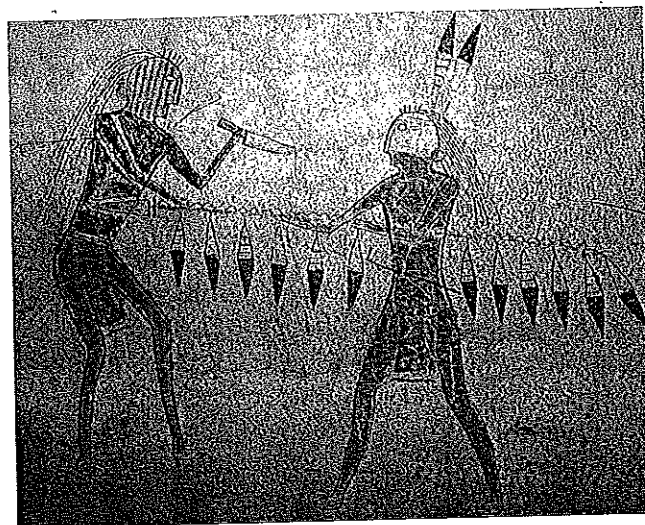


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The Archaeology of Class War: The Colorado Coalfield Strike of 1913-1914 edited by KARIN LARKIN and RANDALL H. McGUIRE. University Press of Colorado, Boulder, 2009. 432 pp., 49 photos, 5 illustrations, 22 maps, 19 figures. \$60.00 (cloth).

Reviewed by Paul A. Shackel, University of Maryland

Driving through southeastern Colorado on US Route 25, there are road signs directing people to the site of the Ludlow massacre. The site is about 15 miles north of Trinidad, Colorado, and about 1 mile west of the interstate. The majority of heritage tourism seekers expect to see a monument, exhibits, or interpretive signs related to an Indian massacre. However, as you approach the site there is a monument that faces west with a man standing and a woman semi-crouched and caressing a young child in her arms. The inscription on the memorial states, "In memory of the men, women, and children who lost their lives in freedom's cause, April 20, 1914. Erected by the United Mine Workers of America." It is a monument paying tribute to those who lost their lives in the Colorado Coalfield War in the early twentieth century.

While the coal strike in southern Colorado was one of many clashes between labor and capital in the industrializing United States, the monument stands as a reminder of one of the most horrific incidents related to labor unrest in this country. Men, women, and children taking refuge in the strike camp were killed during an attack by the Colorado National Guard. The work of the Colorado Coalfield War Archaeology Project, a collaborative endeavor between Binghamton University, Denver University, and Fort Lewis College, along with support from many other local and national entities, like the United Mine Workers of America, the Colorado State Historical Society,

and the Colorado Endowment for the Humanities, helped to bring this event and the lives of workers to a wider audience. This volume, *The Archaeology of Class War*, edited by Karin Larkin and Randall McGuire provides an important overview of the project and highlights some of the contributions archaeology can provide to support the history of this event. The project serves as model for others who want to bring the memory of working class people to the forefront of the national public memory.

This volume is divided into 12 chapters and authors provide specific overviews and/or analyses of artifacts, documents and oral histories to provide a new look at life and conditions of miners and their families at the Ludlow tent colony and the corporate town of Berwind. Examining the living conditions of the workers and their families before the strike provides ample testimony as to why the miners went on strike. The archaeology of the post-strike settlement shows how the corporation controlled workers' lives through the built environment and access to goods.

In chapter 1 McGuire and Larkin provide an overview of the research project. They explain that the Ludlow collaboration crafted archaeology as political action and one of the goals of their work is to keep the memory of the events at Ludlow in the national public memory. The project focuses on the struggle for labor rights, the idea of class consciousness as a basis for the strike, the complexity of race, class and gender, and building an archaeology program for nontraditional audiences, in this case the working-class. In the following chapter McGuire provides important historical context and explains the unrest in the region before, during, and after the massacre at Ludlow. He furnishes a detailed description of the massacre. In Chapter 3 Larkin provides an overview of some

of the research questions for the archaeology project, such as looking at spatial organization, diet, and consumer behavior. She describes the beginning of the project. Archival research helped to identify the archaeological potential of the Ludlow tent colony and the corporate town of Berwind. Larkin describes the various survey techniques used, including surface surveys, photograph overlays, and remote sensing. She also provides a description of the analyses of the archaeological assemblages.

In chapter 4 Margaret Wood examines the town of Berwind following the events at Ludlow. She looks at issues related to gender, class and ethnicity and shows the impact of social engineering on communities and how people reacted to these reinforced corporate ideals. In the next chapter, Sarah Chicone examines the notion of poverty and class consciousness. As an important contribution to this volume she explains that archaeologists should not define poverty by material, but rather they need to examine the larger context of the situations and it should be studied as a social, economic and historical phenomenon. In chapter 6 Michael Jacobson examined the use of the built environment to reinforce ethnic identity and class consciousness. He shows how space was continually manipulated by the miners and the corporation to achieve their own goals. Amie Gray explains in Chapter 7 how members of the progressive movement called for industries to take an active role in the Americanization of foreign workers. Gray examines the material culture of the marginalized within the context of the social reform movement and the creation and use of the idea of race.

In Chapter 8 Claire Horn explains that at the turn of the twentieth century progressive reformers were concerned about health issues. The Colorado Fuel and Iron Company adopted many of these progressive programs. While company doctors were present in the town, many of the miners still relied on proprietary medicines to heal their aches and pains. In the next chapter Summer Moore examines toys found in the Ludlow tent colony and she suggests that these objects are a way of showing how the new immigrant adopted Victorian values. Toys may also be seen as teaching tools that will help the newcomer to navigate the material

world of the United States.

Mark Walker explains in chapter 10 that class struggles are often omitted or silenced from the official histories of our country. Many times the workers leave little or no records, and their material remains tend to be less substantive and more impermanent than other groups. Remembering Ludlow is often contested. While many in the working class see this memory as important and part of their working-class roots, others challenge the efforts to making the events part of the official public memory. In Chapter 11, Bonnie Clark and Eleanor Casella, two archaeologists not directly connected with the project, explain the importance of the Colorado Coalfield War Archaeology Project in teaching about issues of class and conflict management. Studying this project allows students to critique corporate capitalism. In Chapter 12 two of the project collaborators, Philip Duke and Dean Saitta, provide an important summary that describes the public outreach they performed at the site and the impact of the archaeology project. These messages include; 1) the importance of the Colorado Coalfield Strike and War in American history; 2) the role of women in the camps and their importance to the conduct of the strike; 3) the complications of ethnicity; 4) the importance of historical memory to the local descendant community; 4) the contributions of organized labor to winning workers' rights; 5) the relevance of coalfield history to contemporary American culture and society.

In all, *The Archaeology of Class War* provides an important way of looking at a tragic episode in America's past. The volume provides several excellent examples of the study of material culture and the working class. Many of the authors also reflect on the importance of doing an archaeology of class, and being active in supporting a history of class consciousness. The struggle for the memory of Ludlow is ongoing, and keeping it in the national public memory will continue to need the effort of scholars and the working class communities. The Colorado Coalfield War Archaeology Project has played a major role to ensure that the memory of the events surrounding Ludlow will survive, although the struggle is not without some resistance.