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Introduction

Fawn-Amber Montoya

Pueblo, Colorado, a dusty western high-prairie town at the foot of the Rocky Mountains, has a historic and symbolic attachment to the East Coast. To illustrate this connection, in May 1902, Pueblo opened its own Coney Island—Lake Minnequa—with a grand opening that included a band concert, balloon races, fireworks, an opera, fishing, and boat races. Sarah Bernhardt performed at Lake Minnequa, in 1906, and stated that this was the “only time in her career when she ‘played’ an amusement park.” Pueblo’s “Coney Island” included a ten-cent gate admission, a roller coaster, shooting gallery, hall of mirrors, roller-skating rink, boating, swimming, a theater and dancing on a pavilion built over the water. There were acres of lawns for games or picnics.

Pueblo residents gathered at Lake Minnequa and used it as a communal place to enjoy their leisure time. It was a place where lovers would meet and weddings would be celebrated. With its Coney Island-style, it represented the intermingling of happiness and industrialization, led in the region by the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company, whose corporate leadership centered on

the East Coast. Lake Minnequa was the crown of the growing community of Bessemer, also home to the administrative offices of the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company (CF&I), and the Minnequa Steel Works.¹

Despite the frivolity found at Lake Minnequa, industrial development around Pueblo, Colorado, had a darker side too. A dozen years after the fanfare of opening day at Pueblo's Coney Island, CF&I miners were embroiled in the Great Colorado Coalfield War, which began when striking miners were evicted from their company-owned homes in September 1913 and moved into tents on the Colorado plains—south of Pueblo. In the Ludlow tent colony on the morning of April 20, 1914, the day began with an exchange of gunfire between striking miners and the Colorado State militia and ended with the death of over twenty individuals, guardsmen, miners, and their families—including women and children.

Making an American Workforce examines the industrialization and development of communities in southern Colorado within this context of labor relations and East Coast company men and the impact on the families and immigrants who worked for the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company. This text relates the localized events, like Ludlow, and the local communities, like Bessemer, to broader themes of the industrial birth of the United States and the role of capitalism in the day-to-day lives of families.

LABOR RELATIONS / WELFARE CAPITALISM

The Colorado Fuel and Iron Company formed a sociological department headed by Richard W. Corwin and focused on improving the lives of the miners and their families through educational programs, healthcare, and a company periodical. Corwin saw the Sociological Department as a means to be able to educate and Americanize his labor force. The labor force included large populations of immigrant and migrant groups who came to the region to participate in the booming steel and coal economy. While CF&I saw the Sociological Department as a means of assisting with labor relations, the United Mine Workers, Industrial Workers of the World, and the Western Federation of Miners rallied the miners to join unions in which their rights would be represented. Corwin and later the Rockefellers saw their approach to managing employers as welfare capitalism, one in which they attempted to understand the employees and their needs and at the same time made sure

that the employees provided an adequate supply of labor for the company. This approach to employee needs was part of a national dialogue throughout the United States centered on corporations' paternalistic behavior toward their employees. The approach used by CF&I to educating their workforce and constructing ideas of Americanization was not only a CF&I, a Colorado, or western Idea. After the Ludlow Massacre, John D. Rockefeller Jr. used the Employee Representation plan as a national and international model for employee relations.

The YMCA since the 1870s had engaged in dialogue about the "crisis of masculinity" that middle-class American men found themselves in. With the increase of immigration into the continent and working-class men being more physical fit, the YMCA, along with corporations, envisioned the creation of a system of welfare capitalism. Employers felt that they were rescuing their employees, and within this context they, the wage laborer, and management redefined new ideas of manhood. The YMCA felt that the best approach to this was to develop social relations modeled after a patriarchal household, one in which the employer was the patriarchal figure and the employees his children. Much of this dialogue among working-class communities emerged with the conflict that occurred between management and their employees. Rockefeller Jr. and CF&I felt that the YMCA would be able to assist in the unrest in southern Colorado.²

BESSEMER

The community of Bessemer grew up around the Colorado Coal and Iron Company's Steel Mill, which would later become the Minnequa Steel Works. The area west of the steel mill, by the 1880s, had garnered the name Bessemer after Sir Henry Bessemer, the inventor of a process that converted pig iron into steel. Before the building of Betsy—the first blast furnace of the CF&I mill—the new plant was reported to be on a "cactus-studded prairie two miles from 'downtown' Pueblo."³ By 1883, Bessemer had a seventeen-piece brass band, was constructing a two-room school house, and had a population of between one and two thousand people who saw this community as home.⁴

In the spring of 1886, residents petitioned the Pueblo County court to incorporate Bessemer into a city.⁵ In 1890, the city of Bessemer laid a main

water line and allowed the Pueblo City railway to extend its horse-drawn cart service into Bessemer. At that time the governor of Colorado, John J. Routt, labeled Bessemer as a “second-class city,” meaning that it was an up-and-coming community. In the same year, Bessemer garnered a hose cart for fire protection, established a one-man police department and, in 1889, the Pueblo Gas and Electric Light Company installed poles and wires for electric lights. During the national economic depression of 1893, Bessemer faced a looming crisis and its leadership decided that in the best interests of the community they should become part of the city of Pueblo. In 1894, the city of Pueblo annexed Bessemer.⁶ The perceived potential for the community’s growth was based on the influx of immigrants, the region, and the large number of jobs available at the Steel Works.

In the twentieth century, the Bessemer Neighborhood came to represent the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company because of the administration building and its growing immigrant and migrant communities who worked in the steel mill and came to live in the community. Bessemer, like other western communities located near an economically thriving environment, became transformed from an isolated location into a community where immigrants from all over the world and migrants from all over the United States would settle and make a life for themselves. In this region, like in other areas of the country, newcomers would bring their religions, language and traditions from their homelands; merge those with the traditions of others in the new region; and, within a few generations, complete the process of assimilating or acculturating to an American-style of life.

Lake Minnequa, Bessemer, and Pueblo together represent the spaces that were created with the growth of industry in the West. While CF&I employees and their families helped to form these communities, this region was deliberately developed by the dreams of East Coast entrepreneurs and businessmen who changed the landscape of this region and established communities where laborers would come to see themselves as part of a larger economy and labor force. Bessemer, Pueblo and other communities in southeastern Colorado came into existence due to the growth of the railroad industry and its increasing demand for coal, as the United States sought out new fuel resources. The administrators of this region adopted company policies that would structure the lives of their workforce ultimately making them what the company considered better employees and Americans.

ROOTS OF CF&I

As the community of Bessemer blossomed, two industrial men from the East Coast changed this geologically rich corner of Colorado. William Jackson Palmer brought about the foundation of a coal economy in the West, and John D. Rockefeller Jr. juggled the complex relationship between labor and the company management. William Jackson Palmer entered Colorado with the dreams of building a railroad; he sought out mineral resources that would help with the efficiency of building a railroad. The coal within southern Colorado fueled Palmer's dreams and provided him with the means for a steelworks. According to Thomas Andrews,

by exploiting the region's thick coal seams, Palmer believed, Colorado and New Mexico could escape the limitations of isolation and aridity under which they were laboring. He foretold a utopian future for the Rocky Mountain landscape, one powered by the same forces responsible for revolutionizing the British economy.⁷

The success of Palmer's railroad rested in its location near the coal fields, which provided the fuel for transportation to the region. The Denver and Rio Grande railroads opened the southern Colorado coal fields in Fremont county in 1872, fields further south in Huerfano by 1876, and in Las Animas county by 1878. At the same time, rival railroads like the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe began building competing lines to these fields. With this competition, the coal fields, mainly represented by the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company and its subsidiaries, flourished.⁸

Like Palmer, the Rockefellers also invested (and profited) heavily in southern Colorado. At the turn of the twentieth century, the Rockefeller influence—while not direct—was consequential, as Rockefeller Jr. sat on the Board of Directors of CF&I. During the Rockefeller years at CF&I, communities throughout southern Colorado sprang to life. With the help of Dr. Richard Corwin, CF&I established the company's Sociological Department with the intent of assisting employees in becoming better workers and transforming them into "Americans." In addition to the Sociological Department, CF&I printed company publications that focused on the workings of the coal fields and the steel mill. Despite having a large investment in CF&I, the Rockefellers remained absent from the minefields and left the day-to-day operations in the hands of local management until the Ludlow Massacre of 1914.

In the fall of 1913, CF&I miners were embroiled in the Great Colorado Coalfield War, which began when striking miners were evicted from their company-owned homes and forced into a tent colony on the Colorado plains. In the Ludlow tent colony on the morning of April 20, 1914, the day began with an exchange of gunfire between striking miners and the Colorado State militia and ended with the death of over twenty individuals—guardsmen, miners, and their families. The shock over the deaths of women and children at the Ludlow tent colony thrust Rockefeller Sr. and Rockefeller Jr. into the media spotlight, and people throughout the United States demanded that the Rockefellers answer for the massacre. The Rockefellers had little direct connection to the Massacre, but their majority interest in the company was interpreted by union organizers as a sign that CF&I management may have ordered the strike. In response to hearings in Colorado and with the Federal Government, Rockefeller Jr. came to southern Colorado in 1915 and became more directly involved with the inner workings of the company. Through this work, he proposed an employee-relations plan that set up a structure not only for industrial-labor relations, but for the social betterment of the camps.⁹

Colorado Fuel and Iron Company, under the leadership of the Rockefeller family, was central to the creation of the workforce and the communities of this region. This text provides a look into how the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company deliberately built a workforce to meet its production needs and the impact of these practices and policies on the families and communities of southeastern Colorado. *Making An American Workforce* also addresses how CF&I ownership envisioned and implemented the formation of a company union—and how this idea of a company union is spread throughout the United States and even internationally. With scholarship from a diverse group of historians and a sociologist, this text expands the story of the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company and its influence on the American West; it enables the reader to contemplate the impact of CF&I on the lives of its employees and their families; and it demonstrates how the company's policies transcended southern Colorado, influencing the coal mines of Wyoming and the policy of company unions across the nation and the continent into the middle half of the twentieth century.

PURPOSE OF THE BOOK

Making an American Workforce fills a void in regards to scholarship on the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company because it includes a strong focus on CF&I corporate policies after the Ludlow Massacre, specifically regarding the Employee Representation Plan and how the Employee Representation Plan was touted throughout the United States and the world. This work addresses the rise of compassionate capitalism with research specifically focusing on Richard Corwin and his creation of the Sociological Departments and his ideas about Americanization programs and Eugenics that endured into the late 1920s. Chapters address the role of the Ludlow Massacre in the changing nature of industrial relations in southern Colorado and in the United States. The text gives a strong review of the impact of the corporate response to Ludlow, including the implementation of John D. Rockefeller's Industrial Representation Plan as an answer to the criticism following the events at Ludlow; the far-reaching effect of this plan on CF&I-managed communities; and the impact of this corporate policy on ideas of corporate welfare spread on an international level. *Making an American Workforce* explores the impact of CF&I on the physical bodies of their employees, through leisure activities and physical competitions, with the implementation of Corwin's Sociological Department and the transformation in labor relations at Ludlow, while at the same time influencing national and international dialogue about labor relations. The takeover of field days by CF&I after the Ludlow Massacre illustrates that company managers felt that they were better at structuring the leisure spaces of its employees and that they could link leisure and recreation to the national dialogue about health and fitness through the YMCAs.¹⁰ Themes for the text include the role of the body in the structuring of the labor force, both before and after the Ludlow Massacre; the national and international influence of the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company; and how CF&I's construction of an American workforce influenced its employees.

The bulk of the text focuses on the Ludlow Massacre and its impact on employees of CF&I in the establishment of a company union and how the ideas of the Employee Representation Plan were transmitted into the workforce of CF&I. In the first chapter, "Learning from Ludlow," Sarah Deutsch gives her perspective on the research that has been done on Ludlow in the past twenty-five years and the current state of the field. "The United Mine

Workers knew immediately that the events of their strike at Ludlow would form a key chapter in their history,” she writes, “and to ensure its place they wrote that chapter in granite in 1918, when they dedicated a memorial to those killed at Ludlow on land the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) purchased, encompassing the tent colony where the strikers had died.” Deutsch illustrates that the relevance of Ludlow continues to live on through twenty-first-century scholarship.

In the second chapter, “Dr. Richard Corwin and Colorado’s Changing Racial Divide,” Brian Clason and Jonathan Rees argue that Richard W. Corwin, founder of the Sociological Department and a pioneer of medicine in Pueblo, Colorado, participated in the Eugenics movement in the 1910s. The Eugenics movement in the United States had its roots in the Progressive movement and its followers included Margaret Sanger. Scientists and medical practitioners of the time developed theories designed to illuminate which individuals were suitable to reproduce based upon principles of Social Darwinism and their ideal model of civilization. This chapter presents solid evidence that links Corwin to the American Eugenics Society and considers the idea that Pueblo’s celebration of Corwin as the pioneer of medicine may obscure this lamentable yet significant aspect of his legacy. While Corwin may not have been a practitioner of eugenics, he kept up with the medical dialogue of his time. Further, this chapter gives the reader a better understanding of the organization of CF&I and how it became involved in the daily lives of its employees. The Americanization programs and the mentality of Corwin shaped the workers into thinking of themselves as a unit and gave them a better understanding of their connection to each other and their communities.

In chapter 3, “Governor Elias Ammons and the 1913–1914 Southern Colorado Coal Strike,” Anthony R. DeStefanis addresses the centrality of Governor Ammon’s role in the 1913–14 Colorado Coalfield Strike, as he held the power to summon the Colorado National Guard / State Militia. The National Guard made it possible to bring in strike breakers and assisted in establishing the power of the company in the labor strikes in Colorado. DeStefanis’s chapter explains why Ammons called out the National Guard and how he funded it during the winter of 1913 and spring of 1914. This chapter also explains how the formerly union-friendly Ammons shifted sides to support the National Guard for his own political preservation within a larger Nativist

dialogue that often pitted foreign-born union members against native-born guard members. DeStefanis includes the story of Roady Kenehan, the state auditor, who in defiance of Ammons refused to sign certificates indebting the Colorado state government to pay for the deployment of National Guard troops against the striking miners. Kenehan argued that coal mine operators needed to negotiate with the striking miners in order to reach a settlement. Despite Kenehan's refusal, the state, as explored in this chapter, funded the National Guard through the selling of Insurrectionary Bonds to individuals and businesses in Denver.

Chapter 4 takes a look at the effects of the Ludlow massacre, including the formation of John D. Rockefeller Jr.'s Employee Representation Plan in response to the Massacre and the impact of this plan on the national dialogue related to company unions. Historian Robin Henry, in her chapter, "In Order to Form a More Perfect Worker: John D. Rockefeller Jr. and Reform in Post-Ludlow Southern Colorado," addresses how John D. Rockefeller Jr. through the help of Ivy Lee, a public relations expert, became immersed in company policy and the day-to-day operations of CF&I. In response to this change in his leadership, Rockefeller Jr. not only implemented the Colorado Industrial Plan, an employee representation plan, but also theorized about the company's responsibility to its workers—both in the workplace and in their homes and personal life. Henry connects the reform work of Rockefeller Jr. in Colorado through the YMCA, with his reform work in New York and Illinois and other areas of the United States.

In chapter 5, "Field Days, YMCA, and Baseball: CF&I's Industrial Representation Plan and Gender Relations in Southern Colorado Coal-Mining Camps," Fawn-Amber Montoya addresses the embracing of recreation as part of Rockefeller's plan that focused on social betterment. She explores the rise of Field Days, which included contests such as the heaviest woman contest. Montoya examines the success of baseball as a means of Americanizing workers and their families for generations. Finally, she explores, through the lens of recreation, how CF&I management interpreted gender.

In chapter 6, "A Tale of Two Employee Representation Plans in the Steel Industry: Pueblo, Colorado, and Sydney, Nova Scotia," Greg Patmore examines and compares the history of two Employee Representation Plans (ERPs) during the interwar period. Patmore compares the plan at Pueblo, which was part of the ERP established by John D. Rockefeller Jr., at the Colorado

Fuel and Iron Company following the Ludlow massacre in 1914, with the introduction of an ERP in Canada. At the Sydney, Nova Scotia, steel plant of the British Empire Steel Corporation (BESCO), following the defeat of the unions in a major strike, management introduced an ERP in August 1923. Patmore argues that employee representatives at both steel plants exercised some degree of autonomy. Against a background of favorable labor legislation, both ERPs went into decline, although the ERP at Pueblo survived for longer against union organization. This comparative chapter enables the reader to see the impact of Rockefeller's work in an international context.

In chapter 7, "Putting the 'I' in CF&I: The Struggle over Representation, Labor, and Company Town Life on the Edge of *Aztlán* in a Wyoming Company Town," sociologist Ronald L. Mize looks at the role of Chicana/os as laborers in Sunrise, Wyoming. He addresses this group outside of the traditional perspective of Chicano scholars, who have tended to focus on the Chicana/o experience in the southwestern states of California, Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona. He illustrates how Sunrise became part of Pueblo's steelmaking industry.

While the text itself covers a variety of topics, it centers on the legacy of CF&I, engaging the reader in the variety of work surrounding the company's history. The interdisciplinary approach offers a textured analysis of the impact of CF&I and the Ludlow Massacre one hundred years after the event.

NOTES

1. Rawlings Library Newspaper Collection. Pueblo, Colorado *Pueblo Star Journal*, Sunday, December 8, 1974, 3c.
2. Thomas Winter, *Making Men, Making Class: The YMCA and Workingmen, 1877–1920* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002).
3. *Pueblo Chieftain*, October 16, 1952, 34.
4. *Ibid.*, October 16, 1952.
5. *Ibid.*, October 9, 1952, 2, and January 27, 1924, 6.
6. *Ibid.*, January 27, 1924, 6.
7. Thomas G. Andrews, *Killing for Coal: America's Deadliest Labor War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), 43.
8. Andrews, *Killing for Coal*, 53.
9. Jonathan H. Rees, *Representation and Rebellion: The Rockefeller Plan at the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company, 1914–1942* (Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2010).

10. *Making an American Workforce* fits within the dialogue of Welfare Capitalism that is occurring throughout the United States in the twentieth century. Thomas Winter, in his work *Making Men and Making class*, addresses the role of the YMCA in constructing ideas of masculinity for the middle and working classes; that book has two chapters that specifically address the ideas of masculinity and its attachment to YMCA programs in the 1910s.