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Review of *Chasing the Glitter: Black Hills Milling, 1874- 1959* By Richmond L. Clow

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Chasing the Glitter: Black Hills Milling, 1874-1959. By Richmond L. Clow. Pierre: South Dakota State Historical Society Press, 2002. xii + 202 pp. Photographs, notes, bibliographic essay, index. \$59.95 cloth, \$29.95 paper.

In the 1800s, the American Gold Rush shifted from California and Nevada to Colorado, and then to South Dakota. The search for gold, and the wealth and profits it brought, helped develop the American West. Richard Clow's *Chasing the Glitter: Black Hills Milling, 1874-1959* tells the story of Black Hills gold mining in South Dakota. Drawn from successful mining ventures in California, Nevada, and Colorado, gold miners and investors hoped to strike it rich again in the Black Hills. But only by milling and extracting the gold trapped in tons of hard-rock ore could these companies and their investors make a profit. In *Chasing Glitter*, Clow portrays the struggle to extract Black Hills gold by examining the development of these milling operations.

The story of Black Hills milling involves the increasing need for large investment, costly and complex machinery, and scientific mining engineers. The gold was in the Black Hills, but the problem was how to extract it from low-grade ore. Because profit margins were always narrow, constant advances in gold-milling technology were required for companies to make a profit. Amalgamation, smelting, and cyanidation were the major milling techniques used for extraction. Clow traces the history of Black Hills milling through the development of increasingly sophisticated technology adapted to local conditions.

With the development of cyanidation in the 1890s, Black Hills gold mining boomed. Between 1895 and 1900, gold production doubled. In the early 1900s, the Homestake Mining Company in Lead, South Dakota, was the largest gold producer in the world. Just as California, Nevada, and Colorado gold mining operations helped develop new mining and milling technologies, so too did Black Hills gold mining.

Driven by the “chase for glitter,” progress in milling technology helped make the Black Hills into a major gold mining region in the world. These old Black Hills mills, still dotting the South Dakota landscape, provide ample evidence of the importance of gold mining to the settling and development of the West and the Great Plains. Clow’s *Chasing Glitter* helps bring these old mills to life, telling their story and the larger history of Black Hills gold mining.

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