

BOOK REVIEW

Karl Wolzak, *No Royalty No Deal: The story of Royce (Bill) William Allen – Prospector*, Karl Wolzak, utilising digitalprintaustralia.com, 2019, ISBN: 978-0646-80006-6.

This book presents a narrative for two types of reader, the average, who knows little about mining and prospecting and the knowledgeable, who knows the game. The early mining history of Big Bell and the Barbara will interest even the average but where the Bullfinch mine history includes Western Mining Company it is probably too much and they are likely to put down the book and try again later. This could have been shortened to a precis without detracting from the story of Bill. The same applies to the Golden Cities and KBRL stories where a lot of the information does not apply to Bill. Even the experienced eyes may glaze over here.

The narrative of such a man is otherwise an entertaining and well written story of an indomitable if flawed character, His drinking is dealt with empathetically, and his family life equally so.

It is particularly valuable in its detail of early basic prospecting, recognising country, pegging, loaming, shaft sinking, driving and extracting the gold, rarely done by prospectors nowadays. Again, it is fascinating as Bill progresses from that early phase, bough shed camp and all too sharp negotiations with small and large mining companies. luck of the game is detailed in the wins and losses. Contemporary figures have affirmed the sheer prospecting ability of the man and his propensity to drive a hard bargain for his leases. An editor would have corrected the typos such as the misspelling of Moorine Rock and introduced a relationship of Bill's Widgiemooltha mine to Larkinville, which really detract little from the story.

The glossary is helpful, but it could have been enlarged to include a number of terms the general reader would not know, while the index is a welcome addition.

Overall, the author has presented a 'heroic' picture of the trials and tribulations of a hard-working mining character, who from humble beginnings achieved much in the field of prospecting, and who showed that intuition and accumulated knowledge could sometimes outwit and surprise the professional technician. It is a very entertaining book and valuable as a history of a classic 'learn-on-the job' Goldfields success story and the evolution of prospecting.

John Rees