

45-5179

E159

2007-1295 CIP

Saitta, Dean J. **The archaeology of collective action.** University Press of Florida, 2007. 140p bibl index afp; ISBN 9780813030708 pbk, \$24.95

Once artifacts enter the archaeological record, they usually cannot be identified with a particular person, and deposits often represent considerable amounts of time. This is not what Saitta's title refers to, although his definition ("Collective action is ... the group behavior of individuals united by particular life experiences, existential anxieties, and strategic interests in concrete historical ... circumstances") is not particularly helpful in this regard. Saitta (Univ. of Denver) advocates critical archaeology, which aims to guide positive social change while still maintaining the discipline's scientific validity. He dedicates much space to theoretical explication, paired with a case study-based justification for critical archaeology. The book describes fieldwork and preliminary analytic results for two sites: the Ludlow strikers' camp and Berwind, a company town connected with the Colorado Coalfield Strike in 1913-14 and its aftermath. Ludlow was the site of a major long-term confrontation between striking miners (including their families) and mine operators, who were aided by the Colorado state militia. Saitta writes well, but his agenda means that archaeological data take third place behind historical records and interactions of project archaeologists with miner descendants and representatives of the modern labor movement. **Summing Up:** Recommended. Graduate students, faculty.—*J. E. Rafferty, Mississippi State University*