (Saitta 2005b). Such terms are held by some to better capture organizational variety and/or address the ‘classificatory ambiguity’ (Neitzel and Anderson 1999) of archaeological cultures. The rub for the activist scholar, however, is that these concepts do not assign a distinctive ontological status to the subject societies of interest. They neither highlight specific causal powers that can focus comparative work, nor do they engagingly explain to our varied public constituencies exactly *how* the present is different from the past. We need something stronger, with a sharper critical edge, for capturing and comparing organizational differences across time and space, and for fostering the kinds of critical self-consciousness about contemporary lived experience that can impel broader interest, engagement, and change.

Historical archaeology is one pursuit that has provided a concrete touchstone for action, given recent arguments establishing capitalism as a central analytical focus (Delle *et al* 2000; Leone 1995; contributors

to Leone and Potter 1999; Little 1994; Matthews *et al* 2002; Orser 1996; Paynter 1988). A focus on capitalism foregrounds social divisions and conflicts – around class, power, ethnicity, gender – and their embodiment in material culture. This approach has balanced inquiry and produced more complete accounts of the past. Just as importantly, it has encouraged self-consciousness about the social value and political utility of archaeology (Leone 1995). Contributors to Leone and Potter (1999), for example, take an explicitly activist approach to their subject matter. They are concerned that their scholarship illuminate capitalism in ways that can demystify its operation, if not actually help to transform it. This orientation offers new possibilities for connecting archaeology to contemporary life and for diversifying archaeology’s public audience, even as we struggle with the forms that our activism and advocacy should take.

The Colorado Coal Field War Archaeological Project looks to extend this emerging tradition and set of scholarly and political commitments. The scholarly goal of the project is to fill in what ‘official’ Western history leaves out; namely, a better understanding of the existential concerns and strategies of men in the mineshafts and women and children in the home. Official Western histories, when they address this episode in American industrial relations, focus on famous people, events, and the organizing activities of the United Mine Workers union. We have only anecdotal information about the everyday lives and relationships of the ethnically diverse population – 24 different languages were spoken in the southern Colorado coal fields – that comprised the labour force. Archaeology can flesh out their side of the story, address official history’s blind spots, and help produce a fuller understanding of cultural and historical process on the Western frontier.

McGuire (2004) and Saitta (2005a) detail some of the project’s contributions so far. The main research questions focus on (1) whether the distribution of ethnic groups in the tent colony duplicated or departed from the ethnic segregation of the company towns; (2) how striking families supported themselves, given minimal strike relief and siege-like conditions; and (3) to what extent coal camp life changed and/or improved following the strike. The Ludlow excavations provide the strike context, and we are excavating in pre- and post-strike contexts at the Berwind coal camp above Ludlow, from which many of the Ludlow colonists came. We are looking to test documentary accounts of life in the coal camps and tent colonies as well as investigate other ways – unrecorded by history – in which miners might have been coping with their circumstances.

The archaeological contexts have good integrity and abundant remains. The assemblages at Ludlow – clothing, jewelry, children’s

toys, bullets, cartridges – speak to a hurried, catastrophic abandonment on the day of the massacre. Complete excavation of one tent platform and its associated artifacts (including a crucifix and a button inscribed with the words *Societa Alpinisti Tyrolesi*) suggest an Italian Catholic ethnic identity. This gives us confidence that the ethnic organization of the camp is knowable. Other data suggest that miners may have been consciously striving to actively preserve ethnic identity. Preliminary analysis of ceramic remains from one cellar at Ludlow suggests that workers were resisting ‘Americanizing’ influences in turn-of-the-century immigrant life that elsewhere were expressed by the embracing of a Victorian order in foodways and associated material culture (Gray 2005).

Data on daily subsistence comes from several deep features including a privy, trash pit, and several cellars. Dietary remains reveal an enormous reliance on canned foods, much more than what we see in working-class contexts at Berwind. Much of this canned food is undoubtedly Union-supplied. At the same time, some features contain lots of evidence for home canning, such as mason jars. This implies access to local farmers or gardens for fresh vegetables and fruit. Similarly, cow bones showing up in Ludlow deposits – combined with the fact that they represent inferior cuts of meat – may suggest supply from local ranchers. Additional faunal analysis may disclose patterns of meat-sharing within the tent colony. In general, our current data from deep features suggest worker strategies consistent with Labour’s commitment to using *place* – understood as social ties of kin and community that link workers to family and friends employed in local business, health care, and law enforcement – as a way to offset Capital’s greater command of *space* through control of markets, telegraph, railroad, and other technologies (Harvey 1996).

Comparisons of the Ludlow assemblage with pre- and post-strike deposits at the nearby coal camp of Berwind reveal some interesting changes in household strategy over time. Wood (2002b) shows how working-class women in the company towns were able to raise whole families on miner’s wages that would not even feed two people. Trash dating before the strike contains lots of tin cans, large cooking pots, and big serving vessels. Families took in single male miners as boarders to make extra income, and women used canned foods to make stews and soups to feed them. After the strike the companies discouraged boarders but the wages still remained very low. The tin cans and big pots disappear from the trash, to be replaced by canning jars and lids, and the bones of rabbits and chickens. Women and children who could no longer earn money from boarders instead produced food at home to feed the family. It remains to be seen whether post-strike contexts suggest an overall improvement in worker living conditions over time.

Coal Field archaeology is thus producing some promising leads for reconstructing Labour’s strategies in Western coal towns and striker tent colonies. We hope to conduct future fieldwork at the Colorado militia camp located several hundred meters southwest of the Ludlow colony, so as to conduct the ‘archaeology of perpetrators’ advocated by Pollock and Bernbeck (this volume). However, landowner permission to excavate at the militia camp has thus far been denied. The work conducted in other contexts, however, has added to the historical understanding of events gained through written documents.

At the same time – and in keeping with the ethical prescriptions of a pragmatist view – we are using these findings to engage contemporary communities and issues in southern Colorado and in the United States. We see our work as a form of political action sensitive to working-class histories and interests. In the last decade, many historical archaeologists have advocated that we should work directly with local groups having an intimate connection to the historical sites that we study (eg, LaRoche and Blakey 1997; Spector 1993; Wilkie and Bartoy 2000).

In southern Colorado we make a distinction between Ludlow’s *descendants* and *descendant community* (McGuire and Reckner 2002). Ludlow’s descendants are principally middle-class Anglos. Their parents participated in the great social mobility of the 1950s and 1960s. Today they are teachers, lawyers, businesspeople, managers and administrators, and they are scattered across the United States. They share an identity as descendants of the massacre but they do not form a community, either in the sense that they live near each other or as members of an organization or club. The descendants’ memories are familial and personal. Their interest in our work stems from a concern to establish or re-establish a connection to their familial past and/or to see to it that their family’s role in this past is properly honored. We have aided descendants in locating graves so that stones could be raised to family members who died in the massacre, and by correcting errors in documentation or labels on photos in historical archives.

Ludlow’s *descendant community* is the unionized working people of southern Colorado. They include many descendants of people who participated in the strike, but the vast majority of them have no familial connection to the events of 1913–1914. A minority of them are ethnic Whites (Italians and Eastern Europeans) but the majority are Chicanos. It is this population that maintains the monument and organizes the annual memorial service that has been held at the site every June since 1918. Indeed, this long commemorative tradition is evidenced by one of the more evocative artifacts produced by our excavation, a bent, rusted wreath stand from a past memorial service that we recovered from a trash-filled, still-undated privy. Although the last unionized mine in the area closed in 1997, the descendant community is still actively involved in union struggles. Many of the

everyday realities that provided context for the Ludlow Massacre – workplace danger, corporate greed, chronic tension between Capital and Labour – are still with us. The memorial service is a national event for the union and an opportunity to address contemporary issues facing organized labour.

Workers in a variety of industries in southern Colorado closely identify with, and draw inspiration from, the events at Ludlow. Since the project began, employees of Las Animas County and health-care workers at Mt. San Rafael Hospital in Trinidad have unionized. Both groups chose the union of their fathers and uncles, the United Mine Workers of America. The lifespan of the project has also coincided with a steelworkers strike at the Oregon Steel plant in Pueblo, Colorado, about 75 miles north of Ludlow. Oregon Steel is the direct corporate descendant of the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company. The steelworkers struck to end forced overtime and thus reclaim one of basic rights that were at issue in 1913, the eight-hour workday. The steelworkers made Camp Ludlow a powerful symbol of their struggle. We participated in the struggle by joining steelworkers on the speaker's platform at the annual Ludlow memorial service and at their union hall in Pueblo.

We also engage a number of other public constituencies. Our work has been featured in numerous local and regional newspaper articles and on Colorado Public Radio. In these contexts we remind citizens that the workplace rights we enjoy and take for granted today were won via struggle and paid for in blood. This has elicited numerous invitations to speak to various groups and societies across the political and ideological spectrum, from the Daughters of the American Revolution, to the Rocky Mountain Explorers Club, to the American Federation of Labour – Congress of Industrial Organization's Union Summer programs. We have taken the project into Colorado schools, in the form of a middle school classroom history trunk intended to enlighten an even younger generation about Colorado's significant labour history, and through the University of Denver's 'Reach Out DU' classroom lecture program.

We have worked with the Colorado Endowment for the Humanities to educate teachers interested in weaving Colorado's labour history into middle and high school curricula. We involve Ludlow's descendant community in this activity. This community understands that writing the past has consequences, and it has a keen interest in how it is presented. The 'vernacular' or 'folk' histories of this community often differ from official history (Bodnar 1992). Vernacular histories emphasize the militia's role in starting the shooting on 20 April. They implicate the militia in many more atrocities against colonists on the day of the massacre, and count many more casualties in the conflict. They suggest, for example, that additional bodies were secretly

removed from Ludlow by the militia after the assault and subsequently deposited in unmarked graves on the Colorado prairie. These histories also conflict with the 'critical' histories that we activist-scholars write about Western industrialization and its human cost. Vernacular history has intellectual as well as considerable emotional appeal. Thus, developing pedagogies that negotiate between and among vernacular, official and critical histories is a real challenge. However, it is one that must be met in order to deepen the public's appreciation of the past, enhance archaeology's contemporary relevance, and build alliances for change.

Our project is also contributing in more publicly visible ways to community building in the Colorado coalfields. Labour history sites are generally neglected in America's commemorative landscape (Foote 1997). Mindful of this lacuna, we produced a three-sided interpretive kiosk for the Ludlow site that described the history, archaeology, and legacy of the events that transpired there. We followed this up with a smaller historical marker for Berwind, modeled on the Corazon de Trinidad ('Heart of Trinidad') markers that celebrate Santa Fe Trail history in downtown Trinidad. The Berwind marker emphasizes the role played by Colorado's immigrants in the making of the Industrial West. We have just completed an interpretive trail for the Ludlow Massacre site to replace the original kiosk, a feature that updates the story told by archaeology and locates the Ludlow drama in a wider landscape. These interpretive materials offer 'counter-classic' narratives to balance the triumphal, mythic narratives that have long informed Western public history. Their location at a site like Ludlow that functions so powerfully as a 'living' memorial creates pressure and incentive to update when appropriate, lest they succumb to the kind of ossification or 'Disneyfication' of history that increasingly has come to characterize other kinds of public commemorative efforts (Silberman, this volume).

CONCLUSION

Colorado Coal Field War scholarship employs theory and method that is common to much contemporary archaeological practice. This scholarly work is producing some promising leads for fleshing out working-class agency and history in a region long dominated by mythic narratives of rugged individualism, frontier conquest, and national progress. What most distinguishes our project is its unapologetic activist and emancipatory dimension. This public outreach work is informed by a pragmatist ethos emphasizing the expansion of conversation and community. Ours is one of the few archaeological projects in the United States that speaks to the historical struggles of, and also directly to, working-class people. We are building an archaeology that we hope working people will relate to both emotionally and intellectually.

This raises the question of exactly *how* this archaeological work is emancipatory. Yolanda Romero, president of UMWA Local 9856 Women's Auxiliary, captured a bit of it with her observation about the meaning of excavated artifacts from the Ludlow tent colony:

Until now, we've only known what we've seen in photographs. But to see a real thing, an item that a person actually handled, really brings those people and that time to life... [W]orkers today are still fighting for some of the same protections the Ludlow miners wanted. People should know how far we've come and how far we still have to go. (UMWJ 1999)

This observation takes on added salience in the aftermath of several mining accidents in Alabama, Kentucky and West Virginia that claimed the lives of over 30 miners in the first few months of 2006. Archaeological work at Ludlow thus illustrates that the coal mining past is, in many ways, still present. For this, our work is earning considerable approval and support from citizens closest to the history of Ludlow. The United Mine Workers of America now count us among their union brothers and sisters (Butero 2005) and always reserve a spot on the speaker's platform for us at the annual Ludlow memorial service. There is still much to do however, to build the kind of trust and shared 'observational language' that is required, if archaeological work is to contribute meaningfully to emancipatory projects in the community.

We have also worked, through educational channels and public history initiatives that enrich an impoverished commemorative landscape, to reach a broader audience that has never heard of the Ludlow Massacre and that has missed, or misunderstood, the history of US labour conflict and its powerful legacy. Whether these wider audiences will be convinced of Ludlow's significance in the human struggle for workplace freedom and dignity remains to be seen. For the moment we content ourselves with the knowledge that we're politically engaged – that we're 'in the game', to quote Hall (2004) – and the belief that our activities are cultivating an audience for archaeological work while simultaneously justifying archaeology's existence as an enterprise that serves the public good.

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