



Bisbee Mining & Historical Museum, *in association with the Smithsonian Institution*

Newsletter

Issue #76, Spring/Summer 2017

MARKETS.
NEW YORK CITY —
Average Price of Copper
per ton week ending
June 27, 29.50

The Bisbee Daily Review

Associated Press Special Leased Wire Service.

WEATHER.
Generally fair except
local showers and
thunderstorms in the
northeast portion to-
day.

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THE BISBEE DAILY REVIEW, THURSDAY MORNING, JULY 12, 1917.

PRICE FIVE CENTS

ALL WOMEN AND CHILDREN KEEP OFF STREETS TODAY

The Bisbee Deportation happened one hundred years ago on July 12, 1917. No one living in 2017 remembers the events of that day first-hand or the complicated forces in the world and in Arizona that helped set the stage for what became known by many as Bisbee's darkest day. The Deportation left lasting scars on the town and its citizens, upended lives, changed the relationship of the mining companies to their employees, made enemies of friends, brought people closer together or tore them apart, and as time passed faded from immediate memory. It became the subject no one discussed. Parents and teachers did not pass the story onto later generations. The companies—or one company eventually—did not acknowledge the event publically and actively discouraged anyone else from doing so. Yet it was not forgotten and as the years passed men and women who recalled July 12 remembered the emotions of the times—the fear, threats of violence, and the ugly dissension that led to the companies' decisive action. In the aftermath, broken families were left destitute and confused, and any innocence that may have remained in the rough and tumble mining camp that had been founded just thirty-seven years earlier disappeared. The story still resonates. Twenty-first century residents debate the deportation and opinions remain sharply divided regarding who was right or wrong, innocent or guilty and even about what really happened that day. In order to better understand this complicated story, it is necessary to consider world and regional events of the time and to learn more about Bisbee—the Queen of the Copper Camps.

In 1917, the war in Europe was in its third year. The United States had remained neutral as half the planet

engaged in death and devastation on a scale never seen in recent history. But events were taking place that would begin to pull the United States closer to the conflict. President Woodrow Wilson resisted the pull toward war from the start. He viewed the role of the U.S.—his role—as one of mediator rather than combatant, and he continued to believe that with determination backed by the emergence of the U.S. as a major world power he could succeed.

Across the Atlantic Ocean, warring nations were locked in an endless stalemate. The Allies knew they could not win without the United States. Germany needed to halt the flow of materials being shipped to Britain from neutral America, and it realized that if the U.S. entered the war, it would lose. Faced with this possibility, the German government conceived a bold and risky plan.

On January 17, 1917, British Naval Intelligence intercepted and decoded an astonishing message from German Foreign Secretary Arthur Zimmerman to the German Ambassador in Washington and the Imperial German Minister to Mexico. Known as the "Zimmerman Telegram", it revealed that Germany would begin unrestricted submarine warfare in February—meaning it would attack not only enemy vessels but neutrals as well. If this action caused the United States to enter the war, Germany proposed an alliance with Mexico to "make war together, make peace together, generous financial support, and an understanding on our part that Mexico is to reconquer the lost territory in Texas, New Mexico and Arizona". The Germans, through despera-

tion, calculation or both, were going to force the president's hand—he could continue to resist joining the war even though Germany clearly was drawing a line in the sand or he could do what Britain and the Allies desired and enter the fight. Once the Zimmerman telegram was made public, it would inflame the nation. The idea that Mexico might join the war against its northern neighbor and expect to reclaim territory long ceded was unimaginable, especially since Mexico was already a foreign policy headache for the U.S. government.

Beginning in 1910, a revolution roared through Mexico creating tension along the U.S. southern border. A charismatic peasant leader with a gift for military organization and keen sense of public relations, was head of a growing army of citizens storming through the northern part of the country. In loose confederation with other revolutionaries, Francisco “Pancho” Villa was waging war on centuries of aristocratic rule, intent on returning the land to the people and changing the way they were governed. As the bloody strife progressed and old or new leaders changed places with each other, the U.S. government, under William Howard Taft and later Woodrow Wilson, in a delicate diplomatic dance began to exert influence on the conflict.

In fact, while official U.S. policy supported democratization in other nations, leaders in Washington weren't comfortable with the possibility of a deposed gentry or newly empowered underclass facing off along their Southern border. The world was rapidly changing. In Europe, the Great War was nearly three years old. Revolution was afoot in Russia. England and France, not yet fully grasping the reality that empires were falling out of fashion, were flexing their imperial muscles. The U.S., possibly because it had recently been reminded that it had a big stick to back up its soft voice, waved its stick over the heads of its Southern neighbor. While some in Mexico welcomed and supported this subtle intervention, others, like Pancho Villa, bitterly resented the intrusion. Never one to miss an opportunity to make a statement, he decided to send a message.

On March 9, 1916, Villa led his troops across the border into New Mexico attacking the small town of Columbus. The center of the town was left a smoking ruin. The raiders left death, injury, terror in their wake as they headed back to Mexico. It was the only major military incursion into the U.S. by forces of the revolution, though skirmishes were common in the small towns that shared the border. Residents of Bisbee for instance were constantly aware of the ongoing tension and fighting just seven miles away in the border town of Naco where a small garrison, Camp Naco, was located. Soldiers from nearby Fort Huachuca were on alert in case the fighting spilled over onto the Arizona side. The raid on Columbus infuriated the U.S.—there had not been an attack on the mainland by a foreign power since the War of 1812. Wilson sent John J. “Black Jack” Pershing and 10,000

soldiers first to Camp Furlong at Columbus and then 400 miles into Mexico on a Punitive Expedition in search of Villa. For eleven months, in what was effectively the last true cavalry action mounted by the U.S. Army and the first to use mechanized vehicles, Pershing chased the revolutionaries through the wild deserts and mountains of the state of Chihuahua. While he succeeded in dispersing some of the Villista raiders, he never caught up with the legendary revolutionary chieftain who went on to wage battles for and against continuous changes in Mexico. Pershing meanwhile gained valuable experience and new ideas for his army. He was going to need both. On January 25, 1917, President Wilson ordered the withdrawal of Pershing's force. By February 5, the Punitive Expedition was back across the border and headed off to prepare for other conflicts

On February 24, the Zimmerman telegram was delivered to Wilson who already knew of Germany's intention to launch submarine attacks on all shipping. The president reluctantly realized that negotiation was no longer an option. He would have to respond with force. On March 4, 1917, Wilson was inaugurated for his second term. A few weeks later, on April 2, he asked Congress to declare war on Germany. Congress so declared and on April 6 the Great War became a World War.

All these factors influenced the political, economic and industrial climate of the nation. Growing revolutionary fervor, the desire of working people to improve their status in the rapidly changing world coupled with patriotic zeal as America entered the war set the stage for this story. What happened in the mining town of Bisbee on the Mexican border in the summer of 1917 is framed by the larger picture.

By 1917, Arizona had been a state for five years and copper was its dominant industry. There were operations in Globe, Jerome, Ajo, Clifton, Morenci and Bisbee, all towns that owed their existence to the useful metal. Copper made the mining company owners and stockholders wealthy. At the start of the war in Europe, the price of copper was 13 and one-half cents a pound. In March 1917 it was 37 cents. The mining business was booming. Operations expanded and demand for workers was high. An influx of immigrants from southern and eastern Europe met the need. At least thirty-three nationalities were represented including Mexicans (who were not permitted to work as underground miners). As mining expanded and profits rose, working conditions did not substantially improve. Wages were relatively high for the time, but war inflation cut into gains miners and other workers realized. Their lives were mostly controlled by the companies which owned the store, hospitals, library, newspaper and hotel. Local businesses depended heavily on the mines and the miners to survive. Rapid changes around the world caused workers to become restless, impatient for improvements to working conditions and pay. Labor unions had attempted to gain a foothold among the working men in the past, but their activities had been severely limited by management. Unions were formed,

workers signed up and were promptly fired. One union gave way to another until 1916 when the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers successfully enrolled 1800 miners. However, the union that became the greatest threat in the eyes of the mining companies was the International Workers of the World commonly called the IWW or Wobblies. Though its success in recruiting members across the country was never more than 5% of all trade unionists, its organizing principles and reputation for action reached many more workers and caused growing concern for management. Also, the IWW was the first trade union to actively recruit minority workers and stand up for their rights. Company owners, determined to retain control of the workforce and preserve profits became increasingly firm in their stand against the unions, especially the IWW.

By July 1917 trouble was brewing in Bisbee. The demand for copper needed for the war drove prices up and workers felt they were entitled to a share of profit and better conditions. On June 24, the IWW presented the mining companies a list of demands including a shift to a flat wage system instead of the sliding scale tied to copper prices. To no one's surprise, the list was rejected and a strike was called. By June 27 almost half of Bisbee's work force—about 2000 men—had walked. The strike was not unique. In 1917 alone over 4000 strikes took place across the nation. The pressure of war on industry gave labor unions new strength and hardened management's determination to resist. In Arizona, strikes and walkouts were disrupting copper production to the point that the Governor attempted to intervene. President Wilson appointed former Governor George Wiley Paul Hunt as a special investigator to look into the labor problems. But the big companies weren't waiting for mediation. The owners wanted something done and led by Phelps Dodge president Walter Douglas they came up with a plan of action.

Bisbee was teeming with rumors of pro-German influence in the unions and about caches of explosives and weapons stashed around town for use in sabotage. (Of course there were explosives in Bisbee—it was a mining town, and many people owned weapons. To much of the nation, Arizona was still the Wild West.) Tensions were high as The Citizens Protective League, an anti-union organization previously established by Walter Douglas, was reactivated by local businessmen and put under the authority of Cochise County Sheriff Harry Wheeler. Miners loyal to the companies formed another organization, the Workman's Loyalty League and on July 11 key members of these groups met with Wheeler, Phelps Dodge General Manager Grant Dowell and Calumet and Arizona Mining Company General Manager John C. Greenway. They prepared to implement a bold plan that had been developed by Walter Douglas and others to deal with the strikers and unions: the roundup and permanent exile of all the strikers and anyone else loyal to union activities.

The next morning, July 12, 1917, 2000 special deputies and vigilantes loyal to the mining companies spread out through all the small residential areas that comprised the Warren Mining District. Over the course of the morning, they forced strikers out of their homes and boarding houses and, starting from the Copper Queen Plaza in Bisbee, marched them under heavy guard about four miles to the Warren Ball Park where they were detained and given a chance to renounce the strike and unions and return to work. Of the 2000 detainees, nearly 1200 refused. These were loaded into twenty-three cattle cars and transported to the New Mexico desert near Columbus. Warned not to try and return to Bisbee, they were abandoned. In Bisbee, families were left without husbands and fathers and no means of support. For weeks, the deputies and vigilantes continued to seek out anyone deemed suspicious and bring them before a kangaroo court to face the same fate as their co-workers. Others were harassed and placed under constant surveillance. All entrances into town were monitored to prevent the deportees from returning and to screen anyone attempting to enter. The strikers were replaced with new hires and life went on though things were never the same as before.

The deportees were gathered at Camp Furlong near Columbus where many remained for two months. Gradually they dispersed to other places and other jobs or joined the army to fight in Europe. Some simply disappeared and were forgotten. Eventually a few managed to return to Bisbee after a few years had passed. The story was suppressed and allowed to fade into the town's history. But it could not be erased. On July 12, two men died. Orson McCrae, a company employee acting as a volunteer deputy attempted to detain striker James Brew. Shots were fired and both men were killed. Brew's funeral was held on July 14 without public notice. McCrae received a grand funeral on July 15 in the Copper Queen Plaza. He was remembered as a hero who gave his life in service of the mining companies. Both men were buried in Evergreen Cemetery.

Controversy about the Bisbee Deportation continues. Some believe strongly that the strikers posed a real threat to the safety of the town's citizens and that they were disloyal to their employers and the nation at war. Some believe strongly that it was the right of the workers to unite and strike for better wages and conditions. To some, Orson McCrae was a hero who died bravely in the line of duty. To others, James Brew was a victim of management sanctioned violence. The two sides in the debate will likely never completely reconcile. But the death of those men as well as the actions taken against the nearly 1200 deportees are a reminder that the events of July 12, 1917 may never be resolved. The Bisbee Deportation remains a troubling incident in the town's history one hundred years later.

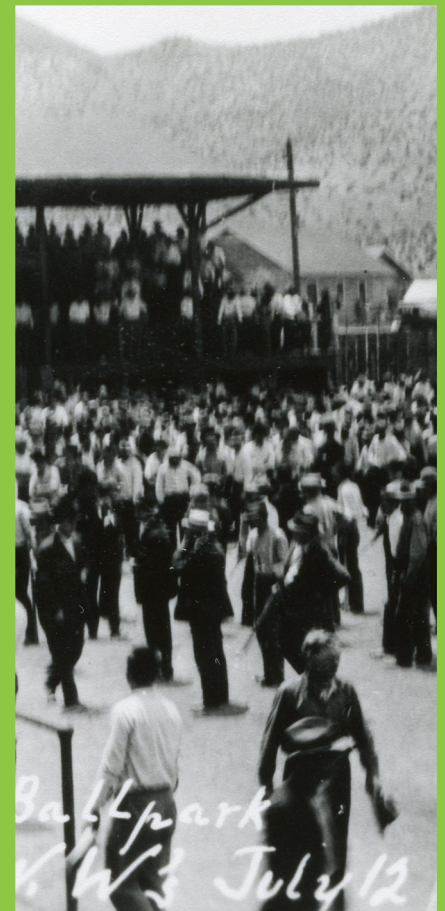


"I have formed a Sheriff's Posse of 1,200 men... in Bisbee for the purpose of arresting on charges of vagrancy, treason and being disturbers of the peace in Cochise County all those strange men who have congregated here... for the purpose of harassing and intimidating men who desire to pursue their daily toils. Appeals to patriotism do not move them, nor do appeals to reason. At a time when our country needs her every resource, these strangers persist in keeping from her the precious metal production of this entire district. Therefore I call upon all loyal Americans to aid me in peacefully arresting these disturbers of our national and local peace. Let no shot be fired... [however] I hereby give warning that each and every leader of the so-called strikers will be held personally responsible for any injury inflicted up on any of my deputies while in the performance of their duties...."

Harry Wheeler, Bisbee Daily Review July 12, 1917



"Dear Friend,
...I sure would be glad for you to come here to live, and I would treat you just as mean as I ever did or know how. But not like the strikers are treated. ...I wouldn't pay to try to have a garden if I had space, because we must pay so high for water. \$2.10 per 1,000 gallons. I can buy vegetables cheaper. We pay \$1.00 for 25 lbs. of new potatoes now... Peaches 15¢. Tomatoes 15¢. Green beans 15¢.
...You would be surprised how the strikers have been treated here in Bisbee since July 12th. It is something awful. War is not so exciting to the people as we have had something worse.... On the morning of July 12th the capitalists of our town with their scabs formed a parade, white handkerchief tied around his right arm and a gun in hand, and searched the town for men not working, first report was IWW, but took everyman not at work. ...worst of all they took husbands and fathers away from their families and marched them through the hot burning sun for 3 miles then loaded them on cattle cars...."



"It was one of the saddest and most outrageous sights ever happened in the state or union. My husband happened to be one of the lucky ones, and happened to have work that morning but one of our neighbor boys that was needed very badly has a sick brother that has not done a days work for a year, mostly all time in bed, and also mother with heart trouble, hardly able to walk around and was the sole support for them and took him away unknown to them, so you may know what a worry it is and have not received any word from him since. Oh I was so upset I could do nothing all day. Well, I guess I must close for this time as you may have to call the neighbors in to help read this scribbling.
So Good Night.
Your old Friend, Mrs. Snyder
PS. Enos and 2 other men were hunting last Sunday and brought home 11 rabbits + 2 doves.

Mrs. Snyder in a letter to her friend, Mrs. Rieter, July 21, 1917 (excerpted)



"We watched them - the wild beasts being driven down Bisbee Road to the ball park and I remember that very well. [I] thought at first it looked like a cattle drive because there were cowboys on horseback on both sides of them so they couldn't get away and drove them in there. It was quite a sight and there must have been a thousand of them and they drove them into the ball park and had a kind of trial down there, I think, but of course I didn't know much about it at that time."

Walter Douglas, Jr., seven years old, watching from the Douglas mansion in Warren, July 12, 1917

"How it could have happened in a civilized country I'll never know. In the box car I was in, there was nothing but sheep dung."

Fred Watson (not dated)



"Any talk of their coming back is nonsense. They will not be allowed to come back. We have been slow to act, but once started it is a finish fight. The serious business of this district is the mining of copper ore, not the building of nightly schools of anarchism or idling on the streets or picketing public places and private works."

Phelps Dodge Corporation, Copper Queen Branch, July 14, 1917

"The deportation was wholly illegal and without authority in law, either State or Federal."

Mediation Commission of the President of the United States, January 9, 1918

"There can be no peace so long as hunger and want are found among millions of working people and the few, who make up the employing class, have all the good things in life."

IWW Preamble

"A committee claiming to represent the Metal Mine Workers Industrial Union No. 800, the metal mining branch of the IWW, waited on us today to present certain demands. We refused to receive the committee or to consider their demands."

Phelps Dodge Corporation, Copper Queen Branch, June 27, 1917

"There will be no compromise because you cannot compromise with a rattlesnake."

Walter Douglas, Bisbee Daily Review July 11, 1917

"On the 12th of July I looked out of my window and seen 75 men in front of my place; they were taking my neighbors in front and lining them up...."

Anna Payne, July 12, 1917

"The prisoners were marched in single file from the enclosure up to the runways and onto the cars."

AP dispatch, July 12, 1917

"Are you an American or not?"
Question posed to the men at the Warren Ballpark, July 12, 1917

"You could almost smell the fear, Men didn't look at each other in the face. Everyone was under suspicion. Loyalties were divided."

Miriam Tefft, memories of a fifteen-year-old girl, February 2, 1982

"Too often there is a glaring inconsistency between our democratic purposes in this war abroad and the autocratic conduct of those guiding industry at home. This inconsistency is emphasized by such episodes as the Bisbee Deportations."

Mediation Commission of the President of the United States, January 9, 1918

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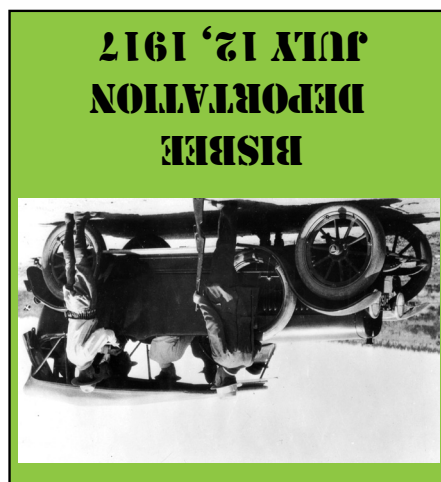
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Bisbee, Arizona 85603**



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