



J. C. “Buck” O’Donnell (1901 – 1969)

Illustrator and Miner

2022 Inductee from Mining’s Past

Buck O’Donnell was a talented illustrator and cartoonist of late-nineteenth-to-mid-twentieth century mining practices. His drawings were based on his experience, which ranged from mucker to mine superintendent. His experience over an extensive career, involving places such as Butte, Montana, Grass Valley, California, and Utah provided a wealth of subjects.

He had an eye for detail, and just happened to have a good sense of humor to go along with it. Subjects that he illustrated included haulage and transport, poetry and cartoons, miners' customs and leisure, mucking and loading, hoisting, prospecting, milling, timbering, shaft sinking, safety, underground lighting, blasting, high-grading, and the Cornish pump.

He lived through a technological revolution in mining and was part of it, as manager of Shaft & Development Machines Co. of Salt Lake City, a manufacturer of mining equipment. Here, he made improvements in the Cryderman mucker, and shared a patent for these improvements. He would also travel to mines that had purchased a Cryderman and instructed the mine’s crews on how to operate it.

Aside from his work with Shaft & Development Machines, he worked for the Anaconda Copper Mining Company at Butte, Montana and the Idaho Maryland Mining Co. in Grass Valley, California.