Decolonizing Ludlow: A Study in Public Archaeology
By Karin Larkin, Department of Anthropology

Introduction:
Archaeology has benefited recently from approaching scholarship using decolonizing methodologies and philosophies. Anthropology and museums alike have recognized their historic roles in perpetuating imperialist epistemologies and narratives and have actively worked to disengage from this practice and shift their approaches in narrative creation (Allen and Jobson 2016, 129-140; Baum 2015, 420-434; Harrison and Harrison 02, 31-31; Kreps 1988; Lawrence 1991; Lonetree 2012; Mallon 2012; Oland and others 2012; Smith 2012; Smith 1993, 782-783). Since the passage of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act in 1990, museum professionals and archaeologists across the United States have more systematically incorporated alternative voices and lines of evidence into their research designs and methodology, while simultaneously shifting toward a more inclusive professional practice. For decades, archaeologists have critically examined their roles in the creation of constructions of the past and the impact of those constructions on contemporary issues and politics (Blakey 1997, 140-145; Leone and Potter 1988; McGuire and Paynter 1991; McGuire 2008; Oland and others 2012; Saitta 2007; Trigger 2006; Wilkie and Bartoy 2000, 747). Even if these researchers haven’t couched their arguments as decolonizing, many were. In the United States, most of these colonizing pioneers have been working with Native American and African American communities and applying critical, racial, and/or feminist theories. These scholars have applied their theories to critically examine and deconstruct narratives surrounding unequal power structures, the supremacy of Western ideologies, patriarchal structures, and racism. An explicitly decolonizing approach has not been as prominent in many historical and/or industrial archaeological contexts in the West, perhaps because scholars do not recognize those contexts as colonial. However, here I argue many are and that archaeology in general would benefit from adopting a decolonizing approach to their scholarship.

Part of practicing a decolonizing archaeology involves recognizing that our work is political and can be used to help address structural inequality and assist in reconciliation. Archaeologists have begun to recognize that their work has political consequence (Blakey 1997, 140-145; McGuire 2008; Saitta 2007; Wood 2002b, 187-198). As such, archaeology can be, and has been, a political enterprise. “Indeed, it is almost a truism today to say that archaeology is an inherently political endeavor,” (Wood 2002b, 187-198:187). Mark Leone aptly notes, “without the explicit consideration of politics at both the local and larger levels, there can be no adequate understanding of the material bases of historical archaeology in our own society,” (Leone 1995:251). He goes on to explain that historical archaeologists are under pressure from inside and outside the field to both consider politics and be political (Leone 1995:251). However, while archaeologists have become accustomed to critically examining power relations in “politically sanitized ‘contextual’ studies” (Leone 1995:252), few feel comfortable explicitly advocating political positions (Wood 2002b:188). Wood explains that scholars who do recognize the political nature of archaeological practice “have learned that politics are powerful, politics are dangerous, and politics are implicated in the creation and maintenance of oppressive regimes,” (Wood 2002b:188). Politics are powerful and can endanger funding sources as well as site access. However, because of archaeologists’
history in narration creating in the past and our role in social constructions of the past, archaeologists must be aware of and sensitive to narratives of domination, subjugation, and resistance. Indeed, archaeologists should recognize the political capital of these narratives, critique them, and work toward inclusive, collaborative, and engaged practice. In other words, archaeologists should act as advocates in exposing AND changing oppressive and unjust power structures. Employing decolonizing principles and methodologies has provided archaeologists with a tool kit for accomplishing these goals.

Hart and colleagues note, “[d]ecolonizing archaeology is fundamentally about restructuring power relations in the present for the future,” (Hart, Oland, and Frink 2012:4). Here, these scholars get at the heart of why decolonizing matters. In employing decolonizing methods and principles, archaeologists become activists, using the past to advocate for changes in unequal social or political structures that threaten the present and future. They argue that;

New methodologies and epistemologies are needed to mobilize archaeologies of transitions in colonial contexts. These practices must: (1) engage with Indigenous histories and contemporary communities; (2) foreground questions about Indigenous choices and actions; and (3) be sensitive to social, political, economic, technological, legal, and ecological context. (Hart, Oland, and Frink 2012:4)

They make thier arguments in the context of Indigenous histories and narratives, however, the same principles should be applied in other colonial contexts. The question arises then, what are other colonial contexts. How narrowly should we apply this concept? I would argue, following Gosden (2004) and Hart and colleagues (2012), that at its core colonialism is about unequal human relations that have arisen from imperialism, world-systems, or economic expansion and exploitation of the “other.” This happens in a wide variety of contexts, is multi-scala and multi-timed. As noted above, most previous studies have focused on Native Americans or African Americans as the “other” in the United States, however that may be too narrow of an application. While these contexts absolutely need decolonizing, other contexts should also be included. Here, I apply the concept of colonialism to a coal-mining community in southeastern Colorado and argue that company paternalism created colonizing conditions.

Why is it useful to understand this history in a colonial framework? Because it allows scholars to recognize that we need to approach and structure our research, interpretations, and outreach with decolonizing goals and methodology in mind. These include: contesting hegemonic, ethnocentric, and gender imbalanced narratives of the past, creating a space to address historical trauma and unresolved grief, to engage the past with contemporary social and political issues, and to reinsert the often disenfranchised or stifled voices of the past through our practice while creating a space for advocacy and agency. We need to humanize the past, engage in contemporary social and political issues, and practice an inclusive and impactful public anthropology. The Southern Colorado Coalfield War Archaeological Project provides an interesting case study in applying a decolonizing methodology to an archaeological project.

The story of the Ludlow Massacre at a coalminers’ striking tent colony in southern Colorado epitomizes the problematic nature of the industrial imperialism and colonization of the American West. The exploitation of mineral resources, like coal, in remote areas of the West by large, powerful industrial giants from the East created social and economic situations that were untenable. This difficult history illustrates the power of capitalism as an imperialistic force in creating inequality and oppression in past political and social environments. While the coal camps of the southern Colorado coal fields do not at
first glance seem to fit into a colonial framework, I argue that the circumstances surrounding the inhabitation and management of these coal camps does indeed represent a colonial situation.

Unfortunately, most history books ignore this epoch in U.S. industrial history and neglect to acknowledge its effect on the trajectory of labor history. In doing so, this omission negates the impact of this event on social, political, and economic politics and social practice in today’s society. Here I argue that the narrative of the Ludlow Massacre would benefit from approaching the subject using a decolonizing approach. I also contend that utilizing an approach that critically evaluates the unequal power structures and suppressed narratives of the past, assesses their impact on contemporary descendant communities, and promotes advocacy and healing could have profound impacts on archaeological praxis.

I would like to point out that the Colorado Coalfield War Archaeological Project (CCWAP) and the group of archaeologists who have worked on the project, cooperatively called “The Ludlow Collective,” have done this work since the inception of the project, even if they have not explicitly called it decolonizing. The foresight of the founding project directors Drs. Dean Saitta at the University of Denver, Randall McGuire at SUNY Binghamton, and Philip Duke then at Fort Lewis College, designed the project to foster collaboration, address inequities in representation, and affect contemporary practice and policy. Dean Saitta has called the project and “emancipatory archaeology,” (Saitta 2007). In doing so, he alludes to the decolonizing work project archaeologists have attempted. I hope to outline our work in a decolonizing framework. In this article, I discuss how the southern Colorado coalfields represent colonial outposts to the dominant eastern companies, explain what a decolonizing methodology entails, and outline what the project has done using a decolonizing methodology. I use my experiences as the second project director and as a member of a statewide Ludlow Centennial Commemoration Commission\(^1\) to explore the utility of decolonizing the Ludlow narrative.

**Coal Camps: Paternalism as Colonialism:**

There has been a lot of discussion lately around decolonizing methodology and scholarship (Allen and Jobson 2016, 129-140; Baum 2015, 420-434; Denzin, Lincoln, and Smith 2008; Harrison and Harrison 02, 31-31; Kreps 1988; Lawrence 1991; Lonetree 2012; Mallon 2012; Oland and others 2012; Smith 2012; Smith 1993, 782-783). According to Linda Tuhiwai Smith, “concepts of imperialism and colonialism are crucial ones which are used across a range of disciplines, often with meanings which are taken for granted,” (Smith 2012:21). While scholars take the meanings for granted, the two terms are interconnected. She explains that what scholars generally refer to as colonialism is really an expression of imperialism (Smith 2012). I agree they are interconnected, especially in the industrialized West, and employ the term as interconnected. Linda Tuhiwai Smith describes four ways European imperialism manifest including: 1. Imperialism as economic expansion, 2. Imperialism as subjugation of “others,” 3. Imperialism as an idea or spirit with many forms of realization, and 4. Imperialism as a discursive field of knowledge, (Smith 2012:21-22). Of Smith’s four ways scholars generally describe imperialism, two have particular relevance to this discussion in relation to the southern Colorado coalfields: imperialism as economic expansion, and imperialism as the subjugation of “others.”

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\(^1\) In 2013, Governor John Hickenlooper signed legislation to create a statewide commission to commemorate the 100 year anniversary of the southern Colorado coalfield strike of 1913-14 and Ludlow Massacre.
When examining the history of the southern Colorado coalfield strike and massacre of 1913-14, it is easy to argue that the coal camps were imperial and colonial environments in the early 1900s. During the early 1900s, industrialization was the established economic driving force in American society and coal supplied the fuel for the majority of industrialization and expansion. The industry in America was generally run by large corporations headquartered in the east. As the railroads expanded so did the need for good quality coking coal. Beyond the Appalachia region, many of these deposits were found in largely undeveloped areas of the West in Colorado, Wyoming and Utah. This industry brought changes in class divisions, widespread migrations, and settlement patterns that precipitated broad social changes. The coal companies’ practices and policies not only shaped, but controlled the daily living conditions of the workers and nearly every aspect of the lives of miners and their families, especially in the southern Colorado coalfields. In southern Colorado, a few large corporations dominated this heavily industrialized area. The largest of these companies was Colorado Fuel and Iron Company (CF&I) based in Pueblo, Colorado. In 1903, the Rockefeller Corporation purchased the controlling shares of CF&I. According to the Engineering and Mining Journal, approximately ten percent of Colorado’s population depended on CF&I for their livelihood in 1913, the company employed about 14,000 miners (Whiteside 1990:8-9).

In the southern Colorado coalfields, colonialism played a role in facilitating the companies’ economic expansion by ensuring control and subjugating a geographically isolated working class population, many of whom were new immigrants to the United States. The southern Colorado coalfields were located up remote canyons along the foothills of the Sangre de Cristo mountain range on the east side of the Rocky Mountains. Coal company towns dotted the landscape near the mines between the cities of Walsenburg, Colorado and Raton, New Mexico (see Figure 1). The majority of the mining activities took place in Huerfano and Las Animas counties isolated from urban or developed areas of Colorado or New Mexico (McGovern and Guttridge 1972).

The surge in immigration in the United States during the 1910s, affected ethnic compositions in the rapidly growing communities in southern Colorado. Prior to 1903, the men that moved into the region were experienced miners recruited by the companies to establish the industry in Colorado. However, as the industry grew and earlier strikes strained the labor force, companies began to actively recruit immigrants to work the mines from southern and eastern European countries. These countries were experience political and social turmoil and the promise of the “American Dream” appealed to large numbers of migrants. Most of these workers, however, were inexperienced in mining and had to learn on the job while not speaking the language. Coalmines in southern Colorado also experienced another wave of migration from Mexico as many migrants moved back into the region because of cultural or familial ties to escape the social, economic and political uncertainty brought on by the Mexican Revolution. By 1912, nearly two-thirds of the population were of non-Western European origin and most did not speak English.

At the same time that ethnic divisions in U.S. and southern Colorado were growing, many Progressive-era reformers were advocating for “Americanization” programs to train immigrants to think and act like proper middle-class Americans (Boswell 1916, 204; Hill 1919, 609; Huebner 1906, 191; Kellor 1916, 240). This translated into an effort to socially colonize the workers and their families. The concern with proper values and improving oneself and one’s family is clearly seen in the policies enacted by the Colorado Fuel & Iron. Company policy emphasized the fostering of proper American families in the camps, as disciplined and moral families translated into productive, compliant workers who would remain loyal to
the company and increase productivity, translating into higher profits (Montoya 2014; Wood 2009, 123). CF&I established kindergartens to help socialize children early into proper American life. In 1901, the company also published the first issue of *Camp and Plant*, a magazine designed as a counterpoint to the muckraking press that often challenged company ideals by exposing the contradictions found in many industrialized settings (Camp and Plant 1901-1904). *Camp and Plant* unabashedly published articles on proper education, town life, housekeeping, gardening, and childrearing with the goal of espousing propaganda that would shape good “American” workers and families. The emphasis on “Americanization” of these new immigrants and their families and paternalistic company policies and practices fostered inequities in racial, ethnic and social relationships there during the time. These policies coupled with very high proportions of migrant and foreign immigrant labor created colonizing conditions in these remote locations.

How do the environments in the CF&I company towns reflect colonial conditions? Definitions of colonialism generally outline four conditions that combined to create colonized environments. These include: political and legal domination over an alien society, relations of economic and political dependence, exploitation between imperial powers and the colony, and finally, racial and cultural inequality. Using these general categories and collapsing the first two and last two allow for a concise discussion of how these conditions manifest in the southern Colorado coalfields. Here, I discuss the political, legal and economic relationships of domination and dependence as well as the exploitive nature of that relationship, which exacerbated racial and cultural differences. Comparing the conditions in the southern Colorado coal camps to these four outlined criteria paint a stark picture of imperialism and colonialism.

**Political, Legal, and Economic Dependence and Domination**

The isolated locations of most of the coal deposits in the West coupled with the demand for large labor forces to feed the mining operations drove large numbers of immigrants from all over North America, Europe and even parts of Asia to these remote areas (Andrews 2008). The lack of pre-existing local housing, goods, and services created opportunities for the mining companies to develop colonies for the laborers and their families around the mining operations in which the company would supply the missing resources. Because of these circumstances, CF&I wielded formidable economic, political and social power in early twentieth-century Colorado and its inhabitants.

During this era in labor history, American companies practiced a form of corporate paternalism that produced dependency relationships between workers and the company that reflect a paternalistic household (Montoya 2014; Wood 2009, 123). Rockefeller viewed the labor/capital relationship as like a “typical American family.” In this view, the company stood as the head of the household and the workers were the children that relied on the company for their livelihood. The isolation of the coalmines in southern Colorado ensured the dependence of the workers on company provided goods and services. The company controlled the social and economic lives of the miners and their families. Most of the miners and their families lived in company towns within company owned houses, bought food and equipment at company stores, and alcohol at company saloons. The doctors, priests, schoolteachers, storeowners, and law enforcement were nearly all company employees. Many of the camp entrances were gated and secured by deputized armed guards (Beshoar 1957; McGovern and Guttridge 1972). Often workers’ wages were paid in company scrip, which could only be used for company services and in
company owned stores. This monopoly on access to goods and services created and reinforced the dependent relationship of workers on the company.

CF&I’s control over the political and economic scene of Las Animas and Huerfano counties was nearly total. The Sheriff of Huerfano County, Jeff Farr, was under CF&I influence and enforced company policy through force (Martelle 2007; McGuire 2009, 29). This political and legal control had serious consequences for the miners and their families. For example, in the years from 1904 to 1914, Sheriff Farr’s handpicked coroner’s juries found the coal operators to blame in only one case out of ninety-five mining related deaths (Whiteside 1990: 22). Most of the extant laws governing mining practice in the state were not only not enforced but ignored (McGuire 2009, 29). As a result, Colorado coalmines were notoriously unsafe and listed among the most dangerous in the nation, second only to Utah. Miners died in Colorado coalmines at over twice the national average. Compounding the issue, handpicked coroner’s juries absolved the coal companies of responsibility almost without exception (Whiteside 1990). Labor organizers worked to get Alias Ammons elected as Governor in an attempt to break the coal companies’ monopoly on state and local politics only to be frustrated by his ineffectual leadership and cow touting to the coal company owners once he was elected (Andrews 2008:254). In effect the companies controlled the legal and economic apparatus of the entire region. The company policy of recruiting labor from distant countries also fostered conditions of social, political and especially economic control over the inhabitants of the region that had few alternative options.

Exploitive Relationship creating Racial and Cultural Inequality

The workforce itself reflected a complex mosaic of migrant and immigrant labor. Southern Colorado reflected larger trends of immigration in the United States during this time. The need for larger labor forces due to industrialization combined with unstable governments in various parts of the world encouraged immigration into the United States at previously unheard of rates. Between 1880 and 1920, twenty-three million immigrants entered the United States, equaling approximately one-third of the population. The composition of these immigrants shifted as well. The initial wave of migrants into the southern Colorado coalfields between the 1880s and early 1900s were generally experienced who came from mining operations in the eastern United States (Andrews 2008; Wood 2002a). According to the 1900 census of the CF&I company town of Berwind, they were predominately of U.S. and northern European descent (Wood 2002a:105). They hailed from the United States and northern European countries, such as Austria, England, Scotland, and Wales (60%). The remaining 40% were Italians. Italian immigrants remained constant throughout the habitation of Berwind due largely to John Aiello, an Italian himself, who acted as a shop owner, landlord, and immigration agent (Wood 2002: 107-108). Although varied in nationality, there was an ethnic core centered in northern European culture. This ethnic composition likely facilitated a sense of community in the coal camps early on but this shifted after the 1903 labor strike.

The strike of 1903-1904 changed this ethnic composition through the expulsion of American and northern European (mostly British) strikers from the strike field. Immigrants from southern and eastern Europe replaced them. During and after the 1903-1904 strike, the company actively recruited immigrant labor from southern and eastern European countries torn by war and civil strife (Beshoar 1957). The strong support for labor organization by native-born, Italian and northern European groups shown during the 1903-1904 strike led the company to look for other ethnic groups to limit the success of further organization. Immigrants from Greece, Poland, Slovenia, Serbia, Russia, and other Eastern and
Southern European countries as well as Japan moved to Berwind (Wood 2002a). Before the 1913-1914 strike, the United Mine Workers of America counted twenty-four distinct languages in the southern coalfield camps. In 1912, 61% of the Colorado’s coal miners were of “non-western European origin” (Whiteside 1990: 48) and approximately 21 different languages were spoken in the camps. This obviously had consequences for communicating, maintaining discipline, and a creating and maintaining a sense of community within the coal camps and mines. Distrust and prejudice was rife in the coal camps along racial and ethnic lines. Company policy and rhetoric exacerbated and used these tensions. The Scotch, Welsh and Irish miners despised the newcomers and looked down upon them as inferior due to their southern and eastern European and Asian ancestry. They looked upon them not only as scabs, but as violent heathens. The newcomers, in turn, despised and distrusted each other based on ethnicity. According to Beshoar, (1957:1) “the Italians looked down on the Greeks, the Greeks scorned the Poles as social inferiors, and the latter had only contempt for the skinny-armed Mexicans.” Everyone detested the Japanese and the African Americans. The coal company operators often exploited these biases as a means to control organizing efforts (Duke and Saitta 2009, 351; Saitta 2007).

“Americanization” efforts by the company also villainized cultural practices that did not reinforce the paternalistic and Victorian norms of the time. The company sold these immigrants on the idea of the American Dream, while at the same time creating conditions similar to indentured servitude. Because the majority of workers were immigrants with few legal options or clout, the company easily exercised control over these alien groups.

The relationships of dependence created a situation that fostered exploitation. The company owners strategized to extract the maximum amount of profit by minimizing the safety, compensation, and benefits of the miners. Mine operators and owners ignored labor laws compromising miner safety and were regularly accused of shorting miners at the scales. In addition, the practice of closed labor camps, forced miners and their families to depend on the company for every aspect of their livelihood while inflating prices and limiting services, reinforced the exploitative relationship. As noted earlier, most workers had recently emigrated from political situations that were untenable and could not return. They were trapped in this exploitive relationship with few options but to seek work elsewhere where situations were likely the same or worse.

Applying a Decolonizing Methodology at Ludlow

The Colorado Coalfield War Archaeological Project (CCWAP) formed to focus an archaeological lens on the social and material conditions of these laborers and their families during this turbulent time of widespread industrial growth and corporate imperialism in America. The CCWAP began as a collaboration between three academic institutions (The University of Denver, SUNY Binghamton, and Fort Lewis College) and the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA). In forming this collaboration, project archaeologists began a multi-year quest to study the material culture of class-conflict associated with industrial America in a collaborative and inclusive way. Project archaeologists were interested in using archaeology to examine a very different aspect of industrialization—that of the social, political, and economic conditions surrounding labor unrest, the efficacy of the collective action of multiple social and ethnic groups resulting in the strike, and the strike’s impact on the people who participated. In other words, the CCWAP sought to critically examine the material conditions surrounding social and economic inequality, the impact of collective action on the dominant forces of capital and the economic impact of the strike on everyday life using the archaeology of this labor strike.
Beyond these academic goals, the Ludlow Collective began with the goal of practicing a public archaeology and that goal continues today (Duke and Saitta 2009, 351). In the view of the Ludlow Collective, practicing a public archaeology “entails knowing the world, critiquing the world, and changing the world” (Ludlow Collective 2001, 94-107:95). For project archaeologists, this necessitates engaging the archaeology of the Ludlow strike and massacre with contemporary issues and creating opportunities for advocacy.

Historical archaeology offers a very productive arena for examining the relationships between and among social consciousness, lived experience, and the material conditions. In other words, historical archaeology allows scholars to dig deeper into the social, political and economic realities of all sectors of society because it concentrates on the intersection of identity, experience and the material conditions. Practiced correctly, the discipline of archaeology does not have the embedded biases of history. Project archaeologists employed several theoretical or methodological tactics to limit bias. One of these tactics included examined the agency of these often un-represented populations through their material culture. The archaeological remains at the Ludlow tent colony and the coal camp at Berwind presented a unique opportunity to study a labor struggle from many perspectives. As a short term occupation by an ethnically diverse population of workers that was abandoned quickly under catastrophic condition, the archaeological record is rich. Historical archaeology offers a critical avenue for integrating documents and material culture to expose the tangible struggles of workers and the realities of day-to-day home and work life. It can “capture both the consciousness and material conditions that formed the lived experiences of working families,”(McGuire 2014, 259-271:261). We were interested in furthering the dialogue surrounding the archaeological examination of power differentials related to class, gender, and ethnicity. Because the ethnic diversity of the workers and their families at the coal camps and strikers’ tent colony reflected the larger trends in industrialized America at the time, it provided a microcosm for looking at larger trends. We also constructed our research methodologies to focus on the material conditions related to industrial conflict. Finally, we worked to make this research relevant to contemporary society and practice a public archaeology.

Three of the project’s overarching goals and guiding methodology directly relate to framing this research within a decolonizing approach. First, by looking at the everyday material remains of the workers and their families, project archaeologist shifted the focus from the industry and their leaders to the everyday social, political, and economic impacts and struggles that affected the workers and their families in the early 1900s. In this goal, we sought to humanize the story and provide a rich and varied context that incorporated often-disenfranchised voices into the narrative. In her important contribution to decolonizing studies, Tuhiwai Smith encourages scholars to get past the “sanitary, innocent” past and re-insert agency (Smith 2012: 29-39). By shifting our focus to women, children, ethnic minorities, and lower socio-economic class groups related to a labor struggle, we attempted to achieve the goal of humanizing history and re-inserting agency. Second, project archaeologists sought to incorporate our theoretical and scholarly goals with political ones. Dean Saitta explains in discussing this project “[t]he question is not whether archaeology is political, but how it is so” (Saitta 2007:2). In this case, examining the social impacts of the American capitalist economic system from the time allows us to critically evaluate the real consequences of economic and political policies and practices in the past and apply this knowledge to the present and future. He explains that because archaeology is embedded in society, in that it contributes to constructions of knowledge, it has political currency (Saitta 2007:2). This fact required project archaeologists to be mindful and critical of entrenched biases, take responsibility for our role in
constructing knowledge and do so in ethical and reflexive ways. The researchers of this project wanted to use the past to engage contemporary politics. This leads to the last goal, which was to practice an inclusive, diverse and ethical archaeology that can act as a positive force for social engagement and transformation. In this way, the project could participate in healing and reconciliation efforts as well as engaging our research to affect change. Project archaeologists agreed that we wanted to challenge assumptions and seek deeper understandings from broad and varied perspectives. We wanted to foster public engagement with the materials and narratives. In other words, practice a public archaeology. We believed that this in turn would lead to an inclusive, reflexive and impactful archaeology. We sought to engage multiple audiences in the construction of knowledge and make these new interpretations of the past relevant to multiple audiences including descendant communities, unionized workers, scholars, educators, students, policy makers, and the public. In doing so, we hoped to create spaces to identify, address and hopefully address unresolved historical trauma and correct inaccurate and damaging representations of the past.

In April of 2013, Governor John Hickenlooper signed Executive Order B2013 003 establishing the Ludlow Centennial Commemoration Commission. This commission formed to help commemorate the 100-year anniversary of the strike and Ludlow Massacre. The commission developed from an informal and ad hoc statewide committee that had been meeting since the summer of 2012. Commission members included a diverse group of members including historians, archaeologists, museum professionals, a representative from the Colorado National Guard, and an official from the United Mine Workers of America. Our goal was to offer an open forum to explore a wide variety of ideas on how to commemorate the 100-year anniversary of the strike and massacre. Dean Saitta and Karin Larkin from the Ludlow Collective served on this statewide commission, which sought to raise awareness of contemporary labor and ethnic struggles using the Ludlow Massacre as a tool to highlight the efficacy of collective action and point out complications related to class and ethnic disparities in today's society. In participating on the Statewide Commission, we publicly acknowledge the political nature of our archaeological project. As part of the commission, we helped to sponsor public lectures that drew connections between Ludlow and contemporary issues like healthcare, social inequality, and the political disenfranchisement of immigrants. This appointment allowed us to politicize Ludlow within the extant political structure and provide outreach in a far more public arena. This opportunity played a role in how we were able to continue and expand the original goals of the project to use archaeology as a vehicle for advocacy.

Humanizing the Past and Creating an Inclusive Archaeology

Perhaps the first step in decolonizing historical archaeology and creating an inclusive, impactful, and engaged scholarship is to humanize the past and history. A humanized past moves beyond “official” narratives of history and expands these viewpoints to incorporate disenfranchised voices into a more inclusive narrative. Beyond that, a humanized past entails that scholars embrace oppressed narratives and work to give them voice and agency using sensitive and inclusive approaches. Finally a humanized past incorporates and empowers descendant communities’ narratives. The CCWAP worked to humanize the past through an inclusive project design, activities of the Ludlow Centennial Commemoration Commission, and through the material culture of the Ludlow Tent Colony and the Berwind coal camp as recovered using archaeology.
The project design of the CCWAP included seeking out and examining the material culture of people who are often left out of the official narrative. Typically, those left out of the official narratives include ethnic minorities and the poor. However, other disenfranchised voices also often involve women and children. One of the most moving and impactful aspects of Ludlow’s story was that it involved families—in particular women and children. Women and children had been an important force in all aspects of Colorado coal-mining life and they played active roles in the strike efforts as well. Women and children worked, organized, marched, fought, and went on strike alongside the men. Yet their stories of daily life and struggle are often untold and undervalued. Their presence is seen and felt in historic photographs of the time, however, it is in the material culture excavated by the project that we begin to uncover their real, un-posed, stories. When we look at their belongings, they look remarkably normal. By looking at the objects they left behind, we see a typical story of domestic American life. Things like a child’s shoe, a porcelain doll’s head, a fine set a china, toy tea sets and a baby’s bottle are touching, identifiable reminders of normalcy. They also emphasize the Victorian morals of the time espoused by middle-class American society and actively encouraged by company policy. However, they were found in the burnt remains of the cellars of the striking miners’ tent colony. In this context, they paint a picture of everyday domestic life interrupted by violence and strife.

When practicing a public archaeology, these touching reminders resonate with the public in ways that history books or technical archaeological reports cannot. During the excavations at Ludlow, project managers made a point to regularly greet visitors to the site and give tours. A sign on the side of Interstate 25 indicating the exit for the “Ludlow Massacre” drew a fair number of people off the highway. Some knew the history and made special trips to see what we were digging up (literally and figuratively). Others saw the word “massacre” and assumed it was part of Colorado’s unsavory past with Native American tribes in the region. This latter group easily made up half to three-quarters of the visitors to the site. They were half-right! It was part of Colorado’s unsavory past, but a past related to the labor history that needs to be told and remembered. The struggle of the strikers can and should inform contemporary social life, because the same issues they fought for still resonate. Yet, the high percentage of visitors who did not know this history was striking. Because of this lack of knowledge of the event, project directors felt an ethical obligation to educate the public about the history and archaeology of the Ludlow Massacre. Project directors made sure to tell the inclusive and humanized version of the past, show visitors around the site and let them physically interact with the history. We set up mini exhibits to introduce the visitors to these touching and identifiable reminders (see figure #2). Touching the objects that were used by the strikers and their families, often times created a connection to the past both physical and emotional. As part of a Colorado State Historical Fund grant we worked with the UMWA to create a series of interpretive panels that are now installed at the site to provide information on the history, timeline, the role of the UMWA, and the archaeology when visitors stop.

Another aspect of the CCWAP research design included using various lines of evidence to help augment or correct the “official” histories. We used the congressional hearings from after the massacre and oral histories combined with the archaeology to continue humanizing the past. By broadening our methodology and incorporating alternative lines of evidence from various perspectives, accounts of the cellars offer an excellent example of an alternative and inclusive interpretation. In the “official” histories, guardsmen claim that strikers used the cellars beneath their tents to store ammunition as well as protect themselves from future conflicts. Historians note that there is little historical evidence for
these claims aside from some of the primary sources related to the company literature and propaganda. Take for instance a map created by the militia after the massacre and strike that purports to show the location where a stockpile of arms (See Figure 3). Company and militia oral accounts from the time suggest that strikers were heavily armed and that they stockpiled weapons and ammunition. One excerpt from the 22nd Annual Report of the Colorado Fuel and Iron company stated that:

Strikers only surrendered a portion of their arms...First delivery to state militia was 15 guns that were of 'obsolete pattern.' A few more were from time to time obtained, but at no time were the strikers’ forces without a full equipment of arms and ammunition, which kept in hiding. CF&I 1914

However, if we juxtapose the “official” record with testimony from the strikers and the archaeological record, a very different picture emerges. Examining the strikers’ historic accounts regarding the use of cellars suggest multiple functions, but personal protection of the strikers and their families was most likely the basic function. Pregnant women exemplified this sense of security in their use of cellars as an area to give birth rather than in the tent on the surface (USCIR 1916: 8188). One cellar was often refered to as the “birthing cellar/chamber” in the oral testimonies. Children often slept in the cellars as bedrooms and their parents instructed them to hide in the cellars if the colony was under attack (Andrews 2008; McGovern and Guttridge 1972). This belief caused many families to dive into cellars during the National Guard attack on April 20, 1914. Mrs. Margaret Dominiske sought shelter in a neighbor’s cellar to avoid bullets (USCIR 1916: 8186). Mrs. Costa, one of the victims of the massacre objected to Mary Petrucci’s suggestion of leaving the cellar for a safer location, feeling they were as secure as possible (USCIR 1916: 8194), which unfortunately led to her and her children’s death.

Other accounts by the militia recall a much more militaristic and offensive stance by the strikers. Lt. Col. Edward Boughton speaking about the Ludlow Massacre stated, “You must know, gentlemen, ladies and gentlemen, that in front of the colony on all sides were located carefully constructed earthworks, rifle pits, constructed in such a position as that any return of fire from them was drawn right into the colony.” (USICR 1916: 6367). In addition, Capt. Van Cise supported such an interpretation of offensive capabilities in the colony by acknowledging that strikers did excavate cellars for their women and children to hide in, but argues they also used rifle pits on the sides and inside the colony to attack any soldiers positioned in the colony in addition to the cellars (USCIR 1916: 7328). Lt. Karl Linderfelt contributed to the misconception of rifle pits within the Ludlow colony in stating that he entered the Ludlow colony in an attempt to save women and children trapped in tents and cellars, but was fired upon from rifle pits in the colony (USCIR 1916: 6894). He also stated that the rifle pits for the most part were located on the south and east sides of the colony (USCIR 1916: 6892). Given such descriptions of their existence and their location, archaeologists should have identified rifle pits as well as cellars in the archaeological record of the Ludlow strikers’ colony.

The project spent a good portion of the first couple of seasons examining and testing the historical accounts of the presence of rifle pits. Project archaeologists even tested a couple possibilities for rifle pits on the southern edge of the colony. However, the archaeological record provided no evidence for the presence of rifle pits. The lack of archaeological evidence at the Ludlow colony is buttressed by an absence of discussion of rifle pits outside of the guardsmen. No other individual in the archival record describes or even suggests the presence or existence of rifle pits. Examining the strikers’ narrative of the
use of cellars in conjunction with the archaeological record, it is clear that the colonists had a very
different, more defensive intention with the construction of pits or cellars.

By looking at the everyday material remains of the workers and their families, project archaeologist
shifted the discussion and focus from the industry and its leaders to the lived social, political, and
economic impacts of these policies on the workers and their families in their day-to-day lives. In this, we
sought to provide a rich and varied context that incorporated the disenfranchised voices of these
women and children into the narrative and make them visible and correct misconceptions perpetuated
by the dominant history. Narratives describing the labor struggle, immigrant experience, the work and
social life of women, and the education and lives of children in the coal camps and strike, adds new
dimensions that complete and enrich the story of the past. Several project archaeologists have
examined these alternative narratives in their research (Chicone 2009, 161; Gray 2009, 219; Horn 2009,
remains we found, including miner’s identification tags, children’s toys, babies’ bottles, and fine china
dishes, focus our attention on the human toll of life and loss at Ludlow. The archaeology offers
researchers and the public alike the opportunity to see, touch and relate to the past in different and
more concrete ways.

Beyond examining the material culture, project archaeologists also designed project methodology to
incorporate and work with descendant communities to ensure our constructions of knowledge
augmented narratives in impactful and reconciliatory ways. We recognize that our work is a form of
memory and advocacy adding new depth and dimension to the political landscape and the narrative of
the descendant communities involved. Here, I use ‘communities’ because the project recognizes
multiple descendant communities with which we had a desire and ethical obligation to engage and
collaborate. Project archaeologists were careful to differentiate the lineal descendants of the strikers
and their families from the community of struggle that unionized laborers of southern Colorado
represented. The second represents a descendant community that shares the goal of memorializing the
Ludlow Massacre and making the lessons visible and relevant. Project archaeologists incorporated both
descendant groups into the overall project design and narrative, but emphasized the descendant
community of struggle.

Union workers, particularly those of the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA), represent an
important descendant community and collaborator. Not only does the UMWA own the property that
houses the former Ludlow Tent Colony, they also gave project archaeologists permission to try to
uncover their portion of the past. Project directors spent nearly two years planning the project and
working with the UMWA to establish a mutually beneficial project (McGuire and Larkin 2009, 1). This
relationship continues nearly 13 years after the active fieldwork has ended. UMWA members and
officials are still open to and supportive of the project. Over the years, project leaders have stood beside
UMWA officials to speak at annual memorial services (see figure 4), lobby for labor issues to local and
state politicians, and work to establish the Ludlow Centennial Commemoration. We worked closely with
the UMWA to create an exhibit at the 100-year memorial service using the archaeological materials and
participate in designing commemoration events that fit within the goals and needs of the UMWA. We
recognize our role as stewards of the materials remains excavated during the project but owned by the
UMWA and their importance in commemoration and memory.
The memory of the Ludlow massacre plays an important role in efforts for commemoration, advocacy, learning, and healing. Union members throughout the state and nation still reference the events of the 1913-14 strike and massacre in contemporary struggles for workplace reform and basic human rights. Annually, union members march and hold memorial services to commemorate the sacrifice and gains these strikers and their families made for workers’ rights. Speeches by union leaders also reference the event to discuss contemporary issues. Some lineal descendants of the striking miners also come to the memorial each year. Their primary interest is in a personal and familial memorialization of the strike and massacre. Some speak on behalf of their family and draw out these direct connections to the past, but most attend to reestablish a connection to the familial heritage and honor their ancestors’ roles in the social changes that followed. However, most visitors during the memorial events are pilgrims revisiting a site of historical trauma². They were making a pilgrimage to see the remnants of sacrifice that were made for them. They illustrate that Ludlow can serve as a site of knowledge making and remembering in the process of commemoration, learning and healing. Amy Lonetree explains that tribal museums can act as sites of knowledge building and remembering while at the same time educating the public. I argue here, the site of the Ludlow Massacre and the commemoration events accomplish the same goals for the working class and immigrant communities served. Unfortunately, many of the rights and freedoms that the strikers and their families fought for are still unresolved or have resurfaced in today’s political, economic, and social landscape. A decolonizing practice must assist these descendant communities in addressing historical grief and “[cut] through the veil of silence around colonialism and its consequence,” (Lonetree 2012:5) using our research. A decolonizing methodology must also inform advocacy and policy change around contemporary structural inequalities related to class, gender, and ethnicity. The Commission provided a platform for doing this work through public lectures and events that highlighted the contemporary relevance of this history.

Our failed attempts at using the archaeological record to study ethnic diversity in the strikers’ tent colony provides a lesson in how remembering can offer paths toward healing and reconciliation. One of our original project goals was to try to identify the locations of the numerous ethnic groups that archival documents and census records demonstrate lived in the coal camps. Oral histories and census records note that various groups tended to congregate, work together and live together in the coal camps (Larkin et al. 2005; Margolis 1985). Project archaeologists originally designed our excavations to identify those same sorts of communities in the tent colony at Ludlow. We looked for evidence of ethnic groupings at the colony by looking for identifiable ethnic material culture markers that might indicate ethnic communities within the tent colony. However, we failed to recognize any meaningful patterns or separate ethnic groups in the archaeological record (Larkin et al. 2005). Do you know why?

When we looked at the ethnographic accounts and oral histories that people told of life in the tent colonies during the strike they relate a time where people ignored these ethnic differences and worked together towards a greater benefit. They had a common cause that united the community and forgot some of the ethnic distinctions because at the time they were not important. Everyone regardless of ethnicity had the same basic needs that they were working to attain. Basic human needs that crosscut these arbitrary ethnic and cultural lines. This was a time of unity and solidarity. Over time, those bonds

² I use this term as defined by Lakota scholar and social worker Maria Yellow Horse Brave Heart who defines it as “cumulative emotional and psychological wounding over the lifespan and across generations, emanating from massive group trauma experiences,” in Historical Trauma Response among Natives and Its Relationship with Substance Abuse” pg. 7
have been forgotten as people were thrown back into the grind of daily life and hard work in the coal mines. This unity across ethnic and cultural lines is one important lesson of this event that we should work hard to remember, not forget. In 2015, I had the opportunity to speak at an annual UWMA memorial event and used these data as a reminder of the power of solidarity across gender and ethnic lines (Larkin 2015).

This example in particular shows how archaeology needs the stories and input of the descendant community to help us interpret the archaeological record. At the same time, we need to give back. For our part, we attempted to help these descendants in a variety of ways, such as marking graves of ancestors and correcting errors on the labeling of historical photographs. The collaboration with these direct historical descendants helps to expand and diversify the narratives as well as add personal narratives that humanize the archaeological remains and the past. Hearing the accounts of the survivors and their stories of struggle, loss, and survival as well as being able to touch a material reminder of this struggle resonates in a way that “official” historical accounts cannot accomplish. This collaboration also proves that if people with different backgrounds, knowledge and histories come together, it can be a powerful tool for advocacy. Archaeologists working with descendant communities can help tell these stories and remind people of the important lessons we have learned from the past. Archaeologists can also provide some of the “evidence” that policy makers need to recognize change is required, while the descendant communities have the histories and connections to make it personal and relevant. If we work together, maybe we can create a strong unified voice for advocacy.

Engaging in the Past with the Present to Practice an Impactful Archaeology

Another facet of practicing an impactful archaeology, and one of the most rewarding aspects of our fieldwork, is to bring this decolonized past to the public and engage it with contemporary issues. Research on decolonizing methodology points out the importance of not only unearthing and recording structural inequality in the past, but using that knowledge to challenge those systems and work to enact long-term structural change (Lonetree 2012; Mallon 2012; Smith 2012). An important step in decolonizing the past is in “speaking the hard truths” (Lonetree 2012:5) in the service of creating spaces for dialogue, understanding, healing, and reconciliation. To challenge the unequal structures of contemporary society, scholars will need to integrate the hard truths of the past into contemporary political and social issues, as well as bring them into the public realm. In order to do this, scholars will have to not only incorporate these narratives into classroom curriculum but also move outside the academic bubble and make the past political.

Our experiences with visitors to the site was that the public has an interest and investment in this history, once they know about it. Project archaeologists agreed an important aspect of our work involves education both in the classroom and in the community. To create a society of critically thoughtful and politically engaged citizens, we need to invest in educating our students and public first about the untold history and unresolved traumas and then about how these inform their social and political lives. By educating both students and the public, we hope to collaborate on how to enact change. Yet, when I ask students in class if they have heard of the Ludlow Massacre only one or two hands shoot up even though at least 75% of them have attended Colorado schools. This is appalling and disheartening. Yes, this history is unsavory and, frankly, embarrassing for the “powers that be.” However, it also marked an important turning point for US labor relations. Furthermore, these embarrassing hard truths resonate with contemporary social and economic problems. If we expect the
upcoming generations to have the skills to deal with these problems, we, as educators, need to give them the toolset. As part of the larger CCWAP, as well as the Ludlow Centennial Commemoration Commission, several scholars of Ludlow have attempted to create both the space and the tools for change through pedagogy and outreach. To this end, project archaeologists have worked with other scholars to create curriculum that explores the larger social issues of Ludlow using immersive and engaging methods (Maher and Larkin 2015; Clark and Casella 2009, 331). For example, Larkin collaborated with Matthew Maher, a historian, to create an open source interactive role-playing classroom activity that uses primary sources, archival records, historical accounts, and archaeological data to examine all sides of the strike (Maher and Larkin 2015). Other project archaeologists have created interactive digital atlases, elementary school curricula, or websites to offer educational resources, which are all free and accessible to the public (Jacobson 2006; Ludlow Collective 2007; Ludlow Collective 2018). As noted above, project archaeologists worked with the UMWA to create outdoor interpretive panels at the Ludlow Massacre site to offer information about the Union, the strike and its timeline, the tent colony, and the archaeology (Larkin 2005). These materials help interpret the site incorporating the various voices and lines of evidence.

Project researchers wanted to aid in the Union message and goals. We endeavored to use the past to engage contemporary politics and social issues at local, state and where appropriate national levels. The UMWA actively uses the site in retelling the hard truths and evoking this past in the service of igniting advocacy in correcting contemporary structural inequalities. In fact, the UMWA has a history of using this narrative. The UMWA purchased the 40 acres containing and surrounding the site of the Ludlow colony shortly after the strike and massacre of 1913-14. UMWA President White officially proposed a memorial for the site at the 1916 convention, which passed. Later that year, several hundred coal miners met at the site of Ludlow in commemoration of the massacre and joined the union. Regular commemorations have been held at the site thereafter. The monument, dedicated May 30, 1918, stands as a visual reminder of the historical trauma suffered by the working class immigrants and their families at Ludlow (UMWJ 1918). In further service to safeguarding the memory of historical trauma, the Death Pit was preserved. Every year in early June, the UMWA holds a memorial service where they invoke this memory of the collective action of the strikers, their sacrifice, and the events surrounding the strike and massacre to illustrate the importance and relevance of these same struggles today. This descendant community maintains the physical monument erected to their fallen brothers and sisters and the spirit of the memory by organizing the memorial service and making the struggle of the 1913-1914 strike and massacre part of their active union struggle. They invoke the past addressing contemporary social and political inequities. Project archaeologists have actively participated in this every year since the inception of the project. The work of the Ludlow Centennial Commemoration Commission, provided a relevant platform to continue and further this work. Many of the stories, struggles, and inequities surrounding the relations at Ludlow are recognizable in today’s political structure and discourse. Xenophobia, apathy to working class struggles, lack of adequate healthcare, political disenfranchisement of the working class and immigrant populations (just to name a few) are all prominent problems discussed in today’s news cycles.

In addition, participation in the Ludlow Centennial Commemoration Commission allowed members to leverage interdisciplinary public forums for exploring the above mentioned social issues in innovative and publically engaging venues such as: museum exhibits, theatrical performances, art exhibits, an all-campus reads, authors’ talks, and public lectures. These interdisciplinary and cross platform programing
and pedagogy were far more impactful than a college professor simply delivering lectures on the topic to anthropology and history majors. They reached multiple audiences with multiple learning preferences. They touched on history, archaeology, fiction, art, performance, politics, and ethics to humanize the past through non-traditional collaborations in new and innovative ways that would not have occurred if we had not engaged in public scholarship. As educators and commission members, we were able to use the project data with these other non-traditional methods to speak these hard truths and draw connections between the events of Ludlow and contemporary social and political issues both in the classroom and beyond. The Commission provided a forum to expand these efforts beyond the classroom, reach a statewide audience, and politicize them.

Conclusions
The example of the Ludlow project offers one potential model for practicing a decolonizing archaeology. Even though the industrial setting is not an obvious colonial environment, the realities of corporate paternalism and social inequality coupled with the large immigrant population created that environment. Recognizing the fact of imperialistic domination in unlikely contexts opens new avenues for decolonizing work. In the case of the strike and Ludlow Massacre, applying a decolonizing methodology from the inception of the project allowed the project archaeologists an opportunity to use our research to create spaces for expanding the narratives, applying the research in the service of advocacy, and actively participating in addressing structural inequalities through our participation on the Ludlow Centennial Commemoration Commission.

By examining the history and archaeology of the Ludlow Tent Colony, the political nature of the past is glaringly clear. In fact, the colony itself was a political statement that embodied the unheard and oppressed voices of the flawed social, economic, and political structure of the southern Colorado coal industry. Since our work has political currency and contributes to the constructions of knowledge, archaeologists have ethical responsibilities to speak the hard truths and create a space to promote healing and understanding in wider colonialist. Through our research, project archaeologists explored social issues like, poverty, constructing or maintaining identities, structural inequality, ethnic divisions, and how laborers negotiated the pressure to become “Americans” (Chicone 2009, 161; Duke and Saitta 2009, 351; Gray 2009, 219; Jacobson 2009, 187; Larkin 2009, 69; McGuire and Larkin 2009, 1; McGuire and Reckner 2002, 44-58; McGuire 2008; McGuire 2014, 259-271; Saitta 2007; Walker 2009, 311). We also focused on the lived material realities of working class workers and families as well as the contributions of working-class women in coal camps (Chicone 2009, 161; Clark and Casella 2009, 331; Gray 2009, 219; Horn 2009, 251; Larkin et al. 2005; Larkin and McGuire 2009; Moore 2009, 285; Wood 2009, 123; Wood 2002a; Wood 2004). We all recognized that because the past is political, we must be mindful and critical of entrenched biases, take responsibility for our role in constructing knowledge, and so so in ethical and reflexive ways. In other words, we worked hard to practice a critical archaeology that reached beyond the Ivory Tower to the public realm. From the beginning, project archaeologists agreed that we wanted to challenge assumptions and seek deeper understandings from broad and varied perspectives while also making those accessible outside the academic bubble, the Ludlow Centennial Commemoration Commission provided a public forum to explore the contemporary relevance of our collective research.

These reflections on my involvement with the Ludlow Collective of archaeologists and Commission members and working alongside Union representatives, lawmakers, descendant communities, and
students have shaped my understanding and practice of creating an inclusive, impactful and engaged public scholarship. By developing a project that worked toward contesting imbalanced narratives of the past, created a space to address historical trauma with descendant communities, and engage the past with contemporary social and political issues, the scholarship created a rich tapestry of information sharing, advocacy and outreach. The Ludlow Centennial Commemoration Commission helped to develop interdisciplinary narratives and varied audiences that could not exist sequestered in the academic realm. An important aspect of this decolonizing work involved education both in the classroom and community. To create a society of critically thoughtful and politically engaged adults, we need to invest in educating our students as well as the public first about the untold or subverted history and unresolved traumas, then about how these inform their social and political lives, and finally collaborate on how to enact change.

This project has proven repeatedly that what we do matters. Scholars can make a positive impact in contemporary society IF we make the effort to decolonize, collaborate, politicize, and reach out to engage our research with contemporary issues and communities. This short discussion of some aspects of our work introduces a few ways we have done this but we still have a long ways to go. One episode that occurred during a public lecture by one author of the history of Ludlow at a Commemoration event illustrates this point only too well. During a public presentation of this author’s book, one of the lineal descendants offered information that had been passed down in her family related to the “Death Pit.” According to her family’s recollection, her great aunt, who was heavily pregnant during the massacre gave birth in the cellar just before her death. This author told her flat out that her family’s recollection was wrong. There is no historical documentation to support that version of the story. The descendant was rightfully offended and angry. She questioned why her family’s oral account was not as valid as the official historical documentation. Her question raises a valid point. What are considered “acceptable” lines of evidence? Why should scholars prioritize written documents over descendant’s accounts? Or should they? This story begs the question of who is allowed to be the authority. If we as scholars cannot accept alternative lines of evidence and narratives then we will be bound to the “official” histories that reinforce colonial narratives. This example also illustrates how and why scholars can become viewed as “out of touch” and unsympathetic. If we have the goal of humanizing the narratives, we need to humanize our approach to research and recognize the importance of creating strong, equal relationships with our communities. A relationship that is built on respect, open dialogue, and lacking artificial power positions. In other words, practice decolonizing scholarship. The approach of the CCWAP to work closely with various descendant communities created the type of relationship I describe and can hopefully provide a model for better practice.

Let’s not forget the lessons of Ludlow. In working together, union member, archaeologist, laborer, historian, community member and student we are more powerful together than divided. Together maybe we can help continue the important work that these striking families started and we can carry their stories forward to decolonize the history and affect change.
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Figures:

Figure 1: Locations of coal camps and tent colonies in southern Colorado coalfields.

Figure 2: On Left: Exhibit of archaeological artifacts at site during memorial service. On Right: Visitors to site during excavations.
Figure 3: Militia map showing Ludlow striker’s tent colony with key features labeled. The area circled in red reads “supposed to be the cellar where guns were stored.” Courtesy of Bessemer Historical Society.

Figure 4: Dean Saitta speaking at annual commemoration event.