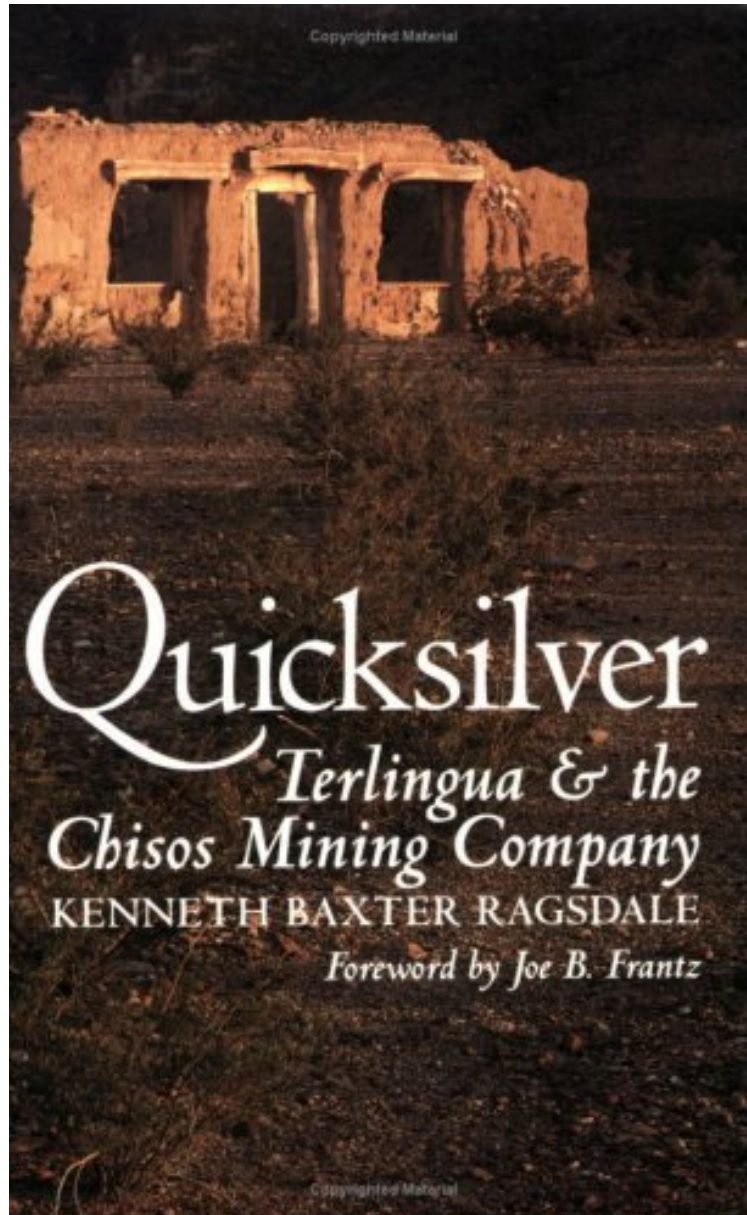


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## Quicksilver: Terlingua and the Chisos Mining Company

*Kenneth Baxter Ragsdale*

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**Kenneth Baxter Ragsdale : Quicksilver: Terlingua and the Chisos Mining Company** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Quicksilver: Terlingua and the Chisos Mining Company:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. fascinating, nuanced, local history By Michael C. Walker Terlingua was a very remote town in south-western Texas in the Big Bend region--a town that only came to exist because

deposits of mercury were found in the area. This book tells of the history of this remote mining town and the Chicago-bred "quicksilver" baron, Howard Perry, who founded it and ran it for years almost as a feudal lord more than a businessman. Well-researched and with an emphasis on ethnic conflict between white Americans and Mexican workers in the area that is welcome but surprising considering the book was written in the late 1970s before ethnocultural/labor studies historiography was much in style with mainstream historians in the South, this book is a very crucial volume to anyone interested in western Texas, the Big Bend, mining history, or company towns. The writing is strong, inviting, and while not of the nearly-novel-like trend some contemporary historians take on, it's a book you'll find hard to put down if you're into the topic. Dr. Ragsdale has apparently written several other books on Texan history which I now am keen to read. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A must for Terlingua visitors. By James Pertain I have visited Terlingua and heard about and saw the remains of the mining company. This book gave a tremendous insight into what went into all this. Though a lot of information is repeated in different contexts, it was very informative. I would recommend this to anyone who's going to Terlingua or has been there. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Unique fascinating history of quicksilver mining. By Mountainaxe This book explores, as nowhere else, the history of commercial mercury production in the Big Bend area of Texas in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Howard E. Perry, a would be Chicago robber baron, established the Chisos Mining company in 1902. Combining sound, intuitive observation with shrewd business acumen, he was able to overcome the difficulties of launching an enterprise in the scenic, rugged terrain of Terlingua near the Mexican border. By making efficient use of local Mexican workers and knowledgeable advisers, Perry gradually prospered. Perry created a paternalistic socioeconomic society in Terlingua, where the company dominated the day to day life of both supervisors and workers. Men who faced countless hazards in the mines by day shared a close knit social life. Perry's venture grew as the demand for mercury increased during the early part of the 20th century. The First World War gave a tremendous impetus to sales, but after the war demand faltered. By 1942, his enterprise had fallen into bankruptcy. Ragsdale's work offers the general reader an easy and approachable writing style. He thankfully steers clear of financial data (sales, profit, losses) pertinent to the expansion (or contraction) of the company. Having spent time in this wonderful area of Texas, I believe Ragsdale's book reclaims the role of mining as center stage and explains why Terlingua exists at all in the remote and unforgiving place.

"This is the fascinating story of Howard E. Perry and his Terlingua fiefdom on the edge of Big Bend National Park. Ragsdale's *Quicksilver: Terlingua and the Chisos Mining Company* is perhaps the best book written on the Big Bend country." --William H. Goetzmann Before Terlingua achieved some notoriety as the site of the annual World Championship Chili Cookoff, the ghost town was the bustling center of the mercury mining industry in the United States. This study, available again in a redesigned paperback edition, examines the company town and its feudal lord, Chicago industrialist Howard E. Perry, who built a hilltop mansion overlooking the dry domain. Based on many primary sources, *Quicksilver* is solidly researched and historically sound. Color and authenticity come from the author's interviews with such individuals as Robert Cartledge, who for nearly three decades worked as store clerk, purchasing agent, and finally general manager of the Chisos Mining Company in Terlingua.

"The fascinating story of Howard E. Perry and his Terlingua fiefdom on the edge of Big Bend National Park...perhaps the best book written on the Big Bend country." --William H. Goetzmann