

and will profit from the experience. It is a welcome addition to the literature on the American War for Independence.

*Kane, Pennsylvania*

JAMES D. ANDERSON

*Success at Oil Creek, August 27, 1859.* (Washington, D. C.: Department of the Interior, 1976. Pp. 16. Photographs, map. \$0.65.)

On August 27, 1976, the Department of the Interior brought forth this pamphlet telling about the world's first successful oil well, drilled by Edwin L. Drake near Titusville, Pennsylvania, and which started to produce on August 27, 1859.

It is indeed unfortunate that the department has stated that it had an excellent general response to this pamphlet, because it includes a considerable number of historical inaccuracies, and therefore it must be used with considerable care by students, researchers, and the general interested public. How such a booklet on such a well-known and well-documented event ever got past the writer, the proofreader, and others, is a mystery indeed.

Some of the more glaring errors are worthy of note. For example (p. 2), the picture caption, "Drake Well in 1859," is really the Drake Well in 1875, decrepit and in very poor condition. It was subsequently taken down and shipped to the Philadelphia Exposition and never did come back to Titusville. On page six is a photograph showing "Titusville's Danforth House," which is strange inasmuch as the Danforth House was located at famous Pithole City, Pennsylvania, another oil boom town. Another photograph (p. 11) is captioned "First U. S. oil field developed at Titusville in 1860." This actually shows a group of very shallow wells just east of the Titusville town line which were drilled in the spring and summer of 1877 and lasted only a few months. Then on page five a map of the oil regions has misspelled both Tidioute and Siverlyville.

All the errors are not confined to the photographs either. The text (p. 2) mentions Dr. Paul H. Giddens's book, *The Early Petroleum Industry*. Actually there is no such volume. A concern called Porcupine Press, in Philadelphia, borrowed and reprinted without permission Giddens's *The Birth of the Oil Industry* (Macmillan, 1938) and his *The Beginnings of the Petroleum Industry: Sources and Bibliography* (1941) and titled the combination *The Early Petroleum Industry*. At this writing, Giddens is considering legal action.

It is most regrettable that these errors are being fed to the public as accurate history.

Warren, Pennsylvania

ERNEST C. MILLER

*Coal-Mining Safety in the Progressive Period: The Political Economy of Reform.* By WILLIAM GRAEBNER. (Lexington: The University of Kentucky Press, 1976. Pp. xii, 244. Preface, introduction, notes, bibliography, index. \$16.75.)

A series of explosions in 1907, climaxed by one in West Virginia that took 361 lives, provided the major impetus for a concerted effort to promote safeguards against accidents in the coal mines of the United States. Within three years, a coalition of operators, miners, state inspectors, bureaucrats, and conservationists succeeded in winning congressional approval for a Bureau of Mines. In its attempts to curb or eliminate injuries and losses of lives, that agency, lacking coercive powers, had to gain the cooperation of employees and employers in the industry. This effort was undertaken at a time when many, if not most, Americans persisted in the notion that industrial accidents were a necessary adjunct of economic progress.

William Graebner's study, winner of the Organization of American Historians' Frederick Jackson Turner Award for 1975, analyzes and evaluates the movement for safety in coal mines during the progressive era. The author focuses on the origin and evolution of the agitation for safer mining operations, the events leading to the creation of the United States Bureau of Mines, and its efforts to reduce or eliminate industrial accidents in coal mines. The driving force behind the safety movement was Joseph Austin Holmes, chief of the Technologic Branch, United States Geological Survey, and the man President William Howard Taft appointed in 1910 as the first director of the Bureau of Mines.

The federal agency failed to reduce significantly injuries and losses of lives in coal mines during the progressive era. Failure, Graebner contends, must be attributed to several factors. Operators, employees, and union officials were reluctant for a variety of reasons to enforce safety regulations. However, the bureau's lack of success was due mainly to its inability "to bring cohesion into a fragmented and archaic political system." At all levels of government, men entrusted with implementing safety rules could not resolve "the con-