Arizona Memories

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Book Reviews

Utah, and Kennicott, Alaska. My objections to the book are few: maps would have been helpful, as would an appendix of mining companies to help keep the players straight. Some of the photograph captions, and thus the photographs, are useless, such as "Copper smelters and mines" and "Steel Gallows frame, 125 feet high." Tell me which ones, and help me understand why they are relevant to the story.

Malone's work now provides another solid account about the economic competition in mining camps and the desires of western mining magnates to join the American aristocracy, the U.S. Senate. It can be used with other recent biographies—on Senator H. A. W. Tabor of Colorado, Senator William M. Stewart of Nevada, Charles Sweeney of Washington, and Senator George Hearst of California—to understand this bonanza-king desire. Malone also, through his statements about the Anaconda legacy and the developments of unionism, leaves the hope for a sequel volume on the growth of the Western Federation of Miners, the Industrial Workers of the World, and the subsequent labor strife—the next Battle for Butte.

National Park Service


Arizona Memories is an anthology of the memories and recollections of twenty-eight persons who visited or resided in Arizona from the end of the Civil War through the 1960s. Laid out in chronological order, these accounts represent a panoramic vista of experiences in this state. The mosaic of people represented includes virtually every major ethnic group—Anglo, Chicano, Indian, Chinese, Japanese, and black—that has played a significant role in the development of the state. The range of activities covers the principle endeavors one associates with Arizona life: ranching, mining, soldiering, exploring—as well as just plain living in a southwestern environment.

This is clearly grass-roots history. Except for Barry Goldwater and J. B. Priestley, none of the people represented are more than local celebrities at best. In the main, these are ordinary people whose simple stories evoke a real sense of the area. The editors, moreover, chose to let these people speak for themselves. Each selection has a brief introduction, but the tales are not cluttered with footnotes and other explanatory material. Instead, in the preface, readers are referred to a list of historical works for additional information. This format seems to work
well because most of the reminiscences stand on their own with a charm and poignancy that is the great virtue of this book.

While these recollections are almost all valuable, some are outstanding. Among the best are two that recount experiences of Mormons. Joseph Neal Heywood, in "A Joyless Arizona Christmas," described a cold and sad winter in a Mormon community, Alpine, in the White Mountains, when his little sister died. In the desert, meanwhile, a wife vividly discussed her life when her Mormon husband was "Arrested for Polygamy." "An Adobe House" captures the feel of that architectural gem as well as I have ever seen it described. Arnulfo D. Trejo's "Street Vendors of My Childhood Days" captivatingly evokes the sounds and smells of the Tucson barrio around the turn of the century. It is the finest selection in the book. "Recollections of a Chinese-Immigration Inspector" reminds one of the timelessness of the problems of illegal aliens as well as the hard life of the Oriental in early twentieth-century America.

Of more recent vintage, "Japanese Relocation: Recollections of the Poston Camp, 1942–1945," by Marry Masunaga movingly and without bitterness tells of the hardships caused by the incarceration in Arizona and the difficulties of adjusting to the desert and detainment. Cozy Stanley Brown, in "A Navajo Code Talker in the Pacific Theatre in World War II," discusses more than his service in the war, depicting his upbringing on the reservation in a simple, unadorned style that is almost poetic. Finally, Maria Urquides, in "Up From the Barrio," transmits a story of triumph over prejudice as she rose from poverty to become one of Tucson's outstanding teachers and community leaders.

This brief look at the best should not take anything away from the other articles. With only a few minor exceptions, this is a uniformly fine collection of personal stories. The editors obviously did their homework and legwork in compiling this book. Sixteen of the excerpts came from books, all but one of which are either out of print or issued by small publishing houses with limited circulation. Five of the articles were from journals or magazines. What is most interesting is that one-fourth of these recollections were culled from unpublished manuscripts in various archives and libraries throughout the state. This should be especially encouraging and gratifying to people who labor in the cause of local history projects. In their introduction, Morgan and Strickland quote Willa Cather, who believed that history began in the heart of each person. This concept is the thread that binds this book together. It is a quite impressive accomplishment.

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312