

corrupts absolutely”—a fact that would break the hearts of the Founding Fathers.

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*Anaconda: Labor, Community, and Culture in Montana's Smelter City.* By Laurie Mercier. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2001. Pp. xi, 300. Map, tables, illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. Clothbound, \$49.95; paperbound, \$24.95.)

With painstaking attention to ethnic, gender, and class dynamics, and utilizing rich archival and oral history sources, Laurie Mercier has produced a finely written and richly excavated study of the century-long relationship between the powerful Anaconda Copper Mining Company (ACM) and the local working-class community it helped create. Mercier examines community unionism in this company town as it turned into a “union city” and later aspired to become a deindustrialized tourist Mecca. Though Mercier covers the full history of Anaconda, from its rise in the 1880s—fulfilling the ambitions of smelter-builder Marcus Daly—to the final closure of the world’s largest smelting operation in 1980, her focus is on the post-World War II period and on community unionism.

Community unionism at Anaconda was characterized both by a strong sense of equality and justice and by discriminatory gender and racial attitudes that ran deep through Anaconda’s white ethnic and mostly Catholic population. Mercier is highly sensitive to how gender affected working-class community-building and to the obstacles that gender discrimination created for the community’s unions, especially Local 117 of the International Union of Mine, Mill, and Smelter Workers (IUMMSW).

Mercier admirably combines an analysis of such varied topics as foodways, holidays, leisure, domestic abuse, parental authority, juvenile delinquency, schools, masculinity, and environmental politics with more traditional union, business, community, and institutional history. She merges her various levels of analysis elegantly and judiciously: the defeat of the left-leaning IUMMSW in 1959 is credited in part to the “elevation of masculinity” and the exclusion of women from union affairs (hence the rise of a women-dominated anti-red campaign as early as the 1940s); the anticommunist movement of the Cold War era is linked to religious conservatism and anxieties about family disintegration; unionism begins to erode in the 1950s in part because of growing emphasis on disposable income, consumer goods, and leisure.

The coming of the Cold War eroded Anaconda’s working-class community and ethos as competition between the IUMMSW—expelled from the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) for its left-leaning politics in 1950—and the CIO’s United Steel Workers of

America divided the community's workers for two decades. Yet the coup de grâce came in the late 1970s, and most dramatically in September 1980, when the smelter's new owner, the Atlantic Richfield Corporation (ARCO) regained ACM's Chilean mines, a profitable alternative to Anaconda and Butte copper. Unwilling to invest in its now inefficient and outdated Anaconda facility (made so by years of poor management under ACM), trying to escape what it considered onerous environmental regulations, and obtaining favorable tax treatments for a plant shutdown, ARCO finally announced the closure of the smelter.

Mercier's account of the rise and fall of community unionism in Anaconda is well written, well researched, and well argued. My one regret lies in the book's failure to exploit its oral history sources more thoroughly. Women's voices, so central to many of Mercier's arguments, are sparsely quoted. Moreover, though the book concentrates heavily on the Cold War years, Anaconda's left is surprisingly mute. We learn about anticommunists and defenders of the IUMMSW, but the author says little about local socialists, communists, and "fellow travelers." The author also neglects Anaconda's corporate elite. Though Mercier does not want to "personalize the corporation or demonize its managers"—preferring instead to make the greater point that the company was merely following the logic of domestic and international capitalism—it would have been useful to hear the voices of local and distant corporate managers pondering the economic fate of this community (and not merely in press releases or public speeches).

Still, this book is a very strong one; it is a wonderful trek through post-World War II western industrial and labor history, a territory still little explored by scholars. Its rich evidentiary foundations and incisively crafted arguments make it a joy to read, and its subtle synthesis of various levels of analysis—domestic, community, institutional, national, and international—constitutes an instructional manual of sorts for writing the history of the twentieth-century industrial American West.

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*Serving History in a Changing World: The Historical Society of Pennsylvania in the Twentieth Century.* By Sally F. Griffith. ([Philadelphia]: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001. Pp. x, 539. Notes, illustrations, index. \$59.95.)

What is a historical society? How has it evolved? What are its characteristics? Where is it headed in this new century? Whose history should it preserve? Using the Historical Society of Pennsylvania as