



Cradle to Grave: Life, Work, and Death at the Lake Superior Copper Mines

By Larry Lankton

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Concentrating on technology, economics, labor, and social history, *Cradle to Grave* documents the full life cycle of one of America's great mineral ranges from the 1840s to the 1960s. Lankton examines the workers' world underground, but is equally concerned with the mining communities on the surface. For the first fifty years of development, these mining communities remained remarkably harmonious, even while new, large companies obliterated traditional forms of organization and work within the industry. By 1890, however, the Lake Superior copper industry of upper Michigan started facing many challenges, including strong economic competition and a declining profit margin; growing worker dissatisfaction with both living and working conditions; and erosion of the companies' hegemony in a district they once controlled. Lankton traces technological changes within the mines and provides a thorough investigation of mine accidents and safety. He then focuses on social and labor history, dealing especially with the issue of how company paternalism exerted social control over the work force. A social history of technology, *Cradle to Grave* will appeal to labor, social and business historians.

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"Precisely what is needed in the field: a work which combines personal experience, community life, descriptions of work and a specific physical environment. It allows readers to 'feel' what life was like for these miners and their families."--Patrick Gagnon, *Silver Lake College*

"Offers rich and thoughtful accounts of technological change as it transformed copper mining....Lankton has offered a penetrating exploration of an important sector of American mining and a model for exploring the interconnections of technological change, management policies, and workplace traditions during industrialization."--*Technology and Culture*

"Will be quite useful to historians...for its many insights into the paternalistic approach to management, especially in its mediation of technological and economic change."--*Industrial and Labor Relations Review*

"Should appeal to a large and varied audience....I recommend it to all readers who enjoy stories of the past."--*Wisconsin Magazine of History*

About the Author

Larry Lankton is at Michigan Technological University.

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