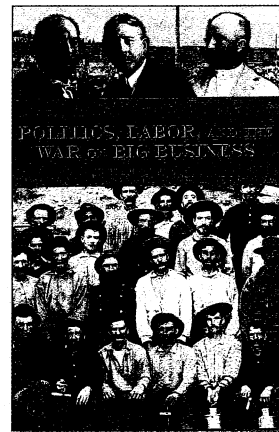




Book Reviews by Carl Hallberg

Significant Recent Books on Western and Wyoming History



The Path to Reform in Arizona, 1890-1920. By David R. Berman. Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2012. xvi + 330 pages. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. Hardcover, \$55.00.

David Berman's *Politics, Labor, and the War on Big Business* is a fascinating study about progressivism in Arizona between 1890 and 1920 through the lives of several key Arizona politicians and the programs and policies they implemented. Berman argues that anti-corporatism was the unifying theme for the state's progressives. Additionally, he shows that while "Arizona had shortcomings . . . it did aim for and produce more working-class benefits, corporate taxation and regulation, labor protection, and democracy" (p. 12). Although his narrative ends with the resurgence of beneficial government policies for large corporations, Berman argues that Arizona progressives were highly successful in their efforts to reform the state and assert the rights of the working class against large corporations.

Importantly, Berman's book underscores the vital place of the West in defining American progressivism. While many historians have examined progressivism as an eastern phenomenon, this book reminds historians that many important progressive concepts originated and first gained traction in the American West. Further, the West served as an important staging ground for the socialist organizations and radical unions, making the region even more important to progressivism.

Because he emphasizes the strong sense of anti-corporatism among Arizona progressive, he challenges traditional narratives that portray progressives as a disjointed and divided group. While political harmony may not have been a characteristic of the

Progressives on the national level, Berman demonstrates that on a regional level, in this case Arizona, Progressives were more united. Berman's work thus opens up new avenues for historians to consider with regards to categorizing and contextualizing the Progressive Era by considering progressivism as a regional movement rather than a strictly national movement.

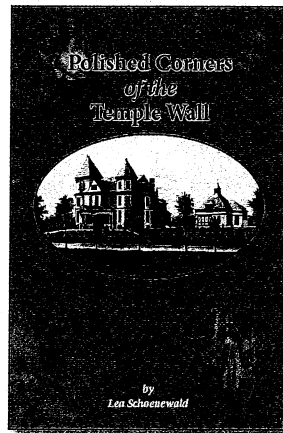
In addition, Berman demonstrates the significance of socialist thought and activism throughout the period. Following the decline of populism, Socialists played a key role in pushing for progressive reforms in the territory. Although progressive reforms never went as far as the socialists hoped, they were nevertheless instrumental in shaping Arizona's policies. In acknowledging the role of socialist reformers, Berman highlights the contributions of the country's most marginalized political group in the shaping of American political policies.

Berman also makes several valuable observations about the contributions of women and minority groups. While Berman notes that women pushed for suffrage and prohibition, he is careful to show the strong conservative tendencies manifested by those same women. Accordingly, although Berman emphasizes the anti-corporatism that united progressives, he nevertheless acknowledges the disparate and confusing nature of progressivism itself.

Politics, Labor, and the War on Big Business thus makes a significant contribution to our understanding of the Progressive

Era and the role of the West in it. Although it is largely a political history, it incorporates elements of other kinds of social and cultural history, thus opening up new avenues for the continued study of progressivism.

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Polished Corners of the Temple Wall: A History of the Jane Iverson Memorial Hall, The Cathedral School for Girls. By Lea Schoenewald. Laramie: Modern Printing Company, 2012. Illustrations, notes. iv + 375 pages. Paper, \$24.95.

In 1921, Edward Iverson donated his Laramie home, the Iverson Mansion, to the Episcopal Church for use as a boarding school for girls. The Jane Iverson Memorial Hall, Cathedral School for Girls operated from 1921 to 1957. Throughout its thirty-six year existence it housed anywhere from five to thirty-five girls a year. The residents, ages ten to seventeen, took classes at the University of Wyoming's Preparatory School (a.k.a Prep) and received study hours and religious studies at Iverson Hall.

In *Polished Corners of the Temple Wall*, Lea Schoenewald

uses articles from the *Laramie Daily Republican-Boomerang* and the Prep student newspaper, *Saddlebag*, and images from yearbooks, scrapbooks, and photo collections to document every play, dance, party, sporting event, and social function at Iverson Hall. Reminiscences from former students and their family members, and brief biographies of former residents provide additional insights into individual lives. Although daily life was fairly strict and structured, most girls tell about breaking the rules by sneaking out at night or getting into a car for a ride home. The book is organized chronologically with chapters three through six organized by decade (1920s-1950s).

Two major problems with this publication are little original writing and no historical analysis. While a history exists within the newspaper articles, personal accounts, images, and scrapbook pages, the author failed to explain the school's history in her own words, and, in general, relay the importance of such a history. Instead, she has opted to publish her research material. Many reminiscences appear to have been written by others. While the personal accounts are a welcome relief from the articles and other source materials, they would have been more stimulating as oral histories, in which the author could have led the conversation and acquired only the most relevant and interesting information about the residents' experiences.

Peculiarly, in every chapter