



# Mass Destruction: The Men and Giant Mines That Wired America and Scarred the Planet

*Timothy J. LeCain*

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*The place:* The steep mountains outside Salt Lake City. *The time:* The first decade of the twentieth century. *The man:* Daniel Jackling, a young metallurgical engineer. *The goal:* A bold new technology that could provide billions of pounds of cheap copper for a rapidly electrifying America. *The result:* Bingham's enormous "Glory Hole," the first large-scale open-pit copper mine, an enormous chasm in the earth and one of the largest humanmade artifacts on the planet. *Mass Destruction* is the compelling story of Jackling and the development of open-pit hard rock mining, its role in the wiring of an electrified America, as well its devastating environmental consequences.

Mass destruction mining soon spread around the nation and the globe, providing raw materials essential to the mass production and mass consumption that increasingly defined the emerging "American way of life." At the dawn of the last century, Jackling's open pit replaced immense but constricted underground mines that probed nearly a mile beneath the earth, to become the ultimate symbol of the modern faith that science and technology could overcome all natural limits. A new culture of mass destruction emerged that promised nearly infinite supplies not only of copper, but also of coal, timber, fish, and other natural resources.

*But, what were the consequences?* Timothy J. LeCain deftly analyzes how open-pit mining continues to affect the environment in its ongoing devastation of nature and commodification of the physical world. The nation's largest toxic Superfund site would be one effect, as well as other types of environmental dead zones around the globe. Yet today, as the world's population races toward American levels of resource consumption, truly viable alternatives to the technology of mass destruction have not yet emerged.

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