

## SYNOPSIS



Deer Tail Press  
PO Box 422  
Duluth, MN 55801  
[www.deertailpress.com](http://www.deertailpress.com)

### **THE BUZZARDS HAVE LANDED! The *Real* Story of the Flambeau Mine**

**by Roscoe Churchill and Laura Furtman**

*The Buzzards Have Landed!* – The ***Real*** Story of the Flambeau Mine is Roscoe Churchill's personal account of how a British mining company muscled its way into a small rural community in northern Wisconsin to build a gold, copper and silver mine on the banks of the Flambeau River. Roscoe and his wife Evelyn, who are known in environmental circles as the "Grandparents of Wisconsin's Anti-Mining Movement," were in the middle of the battle from the beginning to the end. And in his trademark style, Roscoe combines factual information with color to tell the *real* story of what happened.

*The Buzzards Have Landed!* is filled with human drama but also touches on numerous areas of academic endeavor such as environmental studies, sociology, Native American studies, economics, environmental law and political science. It is a comprehensive case study of how a multinational corporation paved the way for its invasive project by undercutting local democracy and exerting undue influence on state regulations governing environmental protection and taxation. The book is replete with examples of dirty tricks and political finaglings – the kinds of things that enabled the Flambeau Mine to be built in the 1990s despite significant local and tribal opposition. As Churchill states in the introduction to the book, "Not only is mining dirty, but so too the politics that are employed." And Roscoe would know. He served eight terms on his local county board during the controversial mining years and was a member of the committee that evaluated the Flambeau Mine proposal. He was also appointed by Wisconsin's governor to serve on a statewide task force on mining in the late 1980s and witnessed the crafting of Wisconsin's mining laws. As a result, Roscoe's story is more than just opinion. Everything he says in the book is backed by factual information – town and county board resolutions, legal briefs, mining company reports, financial spreadsheets, newspaper articles and correspondence between mining company attorneys, state legislators, local officials, regulators within the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and representatives of the Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission. All of these documents are available for the reader to view on a CD-ROM that accompanies the book. Besides being of general interest, this is certain to be an invaluable resource for instructors preparing lectures and presentations, students doing research papers and citizens preparing testimony for public hearings.

*The Buzzards Have Landed!* is full of facts, photographs, emotion and intrigue as the reader travels with Roscoe and Evelyn from their farm located close to the Flambeau Mine to heated town board meetings, county board meetings and even the State Capitol for a private meeting with Governor Tommy Thompson. One minute you find Roscoe at a public hearing, referring to the members of the state's Natural Resources Board as a "bunch of neutered cats" and the next you are reading Evelyn's thoughtful analysis of the shortcomings of Wisconsin's mining laws. A few chapters later you come across the lyrics to "The Ballad of Roscoe Churchill," a folk song written and recorded in Roscoe's honor, and next you are faced with a shocking series of graphs and charts that document present-day pollution problems at the Flambeau Mine site.

*The Buzzards Have Landed!* combines human interest with hard facts about the Flambeau Mine and also serves as a primer on Wisconsin's weak mining laws. But perhaps most important, the narrative is filled with information that can be used by other communities faced with the prospect of hard rock mining or other corporate assaults. As Roscoe writes:

*If and when the buzzards land in your town, I want you to have a "one-up" on the kinds of dirty tricks they play and the obstacles you will need to overcome. Most of all I want to encourage you to fight for your land and clean water, so they aren't snatched away from you and future generations. I trust there will always be a core group of people who will put the environment above corporate greed. This book is for you.*