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SPEAKERS

Henry Vincent, NPR promo, Walter Brockbank, Zac Ziegler, Herman Adams, Nicole Cox, Mike Anderson, Dan Kitchel, Christopher Conover, Jay Kinsella, Walter Douglas Jr., Charles Bathia

C Christopher Conover 00:03

Welcome to The Buzz I'm Christopher Conover. This week, a look back to one of the biggest labor disputes in American history, the Bisbee Deportation. In the summer of 1917, unionization was the talk in many mining communities in Arizona. Members of the Industrial Workers of the World, also known as the IWW or the Wobblies had arrived in the state and began organizing strikes at some mines. By July 12, minecompany executives came up with a plan to break unionization attempts that culminated in an historic event known as the Bisbee Deportation, anti union activists rounded up 2000 Pro union miners and sympathizers and told them to renounce their efforts or be sent out of town on a train. But that wasn't the first time that summer that union supporters were thrown out of an Arizona mining community. Zac Ziegler takes us to a small town in Yavapai County that some historians say was the test run for the Bisbee Deportation.

Z Zac Ziegler 01:16

It's hard to get a better view of Jerome, Arizona than the one offered from the Jerome State Historical Park. It sits in an ornate building on a hill just north of the town near the headframe of the underground mine that produce tons of copper silver and gold ore. And when you look at the building's history, its location and grandeur make sense.

H Henry Vincent 01:37

This is the Douglas Mansion as we know it locally.

Z Zac Ziegler 01:41

HenryVincent is a volunteer at the museum who gives tours and talks about the area's history. He was born and raised in Jerome.

H Henry Vincent 01:49

This building was built by Rawhide Jimmy Douglas, it came into service about 1917 and Rawhide Jimmy Douglas was one of the original organizers of Jerome's second most important mine. This mine is known as the United Verde Extension Copper Company, and Rawhide Jimmy Douglas was the president of UVX during its operation from 1912 until 1938.

Z Zac Ziegler 02:18

The year this mansion came into service was a good one for copper companies. America had entered World War One leading to increased demand for bullets and military hardware, both of which utilized plenty of copper. And rural electrification efforts also increased demand for copper wire. The result? The price had doubled in about a decade. But while it was boom times for the companies, Jerome historical societies Jay Kinsella says the work life of a miner was quite different.

J Jay Kinsella 02:49

12 hours a day, six days a week, minimal pay, hazards underground, a lot of accidents.

Z Zac Ziegler 02:55

And as Henry Vincent says, it wasn't easy work either.

H Henry Vincent 02:59

A lot of the work that went on underground, there was certainly mechanization as that became increasingly popular, but there was a tremendous number of ore buckets that were loaded with a shovel.

Z Zac Ziegler 03:11

Once you were off work, housing conditions were less than ideal thanks to those low wages and life and a boom town.

H Henry Vincent 03:18

This place was packed it's one square mile, and it had 15,000 residents.

Z Zac Ziegler 03:23

That's about the population density of modern day Chicago. To compare, Jerome today has about 500 residents.

H Henry Vincent 03:24

The residents were stacked like cordwood on top of each other. Many miners rooms were double bunked where the minor would be working, the other would be sleeping. Residential quarters were very, very small and and very, very dense. And there was a tremendous amount of people here in a very small area.

Z Zac Ziegler 03:50

This confluence of events led to the miners talking about how they could better their conditions.

J Jay Kinsella 03:56

Word got out amongst the mining industry throughout the Southwest that the Jerome personnel miners weren't happy with the working conditions. They stated their grievances to the mining companies, but it fell on deaf ears. So there was a lot more talking amongst miners quietly, because they needed to make sure that they were still working for the mining company to you know, pay the bills

Z Zac Ziegler 04:26

their demands

J Jay Kinsella 04:27

six hours a day for all men underground, a minimum of \$6 a day for all men underground and \$5.50 a day for people above ground.

Z Zac Ziegler 04:38

If you use the Bureau of Labor Statistics inflation calculator that's almost \$140 a day in today's dollars. Since they worked six days a week that could be the current equivalent of about \$43,000 a year. Today, the average wage for an Arizonan in the natural resources and mining sector is around\$ 61,000 a year.

J Jay Kinsella 05:01

Other things were two men on all the pistons and lainer machines. That's the technical term. They're also known in the mining industry as widow makers

They're also known in the mining industry as widow makers.

Zac Ziegler 05:10

A Widowmaker was a pneumatic power drill that would bore a small shaft into the rock. Once the shaft got deep enough, sometimes up to six feet deep, they'd pack it with dynamite and blast loose rock. The drills were dangerous when run by two miners, but when run by one, Kinsella says they were the leading cause of injury in the mine, the miners were also thinking about equality amongst their fellow workers.

Jay Kinsella 05:37

The other concern that they had was to abolish the sliding scale, and the sliding scale had a lot to do with the color of your skin. There's no gray area not at all.

Zac Ziegler 05:47

On July 7 1917, one of the town's newspapers, the Jerome Daily News, reported that a group of miners gathered to consider a strike.

Jay Kinsella 05:56

And the result was 471 votes against a strike. And 194 in favor of the strike

Zac Ziegler 06:04

Kinsella says that more than two to one vote against was quite a blow to the morale of the people who were ready to strike.

Jay Kinsella 06:12

And so subsequently, the 194 that were in favor, that started out in favor of the strike, really started become boisterous.

Zac Ziegler 06:23

Members of the Industrial Workers of the World, or the IWW, had arrived in town and we're helping the miners who wanted a strike to hold one.

Jay Kinsella 06:33

The mining company executives saw the handwriting on the wall. They did what they could, but they needed to be back there as politically correct as they could possibly be

they needed to be back then as politically correct as they could possibly be.

 Zac Ziegler 06:45

So instead of trying to break the strike themselves are hiring someone to break it for them as other industries did. They riled up the anti union workers and residents of Jerome, the night of July 9, people who didn't want the mine to shut down, we're armed.

 Jay Kinsella 07:02

They were supplied, shovels, axe handles, all sorts of different things. In our archives, we have lines of the vigilantes on Main Street confrontation with the wobblies and the striking miners, they went to blows.

 Zac Ziegler 07:16

The next morning, that group of about 250 men reported for what according to historian John Linquist and a 1969 article, they called cleanup duty,

 Jay Kinsella 07:27

all hell broke loose. There was face to face confrontations, violence, beatings on both sides.

 Zac Ziegler 07:36

Linquist writes that they started at six o'clock in the morning, and rounded up about 100 men by 930. That morning, a number of them were released, but between 63 and 67 were loaded into four cattle cars that had shown up on a mine owned rail line near the mine. But as far as the mine was concerned, it had an ability to separate itself from the events.

 Jay Kinsella 07:59

And the only thing that the mining company did acknowledge is that they brought in four cattle cars into the town of Jerome

 Zac Ziegler 08:10

Plus there was an added layer of distance from the men who owned the mining companies.

 08:15

Senator Clark out of Butte, Montana, Jimmy Rawhide Douglas out of Quebec, Canada, they had

personnel here. They weren't here all the time, because they had holdings in other areas. But I tell you, they knew exactly what was happening in Jerome even though they weren't here.

Z

Zac Ziegler 08:31

Again, here's Henry Vincent.

H

Henry Vincent 08:33

That was kind of the tone of how you met Lord labor organization in those days and I'm not saying it was right. But the the original dry run of kicking the wobblies out of town it came here in Jerome where they were loaded onto cattle cars, and shipped out.

Z

Zac Ziegler 08:52

The train eventually stopped in Needles, California, but locals didn't want unionizers there. Vincent says they ended up in Kingman largely, though Kinsella says some ended up as far as New Mexico. Both men distill the Jerome Deportation ultimately down to concern for self and concern for community. Jay Kinsella.

J

Jay Kinsella 09:13

It basically boiled down to a concern that the miners had, a concern that the mining company officials had, and the worst of times to wage this concern, which was the start of World War One.

C

Christopher Conover 09:28

That was Buzz producer Zac Ziegler reporting. Coming up after the break what happened a few days later, and a few 100 miles to the south. You're listening to The Buzz stay with us.

N

NPR promo 09:43

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C

Christopher Conover 10:08

Welcome back to The Buzz. I'm Christopher Conover. This week we're traveling back to an historic labor dispute that ended with copper company supporters rounding up pro union Arizonans and forcing them out of the state. Days after the deportation in Jerome, mining

company Phelps Dodge was again dealing with miners who were displeased with their working conditions and threatening a strike. They saw the action taken by other Phelps Dodge employees to the North as a possible plan of action to break the labor organization movement. Charles Bathia was born and raised in Bisbee. He's a local historian who moved back to the area later in life. We met him at the site where the pro union Bisbee miners were rounded up Warren Dallpark, which is named for the neighborhood where it stands.

C Charles Bathia 11:01

Warren was a community that was built by one of the competing mining companies the Calumet in Arizona Mining Company. And so this was a this was a place where people gathered. On July the 12th, 1917, when the deportation took place. The deportees the ones that were arrested and rounded up starting in Upper old Bisbee were marched here four miles from downtown Bisbee. And they were staged in this park where we're at we are right now.

C Christopher Conover 11:31

Bathia says that there were similarities between Jerome and Bisbee from the start. Both started early in the morning, Jerome at six and Bisbee at 6:30. Both had roughly one to one ratios of anti union and pro union people involved. The difference is the scale. The Bisbee Deportation was about 10 times the size of Jerome's

C Charles Bathia 11:56

there were about 2,000 deputies, temporary deputies, and vigilantes to round up 2,000 people. It was a one on one operation.

C Christopher Conover 12:07

The action in Bisbee was also notably more official.

C Charles Bathia 12:12

The most active one involved was John C. Greenway, who was the head of Calumet in Arizona. John Greenway had been a Rough Rider with Theodore Roosevelt in Cuba. He has a big history, you know, and he was pleading with these guys come on, you know, just give it up and you can go back to work and this will be over with and then some did. I mean, obviously, they had about 2000 people rounded up and they ended up with around 1,200 or a few less that they actually dealt with when the three hours later when the trains were loaded up.

C Christopher Conover 12:42

The head of Bisbee is other mind company, Walter Douglas, whose father Rawhide Jimmy Douglas owned one of the mines in Jerome was not seen that morning. But But Thea says it's

hard to believe that Douglas wasn't involved.

C Charles Bathia 12:56

The 11th of July he was in Globe-Miami with that where they were dealing with mining issues too. He has private railroad car--of course he did. And so he he came into town sometime on the 11th. There's a lot of disagreement about that. Some people say he was never here, but all the information that I can find says that he was here, but he was really keeping low.

C Christopher Conover 13:19

While there's debate over whether Walter Douglas senior was in Bisbee. That day, his son Walter Douglas, Jr, who spent summers with his father in Bisbee, was there. He recounted what he saw during a 1974 interview for an oral history housed at the Bisbee Mining and Historical Museum. He said his governess took the children upstairs to watch what was happening,

W Walter Douglas Jr. 13:43

We watched the Wobblies driven down the road to the ballpark. And I remember that very well, we thought at first that it looked like a cattle drive because they were cowboys on horseback on both sides, so they couldn't get away. drove them in. It was quite a site and there must have been 1000 of them.

C Christopher Conover 14:09

People were deputized and the Cochise County Sheriff, John Wheeler, was overseeing operations. He

C Charles Bathia 14:16

was running back and forth all morning, but as they were marching these guys down, he was in a car. He'd borrowed the car from the Catholic priest up at the Catholic Church who was a supporter of the deportation.

C Christopher Conover 14:25

While in that car, the sheriff was carrying a belt fed machine gun, and others were also armed with guns.

W Walter Brockbank 14:32

So I think I should go back and explain why so many are armed with rifles that morning.

C Christopher Conover 14:38
That was Walter Brockbank during a 1971 interview that comes from the Bisbee Mining and Historical Museum oral history collection.

W Walter Brockbank 14:48
You may remember that just prior to this country entering the war in Europe the Mexican band by the name of Pancho via had made a raid in the United States near Columbus, New Mexico. Well at that time, there was very little military protection along the border. So many towns along the border fearing other such raids began to organize Home Guard units, which we did here in Bisbee. Having three companies over 300 Men, each

C Christopher Conover 15:16
Those groups were able to get surplus guns and ammunition from the Spanish American War.

W Walter Brockbank 15:21
I have better say that it was not the Organized Home Guard that conducted the roundup sympathizer strikers, but by citizen group that thought it was their duty to restore peace and order in the community and to give all the support possibly to our Armed Forces in Europe.

C Christopher Conover 15:39
Brockbank emphasize that he wasn't a part of either side, mostly because he worked in one of the mine's mechanical departments, as did Dan Kitchel, whose interview also appears in the collection.

D Dan Kitchel 15:51
I didn't oppose him. They didn't oppose me the engineers and the pumpers. were left alone. We were not in this thing at all. Because if we were out, why the mines are closed and flood, but this deportation was the most deplorable thing that ever happened in the United States. I saw them marched down to the to the ballpark, on top of the ballpark with machine guns

C Christopher Conover 16:20
And Kitchell set on top of that they had cut off communications with the outside world.

D Dan Kitchel 16:25

I asked the Jimmy McDonald, who is Deputy United States Marshals, what's this all about? He's I don't know. He's just I can't get word from my office. The wires are cut.

C Christopher Conover 16:38

Charles Bathia told us it's not surprising that the flow of information was cut off by the mines.

C Charles Bathia 16:45

They owned the hotel and the telephone switchboard was in the hotel. And down the morning a deportation, they shut it down. First of all, the phone operators were busy calling, sending out these coded messages to people in Douglas. It's going to start come on up because we had people from Douglas helping out with that. And so you know, nobody can make a phone call. Nobody could send a telegram from the telegraph office down right down the middle of Bisbee for hours

C Christopher Conover 17:15

since the anti union side was so well prepared and made such a show of force. Most of the union side didn't have much choice but to go along, with one notable exception.

C Charles Bathia 17:27

Two people did die that day. And that was during the pickup. And one of the deputies who was actually an employee of Calumet in Arizona, a man named Orson McCray. And he went to this boarding house in Jiggerville

C Christopher Conover 17:39

Jiggerville is one of three neighborhoods that sat where the open pit lavender mine is today.


C Charles Bathia 17:46

And there was a man named James Brew who was a striker. He was sick actually wasn't even well. He was in bed. And so when they came to get him out, when Orson McCray went up to the door, and said, We're going to get you and he said anybody tries to take me I will shoot him. McCray or his men went to the screen door of this room, it was on a porch. And Bruce shot through the door and killed McCray. So the others just opened up on the guy. That's the general story.


C Christopher Conover 18:15

It's an era when mind strikes could be met with deadly force. In 1913 and 14, the Colorado

Coalfield War erupted out of an attempt to break a strike. When it was over as many as 200 people were dead. So Phelps Dodge and the Cochise County Sheriff armed and brought in as many people as possible.

 Herman Adams 18:38


Yeah, the sheriff deputized me. He deputized a whole bunch, you know.

 Christopher Conover 18:44

That's from a 1981 interview with Herman Adams from the Bisbee Mining and Historical Museum's oral history collection. He was among the men who rounded up strikers that day.

 Herman Adams 18:55


The train was loaded up. It had 14 carloads. Opened the doors, put out a plank. Rolled them up in there and locked the doors. Put them all in there and went to New Mexico.

 Christopher Conover 19:16


But not all of the 2000 men rounded up ended up on the train. More than 800 were allowed to return to work. Charles Bathia says at least one was among the people considered a sympathizer.

 Charles Bathia 19:29

The one that is most prevalent in our predominant in our in our history. Here is the story of Mike Pintech, who owned a store in Bakerville, which is just up towards the as you get up toward the traffic circle. And he also ran a taxi service. Mike had tuberculosis so he wouldn't have been able to work anyway. As they were coming by, they grabbed him because he was known to be sympathetic to the movement to the men who worked there. Katie Pintech, his wife, she went to Dr. Nelson Bledsoe who was the chief surgeon at the Calumet Hospital up there, who was carrying weapons and had cartridge belts, I mean, he looked like he was ready to go to war.

 Christopher Conover 20:11

She was eventually successful in convincing the men not to load her husband on the train. But when they got home, their neighbors began threatening.

 20:20

And they said, We're gonna get you, we're gonna get you. I mean they weren't letting him go,

despite the fact that he was questionably involved. So he's knocked off to Mexico for a week kind of hiding out left Katie and their young kids here. And she was watched constantly. She was followed where she went. There's an interview with her that was done in the 70s when she was quite old. And she talks about that, you know, and so anyway, Mike came back up, and when he did, they hauled him before the kangaroo court. So they said, you know, you better just watch out for yourself. So he went back to Mexico for another month or so.

C Christopher Conover 21:00

Pintech died a few years later of tuberculosis. His son's obituary calls it miner's consumption. That son John seems to have been shaped by the 1917 events. He went to law school and became the youngest county attorney in Arizona history. He was 25 at the time. After serving in the army during World War Two John Pintech went into private practice. His obituary calls him a fighter for social justice, including miners' rights and benefits for miners, widows and children. And the family legacy doesn't end there. John F. Pintech was the Cochise County Sheriff for one term starting in 1993. The pintechs were fortunate in that their patriarch was able to return home eventually. That was not the case for many families. But the says many of the men were eventually allowed back but only to pick up their families and property.

C Charles Bathia 21:58

Some of the women we know this, they actually divorced the husbands who they loved in order to be able to survive because they'd have to marry somebody else.

C Christopher Conover 22:09

The train left at about 11:30 That morning heading east,

M Mike Anderson 22:13

There was an attempt made to drop them off in Columbus.

C Christopher Conover 22:16

Mike Anderson is an historian who lives in Bisbee and who has spent the last few years studying what happened after the deportation.

M Mike Anderson 22:25

When the train got through about nine o'clock at night. The Columbus authorities were waiting. And they informed the train crew and the vigilantes that this is New Mexico, you're from Arizona, whatever authority you had to do this in Arizona, you have none in New Mexico. You

need to take this train back to Arizona immediately. And if you don't, we're going to arrest all of you for kidnapping. So they backed it up 20 miles to a sighting called your Hermanas, uncoupled the 23 cattle cars and just left them there.

C Christopher Conover 22:55

Word eventually made its way to the White House where President Woodrow Wilson had the men brought to an army camp near Columbus.

M Mike Anderson 23:03

Once the men were settled in Columbus. Obviously they wanted to get back and that was one of their goals. The other goal was to seek justice because it was it was a criminal act. It was kidnapping. And there were a number of these men that immediately wanted to see that those who kidnapped and were brought to justice

C Christopher Conover 23:22

Anderson says the men filed kidnapping charges against those involved hundreds of them.

M Mike Anderson 23:28

How do you process hundreds and hundreds of kidnapping trials? So the Cochise county attorney decided we'll try one man, Harry Wooten, hardware store salesman. If the jury convicts him, we'll start even on the others.

C Christopher Conover 23:45

There were months of pretrial motions and deliberations then came a lengthy trial. But in the end,

M Mike Anderson 23:52


Harry Wooten was found not guilty. The justification that the prosecution gave was that it was the law of necessity that the vigilantes were operated under. Now, I challenge you to find in the Arizona Revised Statutes where the law of necessity is because it ain't in the law books.

C Christopher Conover 24:11


So the deportees took the mind companies and others to civil court filing a class action lawsuit in federal court in Tucson, Simmons V. The El Paso Southwestern Railroad et al

 Mike Anderson 24:24


That case was settled out of court, the mining companies crowed that we didn't, we didn't give them very much. But what's interesting to find out is that quite a few of the men who signed on to the class action lawsuit bought homes and businesses after the settlement was reached in 1920. So some justice was rendered.

 Christopher Conover 24:43

Anderson says some of the men did eventually returned to Bisbee and were even buried in the city's cemetery, other stayed in New Mexico or spread out working in other mines under aliases.

 Mike Anderson 24:56


They picked up their lives and they went on with it. And that was what The most interesting things to me was, these were not these were not men who suffered calamity and just fell to pieces. They were they were tough. They, considering that 80% of them were immigrants, they'd already gone through great hardship.

 Christopher Conover 25:15

The story of the deportation was buried over the years, especially when it came to teaching future generations in Bisbee, like Charles Bathia and his sister.

 25:24

My sister graduated my in 1971, and she went to NAU. And she was taking, I think, in Arizona history class as a freshman. And so the professor, the teacher, the class was talking about Arizona history and the history of copper mining. And he mentioned the story of the deportation in Bisbee. And she said, Excuse me, what are you talking about? I'm from Bisbee. And he started to laugh. She said, that didn't ever you're What are you talking about? That's not did not happen. And he says, if you're from Bisbee, of course, you don't know that it happened.


 Christopher Conover 26:00

Arizona's copper industry was eventually unionized. And in the early 1980s, was part of a major labor battle when unionized miners again struck against Phelps Dodge. That strike became national news when after a five year battle, it led to the largest mass union decertification in US history.


 Charles Bathia 26:21

So at the end of the day, this is not a story about copper. It's a story about people and the way

power and money affect people's lives. You know, and for those men to just have been dumped off into anonymous history is a criminal thing to me.

 Christopher Conover 26:42

And that's The Buzz for this week. You can find all our episodes online at azpm.org and, subscribe to our show. Wherever you get your podcasts just search for The Buzz Arizona. We're also on the NPR app. Thanks to the Bisbee Mining and Historical Museum for use of their oral history collection. Zac Ziegler wrote and produced this episode and our music is by Enter the Haggis, I'm Christopher Conover thanks for listening.

 Nicole Cox 27:19

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