

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

Warren, Pennsylvania

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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-

tradition inherent in a national industry regulated by state laws" (p. 111).

Graebner places the coal-mining safety movement in the context of the historiography of progressive reform. The men who agitated for less hazardous working conditions in underground mines were not Richard Hofstadter's status-minded reformers. Rather, the impetus for reform came from a broad spectrum of society, particularly from people who were alarmed over the large numbers of industrial accidents in the United States. This concern was directed toward a multitude of American industries, only one of which was coal mining.

Industrial safety was one aspect of progressive reformers' pursuit of order, stability, and social integration. The movement was a reflection of concern for resource conservation. Safety programs were means of attaining efficiency, which, in turn, was a method of enhancing profits. Commercial efficiency, Graebner argues, was in practice "a two-way sword which more often cut against safety than for it" (p. 160).

While conceding that the safety movement, as it pertained to coal mining, is not in itself sufficient grounds for defining, or redefining, political relationships, Graebner tends to support the views of Gabriel Kolko and James Weinstein, both of whom have concluded from studies of progressivism that businessmen were the prime instigators of programs that did nothing to "reform" private enterprise or industrial society. However, Graebner is not willing to discount entirely Robert Wiebe's model of business diversity. Furthermore, Wiebe's characterization of progressivism as a "search for order" seems to afford the most accurate explanation for the safety advocates' emphasis on national solutions for the problem of industrial accidents in coal mines.

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The Recollections of Colonel Retread, USAAF 1942-1945. By CARLTON G. KETCHUM. (Pittsburgh: Hart Books, 1976. Pp. 296. Introduction, illustrations. \$9.00.)

Carlton G. Ketchum, one of the best-known men in Pittsburgh, and, indeed, across the country wherever expertise in fund raising for worthy causes is held in high esteem, has written a fascinating account