

# Pikes Peak Fifty-Niner: The Diary of E. A. Bowen

EDITED BY DUANE A. SMITH

In that wonderfully exciting spring of 1859, among the thousands who raced like a whirlwind to reach the golden bonanza, popularly pictured as being near Pikes Peak, was Edwin Bowen of La Salle, Illinois. A member of a small party which had caught the gold fever early, Bowen left in February with men from Michigan, Illinois, and Indiana while a cold, damp winter still gripped the prairie. By March 9 they were on their way across the Great Plains in the vanguard of a rush that was second in numbers only to the 1849 stampede to California.

A hundred thousand, give or take a few, reportedly went west that spring, although not that many persevered sufficiently to reach the roughhewn little settlements of Denver and Auraria huddled on Cherry Creek. Fewer still went on into the mountains to try to disprove the growing suspicion that this was all a humbug. Bowen did and spent the whole summer at the Gregory Diggings, where his success, while not outstanding, was better than average.

Unlike many of his contemporaries, Bowen was not dismayed by his first failures at mining and displayed tenacity in seeking and finally working the claim he purchased. Many others did not; according to newspaperman Henry Villard, throngs left Gregory Diggings that summer, the pursuit of mining having "lost its former vigor," and a reaction against it commenced.<sup>1</sup>

The twenty-eight-year-old Illinoisan was in the prime of life when he decided to try his luck in the goldfields. Raised on a farm, he had spent two and a half years at short-lived Judson College at Mt. Palatine (his spelling belies his education) before

<sup>1</sup> Henry Villard, *The Past and Present of the Pike's Peak Gold Regions*, ed. by LeRoy R. Hafen (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1932), p. 57.

going to La Salle. Here he clerked in a store until embarking upon his own business, which he left to go to Colorado. During the Civil War Bowen served in the 52nd Illinois Infantry, rising eventually to the rank of lieutenant colonel. He fought in the western theater in such engagements as Shiloh and Corinth and on Sherman's Atlanta campaign.<sup>2</sup>

After being mustered out he located at Mendota, about fifteen miles directly north of La Salle, near La Moille, which his father had helped pioneer. In this rich farm country Bowen turned his attention to banking and helped establish the First National Bank of Mendota. He served as president from its inception, becoming a "respected and substantial" member of the community. According to a local historian, "Colonel Bowen conducts the business of the bank with the unbending integrity and faithfulness to duty that was characteristic of him as a soldier."<sup>3</sup> His wife, to whom he faithfully wrote during the Pikes Peak journey, died in 1865; and he remarried twice, his second wife's death occurring in 1873. The old fifty-niner and veteran died in January 1900.

Bowen's diary, now deposited in the Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery, San Marino, California, is a straightforward narrative of his impressions and daily life.<sup>4</sup> He added no embellishments and probably intended his account to be used principally to give the folks at home a concise framework for his journey and experiences. Like many others, Bowen apparently had no intention of staying in the West, although one might speculate what his plans would have been had he struck a bonanza.

Today Bowen's diary entries provide an opportunity for the twentieth-century reader to experience vicariously the work, drudgery, rewards, and excitement of a time now irretrievably gone. For a fleeting moment one can catch the spirit of the day—mostly hard work and expectation. It is his story and that of the men and women who went with him to tap the golden Eldorado, supposedly to be found at the end of their quest. In an age when one could still believe in the American dream of individual success, this opportunity seemed the shortcut of a lifetime.

<sup>2</sup> Civil War and Pension Record of Edwin Bowen, National Archives, Washington, D. C.

<sup>3</sup> *History of La Salle County, Illinois* (Chicago: Inter-State Publishing Co., 1886), pp. 685-86. The writer of Bowen's brief biography said he spent two years in Colorado. *The Past and Present of La Salle County, Illinois* (Chicago: H. F. Kett & Co., 1877), p. 476. Listed his worth at over \$70,000.

<sup>4</sup> In presenting Bowen's diary here his spelling and grammar have been left in their original form with inserts made only to achieve clarity.

- Started for Pikes Peake from La Salle 22 Feby 1859 at 12 oclock A.M. Drove to Holawayville & put up with a Farmer one mile west of Holawayville by the name of Savage, a good man to stop with.
- 23 Drove to Princeton. Arrived at 11 oclock. Put up at the Prairie House. Stayed with him untill the 24th. Left for the Depot.
- 24 Put our teams and wagons aboard the cars for Quincy.<sup>5</sup> Left Princeton 1 oclock A.M. 25th. Paid 130. for 4 Co|—| 13 Horses 4 wagons & 10 men; snow 10 inch.
- 25 Arrived at Quincy 6 oclock P.M. took our Horses from cars & put them up at a Livery Stable.
- 26 Took our wagons fr cars & put them up & started for Palmira at 10½ oclock A.M. Drove 8 miles across Miss Bottom reached the Bluff about six P.M. Camped for the night without hay & stable. Pitched our tent & had a good time.
- 27 Started on our way for Palmira through mud up to wagon hub. Reached Palmira about 1 oclock P.M. Much fatigued—the roads were almost impassable—rested an hour or two & commenced puting our wagons aboard cars; Palmira has 6000 inhabitants.<sup>6</sup>
- 28 Left on first train for St. Ives. Chartered two cars & paid 140. for 13 Horses 4 wagons & 10 men; the men went at half four; arrived at St. Joe at 10½ oclock A.M. the 1st day of March.

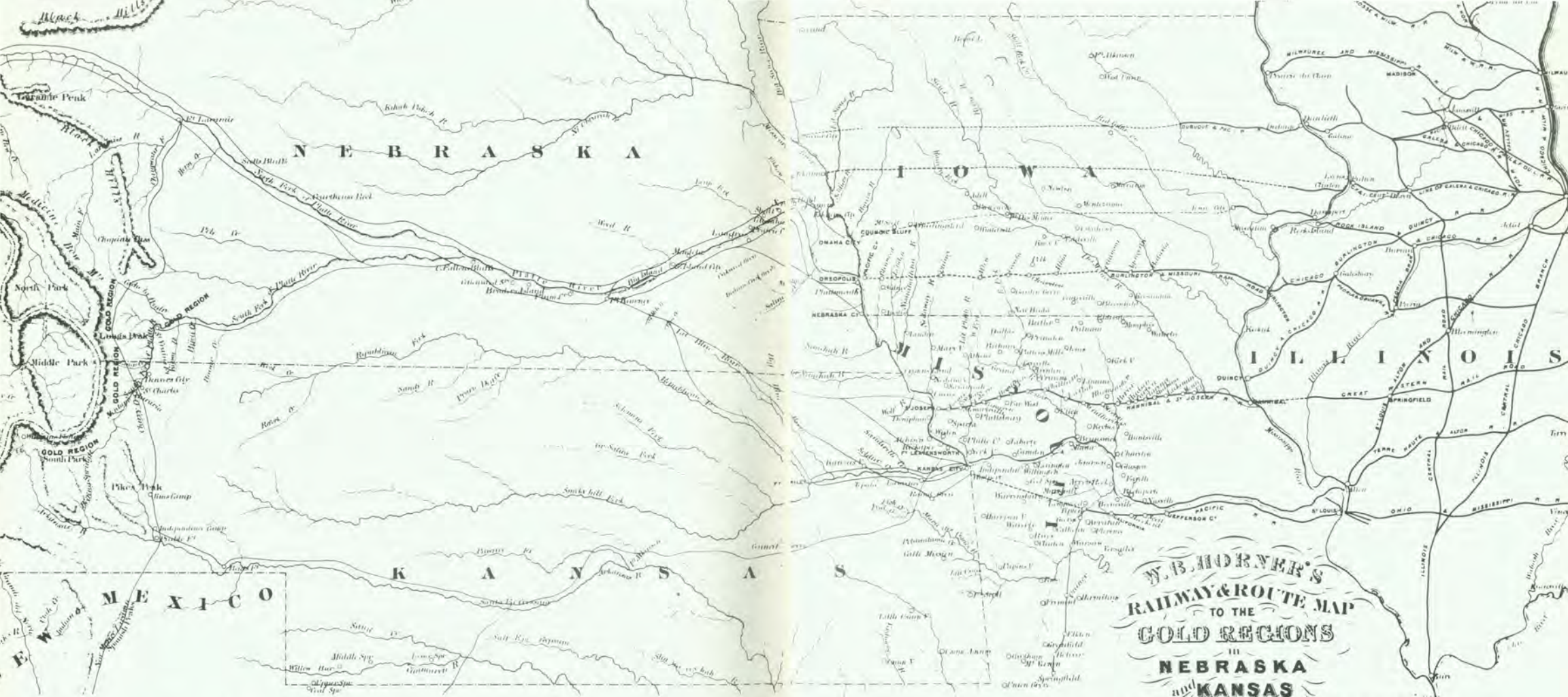
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- 1 Arrived at St. Joe 10½ oclock A.M. took our Horses to Livery Stable & fed them. Eat a good dinner & then went & took our wagons from cars & put up at a large barn which we rented for one week at \$10. per week with an office large enough to accomodate the Co for coocking & sleeping.
- 9 Left St. Joe at 7½ oclock A.M. Put our teams aboard the Belmont & ferried up the River 5 miles to a town called Belmont. Drove to a town called Troy in Kansas—9 miles We layed over in St. Joe one week & 12 hours.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Quincy is on the Mississippi River. Bowen started from La Salle (population 3,993 in 1860) and traveled to Princeton, roughly due west of his starting point. Here he boarded the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railroad. For a general discussion of Illinois in the 1859 gold rush, see Wayne Temple, "The Pike's Peak Gold Rush," *Illinois State Historical Society Journal* (Summer 1951), pp. 147-59.

<sup>6</sup> Palmyra, Missouri, was a station on the Hannibal and St. Joseph Railroad.

<sup>7</sup> St. Joseph, Missouri, was a favorite "jumping off place" for the Platte River



Map from Horner's 1859 guidebook to the goldfields.

- 10 Started on our way for Kinnekuk<sup>8</sup> 28 miles from Troy. Drove 20 miles 5 miles of which were very muddy; night set in & we camped in the mud—about midnight a terrific snow squall came up & lasted until 9 o'clock next day. We had no hay. Wind was very strong.
- 11 Started early in morning. Drove 4 miles & reached Woolf Creek & camped for the day.
- 12 Stayed in camp all day. Done our washing & repairing. Went two miles & bot of a farmer 300 [lbs?] hay. Paid 2.00.

route; others were Kansas City, Weston-Leavenworth, Nebraska City, and Council Bluffs-Omaha. Routes from these Missouri River border towns all converged at Fort Kearny to form the "Great Platte River Road." See Merrill J. Mattes, *The Great Platte River Road: The Covered Wagon Main-line via Fort Kearny to Fort Laramie* (Lincoln: Nebraska State Historical Society, 1969), pp. 103-05, 112-15. Troy was a small town northwest of St. Joseph.

<sup>8</sup> Although Bowen subsequently spelled it several ways in his diary, it is correctly Kinnekuk, Kansas.

- 13 Started for Kinnekuk over bad roads. Looked like rain. Bated<sup>9</sup> our horses at Grasshopper Creek after driving 10 miles. Drove ½ way across indian reserve occupied by the Potawatimes & Kickapoos, to Walnut Creek & camped for the night. About 3 o'clock a terrific snow storm came up & lasted until 2 o'clock P.M. the 14th.
- 14 We remained in camp all day & night. Cleared of [f] in the afternoon & was very pleasant all night.

The Indian Reserve is 12 miles by 21½ miles. Kinnekuk is the eastern boundary and Powhatan the western boundary.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup> A phonetic speller at best. Bowen here means "baited," referring to giving food and drink to the animals.

<sup>10</sup> By a treaty in 1832 the Kickapoos, then living in Missouri, were assigned a reservation of twelve hundred square miles in extreme northwestern Kansas. In 1854 this tract was given back to the government, except for 150,000 acres

- 15 We started about 8 o'clock. Drove through Powhatan Oak Point & bated our horses at Mud Creek Drove to Nemahah Creek & camped for the night.<sup>11</sup>
- 16 Remained all day in camp. About 3 o'clock came up a terrific snow storm & lasted all the 17th with some rain.
- 18 Went hunting. Could find no game. We concluded to lay over a week & wait for grass & good roads. About 4 o'clock Valentine, Miley, Swarthout & Gould reached our camp on the Nemahah. Today there is about 75 men camped on this creek.
- 19 Bot 16 Bushel corn & shelled it & sacked it to take along for feed. Hired Libby & Strout to haul 8½ Bush. corn to fort Kerney. Paid him 50 cts per Bush. Paid 50 cts per Bush. at Nemahah. Nemahah is 75 miles from St. Joe and 38 miles fr. Big Blue. This evening our co. held a meeting in Valentine's tent & elected a captain which was Wm. Valentine, La Salle, Illinois. Our Co. fr. the Nemahah was composed of the following persons.<sup>12</sup>

Wm. Valentine, Capt., La Salle.  
 L. Miley, "  
 I. V. Swarthout, "  
 E. A. Bowen, "  
 W. G. Telfer, "  
 Nicholas Groat, "  
 Joseph Strout, "  
 Cyrus Liby, "  
 Green Shepherd, Ind.  
 F. C. Metcalf, La Moille, Ill.  
 Jacob Velie, La Moille, Ill.  
 Wm. Gould, Mich.  
 Wm. Allen, Laport, Ind. [La Porte]

in the western portion at the head of Grasshopper Creek. Bowen and his party thus passed through this diminished reserve. The Potawatomes were located on a separate reservation farther to the south. See William E. Connelley, *A Standard History of Kansas and Kansans* (Chicago: Lewis Publishing Co., 1918), I, 258-62, 264-65.

<sup>11</sup> The party was now in Nemaha County, Kansas.

<sup>12</sup> The arrival of the wagon train in Denver on April 14 was noted in the first (and only) issue of the *Cherry Creek Pioneer*, April 23, 1859, p. 4. In listing the members of the company the paper gave the names as follows: W. H. Valentine, L. Miley, J. Swarthout[?], E. Bowen, W. G. Telfer, N. Groole, Jas. C. Strout, [illegible] Libby, G. Shepherd, S. C. Metcalf, J. Vielle, P. W. Gould, W. H. Allen, A. Givens, E. Prescott, S. Peus, M. Washam, C. Snyder, and A. Banter. It will be noted that Samuel Freese and one of the Allens are missing from the *Pioneer's* list. A letter written May 2 by correspondent Clarendon Davison to the *Chicago Press and Tribune* mentions Bowen and Valentine and gives the name "Miley" as "Wiley." LeRoy R. Hafen, ed., *Southwest Historical Series, Vol. X, Colorado Gold Rush: Contemporary Letters and Reports 1858-1859* (Glendale: The Arthur H. Clark Co., 1941), p. 344.

Wm. H. Allen, Laport, Ind.  
 Samuel Freese, Calamazoo, Mich; [Kalamazoo]  
 Adison Given, Ind.  
 Ezekel Prescott, Shelby Co; [Ill.]  
 Sidney Pease, Shelby Co; [Ill.]  
 M. R. Warsham, Shelby Co.; [Ill.]  
 Cristopher Snyder, Moweaqua [Ill.]  
 Adam Banter, Moweaqua [Ill.]

- 20 Sabbath Day. Remained in camp all day. Was very pleasant day with S. wind. Had some hul[|]ed corn which was very nice.
- 21 Our Co. started early in the morning having been much recruited Our first Co. layed over at Nemahah Creek opposite Seneka five days waiting for the roads to dry up. Our Co. when starting for Nemahah numbered 21 men, 21 hosses & mules, 6 wagons—Drove to Ash Point & bated our horses. Hitched up & drove to Elm Creek & camped for the night.<sup>13</sup>
- 22 Started early in the morning. Drove to Big Blue 12 miles & Bated our teams & waited for F. C. Metcalf to repair his wagon tongue. Hitched up & drove to Cottonwood.<sup>14</sup> Distance from Big Blue 12 miles.
- 23 Started ½ past 6 o'clock. Drove to Rock Creek, Distance fr Cottonwood 21 miles. Arrived at R. C. half past one & camped for the night.<sup>15</sup> Had a good rest.
- 24 Got up early in the morning. Started on our way 20 minutes before six. Drove 14 miles & bated our teams on Little Sandy. Drove to Big Sandy & camp for the night 4 miles fr. Little Sandy. Camped half past one o'clock. Wind was in the west & verry strong, verry dusty.
- 25 Started half past 5 o'clock. Drove 16 miles to Little Blue. Bated our teams & drove up Little Blue 14 miles & camped for the night. Weather verry fine. C.[amped] at the Pawne ranch.<sup>16</sup>
- 26 Started ½ past five o'clock. Drove 18 miles up L. Blue.

<sup>13</sup> Bowen's party thereafter followed the main approach to the Great Platte River Road along the Little Blue River. The Independence and St. Joe roads merged west of Big Blue Crossing and then followed the general course of the Little Blue valley to the headwaters on Thirty-two-Mile Creek and thence to the Platte. Mattes, *Great Platte River Road*, pp. 150-51.

<sup>14</sup> During the rush to California there was no real settlement along this route. Beginning in 1859, however, stations to serve freighters, stagecoach passengers, and other travelers were established; Cottonwood Station, a mile and a half northwest of Hanover, Kansas, was one of these. *Ibid.*, pp. 151-52.

<sup>15</sup> Rock Creek Station, six miles southeast of Fairbury, Nebraska. *Ibid.*, p. 152.

<sup>16</sup> Pawnee Ranch Station, also Spring Ranch. *Ibid.*

Bated our horses. Drove on to the point of leaving L. Blue 6 miles & camped for the night. Weather good. Looked like rain.

- 27 Co. decided to travel on the Sabbath. Started at ½ past 5. Distance to Elm Crk. 10 miles[;] 32 mile crk. 5. Mole in Prairie 12 mile—Platt River 10 mile[;] Fort Kerny 7 mile. We drove to Platt Riv. & camped after dark in a snow storm without wood & water.
- 28 Started & drove to Fort Keany & camped near Majors Russell & Wadels Ranch.<sup>17</sup> Bot hay for our teams. 30 Farr.—Snowing, windy & very cold. Bot a pony & saddle. Paid 65. dollars.



*An 1858 view of the parade grounds and officers' quarters at Fort Kearny.*

- 29 Started 6 ock. Drove to first point on Platt & bated. Drove to Plum Creek & camped. Distance fr. Ft. Keany 32 m.<sup>18</sup> Killed one skunk & saw one buffalo crossing Platt R. 15 shots at skunk & finally knocked down with a buffalo chip by Nick. Well cented.
- 30 Drove twelve miles & bated & then drove 13 miles in all 25 miles. Valentine Swarthout & myself having horses we rode on ahead about 4 miles. Saw a buffalo crossing the bottom making for the bluffs & kenysans to the south. We followed on our horses until he reached the bluffs. When we left our horses & gave him chase. Valentine made the first shot & hit him in the shoulder blade. I loaded my gun & went to cap the same & found

<sup>17</sup> Fort Kearny had been established in 1848 on the south bank of the Platte near present Kearney, Nebraska (the town perpetuates the common misspelling of the name). For those traveling the Great Platte River Road, "It was the sentinel of all the trails which converged on the fabled Platte River valley." *Ibid.*, p. 192. See also pp. 167-237. "Majors Russell & Wadels" is the famous western freighting firm of Russell, Majors, and Waddell.

<sup>18</sup> Plum Creek was about ten miles southeast of present Lexington, Nebraska. Mattes, *Great Platte River Road*, p. 272, gives the mileage as thirty-five miles from Fort Kearny.

the tube was blown out. I thus went back & got my poney & took Valentine's revolver & gave him chase. I came up within six rods & he turned to give fight when my pony became so frightened that I could get him no nearer. He turned & went into a kenyon & layed down. I tried to ride my poney into the kenyon so as to get & shot at him with the revolver but could not get my pony down as he was afraid. I dared not let him loose as he might run away. I got off & led him down when it was very steep. I got to the bottom & was just taking aim at him, he being about 2 rods frm me, when he sprang to his feet & gave me chase. The pony snorted, wheeled around & commenced ascending the bank where we came down & I took to the nearest point & ascended as fast as possible. We both made our escape. He came a short distance up the bank, but finding it rather steep for him he turned around broadside & stoped. I again ascended about a rod & fired 8 revolver shots into him without much effect. By this time Valentine came up. He got onto his horse & started for the wagons to get another rifle, when four of our Co. took horses & came back. After they came up some ten shots was put into him before he nocked him down & at last Nicholas Groat put a ball through his heart & |he| gave up after about a minute. He was a monster would weigh 1500 lbs when fat. We took 200 lbs meat from him & started for the train. Reached the train half past one while bating the teams. overhalled six wagons in camp & found Jas. Temple with one of them from Omahah. He said they found the roads awful the N. side of Platt.

- 31 Drove about 30 miles & camped on the Platt for the night. In the forenoon saw 6 antelope but did not pursue them as we had as much meat as we could use. Wind E. 9, S. 12. W. 3. N. till night.

April

- 1 Commenced snowing about 3 o'clock & continued all day & most all night of the 1[st]. We stayed in camp all day. Waided the Platt for our wood. Got ash & dry willows.
- 2 Snowstorm continued until about nine o'clock A.M. 4 of us went out on a hunt. Saw no game but Geese. Nick shot one & waided the Platt to get him. We returned

to camp & the Co. decided to start on our way. Started half past 11. Drove to Fremont Spring & camped for the night. Distance 16 miles fr. Cottonwood.<sup>19</sup>

- 3 Snow squall about 3 oclock A.M. Froze hard being camped out on the prairie. We started early. At nine it commenced to snow & blow. Continued to storm & blow until noon. Reached O'Fallons Bluffs<sup>20</sup> at 1 oclock & camped. Distance 20 miles fr. F. Springs. Saw some 20 elk about a mile from us.—It was *verry* tedeous traveling. We could not stand it to drive, but a short time. We changed often.
- 4 Started half 5 with good solid frozen roads. This morning the Platt was frozen over where the water was running—so thick that it would bear a man. Drove to within 6 miles of the crossing of Platt & camped. Wind north west with frequent snow squalls—during the day. Drove 35 miles.
- 5 Reached the crossing of Platt about 8 oclock. Left the old California Road & took the new road up the South Platt.<sup>21</sup> Drove about 20 miles & camped for the night. Saw several encampments of the Sioux Indians at the crossing of Platt. While in camp an Indian claiming to be the chief of Cheyene Tribe came to us & beged some thing to eat. Saw Lodge about two miles from our camp.
- 6 Started at Sunrise. Drove up the Platt 25 miles, & camped at 6 oclock P.M. We had heavy sandy roads. Passed an ox team, one yoke of oxen with 3 men, one woman & one small child, the first woman we had seen on the way to Pikes Peake.
- 7 Started 6 oclock. Drove 27 miles & camped on the Platt for the night with first rate old grass. In the afternoon

<sup>19</sup> Cottonwood Springs, where later Fort McPherson was constructed (1866), was on the east side of Cottonwood Creek 97 miles from Fort Kearny. Mattes gives the distance from Fort Kearny to Fremont Springs, which was approximately opposite present Hershey, Nebraska, as 128 miles. See *Great Platte River Road*, pp. 263, 275, 277.

<sup>20</sup> O'Fallon's Bluff was opposite and west of Sutherland. *Ibid.*, p. 264. Bowen commented at the end of his diary: "No wood from O'Fallons Bluffs for 160 miles up the South Platte. Buffalo chips are used for fuel."

<sup>21</sup> This is the Upper Crossing or Old California Crossing of the South Platte, four miles west of Brule (*ibid.*, p. 279). The road to California struck the North Platte at Ash Hollow.

<sup>22</sup> Bowen had the creeks confused. The party would have come first to Bijou Creek, then to Kiowa Creek.

<sup>23</sup> Fort St. Vrain, built by Bent and St. Vrain in 1837, was one of four competing South Platte fur-trading posts in the 1830s. Fremont visited it in 1842 and 1843; by the mid-1840s it was already falling into ruin. For a history of the fort see LeRoy R. Hafen, "Fort St. Vrain," *The Colorado Magazine*, XXIX (October 1952), pp. 241-55.

- we traveled south west by west. We had several long sandy hills to go over. Sand about 6 inch deep.
- 8 Started six oclock. Drove over some sandy roads. Weather good but cold in the fore noon. In afternoon wind south & sun shone. Was verry warm. Drove over an inclined plain. 12 miles across splendid road. Camped for the night. Traveled 28 miles. Here while in camp we first had a view of two peaks of the Rocky Mountains, a distance of 150 miles. We could not see these peakes in the daytime. We saw them distinctly after the sun went down.
- 9 Started six oclock. Drove 15 miles & bated. Passed Kiowa Creek 4 oclock P.M. Drove over Sand Ridges in afternoon. Roads were heavy. Drove half way between Kiowa Creek Bijou Creek & turned down to River & camped. Saw one antilope early in morning. Drove 30 miles. Passed one Indian Lodge at the Kiowa Creek, some dz Indians & Squaws—Chinani [Cheyenne]—nation.
- 10 Being Sunday we remained in camp all day. Threatened rain, but blew over. Wind blew from west towards evening very strong.
- 11 Started 5:30. Drove 25 miles & camped 3 miles from where we camped we crossed Bijou Creek.<sup>22</sup> Dry at crossing. 3 miles from this creek we found the heaviest sand roads we had—10 miles east of this creek sand heavy.
- 12 Started 5:30. Drove to Fort St. Vrain<sup>23</sup> & camped 12 oclock—distance 20 miles. We camped for the purpose



of crossing the Platt to prospect for gold on the Cache a La Poudre [Poudre] River but could not cross the Platt. It has been reported that gold has been found on this river. It empties into the Platt about 5 miles below the Fort. 12:30 commenced snowing & continued 7 hours—4 inch snowfall.

- 13 Started 6:30. Drove 24 miles & camped near Jim Sanders Ranch.<sup>24</sup> Started on frozen ground. We are tonight about 28 miles from Cherry Creek.
- 14 Started 5 o'clock. Mounted my pony & reached Denver City 10 A.M. Teams arrived 12 o'clock. Drove up Cherry Creek 3 miles & camped. No grass near town. Found no one moving. There is very little gold on Cherry Creek. Will not pay to mine.
- 15 Remained in camp all day. Prospected on Cherry Creek & Platt. Could not find dirt that would pay. Made pump box.
- 16 Went up 15 miles on Dry Creek. Prospected. Could find good dirt but no water.<sup>25</sup> Four of our Co. went up to Arapahoe City on Clear Creek to prospect.<sup>26</sup> Found plenty of water & very fair dirt. Resolved to go up there on Monday. About 11 o'clock A.M. John Scuder shot P. T. Bassett through the lungs. Both parties from St. Louis, Mo. There was difficulty between them.<sup>27</sup>
- 17 Sabbath day. Remained in camp. P. T. Bassett died this morning. Went to his funeral today at 3 o'clock P.M. A Methodist preacher by the name of Fisher<sup>28</sup> preached. Text "Let us know the end. Fear God & keep his commandments for this is the whole duty of man." Some one hundred present. Sermon *very* ordinary.
- Scudder has trial tomorrow. No doubt but he will be hung.
- 18 Left camp 7 o'clock. Started for Arapahoe City on Clear Creek. Arrived at 12 o'clock. Arapahoe is about

<sup>24</sup> Bowen is referring to Jim Sanders (Saunders), an old mountain man who carried the first mail express between Denver and Fort Laramie. Villard, *Past and Present*, p. 17n.

<sup>25</sup> Other people had the same trouble on Dry Creek; see, for example, the *Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), April 23, 1859, p. 2.

<sup>26</sup> Arapahoe City on Clear Creek, founded in the fall of 1858, was about two miles east of present Golden. Hafen, ed., *Colorado Gold Rush*, p. 173n. Never very large, it soon disappeared.

<sup>27</sup> The *Rocky Mountain News*, April 23, 1859, p. 3, gave a similar account of the Bassett-Scudder affair. Editor William N. Byers thought Scudder would have hanged if his friends had not helped him escape. Scudder came back voluntarily in 1860 and was acquitted on the grounds of self-defense.

<sup>28</sup> George W. Fisher preached the first sermon in Denver and was also active at the Gregory Diggings as Bowen relates. Fisher was an elder in the Methodist Church. Isaac Beardsley, *Echoes from Peak and Plain* (Cincinnati: Curtis & Jennings, 1898), pp. 228, 356-58. Bowen was a lifelong Baptist. *History of La Salle County*, p. 686.

one mile from Table Mountain on North side Clear Creek. John Scuder made his escape today.

- 19 Frederick Metcalf, Nicholas Groat, Adison Givons & Washam went up into the mountains to prospect for gold. A man by the name of Cook from Arapahoe accompanied them, it being reported that some seventy men were up in the mountains some 40 miles mining. Bal. of Co. rem'd in camp to prospect on Clear Crk. & run our Quick Silver Machines.<sup>29</sup> Commenced running one of them but the silver was not pure—Mixed with the black sand.
- 20 Valentine retorted his quicksilver in forenoon, commenced running his machine in afternoon, but had poor success. I went to the south 3 miles & climb|ed| up the table mountain & followed it up north to camp.
- 21 Got up in the morning & found 6 inch of snow, Miley took pan & shovel and I took my rifle. We went into the mountains some 8 miles to prospect for gold & hunt antelope & deer. Snowed all day. Found snow 10 inch deep in the mountains. Prospected on north branch of Clear Creek & on head of Ralstons Creek, but could not find the color. Saw no game—reached camp 5 o'clock, P.M.
- 22 All hands turned in to dig down to bed rock in the bed of the stream. Worked all day but could not reach it. Telfer went to Denver City & returned without any good news.
- 23 Last evening the minors held a meeting in town to consider the propriety of turning the creek. Decided to turn it & commenced work this morning with fifty strong.<sup>30</sup>
- 24 Being Sunday I remained all day in camp. Was a very fine day. Enjoyed my-self very much.
- 25 Commenced snowing 5 o'clock A.M. Continued to snow & rain until 4 o'clock, P.M. 12 to 15 inch snow fell, turned our stock out in morning to feed. They went south about 6 miles. We had hard work to find them & get them back. It snowed so hard that we could not see, but a few rods. We feel somewhat concern|ed| for the boys in the mountains.

<sup>29</sup> Quicksilver (mercury) has a natural affinity for gold and is a convenient means of separating it from sand. The type of machine Bowen used is not known.

<sup>30</sup> This was only one of several such projects; see the *Rocky Mountain News*, April 23, 1859, p. 3, and May 7, 1859, p. 5.

- 26 Warm & Pleasant. I herded the horses all day. Snow all gone by night on the bottom of the creek.
- 27 Worked all day on the dam. Verry pleasant weather. Found a peculiar species of cactus. Took it up & put into a box to take home.
- 28 Worked on dam & ditch all day.
- 29 Went to work on ditch but we had no cattle. Could do nothing in the forenoon. Worked in the afternoon.
- The boys arrived from the mountains 9 oclock A.M. Found gold at every prospect but not verry rich. Went some 50 miles in the mountains. Found snow 15 feet deep in some places. They had a verry hard time.
- 30 Worked on the ditch in forenoon. Soon after dinner a thunder storm came up & lasted several hours. It came verry near upsetting our tent.

## May

- 1 Being Sundy we remained in camp all day. Weather warm occasionally some rain. Telfer decided to return to states with Liby & Strout. They decided to leave Arappohoe next morning.
- 2 *Monday* Strout Liby & Telfer left our camp for Denver City 9 oclock A.M. Telfer rode my pony. Nickolas intended to have started for the mountains this morning but we concluded to wait & see what the result of the ditch & dam would be. Moved our wagon & tent a short distance. Done our washing & Co. bot Telfers interest in provisions & traps.
- 3 Went up to ditch to work. No cattle came. returned to camp & retorted Quick Silver. Took about 10 lbs & ran it through the retort 5 times. It was verry impure.
- 4 Waited some time for the oxen to commence work on the dam. Did not find them until noon. In the afternoon it looked like a thunder storm. It blew by & the wind continued to blow verry hard until sundown. It was so strong that we were obliged to remain in camp.
- 5 Went to set our machine. Could not get the pump to work. Put a new valve in the pump & commenced to run the machine, 3 oclock P.M. Ran it until night with four men. Retorted our silver at night & found we had 40 cts in gold.<sup>31</sup>
- 6 Helped Valentine to sink a hole to bed rock. Could not

- get down, the water came in so fast. We have given up all hopes of giting gold on this Creek. Our only hope is in the mountains. It commenced raining 5 oclock & rained all night. Velie's t|w|o mares strayed away from the rest this afternoon.
- 7 Raining until 9 oclock. Four went early after Velie's horses & came back 3 oclock, P.M. Did not find them. Velie & Miley found them but could not drive them up. Velie watched them all night.
- 8 Four started early to find Velie & his horses. Did not find him. Velie came in 5 oclock. Said he left his horses at the mouth of Clear Creek. Valentine, Miley, Allen & myself started for them 15 miles. Reached them at dark. Was 3 hours driving them 4 miles. Could not catch them. Got them into a ranch & caught them. Reached camp one oclock.
- 9 Remained in camp all day. Repaired tent.
- 10 Went to Denver, Got no mail. Packed up Hefners traps to camp to go into the mountains with us.
- 11 Started for the mountains 8 oclock to prospect for gold. Went some 20 miles & camped. We packed 4 horses. Valentine, Miley, Velie, Hefner & myself composed the Co.
- 12 Started 6:30. Traveled 12 miles & camped within 3 miles of Gregory's digings. Snowed all night. Six inch snow in the morning. Saw two elk in forenoon. Shot one. Grover, Valentine & Velie made R.M. Bread hard & tuff as |illegible|. Saw fine pine groves.
- 13 Remained in camp for the snow to cease & melt until noon. Put our packs on & started for Gregory digings. Reached the digings in two miles. Put our tent up. Mr. Gregory<sup>32</sup> Took us to his lead on the mountain & paned out a panfull of dirt. Got about 75 cts to pan. He has a lead up over the mountain from 6 to 12 inch wide. Had to pack his dirt to water in a sack.
- 14 Prospected all day without any success. We tried to find more leads like Gregories but did not succeed. Mr. G. showed us where he thought we would strike one, Could not get the color in the creek. Weather cool.
- 15 Started early in the morning for Jacksons Digings<sup>33</sup> on

<sup>31</sup> Miners had trouble at Arapahoe all winter, the gold being so fine that it proved too difficult to save. Hafen, ed., *Colorado Gold Rush*, p. 337.

<sup>32</sup> John Gregory, discoverer of Gregory Diggings. Gregory led the first party to his discovery and on May 6 the Gregory Lode was opened, news of which reached Denver on the eighth. The Bowen party was one of the earliest to reach the site. *Rocky Mountain News*, May 28, 1859, p. 2.

<sup>33</sup> Discovered by George A. Jackson at present-day Idaho Springs. It was not as rich as its neighbor, Central City, nor as lasting as a mining area.





George A. Jackson

Clear Creek some ten miles south. We was forced to leave as there was no grass for our stock. We found hard roads as we had no guide. Reached Clear Crk. middle afternoon & camped with good grass for our stock. We struck the Creek about a mile below Jackson's diging.

- 16 Went up to the digings early & commenced prospecting on the side of a mountain. We got tired of diging before we reached the bed rock & gave up without success. Saw a good many mining & at night saw them take out considerable gold, which was course. We prospected all day & found the color in many places. We concluded to start for our wagons in the morning.
- 17 Started for the rest of our boys early on a northern trail south side of Clear Creek. We left most of our

packs so that we could ride our mules. We reached our camp & found the boys & stock all right 4 oclock P.M. a distance of 25 miles.

- 18 Remained in camp all day, making preparations to start for the mountains with our wagons. Miley went to Denver but found no letters for me. I think it very strange that I get no letters.
- 19 Started for the mountains with wagons. Went 5 miles round table mountain to foot of the mountains & Nick was so sick that I could go no further. Two wagons went on. Miley & Valentine & one wagon from Chicago. Metcalf went horseback to prospect. Viley [Velie?] remained with me also. One wagon with 5 men from Laporte, Ind. Nick has been unwell for a week or ten days.
- 20 Nick had a hard night with toothache & fever. Is free from fever today but suffers much from toothache. Rainy in afternoon. Made a knife scabbard. Done washing, etc.
- 21 Made a pack saddle today. Nick is much better today except his tooth which is verry painful. Face swollen; will ulcerate.
- 22 Went with Nick to Denver to get his tooth drawn. Returned 6 ock. The doctor told him he was ulcerated. Gave him some medicine & pulled his tooth. Bill 2.50 which I paid. Frederick & Hefner returned from Jacksons digings in the Mountains. Brought bad news. No one mining, all prospecting. Frederick thought it of no use to go up there. Having tried or visited all points



A prospector going into the mines . . .

. . . and coming out.



for mining. We can but conclude to return home. We conclude to remain in camp for a few days & see what news the passersby might bring from the mountains. There has no gold been discovered up to this date that will pay to mine, unless it be Gregory's lead & that is verry limited. The emigration which came out this spring had mostly returned. Five wagons came in today on the Smokey Hill route. None coming in on the south Platte route.

Frederick met Valentine & Miley about half way up to Jacksons digings with two wheels[?] of his wagon. They were trying to get down the steepest mountain on the road.

23 Nick improving some. The Laporte wagon with 5 men packed up left for our old camp at Arappahoe. 2 of them will start home in a few days. The balance will remain still longer. Hefner lodged in my tent last evening. He started this morning for Auraria said he should not return to the mountains again unless better digings should be found.

24 Took team & went to Arappohoe & got my things which I stored there with Fisk. Only two boys in town. All men in the mountains. They gave good account of Gregory's diggings Returned to camp & Velie & myself concluded to start for the mountains in the morning. We made up our minds to try the mountains once more & unless we found a good thing we would start home this being the 4th time.

25 Got up early in the morning to start for Gregories digings but found it raining. Concluded to wait until the rain was over. Shortly after dinner it commenced snowing & continued until 12 oclock at night. Turned verry cold. Froze quite hard. Six inch snow fell.

26 Sun rose very clear & warm. Snow commenced melting early in the morning. Velie & myself went to Arappohoe in the afternoon. We concluded to start for Gregory's digings tomorrow morning.

27 Started up the mountains 10 oclock A.M. Left camp soon after sun rise and drove our teams back to Clear Creek. Nick & Fred remained in camp to take care of of stock while Velie & myself went to mountains. Stopped to let our horses feed & take drink. As we went [to] catch them to start on, Valie's mare started back & went clear back to camp. Velie followed her & re-

turned to us six oclock P.M. We put our packs on & started. Went to a creek & camped.

28 Started sunrise & went 5 miles & stoped for breakfast. After the mules had picked we started on and made Gregorys digings 12 oclock. Took diner & we went prospecting. Found a lead & returned to camp. Did not prospect any.

29 Sunday did not prospect any. remained in camp most of the time.

30 Commenced sinking a hole on the lead we discovered, dug 7 feet long 4 wide and six feet deep but did not get the color. Concluded the lead was to[o] deep to pay & we abandoned it.

31 Started to prospect on two claims which we made on another lead Saturday 28 May. Dug 20 inch. Got a fine color.



Gregory Gulch in 1860.

June

1 Commenced in the morning to sink a hole down on the claims we had made. Worked until noon and then went to a miners meeting to make laws. The meeting passed off verry well.<sup>34</sup> A good many present.

<sup>34</sup> The *Rocky Mountain News*, July 11, 1859, p. 3, reported that this meeting elected delegates to the proposed state constitutional convention. A typical activity in a new mining district and extremely important to delimit claim

- 2 Velie commenced work on the claims while I went out with a fellow from Amboy, Ill. to prospect. We went up to the head of South fork of Kendalls fork, thence south to divide between said Creek & Clear Creek, then we followed some small creeks east, thence north to camp. We found no show better than where we were at work. Reached camp 2 oclock P.M. on the afternoon. We both worked on the claims to open them.
- 3 Continued to sink down on the claims but often was almost discouraged on account of the stone which impeded our progress.
- 4 Started for Fred & Nick out of the mountains as we had grub enough for our diners only. reached them 4 oclock P.M. We all concluded to start up the mountains Monday morning. Fred & Velie concluded to take their four mules & four horses while Nick & myself concluded to pack. I sent word to Nick to take wagon & cub down to Platt to leave the wagon & Ranch cub with Cole<sup>35</sup> from Elgin, Ill. Nick took them down 3d June.
- 5 Sunday. Remained in camp until 2 oclock. Got up the horses & took our things across the Creek as it is much lower at this time of day than any other time, owing to the snow melting back in the mountains. Drove to ranch quarter of amile from creek where we left the wagon; camped for the night.
- 6 Started for the mountains 8 oclock. Found the mountains full of men going in. Passed a great many ox teams mostly from Mo. having come out the Smokey hill & Santafee routes. Drove some 20 miles & camped for the night. Wether very good. Threatened rain but blew away.
- 7 Started 7 oclock & reached Gregorys digings two oclock P.M. Had good luck making the trip in one & a half day distance 30 miles. After arriving to our camp we pitched our tent & put up the fly in front making a fine house. John Bruce came to our camp in the evening. He is a cousin to Fred & my wife.
- 8 Commenced sinking hole on our claims. Found the

sizes and regulate disputes, the miners' meetings were common throughout the West. The first mass meeting was a week later and from it came the earliest written laws of the Gregory district.

<sup>35</sup> D. M. Cole owned a farm and ranch a couple of miles above Denver. *Rocky Mountain News*, May 7, 1859, p. 3.

- color as usual. Took a pan full down to creek at noon. Got 25 cts worth to pan. weather good.<sup>36</sup>
- 9 Continued to sink the hole. Went & got a drill made. Put in several blasts which tore up the rock well. Rainy in the afternoon.
- 10 Continued to blast the rock in hopes to get through & strike the crevice. Nick & myself went of[f] prospecting in the afternoon some two miles but found no better indication than the claim we were working on.



The Central City "gold belt."

- 11 All hands went to work on claim in morning. Put in two blasts which proved of no use. In the afternoon I went to see a claim on the Casto Lead for sale 1500.<sup>37</sup> Was only part opened just got the color. Went to a claim on the same lead for which Mathers & Co. paid four thousand dollars. They gave me a quart of dirt which I carried to camp in my pocket hndkf. Washed it out & got 40 cts. Our claim looked a little more like a lead tonight, but the rock troubles us very much.
- 12 Sabbath. Remained in camp in forenoon. Went down the Creek to hear preaching in the afternoon, but

<sup>36</sup> Bowen makes no mention of the visit of Horace Greeley and party to the diggings, nor apparently did he go to his speech.

<sup>37</sup> The Casto Lode was one of many within a radius of a mile and a half from Central City. See Ovando J. Hollister, *The Mines of Colorado* (Springfield, Mass.: Samuel Bowles & Co., 1867), p. 144.

found that the meeting came off in the forenoon. Returned to camp 4 o'clock & layed down.

- 13 Started with Velie to prospect some claims that Hefner staked out for us yesterday. Went according to directions given, but we could not find them. Nick & Fred remained at camp to work on claim. We took several days provisions with us & as we could not find the claims we concluded to strike out on a prospecting tour. We started out in a S.W. course for Clear Creek expecting to make Clear Creek when it comes out of the Bull Mountains. We reached middle fork of Clear Creek at noon. Took dinner, & let the mules feed. The grass was excellent. Started on & followed up Middle fork some 3 miles. Then crossed & ascended a very steep & long mountain upon which we found good indications & a quartz lead, but did not prospect it as no water was near. Followed the divide on west for two miles then south to Clear Creek & camped about two miles from the Snowey Range.

Velie snapped his gun several times at an elk but could not get it of[f]. The elk was about 8 rods just across the gulch. Clear Creek is high & very swift. We shall not be able to cross it.

- 14 Started up the creek to go to the Bull Mountains. Found the mountains so stoney that we concluded it would not pay as the indication for gold was not very good near us. We turned our course & took our trail back until we reached the divide between Clear Crk & the middle fork at which place we prospected a lead, but did not get the color.

Soon after diner we started on our way back to camp but from the Middle fork we took another route. We got along well, did not get lost. Reached the boys in camp 4 o'clock. The boys had struck nothing while we were away. We all concluded that it was of no use to spend any more time on our present claims as the prospect was not so good as when we commenced.

- 15 Nick & Velie started early in the morning with my mules on a prospecting tour north E. towards Boulder City<sup>38</sup> while I went around the mines to see if I could buy a good claim. Did not succeed. We all made up our

<sup>38</sup> Later known as Boulder, it had been established in February 1859. Attaching "City" to a town's name was a common practice on the mining frontier and seems to have given the residents a sense of grandeur that they might not otherwise have had.

minds to buy a claim that was opened if the boys did not find one.

- 16 Fred & myself went the rounds to see what we could see in the shape of an open claim that was paying that we could buy. Found none that suited us. Returned to camp & got our diners. In the afternoon I went down the Creek with Bruce. Had some talk with DeFres<sup>39</sup> about buying 50 feet of his claim on the Gregory lead. He said he would talk with his bro. & let me know in the morning.

- 17 Went down to Gregory lead with Fred to see De Fres. They had made up their minds to sell. Said they would take 280 acres of land in Marshall Co, Ills. which I offered to trade them. They wished me to make them an offer what I would give them, which I did. Told them I would give them 5000. for the 50 feet & sleuce, washtub, ropes & all the quartz which they had taken out & would let them have the land for 3500. Would pay them 1500 more when I got it out of the claim, giving them one-half as I took it out. They said if I would pay them 2000 they would call it a trade. I told them I could do no better. After a few minutes they said they would call it a trade. Agreed said I & we went & drew up the rightings. Frederick took a piece of the quartz to camp, took a hammer & mused it up, weighed it & found it weighed 7 pounds, washed it & got 32 cts, being worth almost 5 cts to the pound.

- 18 Went down to claim which I bought for the purpose of selecting a place on which to pitch my tent. Saw Mr. Defres. He told me that I could not deed him the land in this country, that a lawyer from Chicago told him so. I told him I would give him a bond for a deed, which he said would answer the purpose & I agreed to go with him to Denver tomorrow to fix it up. About 6 o'clock in the evening Mr. Defres came to my camp with his bro. to inform me that he had concluded not to take the land & consequently the trade would go no further.

I told him that it would be quite a disappointment to me as I had made my arrangements to go to work on the claim. Told him I had the contract in my pocket & was prepared to live up to it & should not give up the

<sup>39</sup> Probably either Wilk or Archibald Defrees from South Bend, Indiana, who joined with Gregory in the initial party to enter the diggings.

claim until I was obliged to—told him I was willing to leave it out to disinterested men. He thought they had nothing to do with it. Some Ill. men told him that there was a great deal of bad land in the sec. of country, where my land was. I told him if he was dissatisfied with the land I would take it back & pay him one half as it came out of the claim which he refused to do.

I then told Mr. Defres that I did not think he wanted to back out on acc. of the bad land as much as for other reasons—told him I had understood that he had been offered more for the claim than I was paying. He said it was false. But I have the proof to hand. Mr. John Bruce heard a man offered him ten thousand dollars for the claim the same day I bot it. After a considerable confab they started off, but soon came back & said they would stand the trade & wanted me to go to Denver tomorrow, which I agreed to do.

19 Started for Denver to make out deed for Defres on Mondy. Met Calvert Hartson 6 miles from Gregory's on his way up the mountains. Said Downing & his father was in camp the other side Clear Creek; about 3 miles further I met David R. Carlton from Mo. who used to live in La Salle. They came via of the Express route. I reached Coles ranch on the Platt just before dark. Picked my horses out to grass & had a fine dish of bread & milk.

20 Early in the morning went up to town to meet Defres. Waited for him until noon at which time he arrived from the mountains. Mr. Defres consulted Judge Wagoner<sup>40</sup> respecting my deeding him land which lay in Ill. So he concluded to take a deed rather than a bond, which I gave him & also a bond for 2,175. to assure him against my wife's claiming her dowry in said land.

Got a letter from W. E. Darling written 20 Mch/59. Got 3 letters for Velie. After setling up with Mr. Defres & writing a letter to my wife, I started for the mountains. Reached Clear Creek about 7 oclck P.M. Had to wait 2 hours for them to repair bridge after which I crossed over creek to ranch & slept in Fred's wagon. I tried to find Downings camp but did not succeed.

21 Started up the mountains 5 o'clock. Went to foot of

mountains & bated my horse. Reaching the digings 4 oclck P.M. Found that Nick & Velie had taken the stock down to ranch. William Hassett Smith from Lamoille came to our camp this evening.

22 Bro't our quick silver machine down from forks of creek. Built a foundation for it. Went up to our old camp to see about our gulch claim. Found Link had claimed 50 feet over our claim not knowing the same & in view of the fact that they had sold the claim, we settled it by his giving me his note for ten dollars to be paid when he got it out of claim. I sold the bal. of our claim to the same party for 100 dolls to be paid weekly one half of all that is taken out of said claim. Nick & Velie got to camp sun down.

Sold one half my claim to Fred & Velie drew up the wrightings this eve.

23 All hands went to work on claim puting timbers across to put up windless. Cleaned out the crevace ready to go to sluicing.

24 Continued to work on claim until noon. In the afternoon Nick & myself run the Quicksilver machine, washing the tailings of our sluice which was run through before I bot the claim. Run the machine 3 hours. Retorted the quicksilver & found we had 45½ peniweights of gold.

25 Nick & Fred went to work on claim. Velie & myself tinkered on the machine & commenced running the same ¼ past nine o'clock—run 2 hours & quit for noon. Run 4 hours in afternoon. Retorted the quick S. & found we had taken 60 dollars.

26 Sundry—remained in camp all day.

27 Commenced running sluice 8 o'clock & run until 11 o'clock. Hired two men at 2.50 one to pack dirt & the other to pile stones. Nick thought it best to widen the crevace. Consequently we did not run the sluice. In the afternoon I work|ed| on the sluice cleaning up & fixing the rifels.<sup>41</sup> The rest worked on the claim.

28 Jacob went with Bruce to buy a claim in the forenoon, but did not buy. Nick & Fred worked on the claim widening the crevace. I tinkered up the sluice—About nine o'clock Nick sent down for me. Was ready for the timber. I went up & framed timbers until noon. In

<sup>40</sup> S. W. Wagoner was elected probate judge. March 26, 1859, for Arapahoe County, Kansas Territory. *Rocky Mountain News*, April 23, 1859, p. 3. He was active in the early attempt for statehood.

<sup>41</sup> A riffle consists of blocks set on the bottom of a sluice to catch the gold.

afternoon finished the sluice. The news came in that two men had been killed buy the Ute indians. A party of 3 went over the Snowey range to prospect. Two of the party was shot. The other made his escape by hiding until after dark. Returned to this digings to-night having traveled two nights one day & a half. The man that got away was Slaughter Kenady & Dock Shank was killed.<sup>42</sup>

- 29 Nick & Fred work on the claim timbering. Velie & myself went to work chopping timber. In afternoon Velie worked with Fred & Nick. I hired a yoke of oxen & man for 6 dollars per day & worked with him in the afternoon, halling timber. In the evening a man came to my tent & wanted my Rifle to join the Utes chase that killed the two men. A company of 80 has volentared to give them fight. I loaned them my gun.
- 30 Velie & myself made another windless. Fred & Nick timbering claim. The volentear Co. left today to give the Utes a chase. The Co. gave much dissatisfaction to many of the miners. They thought it a bad move. A portion of the Co. took mules & horses without leave & in several cases caused blows.

### July

- 1 Velie & myself moved our sluice up the creek in the forenoon in order to get near a slide where we could get our dirt down the hill. Made a contrack with a man to delv. our dirt to sluice for 3.33 per day & 2.00 per night. In the afternoon Velie & myself moved our own camp from the fot of the hill up the mountain a short distance. Nick & Fred worked on claim timbering.
- 2 Velie & myself worked in the forenoon fixing the tent puting up the fly. I went with Bruce to look at a claim which he talked about buying. Got two letters, one from Father dated the 10th April—one from Elder Goodno dated Mch 21st. In the afternoon we went up the hill & cut some timber to use in timbering our claim. About 5 oclock the 2nd claim above us caved in & came very near killing one man. He was bruised very bad.

<sup>42</sup> The *Rocky Mountain News*, July 9, 1859, p. 1, and August 13, 1859, p. 4, carried letters referring to these killings and the group which went out to investigate. The two men murdered were J. B. Kennedy and Dr. J. L. Shank; William Slaughter survived. The incident occurred near Kenosha Pass south of the Snowy (Park) Range.



- 3 Sundry. Enjoyed the day verry much, having moved our tent from a verry dusty place up the side of a mountain where it is cool & clean, a very pleasant place indeed. We can overlook the gulch lined with cabins & see all that is going on. Went to meeting up the creek & listened to a sermon preached by Elder Wood from Geo.<sup>43</sup> Text Isa 43:10—You are my witnesses. A fair audience was present. Sermon verry good. Returned home & baked bread. Weather cool & pleasant, cloudy & smoakey.
- 4 Being the 4th of July we commenced runing our sluice.<sup>44</sup> We set our quicksilver machine at the tail end of sluice to see if we could catch any gold. Buy the looks of malgum I should think we saved ten dolls. R. V. Downing rocked the machine. We concluded not to run the machine in connection with the sluice. Thought it best to run the tailings through afterwards as we did not run water enough in the sluice. Velie & myself worked the sluice.
- 5 Run the sluice all day & for part of night. Stoped at 11:30. Fred stuck a pick in his foot so as to lame him some. He came down from claim & worked in the afternoon at the sluice & I paned out.
- 6 Run the sluice 9 hours in day & nine h. at night.
- 7 Run sluice 7 hours. Did not run at night as we had no dirt. The war party in all 76 returned today without seeing a Ute & they did not find the bodies of those reported killed buy the Utes.

<sup>43</sup> The *News* reported that the Rev. Mr. Porter from Georgia, of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and the Rev. Mr. Wood, a Baptist of the same place, would preach each alternate Sabbath at eleven in Mountain City. *Rocky Mountain News*, June 25, 1859, p. 1.

<sup>44</sup> The sluice was a long trough, often exceeding one hundred feet. Water washed through it carried gravel and sand, the gold settling to the bottom where it was caught in riffles. A larger volume of earth could be handled than with the earlier pan and shovel or the rocker.

- 8 Run the sluice 8 hours in day & five hours in the night. Retorted at night & found we had taken out a pound of gold since Monday.
- 9 Run the sluice in forenoon 5 hours. Did not run in the afternoon. Cleaned up & paid up our bills. Paid Defres 100. on claim. Paid him \$50. the 1st July 1859.
- 10 Being Sunday rem[a]ined in camp all day except to go to church. In the afternoon we had a small shower which was the 1st have had for six weeks. A man from Jacksons digings reported that he found Kenday dead. He was one of the two reported killed buy the Indians. Report says that this man found him in a siting position with his revolver in his hand. In his memorandum book was found written that he lived 5 days after he was shot & had nothing to eat. He found that he was mortifying & shot himself to get out of his misery. He was not scalped. Some suspicion is had of Slauter that foul play had been plaide.
- 11 Put up our quicksilver machine in the forenoon & run the machine in the afternoon, 2 hours. We had a verry heavy rain in the afternoon.
- 12 We run the Q.S. machine 4 hours in the forenoon & gave it up as a bad job. Could not make it work. We run the sluice in the afternoon 2 hours. It rained in the afternoon verry hard.
- 13 Run the sluice ten hours. I worked all day making a new sluice, a wide one which we think will save the gold. Weather fine.
- 14 Finished up the sluice box & put it in ready for use. Did not wash any dirt today. Velie went out prospecting today. He got sick of our claim & wanted me to take it off his hands which I done and sold the same to Benjamin Sherman of Vermont for 1375. That is one quarter interest in the 50 feet; Sherman gave me his note 12 months for 1,000. with bond of 2,000, to secure or buy the same within six months. The balance to come out of the claim, one half of his share as fast as taken out.
- 15 Run the sluice ten hours & found the sluice saved the gold much better than the old one. Run five hours at night.

- 16 Run the sluice 9 hours & cleaned up with better show than before. Could not tell how much we took out as we had not time to pour all out. Took out in dust 7 oz. 10 Pen. from Friday & Saturday run.
- 17 Being Sunday, went to meeting & herd a presbyterian preach. He read his sermon, was good but rather dry. Remained in camp the balance of day.
- 18 Run sluice 10 hours at night. retorted malgum of Friday & Saturday & took out 5 oz. Sherman has an interest from today.
- 19 Run the sluice 10 hours, with verry good show. Paid Defres 160. on claim.
- 20 Run the sluice 10 hours with good show. Rainy at night. It has rained every day or night for ten days, making it verry unpleasant indeed. Showers are heavy washing a great deal of filth into the Gulch. No doubt will cause much sickness.
- 21 Run the sluice five hours. Commenced after diner but quit on account of rain. It rained verry hard indeed for three hours—raised the water in the Gulch to a flood. About 6 feet of water in our claim.
- 22 Did not run the sluice in the forenoon as we have no dirt. Had to bail the water out of claim—did not run the sluice in the after noon—It was rainy.
- 23 I went up to work on claim. Run the sluice in the afternoon 5 hours—It was rainy all the after-noon. Took out this week in four days run 19 oz & a half.
- 24 Sabbath day—remained in camp all day. Wrote a long letter to my wife. Also wrote one sheet & a half to Webster & Stevens Editors of La Sall Press.<sup>45</sup> Rainy in the afternoon.



<sup>45</sup> Editors E. C. Webster and Rufus C. Stevens both had participated in the California gold rush. The *La Salle Press* was started in 1856; no copies from this period are known to exist.

- 25 Mailed letters via Jones & Russell P.P.Ex<sup>46</sup> at a cost of 70 cts. Run sluice 3 hours in the forenoon & 2 hours in the afternoon. In all 5 hours—Paid Defres on claim 180 Dollars.
- 26 The sluice in the after-noon 5 hours with good show. Was not able to get dirt to run more. Fair wether all day.
- 27 Run the sluice in forenoon 4 hours. Did not run in the afternoon for want of dirt—fair wether all day—New digings reported found on the head waters of the Colorado, where a man can pan out 1 pound a day.
- 28 Run the sluice in the forenoon 4 hours. Could not in the afternoon as we had no dirt. Fred & Nick went of[f] in the forenoon to prospect some Gulch claim—reported unfavorable—could not get the color. Smith of LaMoille took diner with us. Said he was doing well.
- 29 Run the sluice 8 hours. Fair weather all day. In the afternoon we run top dirt as we had dirt from below—
- 30 Run the sluice 9 hours. The last day & a half run, we washed dirt from the uper end of our claim from the top down. Did not pay more than expenses. All together we have run the sluice this week 3½ days & have taken out 26½ oz. Most all was taken out in two & a half days. Fair wether all day. Could not run all the time as we could not get dirt. Bruces partner Roberts came back from Denver this evening & said the Colorado excitement was all a humbug & told us our stock on the ranch needed our attention as they had changed hands several times.
- 31 Sabbath Day. Velie started for the valley this morning to look after the stock—Fassett & Lutz was at our camp today. Hartson & Father started home today. Sent letter to wife with three quartz specimens. Did not go to meeting today—Was in camp all day. Wether pleasant in the forenoon. Some rainy in the afternoon—Rec'd letter from wife dated 10th July 1859.

Aug.

- 1 Run the sluice 9 hours with poor dirt a portion of the time—Found a very pretty quartz specimen. Rainy at night.

- 2 Run the sluice 9 hours—All poor dirt. Nick with several others went prospecting to day some 10 miles up north fork of Clear Creek. While sluicing I picked out a very fine quartz specimen.
- 3 Run the sluice in fore noon 5 hours, in the afternoon 2 hours, in all 7 hours.
- 4 Run the sluice in the after noon 4 hours with dirt from lower hole. Had a good show. Ford, Velie, & Sherman made up their minds to go to head waters of the Platt<sup>47</sup> & work at the new mines until it was time to go home. Concluded to start out of the mountains in the morning.
- 5 Nick got home from a prospecting tour of 4 days at noon. Went N.W. up the No. fork Clear Creek. Found nothing that would pay large. Fred Velie, Sherman & F. Farwell also Bruce left the mountains this morning for Denver. They intend to start for the head of Platt Monday morning next with wagon tools &c. Should they find digings as reported they will not be back until it is time to go home. Retorted this evening & found that we had taken out 12 oz 2 pen this week up to night. Run the sluice in all 3 days.
- 6 Did not run the sluice today. Nick & myself worked up on the hill in the forenoon with one man. Could not get any more men. Men are scarce—all going to Colorado or head of Platt. None worked in the afternoon.
- 7 Sabbath Day. Rem'd in tent in forenoon. In the afternoon went up on the Gregory Hill & gathered some spruce gum to take home. Weather verry pleasant.
- 8 Dit not run the sluice today. Worked on the claim sinking through the Pirates of Iron. I paned 2½ hours in the evening for super. Saw Gregory today. Asked me to go up to the head of Chacha Lapoudre to prospect. Said a man paned 50 oz in 3 days. I made up my mind to go. Sold quartz to amt of 10 oz.
- 9 Left for the fot of the mountains 9 o'clock. Reached Arappohoe 5 o'clock. Found Gregory & others ready to start. Farwell went to Denver yesterday & got my mules. Left Arappohoe at 7 o'clock in the evening & went to Rallstons Creek & camped 4 miles from Clear Creek. Our Co. consisted of 12 named as follows:

<sup>46</sup> In the spring of 1859 William H. Russell and John S. Jones inaugurated a stagecoach service between Leavenworth and Denver known as the Leavenworth and Pike's Peak Express Company.

<sup>47</sup> Reports of rich gold discoveries in South Park produced a rush into the area and the establishment of Tarryail and Fairplay. See the *Rocky Mountain News*, August-September, 1859.





John H. Gregory,  
as painted from  
William N. Byers'  
description.

J. H. Gregory of Geo. Warner Rock Island Foot of Chicago. Defres of Ind., E. A. Bowen, LaSalle, Ills. & Hickombottom of Ills. & Bell of Tenn.<sup>48</sup> In consequence of not being all ready to start together the Co. did not camp together on the Creek. Foot by himself. Defres, Hamond & Maxwell together. The Bal. of Co. went in one camp. We had a slight shower during the night.

- 10 Started rather late. Went to Bolder Creek & Bated. Went to North Bolder Creek & camped.
- 11 All hands started early & went to Thompsons Fork & bated—a verry fine stream. 5 of us started before the rest. We went through to Chache Poudre & camped—the Bal of Co. camped on six mile run—
- 12 9 o'clock A.M. The balance of Co. arrived at Chache-a-Poudre. Gregory was not able to travel further. Will have to lay over until tomorrow and wait for him. Got Foot to put a shoe on Unice. She broke her hooff & was lame—think she will do to travel on by tomorrow. The only town on the Chache-a-Poudre is at the foot of the mountains & is called Colony.<sup>49</sup> Some 20 log cabins, only 4 occupied. One trader, the balance mountaineers with their squaws. While laying in camp some 15 more joined our Co. having followed on our trail from Bolder Citty.

<sup>48</sup> Rumors of gold on the Cache la Poudre had been circulating for some time; Gregory and Archibald Defrees had just returned from prospecting there. *Rocky Mountain News*, August 13, 1859, p. 2. See also issues of June 11, 1859, p. 2, and August 6, 1859, p. 2.

<sup>49</sup> The small cluster of cabins, called Colona, had been established in 1858. The location was later moved slightly and the name changed to La Porte. The trader mentioned was Antoine Janise. See "Colorado Place Names (C)," *The Colorado Magazine*, XVII (July 1940), pp. 135-36.

- 13 All started up the mountains on the Bridger Pass intending to keep it for 15 miles until we came to the North Fork of the Chache-a-Poudre, then follow up the middle fork until we came to south fork, then follow S. fork up to head, thence over the divide. We had not gone more than 5 miles before my mule became so lame I was obliged to return to Denver with her. Consequently the Co. went on & I returned. Went to Six Mile Run & bated—Then went ten miles S. of Thompsons fork & camped. Farwell went on with the Co. with my other mule. Saw a grave on Thompsons fork with Head Stone with the following inscription:

To the Memory of Mr.[?] L. W. Peterson. Aged 24 years was killed by Lightning June 13th, 1854.

From the grave I obtained a verry fine specimen of cemented gravel, the grave being covered with such stone. Nearby was a ravine which was filled with such gravel, the spot no doubt where the man was killed. No doubt the mineral qualities of the rock attracted the lightning.

- 14 Waked up at 12 o'clock & found my mule uneasy, upon which I put the saddle mounted & rode to North Bolder Creek. Reached the Creek at 3 o'clk tied the mule to grass & layed down & went to sleep. Arose at 5 o'clk & started on. Arrived to a small creek at 7 o'clock & found a family camped. They had breakfast ready of which I partook & paid them 50 cts. After letting my mule eat a while I proceeded on & reached Bolder Citty 11 o'clk. Went some two miles below & bated mule & layed in shade an hour or two. The sun is verry scorching on the planes. Reached Clear Creek at Dark. Tied my mule to grass & ate my grub & layed down to rest, but was anoyed verry much by mosquitoes.
- 15 Arose at 5½ o'clk & started for Denver. Reached Coles Ranch at 9 o'clock. Remained there until 4 o'clock. Went out & caught Cub—rode over into Denver. Got a letter from Father & Mother. Traded off Ruber Hose for a Yarger [*sic*] & took same to Coles.

Left for the mountains 6 o'clock. Reached Walls 8 o'clk. Fed Cub Hay & went to bed in a wagon box. Had a good night's rest. Wall paid me 5, which he owed me.

- 16 Started up the mountains 7 o'clk. Reached camp 3 o'clock p.m. Was somewhat tired. Found Nick & Tom putting a shaft down on claim through the sulfate of iron. Having lost just a weeks time on this trip without profit I must now try & make up for lost time.
- 17 Baked bread in the forenoon & done my washing which [was] verry small. Sent Cub back to Coles Ranch by the Express man. In the afternoon I set the quicksilver machine with intention of running our tailings through.
- 18 Run the machine all day with verry good show a portion of what we washed was panings. Attended a miners meeting in the evening to try a young man for stealing dirt from Henderson & Gridley's claim.<sup>50</sup> Mr. Leeper was chosen chairman, by vote The chairman appointed 12 jurymen to hear the testimony & fix the penalty. I was chosen one of the jurors. The trial came off & the Jurys verdict was as follows: that he make restitution to the amt. of 15. & leave this Gulch within 3 days & in case of failure he must take 20 lashes from the Sheriff of this County.
- 19 Run the Q.S. Machine all day & had no show which proves that our sluice does not wash much gold.
- 20 Dit not run Q.S. machine as it did not pay. Baked bread in the forenoon. After noon Retorted & paid up bills. Retorted 3 oz. & 11 Pn Gold.
- 21 Sabbath Day. Remained in camp all day. Had two good sings with Leiber & others, The first sing I have had since I left LaSalle.
- Downing was to see us today. Is doing nothing. Wants to work for me & go home with me. Fassett & Lutz was here today.
- 22 Monday. Nick went over to Russell Gulch. Had three men at work on claim geting out dirt. We intend commencing running sluice tomorrow. We hear that our Co. is on their way back from the head of Platt. All the news we hear from that place is unfavorable. Nick didnot find any good claims for sale on the Russell Gulch.<sup>51</sup>
- 23 Run the sluice in the forenoon. Did not run the sluice

<sup>50</sup> Edward W. Henderson, in association with Amos Gridley, had bought two claims owned by Gregory in Gregory Gulch for \$21,000. *Rocky Mountain News*, June 11, 1859, p. 2. According to Hollister, *Mines of Colorado*, p. 64, Henderson and Gridley made \$17,000 that summer from the claim.

<sup>51</sup> Russell Gulch was opened on June 1 by William Green Russell of the 1858 Russell party. The gulch was located southwest of Gregory Diggings, but it never equaled the production of its older neighbor, being primarily a placer area.

- in the afternoon for want of dirt. Fred Farwell & Bruce returned this evening from the head of Platt & reported those digings all a humbug. Fred said he had made up his mind that he should go home. Velie did not come up in the mountains. Remained at Denver, waiting for Fred to return.
- 24 Settled up with Fred & paid him all up. Got coin & paid him 25, which I borrowed on the way out. Paid him 2 oz. that I owed him on provisions & the prospecting tour up to head of Platt. Paid him his share on claim 13, & gave up his note & took his interest in the claim off his hands. I now own  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the claim & Sherman  $\frac{1}{4}$  interest.
- 25 Discharged all hands on claim this morning. Fred started for Denver to get ready to start for home. Nick got on a spree last night & consequently was tight all day. Was sorry for it or at least appeared to be.
- 26 Run the sluice 5 hours during the day with dirt from the uper end of the claim & cleaned up at night but did not have time to pan out. Had a heavy shower in the afternoon. Went across the Gulch into a store to get out of the rain. Was chosen jurymen to try the right of property between Neill plaintiff & Ranks, Deft. in the matter of a cow. Jurors verdict was that the plaintiff have the cow. Jurors fees 50 cts. cash.
- 27 Paned out the dirt from the sluice & retorted the same in the afternoon. Had 2 oz 5 Pn being all we had taken out this week on one day's run. Farwell got back this evening from the prospecting tour on which I started with Gregory & others. Said they did raise the color. Was over the divide & in the North Fork. The Co. followed up the Middle fork of Ch La Poudre.
- 28 Sabbath Day. Went to meeting in the forenoon. Heard Mr. Fisher preach the same man that preached P. T. Bassetts funeral sermon at Denver last spring. The meeting was held right in front of our tent in a slat house. Nick went to Denver today with Bro. mule to put the same on ranch, Farwell having returned the night before from his prospecting tour. In the afternoon Mr. Leeper invited me to eate a watermelon with him which I excepted. The melon was a good one from Mr. Walls Garden on Clear Crk.<sup>52</sup> After

<sup>52</sup> David Wall, early Colorado farmer, who settled at present Golden. He made more money in the gold rush than did the majority of miners.

- the melon was dispatched we had a good sing. Read letter from Mother today.
- 29 Did not work any. Went to see the man that was testing my quartz. Said he had not cleaned up. Did not know whether he would take them or not. Nick did not return from Denver.
- 30 Went with Leeper to look at a new lead upon the Gregory Hill. Did not consider the show a good one. Have concluded not work my claim any more this fall. Am now waiting to sell my quartz. Offered to sell what I had below to Mr. Defres & square off with him if he would give me 12 oz. to balance the trade. Said he would let me know tomorrow. Downing was here this afternoon. Said he was at work for Valentine, but he had got nothing for it & about out of grub. Wanted me to take him home. He took supper with me & stayed with me all night. Rather wet & rainy in the evening.
- 31 Woke up in the morning & found Mr. Downing had gone & found it very rainy by the looks should think that it had rained all night. Continued to rain all day & bids fare to rain all night. I have just gone to bed at the early hour of 6-30. Nick has not returned from Denver. Have done nothing towards selling my quartz today.<sup>53</sup>

## Sept.

- 1 Went down to Clear Crk to see about my quartz. Saw the man & told me that he would let me know at noon. Saw him at noon. Said he did not want them, at my offer. Would give me hundred dollars per cord. I told him he could not have them. Saw Mr. Defres. told him if he would give me dust 6 oz. & his note 6 oz. more to be paid when the quartz was sold he might have what quartz I had below & he should give me a receipt in full on claim. Said he would do it & the papers was made out. I reserved the right to sluice them over. Nick got back from Denver today. Was detained on account of rain. Said the boys Fred Bruce & Co. left on Tuesday.
- 2 Went to work to make arrangements to sluice quartz. Set the sluice & got all things ready in the forenoon

<sup>53</sup> In his placer operations Bowen had uncovered gold-bearing quartz, which had to be crushed before the mineral could be separated.

- to run. Run the sluice in the afternoon. Gave Nick his time from this to middle of Oct. Having received for bringing him out some 50. dollars. The color showed very good on the Riffles.
- 3 Hired Downing to work until I got through sluicing. Run the sluice  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a day. Joseph Farwell worked at the sluice with Downing. I paned out in the afternoon. Found it did not pay largely—in two half days we took out \$13. We had in the afternoon a verry heavy shower with hail which made it verry cool.
- 4 Sabbath morning. Waked up & found it very cloudy & cold a very heavy fog rested on the mountains. Baked bread for breakfast. Done up my work & made fire to keep warm. Downing put on some beans. The day passed of|f| for a wet one, misty & rainy in forenoon & good deal of snow in the afternoon. The first snow storm this fall that has reached this locality. The Bald Mountains<sup>54</sup> was covered with snow several days ago while it rained here. It is verry evident that the weather is changing colder in the mountains. The trees are covered with snow.
- 5 Weather fine & pleasant. Run the sluice  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a day. Sherman got back from the Platt & Colorado this evening. Had no good success. Sherman bot a claim & sold it again. Said the weather was cold over there. Many had left & were still leaving.
- 6 Rec'd a letter from my wife dated 14 Aug. Run the sluice all day. Cleaned up noon & paned out in the afternoon. Strained my malgum & burnt the same off & found I had 2 oz 11 pn & 6 gr being 2 days run. Weather fine all day. Freezes nights.
- 7 Run the sluice all day. Weather fine. Sherman sluiced with Downing. Nick sluices for Mason & Martin nights & kills one beef a day for the butcher, gets 4 pen each night & 2.00 per head for killing beef.
- 8 Sherman & Downing run the sluice all day. Cleaned up at night. I made ax helve in the forenoon & baked bread & loafed in the afternoon. Weather fine.
- 9 Run the sluice all day. I paned out two days run today. Brought tools down from claim & marked the initials of my name on them to store with Leeper. Weather verry fine & beautiful. Cool nights have had no rain this week.

<sup>54</sup> Located southwest of Gregory Diggings.



- 10 Done up my washing in the morning & paned out until noon. S & D run the sluice all day. Baked bread in the afternoon. D & S boards with Nick & me. I do most of the cooking. Have to bake bread every day.
- 11 Sabbath Day. Went to meeting in the forenoon. Mr. Fisher preached Text—Let the wicked man forsake his ways the unrighteous man his thoughts & turn unto our God who will abundantly pardon. In the afternoon wrote a letter to my wife of 7 pages. After which I baked bread & had supper. Thus the day passed away.
- 12 S & D run the sluice all day. Fair wether. Settled with Farwell Bros. & took their note for 72.67 being for dust loaned.
- 13 S & D run the sluice all day. In the forenoon I went up to Patterson Powell & Co on the Nevada Gulch about the claim I sold them on the 22 June. They had not worked the claim any. The agreement was to pay one hundred dollars & pay weekly one half as fast as taken out. I offered to take the claim back unless they wish to keep the claim & work it. They finally concluded to keep it & we went up to Links & copied the contract so that each party can have a ccopy. Left the contract with Samuel M. Link.<sup>56</sup> Also gave him an order to collect the amt. coming weekly from the claim. Said Link if he collects the pay is to send the same to me in LaSalle. Settled with Link & gave up ten dollar note by his paying 3.33. Having paid Metcalf & Velie in same amt. Also I paid Link one dollar for recording the claim contract one half of which belongs to Fred & Velie to pay.
- 14 Run the sluice all day & finished the quartz. Baked

<sup>56</sup> Link was the recorder of the Nevada District until the spring of 1860. See Thomas Maitland Marshall, ed., *Early Records of Gilpin County, Colorado, 1859-1861*, Vol. II of University of Colorado Historical Collections (Boulder: University of Colorado, 1920), p. 125

- bread as usual. Rather windy & cold. Threatned to storm. No doubt but it snowed back in the mountains.
- 15 Cleaned up sluice & paned out & retorted & found that we had just 7 oz in all that we took from the quartz. Was just 165. Baked bread in the evening. Baked the last of our flour.
- 16 Settled with Sherman & gave him my receipt for the amt he had paid me on the claim. Settled the board a/c with Downing & Sherman also settled up the grub a/c with Nick & found we stood about square, all but the note which I hold against him. I now expect to leave the mountains next Monday for Denver.<sup>56</sup> Will remain there until 3d Oct. at which time shall leave for the states all things being ready.
- 17 Sherman & myself went with Prosser up to the claim to show him the quartz with a view of selling them to him. We offered him what we had out for 2500. & 3500 for all that was out & in the claim. Above the sulfate of iron say down 40 feet The last offer was 2500 cash, the balance 1000 the first day of June next. He was also to have the tailings at the sluice should he take either proposition.
- Prosser to take the quartz out of said claim at his own expence. Messrs Conklin & Co. fired up their engine this evening for the first time.<sup>57</sup> Went off like a top. They all seemed in good spirits. I feel quite encouraged that I shall be able to effect the sale of our quartz before leaving for the States.
- 18 Sabbath. Pleasant weather. Commenced boarding with Brown yesterday morning at one dollar per day. Expect to leave for Denver tomorrow morning. Sent my things down yesterday with the Farwell Bros. at 2.50 per hundred goods to be left at Arappoho City. Went to meeting in the forenoon.
- Saw Valentine & Carlton this evening. C. rec'd a copy of the LaSalle Press dated 20th Aug. Having his own letters written from this place, was very glad indeed to get some news from La Salle.
- 19 Started with Sherman at 8 oclock for the foot of the mountains. We packed our blankets, mine with some

<sup>56</sup> According to a *News* correspondent, September 17, 1859, p. 2, many miners were preparing to leave at this time. The first big snow really hastened their decision, but others stayed and permanent settlement was assured.

<sup>57</sup> The Prosser, Conklin & Co. quartz mill was the first steam mill in the area. T. T. Prosser supervised the operation. *Rocky Mountain News*, September 29, 1859, p. 2.

bottles of medicine weighed some 25 lbs. After traveling some six miles my feet began to swell which caused my feet to blister. We stopped at the 8 miles ranch & took dinner. Started on half past three o'clock. Reached the foot of the mountain just before sundown. Could not walk any further in my boots. Took them off & walked down to Walls in my stocking feet. In all my adventures in this country never have I done as much penance in one day as I have this day. Slept between Walls haystacks. G.S. |Good sleep?|

20 Arose early & started for Arappoho to find the Farwell Bros. They left Gregory's on the 17 with my things & went to Arappoho. Reached their tent 8 o'clock & found them in the very act of getting breakfast. Off which S & myself partook. Miley came along having been up to Jacksons after his wagon & was now on his way to Gregorys. His horses he left in charge with a young man on Clear Creek. He gave me an order for one to ride down to Denver which pleased me much as I was about used up—feet blistered & back lame. Cyrus F. went out & caught his horse & brought it up. Could get no saddle. Put on my blankets & started for Coles on Platt. Reached Coles at 2 o'clock & found him sweeping out his cabin & yard, making preparations for Ladis [ladies'?] co. After taking a rest took my wheels off from the wagon & put them into water. Went down to the ranch to get my mules & paid them 12 dollars bringing up to 3 Oct/ 59. Broke my mules up to Coles & put them in his Corral.

21 Hitched up in the morning to go to Arappoho to get my things. Got back to Coles at 2 o'clock. P.M. Went over to town in the afternoon. Got six papers from LaSalle, 5 Press & 1 Chicago paper, all in one package. The first papers I have recd in this country. Cyrus Farwell came down from Arappoho with me.

22 Went over to town to see if I could see any mules for sale. Mr. Allen showed me a span & harness which he offered to sell for \$230. I told him I had a horse I would trade him.

23 Went over to town in the morning. Farwell rode Cub up to Arappohoe got back to town at 11 o'clock. Showed the horse to Mr. Allen. Told him I would give him 3 oz to boot between his mules & harness & my horse. He wanted me to bring him over in the afternoon. I went

over with the horse in the afternoon. He rode him, liked him very much. Wanted me to give him 4 oz. I told him I would give him \$50 & no more. Said he would take him over to the stable & keep the horse until Morning & he would let me know in the morning—I bought a sack of flour of Jones & Cartwright at \$14.<sup>58</sup> Sold Cole 50 lbs of the same.



Denver in 1859.

24 Went over to town this morning to see if Mr. Allen wanted to trade me the mules at my offer. Said he did not. Said he wanted to have the horse but could not afford to allow so much for the horse. I finally made him an offer of 4 oz which he declined. He wanted me to ride him up to the race track in the afternoon. Said he wanted to see him run. I told him I would if I could get a saddle. Went back to Coles. Mr. Cole & myself went over to the race track.—Found a good many people there as the race was supposed to be the best of the season. The race was quarter mile swing between some man & horse the horse winning. Some 800 changed hands—After the

<sup>58</sup> Jones and Cartwright opened their general merchandise stores in Auraria and Denver in late August. *Rocky Mountain News*, August 20, 1859, p. 3. They sold mining machinery and had freighted in the quartz mill Bowen mentioned in his September 17 entry.

- crowd had gone Mr. Allen wanted to have Cub run. I told him he might win if he could get a rider. He run against Jack Oneals pony without any bet—Cub came out ahead some 40 feet.
- 25 Sabbath Day, wrote a letter to Father & went over to Denver & mailed it, found that there was no preaching. The Vigilance Com was trying a Mexican for stealing a horse—12 jurors found him guilty & sentenced him to 20 lashes leave the place within 24 hours & in case of failure to leave 50 more lashes. After considerable dispute the Mexican was taken to a cabin to await his punishment during which time he left and [illegible].<sup>59</sup> After which I got 50 cts worth of steak & went back to Coles—got supper & spend most of the afternoon.
- 26 Monday—went over to Denver. Did not see any bargains in the way of buying stock. Spent most of the day in Denver & Auraria.
- 27 Went down to the ranch & got my mules for Cole to take some melons & garden stuff over to town. Went over with him after he got his vegetables disposed of & got my mules shod. had three new shews & five old ones—paid five dollars for shoeing the same—bot bacon & sugar to go home with. Bot a Span of mules harness & lead bars for 200, paid in retorted gold. One mule Iron Gray Horse aged three years last spring—the other Sorrell mare mule aged five last spring. The express came in from the states today—did not have time to go to the office for letters.
- 28 Wednesday—went over to town about 9 oclk—went to Express Office—did not get any letters—was considerably disappointed—bot a lead chain—Went back to Coles about 3 oclk. Spent the balance of the day in arranging my wagon harness etc for going home.
- 29 Thur—Awoke in the morning & found that about 4 inch snow had falen—continued to snow all the forenoon—broke away at noon—Repaired my harness in the forenoon in Coles House—Went over to town in the afternoon—Came back & found Downing in the tent—The Mountains are coated with white—they look beautiful.

- 30 Fri—The mountains are verry beautiful this clear sun shiney morning—coated as they are with white robe of snow—Spent a portion of the day in Denver & Auraria—rode Cub over to see if I could trade or sell him—did not succeed.

## Oct.

- 1 Sat.—Did not go over to town to day—made whip lash, done washing &c. Nick came down from the mountains this afternoon—Did not think Mr. Conklin & Co. would be down to buy our quartz—Said they had 8 inch snow up to Gregory's the last storm—Traded Cub for Grey Mare mule to day—got 2 oz. Gulch gold to boot. The mule is verry good size but very ugly—
- 2 Sunday—Went over to Denver & Auraria—took diner with Lutz—found him verry comfortable in his cabin—was no preaching in Denver. Lutz went over to Coles with me—gave Lutz power of attorney to sell my quartz—Route & distances from St. [Joe]

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<sup>59</sup> Libeus Barney, in a letter written October 4, commented: "Week before last, the half-developed Vigilance Committee tried a man for horse-stealing, found him guilty, sentenced him to receive twenty lashes upon the naked back, and leave the country within twenty-four hours." *Letters of the Pike's Peak Gold Rush* (San Jose, Calif.: The Talisman Press, 1959), p. 48.

# The 1880 Labor Dispute in Leadville

BY PAUL T. BECHTOL, JR.

Between the formation of the Miners' Protective Association in Virginia City, Nevada, in 1863 and the organization of the Western Federation of Miners in Butte, Montana, in 1893, there were many attempts at union organization and numerous labor-management disputes.<sup>1</sup> Most of these organizations were short-lived and the strikes unsuccessful, but the participants gained the experience and understanding that ultimately led to permanent organization. One such event occurred in Leadville, Colorado, in the summer of 1880; and, although the strike and the union were finally broken, the miners for a time showed considerable discipline in the face of determined opposition.

By the spring of 1880 the major Leadville mines had been consolidated to some extent. The mines of the Chrysolite Silver, the Little Pittsburg Consolidated, the Little Chief, the Robert E. Lee, the Morning Star Consolidated, and the Iron Silver mining companies produced approximately two-thirds of the silver output of the district. The mines of the next five largest producers accounted for an additional fifteen percent of the production. These were the Leadville (the Carbonates Mine), the Robinson Consolidated, the Climax, and the Highland Chief Consolidated mining companies and the Oro La Plata Mine.<sup>2</sup> Thus, eleven companies controlled roughly eighty percent of the silver production at the time of the strike.

Even this small group of eleven companies, however, did not contain separate, independent units. The colorful Horace Austin Warner Tabor, then Colorado's lieutenant governor, had been tied closely to the development of the Little Pittsburg



The Robert E. Lee Mine.

claims and had served on the company's board of directors. He had been involved similarly in the development of the Chrysolite claim and reportedly owned some 73,000 of the company's shares of stock.<sup>3</sup> In addition, Tabor had interests in other mines and mining companies—the Matchless, Dunkin, and Hibernia, for example—that were to become major producers before the end of the year.

Like Tabor, the Chaffee-Moffat duo had interests in several of the major Leadville companies. Jerome B. Chaffee, a former United States senator from Colorado, was president of the First National Bank of Denver, and David H. Moffat, Jr., was the bank's cashier. Both men had served as officers of the Little Pittsburg (Chaffee as president, Moffat as vice-president) and were still on the company's board when the strike began. Chaffee was at the time a board member of the Leadville Mining Company, and both men had only recently disposed of their holdings in the Robert E. Lee Mine.<sup>4</sup>

Finally, the general manager of the Chrysolite Company, W. S. Keyes, and the general manager of the Little Chief, George Daly, exercised considerable influence in the district. Both were experienced mine managers and were responsible for the operation of several mines in addition to the Chrysolite and Little Chief.<sup>5</sup>

The men working in the mines of the Chrysolite Company had rebelled frequently in the spring of 1880. First, when the

<sup>3</sup> Almost any account of the early discoveries at Leadville contains the story of Tabor and the Little Pittsburg. See, for example, Don L. and Jean H. Griswold, *The Carbonate Camp Called Leadville* (Denver: University of Denver Press, 1951), pp. 36-38. The formation of the Little Pittsburg Consolidated Mining Company is described in Frank Fossett, *Colorado: Its Gold and Silver Mines, Farms and Stock Ranges, and Health and Pleasure Resorts* (New York: C. C. Crawford, 1879), pp. 456-57. Tabor's holdings in the Chrysolite Company are reported in the *Engineering and Mining Journal*, XXIX (April 24, 1880), p. 290.

<sup>4</sup> The Chaffee-Moffat interest in the Little Pittsburg and Robert E. Lee mines is described in Fossett, *Colorado: Its Gold and Silver Mines*, pp. 456-57, 462. Chaffee is listed as a board member of the Leadville Mining Company in the *Engineering and Mining Journal*, XXIX (January 10, 1880), p. 33, and both men are listed among the board members of the Little Pittsburg in *ibid.*, XXIX (May 8, 1880), p. 330.

<sup>5</sup> *Leadville Democrat*, May 29, 1880, p. 8; *Engineering and Mining Journal*, XXIX (June 5, 1880), p. 384.

*This study was financed by the Chapman Fund for Research in Economics of Colorado College.*

<sup>1</sup> For a survey of some of these early organizations see Vernon Jensen, *Heritage of Conflict: Labor Relations in the Nonferrous Metals Industry up to 1930* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1950), pp. 10-18.

<sup>2</sup> *Engineering and Mining Journal*, XXIX (March 13, 1880), p. 196.

company had assessed the men one dollar per month for physicians' services, a form of compulsory medical insurance, the miners objected vigorously, and the plan ultimately was scrapped. Next, the company imposed rules against talking and smoking during working hours that the men felt were unusually stringent.<sup>6</sup> Finally, the company's engineer reported to Keyes that the underground foremen were not measuring the men's work accurately and that the miners were idling in the shafts.<sup>7</sup> When the company replaced some of these foremen, the growing dissatisfaction with working conditions at the Chrysolite Company erupted into a dispute that closed down mines throughout the district.



"When the day-shift men went to work at the Chrysolite at 7 a.m. on May 26 they were informed by the night-shift men, numbering 300, that the long-expected strike was inaugurated."<sup>8</sup> The Chrysolite men then marched, with Michael Mooney in the lead, to the Little Chief to call out the men from that major producer. At the mine they were met by General Manager George Daly, who, when informed of their demands of a wage increase to four dollars per day and a uniform eight-hour day

<sup>6</sup> *Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), June 18, 1880, p. 8.

<sup>7</sup> *Leadville Democrat*, May 27, 1880, p. 6.

<sup>8</sup> U.S., Congress, Senate, *A Report on Labor Disturbances in the State of Colorado from 1880 to 1904, Inclusive, with Correspondence Relating Thereto*, S. Doc. 122, 56th Cong., 3d Sess., 1905, p. 69. Hereafter referred to as *Labor Disturbances in Colorado*.

throughout the district, promptly closed the Little Chief and other mines which were under his direction.<sup>9</sup>

The strikers then moved from mine to mine, informing the men of the strike and seeking their support. To all appearances at least, they achieved their objective, for the ranks of the strikers swelled to several thousand;<sup>10</sup> and before the day was over the procession had taken on the aspects of a parade, even to the inclusion of a band.

The question arises, then, of the extent to which the strike was pre-planned and the extent to which it was spontaneous. In his *Report on Labor Disturbances in the State of Colorado*, the U.S. commissioner of labor, Carroll D. Wright, attributed the organization and execution of the work stoppage to an assembly of the Knights of Labor, of which Mooney was president. No one at the scene at the time, however, corroborated this interpretation.<sup>11</sup> That is to say, there may well have been a Knights' assembly in Leadville, and many of the strikers may have belonged to it; but after the first few days of the strike, the Leadville men followed the specific precedents worked out by the hard rock miners in Virginia City, Nevada, not the generalized directives of the amorphous Knights.

Regardless of the precedent followed, Mooney from the first urged the men to keep out of the saloons and to maintain order. The extent to which the men followed this advice is, it seems to me, important in evaluating the developments of this dispute and in understanding the "heritage of conflict" associated with the Western Federation of Miners.<sup>12</sup>

The question of the goals and motives of the miners arose on the second day of the strike. The mines under the direction of Daly were barricaded and guarded by heavily armed men.<sup>13</sup> A report of this development incensed the miners, and they sent a committee to verify the rumor. However, it is likely that the many managers and owners equally were incensed and alarmed that day by a second demonstration of several thousand men

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.* In addition to the mines he normally managed, Daly was at the time in charge of the Chrysolite because Keyes was in Denver.

<sup>10</sup> In *Labor Disturbances in Colorado*, p. 70, the estimate is 3,000; in the *Leadville Democrat*, May 27, 1880, p. 8, the estimate is 2,000.

<sup>11</sup> See, for example, J. R. Buchanan, *The Story of a Labor Agitator* (New York: Outlook Company, 1903), pp. 3-36; E. G. Dill, "History of Lake County," in *History of the Arkansas Valley, Colorado* (Chicago: O. L. Baskin & Co., 1881), pp. 239-45; Carlyle Channing Davis, *Olden Times in Colorado* (Los Angeles: Phillips Publishing Co., 1916), pp. 248-61. Dill and Davis were newspaper publishers in Leadville at the time of the strike; Buchanan was a printer. These descriptions are inconsistent so far as details of the strike are concerned (Dill's account is perhaps the best and Buchanan's the worst), but they all agree that Mooney was an ad hoc leader.

<sup>12</sup> For reports of Mooney's speeches see *Labor Disturbances in Colorado*, p. 71, and the *Leadville Democrat*, May 29, 1880, p. 8.

<sup>13</sup> *Labor Disturbances in Colorado*, p. 70.



who a few days before had been going into the shafts in a seemingly contented fashion. Despite these feelings collective bargaining, mining-camp style, began that day. After the morning parade, the men held a meeting at which a resolution setting forth the official demands of the group was adopted: a wage rate of four dollars per day for men underground and "on top," a uniform eight-hour day in the district, and a closed shop—i.e., an employment policy that would require meaningful recognition of the union. The concern with shift bosses and underground foremen which in large part had triggered the strike was not included, perhaps because it was only a Chrysolite problem. Committees of miners were elected to present these demands to the managers and superintendents of the various mines.<sup>14</sup>

In addition, picket lines of a sort—committees of men to visit each mine—were organized and instructed to visit the mines the following day. Mooney and his men were determined to close down the mines, but they were determined also to accomplish this without violence or property damage. On Friday morning, the third day of the strike, the *Leadville Democrat* reported: "Another night of exceptionally good order."<sup>15</sup>

When the miners met again on Friday morning, the name adopted for the union was the Miners', Mechanics', and Laborers' Protective Association; and, as the name implies, a copy of the constitution and bylaws of the Virginia City union was used as a guide in creating the organization. Also, by Friday printers sympathetic to the union had published a newspaper, *The Crisis*, and copies of it were distributed at the meeting.<sup>16</sup>

Friday afternoon the mine managers met to reject formally the union demands and to ask the county for guards for their mines, another action which irritated the strikers.<sup>17</sup> That evening a mass meeting was organized by a Citizens' Committee to discuss the issues separating the two sides. At the meeting several ministers and Charles S. Thomas, at that time a local attorney and later a Colorado governor, praised the strikers for their orderliness. Daly and Mooney also spoke and each restated the position of his side. Committees representing the two sides were asked to meet the next day, and the following resolution was passed with no indication of dissent:

1. *Resolved*, That we recognize the right of every man to demand such price for his services of whatever kind or char-

- acter as he may deem fit or proper, and that he has the absolute right to decline service in any capacity, if he thinks he is not fairly remunerated for the same. But while we recognize this absolute, we do not believe any man or number of men, however great, have a legal or moral right to dictate to others what price they shall receive for services, or when or where they shall labor, or what occupation they shall follow, so long as private rights are not infringed.
2. That we regard any effort to extort any price for services, goods or other thing [sic], by threats to injure person or property as unlawful and riotous and deserving prompt civil punishment.
3. That we condemn any combination of capital in any department of industry which has for its object the extortion of an undue profit at the expense of labor.
4. That we believe every business should be conducted strictly upon the principle of honest competition, and that any effort to void fair compensation is dishonest and should be condemned.<sup>18</sup>

In view of subsequent events it seems clear that the mine owners, mine managers, and town businessmen read this statement differently than did the miners.

On Saturday, May 29, the committees representing the union and the companies met but accomplished little. The union reportedly modified its demand of four dollars for "top men," but no formal statement was issued by the union at the time.<sup>19</sup> While the results of the negotiation might have been the same no matter who was on the committees, it should be noted that neither Daly nor Keyes was a member of the management group. In view of Keyes' standing in the eyes of the New York owners of the major Leadville mines, his absence was especially unfortunate. Also on Saturday the county commissioners met to consider the demands for protection of property issued by the owners and managers the day before. And reports circulated that several of the smaller mines had accepted the union position and were going to open.<sup>20</sup> If these owners and managers had in fact agreed to the union terms, they were, perhaps, asked to reconsider; for the mines did not resume operation.

On Sunday, Memorial Day, 1880, Sheriff L. R. Tucker, on orders from the county commissioners, issued a request for all citizens to serve as mine guards if necessary. The traditional Memorial Day parade included an impromptu group of striking miners as well as the organized militia companies and veterans' groups. Later in the day another bargaining session was held. This one involved Daly (but not Keyes) as well as Sheriff Tucker. At this meeting the union men were reported to have

<sup>14</sup> *Leadville Democrat*, May 28, 1880, p. 8.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, May 29, 1880, p. 8.

<sup>17</sup> *Labor Disturbances in Colorado*, p. 70.

<sup>18</sup> *Leadville Democrat*, May 29, 1880, p. 8.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, May 30, 1880, p. 8.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, *Labor Disturbances in Colorado*, p. 70.

proposed an eight-hour day at forty cents per hour, but again no official statement was issued.<sup>21</sup>

An official statement condemning the use of violence was released, however. The statement was signed by both Mooney and E. E. Baker, another of the union leaders. In addition, Mooney said that he would assist personally in arresting anyone creating disorder. It seems likely that the managers and owners went into this session seeking such a statement if they could not convince the union to agree to return at the pre-strike level of wages and hours, for both Daly and Keyes had announced before the meeting that they planned to resume work the next day.<sup>22</sup>

On Monday, May 31, the Chrysolite and Iron Silver mines under Keyes' direction and the Little Chief under Daly were reopened. Arrangements were made to board and house the men who went back to work, and these mines operated on at least a token basis throughout the strike. During the next two weeks other mines from time to time announced plans to reopen and some began production, but none was able to resume or to continue for more than a day or two. Twelve days after the strike began the *Leadville Democrat* commented:

The progress and production of the mines of the richest district in the world, for the past week, has [sic] been practically nothing. The Chrysolite has possibly produced four hundred tons during the entire week and the Little Chief about three hundred, taken together, a fair day's work for one of them. This is the extent of the one product. . . . Every drift, every shaft, every description of underground improvement, is just where it was left off the day the strike was inaugurated.<sup>23</sup>

The same assessment could have been given a week later. The strike effectively closed down the mines in Leadville.

The carnival-like atmosphere soon disappeared, too. There were no more parades, replete with brass bands, or public meetings involving managers, owners, miners, and townspeople to be conducted on a town-meeting basis. In short, the situation became more serious and "the Miners' Association and the mine managers were in almost constant session."<sup>24</sup>

On Tuesday, June 1, the union leased a hall and called evening meetings for the next four nights. Also on Tuesday a

deputy sheriff fired on a group of strikers and injured three. One newspaper reporter claimed that the deputy was forced to fire because a mob was keeping some men from returning to work; another reporter said that the men were drunk. In any case, two weeks later the deputy received "a brace of silver mounted revolvers" from the Chrysolite and Little Chief companies.<sup>25</sup>

On Wednesday, June 2, the union issued a formal statement reducing its demands for "top men" to \$3.50 for an eight-hour day, in the same statement emphasizing that the strike was still on. That is, a statement publicizing a concession which perhaps already had been presented to the managers was used to counteract rumors that the limited operations at the Chrysolite, Iron Silver, and Little Chief marked the end of the strike.<sup>26</sup>



The main shaft of the Little Chief Mine.

There were, however rumors of dissension in the union ranks, and there is evidence of tension if not dissension. For example, one small mine which had accepted the union demands was visited by a union committee, and the men working there

<sup>21</sup> *Labor Disturbances in Colorado*, pp. 70-71. The union's offer was reported in the *Leadville Democrat*, June 1, 1880, p. 8.

<sup>22</sup> *Leadville Democrat*, June 1, 1880, p. 8.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, June 6, 1880, p. 6. In his quest for dramatic emphasis the editor exaggerated rather badly the average daily production capacity of each of these mines. For production before the strike see the *Engineering and Mining Journal*, XXIX (March 13, 1880), p. 196.

<sup>24</sup> Dill, "History of Lake County," p. 243.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, *Leadville Democrat*, June 2, 1880, p. 8, and June 15, 1880, p. 8. Two of the men brought charges against the deputy, but the court dismissed them. *Ibid.*, June 9, 1880, p. 8.

<sup>26</sup> *Leadville Democrat*, June 3, 1880, p. 8.

called out again. No public explanation or justification for this development was given. After a union meeting a group of fifty men awakened one of the county commissioners demanding to know why the Sunday call for mine guards had been issued. When the commissioner convinced the group that he had not been involved in that decision, they apologized and went to talk with the other commissioners. There is no record of their later meanderings, but such behavior contrasts sharply with the purposeful direction Mooney had exercised up to that time.<sup>27</sup>

In addition to these problems, the union men learned that the first shipment of arms from Governor Pitkin had arrived in town that day. From the union point of view, the only favorable development was a report that Keyes thought the situation was exasperating.<sup>28</sup> There is no day-by-day record of the events of the next week. The editor of the *Leadville Democrat* found nothing to report except that the strike, indeed, had stopped production. A record of the letters, telegrams, and orders issuing from the governor's office confirms the view that the situation changed very little. Between May 26 and May 31 Pitkin wrote seven letters concerning the strike to people in Leadville, but between May 31 and June 10 he wrote only one, and this was to refuse a request for a cavalry company for the militia because the state could not support one.<sup>29</sup>

R. G. Dill, the editor of the *Leadville Herald*, writing a year after the strike, mentioned the constant negotiating sessions, as quoted above, and then gave this view of the week's events:

The threats of the miners were frequent, and took the shape of anonymous letters, addressed to prominent miners and property owners, in which they were informed that unless the demands of the miners were complied with, the town would be laid in ashes and a number of prominent men murdered. The newspapers were also threatened with destruction, and their editors with assassination. Mr. Mooney, upon being informed of these threatening letters, promptly disavowed any responsibility therefor, and promised that his influence, and that of

the miners' league, should be used for the protection of property and life. The constant repetition of these threats induced great alarm, however, particularly as it was known that a gang of lawless men, in no way connected with the miners, had taken advantage of the state of affairs, and were engaged in plotting against the public peace, for the purpose of avenging the hanging of two of their compatriots in the previous fall.<sup>30</sup>

In one of its infrequent commentaries on the strike during this week, the *Leadville Democrat* described the results of this letter-writing campaign:

A great number of miners call at the offices of the superintendents and state that they are ready to commence working again at the old figures [but then] the men invariably fail to put in an appearance. . . . [At the Duncan mine] out of some fifty or sixty men who had previously signified a willingness to return to work, but about fifteen put in an appearance, and out of this number only three had brought their lunches and were willing to go down the mine and begin.<sup>31</sup>

Union leaders repeatedly denied that union men were responsible for any threats, but in a speech in Denver after the strike had been broken by the state militia, Mooney claimed one superintendent was caught throwing threatening letters down a shaft where men were working.<sup>32</sup> Regardless of who was responsible for the threats and innuendos circulating in the district and regardless of the reasons for the lack of progress in the negotiating sessions, it seems clear that the pressure created by both of these situations had turned Leadville into a community of frustrated, angry, impatient men—on both sides of the dispute. Before the explosion could occur, however, Mayor John F. Humphreys on Tuesday, June 8, assumed the conciliator's role and asked each side for one last bargaining effort.<sup>33</sup>

In response to this request Keyes and Daly sent to the union a written proposal suggesting that the men return at the old wage rates and that Keyes and Daly would then try to persuade the other managers to adopt the eight-hour day. The union rejected this proposal insisting that some wage increase would have to be granted.<sup>34</sup> Two days later the union proposed a wage



R. G. Dill

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Governor Frederick W. Pitkin, Letter Copy Book, State Historical Society of Colorado Library. The events of the Leadville strike are covered on pages 274-337.

<sup>30</sup> Dill, "History of Lake County," p. 243. The public hanging was a lynching carried out by a vigilante group. A Denver newspaper account of the lynching leads one to wonder if the prominent men of Leadville of 1879 knew what they were about, and their concern during the strike is understandable. See the *Rocky Mountain News*, November 21, 1879, p. 4.

<sup>31</sup> *Leadville Democrat*, June 5, 1880, p. 8.

<sup>32</sup> *Rocky Mountain News*, June 18, 1880, p. 8.

<sup>33</sup> *Leadville Democrat*, June 9, 1880, p. 6.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

rate of \$3.20 with a guaranteed eight-hour day. The managers submitted this proposal to the various absentee owners by telegraph with recommendations against acceptance. The recommendations were followed.<sup>35</sup> Collective bargaining was at an end.

On Friday, June 11, a Citizens' Executive Committee issued the following proclamation:

Notice is hereby given by the undersigned, a committee of citizens of Leadville, that the citizens aforesaid are thoroughly determined that the work on the mines shall be resumed, there being to our certain knowledge men enough in the camp to work at the rate of wages offered by the mines, providing the intimidation now practiced under the auspices of the Miners' Union cease; that the citizens hereby state that an adequate force of men properly armed have been enrolled for the purpose of maintaining the peace of the country and protecting such miners as may be willing to go to work; that on the first step taken by any adherent of the Union, or other disturbers of the peace, to interfere with, intimidate or threaten any miner willing to work, THE UNDERSIGNED WILL SEE THAT SWIFT AND AMPLE PUNISHMENT IS MEETED [sic] OUT TO THE OFFENDER OR OFFENDERS.

All parties whether miners or others who may themselves be intimidated or threatened or may know of others being intimidated or threatened will confer a favor by communicating the names of the parties engaged in such intimidation, or threats, and the time and place, with a view to taking prompt and exemplary action.<sup>36</sup>

The following day, Saturday, June 12, both the miners and the Citizens' Committee took to the streets to publicize their positions, or perhaps more accurately, to intimidate the opposition. The Citizens' Committee had mustered some six hundred men and, with arms provided by the state, paraded through the streets.

The men who took part in the parade were principally business men, and the demonstration was all that could have been looked for. It failed, however, in the accomplishment of its purpose. The only effect it produced was to inflame the passions of the miners, who had gathered on Harrison avenue [Lead-

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., June 11, 1880, p. 6.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., June 12, 1880, p. 8. In the *Democrat* this group is identified as the Citizens' Executive Committee of One Hundred; in *Labor Disturbances in Colorado*, p. 71, it is described as the Citizens' Executive Committee of Five Hundred. In both sources the wording of the proclamation is identical except for the clause which appeared in capital letters in the *Democrat*. This clause in *Labor Disturbances in Colorado*, p. 71, reads: "The undersigned will hold the leaders of the union responsible with their lives." Clearly, this latter phrasing places a greater burden on the union leaders. Moreover, the difference in the size of the Executive Committee is of some interest. The public meeting of May 28 was called by a citizens' committee of five hundred, and a comparison of the resolution passed at that meeting with the proclamation issued on June 11 describes vividly the change in attitudes which occurred in Leadville. If, in fact, the same group of citizens uniformly experienced this revulsion, then collective bargaining, indeed, had failed to indicate a possible method for solving this labor-management dispute.

ville's main street], and, as the column passed, assailed the participants with approbrious [sic] epithets and jeers.<sup>37</sup>

The *Leadville Democrat* estimated the total number of persons in the melee at 1,500; so, allowing for errors in estimates, the two sides were of roughly equal strength.<sup>38</sup>

But whatever the actual relative strength, the Citizens' Committee and its adherents felt not only that they had the upper hand but also that they were morally right. The legalities could be taken care of later. Infused with this view of their mission, several mounted members of the demonstration proceeded to assume police functions by riding into the crowd on the sidewalk and ordering them to clear the street. At least two of the Citizens were arrested immediately, and a repetition of the lynching of November 9, 1879, was avoided.<sup>39</sup> Ultimately, of course, the Citizens' Committee view of law and order would prevail, but for a moment at least local lawmen were more or less impartial. The group supporting the owners, however, demanded allegiance, not neutrality. The Citizens' Committee chairman wrote Governor Pitkin "advising him that the civil authorities—the Sheriff, Mayor and Chief of Police—were believed to be in sympathy with the strikers; at all events they were not trusted, and could not be depended upon to protect life and property."<sup>40</sup>

Governor Pitkin hesitated, but only briefly. On Sunday, June 13, the governor wired one of his most trusted correspondents, J. D. Ward, that reports from Leadville "were conflicting," that some described the situation as "amusing rather than dangerous," and that "if some dispatches are correct it would be ridiculous to [send troops]." In the end, however, the governor accepted the owners' point of view when he rather plaintively suggested to Ward that "the leading men should agree on what they want me to do."<sup>41</sup> The "leading men" had decided,

<sup>37</sup> Dill, "History of Lake County," p. 244. Of the six hundred men, less than one-quarter could have been armed with weapons sent in for this particular disturbance. In a letter dated May 30, Governor Pitkin informed Sheriff Tucker that he was sending sixty rifles to Leadville; these arrived June 2 as noted above. In the same letter he authorized Tucker to requisition forty additional rifles already at Fairplay and sixty more that would be sent to Buena Vista—but only if the need should arise. According to Dill the rifles in Fairplay were sent for by the Citizens' Committee, but, even so, a large number of men in the parade would have had to supply their own hardware, and, according to the *Leadville Democrat*, many did not. In the June 13 issue p. 4, the editor, with unwonted flippancy, remarked: "The pick-handle brigade was particularly effective. Those are just the things to stop intimidators from writing bad letters."

<sup>38</sup> *Leadville Democrat*, June 13, 1880, p. 8.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Davis, *Olden Times in Colorado*, p. 256.

<sup>41</sup> Pitkin, Letter Copy Book, p. 317.

and on the same day Pitkin declared that a state of martial law existed in Leadville.<sup>42</sup>

The end of the strike followed quickly. A representative of the mines sought military permission for one more meeting, which was held on June 17. This gathering was another public meeting with the military and leading citizens as well as union and management representatives attending.<sup>43</sup>

Essentially, the union agreed to return to work under the same conditions that prevailed before the strike began. Keyes and Daly agreed to keep the eight-hour day in their mines and promised to urge other operators to adopt these hours. No general repression of union leaders was sought, and the union was not required to disband, while the union representatives agreed to abandon public demonstrations of a "threatening character."<sup>44</sup> For all practical purposes union activity was at an end.

The Leadville strike was typical of many early labor disputes in the hard rock mines of the West. Repressed grievances built up tension, and some event triggered a walkout. Then, if a labor leader with organizing ability appeared, the dispute took on some of the characteristics of modern collective bargaining. If such a leader did not arise, the issue burned out in a few days.

With Michael Mooney providing the essential leadership, the Leadville miners were able to bring mining activities to a halt, thus applying the economic pressure which is the essence of a strike. In this case, the miners had just received a month's pay which made a work stoppage possible.<sup>45</sup>

Once union organizational problems had been partly resolved at least, negotiations with management representatives could become the main union function. Negotiation, however, generally consisted of management rejection of all demands, particularly the demand for union recognition and a closed shop employment policy.

At this point developments reached a critical stage. Management could reopen the mines only by meaningful negotiation—or by breaking the strike. If the union leadership had not been able to prevent outbreaks of violence, particularly property damage, the management side could use these activities as the basis for outside intervention, generally state troops of some sort. If the union clearly had kept its members under control, the management position was more difficult, and some-

times provocation of "unrest" was found necessary by management.

Once outside force was applied in the name of "law and order," the strike generally was broken. Only rarely were state troops used to prevent property damage rather than as mine guards for strike breakers.<sup>46</sup> In Leadville in the summer of 1880, the fledgling union organization could not survive the appearance of the state militia. Permanent union representation for the hard rock mines in Colorado had to await the formation of the Western Federation of Miners.

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<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 319.

<sup>43</sup> *Labor Disturbances in Colorado*, p. 73.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 74.

<sup>45</sup> *Leadville Democrat*, May 27, 1880, p. 8.

<sup>46</sup> *Labor Disturbances in Colorado*, pp. 76-84.

## Denver and the War on Unemployment

BY BERNARD MERGEN

"Being a proletarian in good standing is no bed of roses," wrote Heywood Broun in the *Nation* on March 26, 1930.<sup>1</sup> From 7,971,000 unemployed workers in July 1931, the total rose to 15,071,000 in March 1933, or one of every three wage and salary earners. Many of the employed were working only part-time.<sup>2</sup> Federal, state, and local relief funds were exhausted or inadequate. In short, the situation was as desperate as any in American history. One of the responses to this condition was the organization, by the unemployed themselves, of various self-help projects. A list compiled in November 1933 names over three hundred separate organizations in thirty-three states.<sup>3</sup> This paper will focus on one of them and describe the factors which shaped its growth in comparison with other self-help groups.

The Unemployed Citizens' League of Denver was created on June 23, 1932, in meetings held simultaneously in eight mortuaries throughout the city.<sup>4</sup> The meetings were held in mortuaries because the school buildings were closed for the summer and all of the churches except Grace Methodist refused to donate their facilities.<sup>5</sup> The meetings were called by a com-

mittee of unemployed professional men led by Charles D. Strong, an architect; Carl Whitehead, a lawyer; and Franklin Wood, a civil engineer. These men had read about the Unemployed Citizens' League of Seattle and drew up a similar plan to present to Governor William H. Adams.<sup>6</sup> The main objective of the Denver league was cooperative production. "As soon as local units of the unemployed are organized," reported the *Rocky Mountain News*, "they will be asked, under the present plans, to name delegates to a central organization committee to co-ordinate activities. The plan then calls for the organization of groups for the gathering and production of necessities for relief of the unemployed. Under the proposal outlined to the governor, the organization would have no treasury and would not buy or sell any goods, but would use land and machinery donated for the purpose in producing necessities to relieve distress among the unemployed and their dependents."<sup>7</sup>

The public officials of Denver had made an effort in the fall of 1931 to meet the emergency, but it had proved to be insufficient. Mayor George Davis Begole had called upon several prominent individuals to form a Citizens' Employment Committee to assist in finding new sources of employment and relief. Realizing that no welfare work could begin until the city officials knew the dimensions of the problem, the chairman of the committee, J. F. Welborn, created what he called the Denver Employment Army. Its objective was "to canvass the homes and



Denver mayor  
George D. Begole.

<sup>1</sup> Heywood Broun, "It Seems to Heywood Broun," *Nation*, CXXX (March 26, 1930), p. 353.

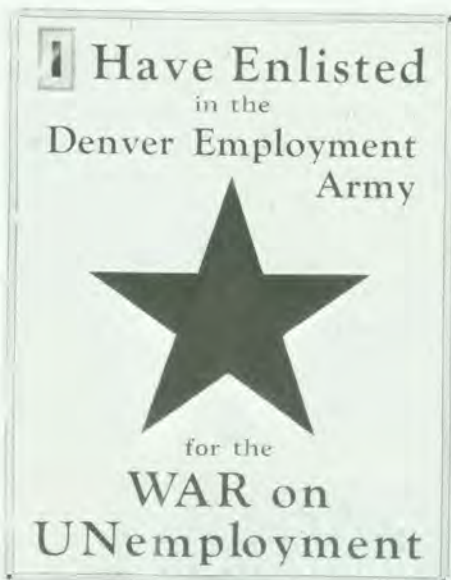
<sup>2</sup> Irving Bernstein, *The Lean Years: A History of the American Worker, 1920-1933* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1966), p. 316. Statistics available for Buffalo and Syracuse suggest that about as many persons were employed part-time as were unemployed. See *Monthly Labor Review*, XXXIV (February 1932), p. 274, and XXXIV (April 1932), p. 778.

<sup>3</sup> A. Mosher and E. J. Wolfe, "Self-Help Projects in the United States," mimeographed (New York, 1933), Mary Reed Library, University of Denver. For a general discussion of these organizations, see *Monthly Labor Review*, XXXVI (March 1933), pp. 449-95; (April 1933), pp. 717-70; (May 1933), pp. 979-1038; (June 1933), pp. 1229-40; and Daniel Leab, "Barter and Self-Help Groups 1932-33," *Midcontinent American Studies Journal*, VII (Spring 1966), pp. 15-24.

<sup>4</sup> *Rocky Mountain News* (Denver), June 19, 1932, p. 7; *Monthly Labor Review*, XXXVI (March 1933), p. 461.

<sup>5</sup> Interview with Charles D. Strong, August 5, 1968. The author would like to express his appreciation to Mr. Strong for help and hospitality in preparing the article.

dwelling places of the entire city for work wanted and offered, arouse a civic consciousness, try to place all the people possible in the positions offered by their respective districts, and then turn over all cards and records to the Committee, which will thereupon assume the responsibility for the relief of our unemployed."<sup>8</sup> Every person who cooperated with the committee in registering for work or offering jobs received a sticker with a large red star and the slogan: "I have enlisted in the Denver Employment Army for the War on Unemployment." When the



committee made its report to the mayor on March 31, 1932, it had registered 22,000 unemployed men and 4,000 women, provided jobs for 9,000 men and 1,000 women, and distributed public and private relief to 6,986 families.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup> *Rocky Mountain News*, June 19, 1932, p. 7. The *New Republic* and the *Nation* had emphasized the political importance of the Seattle league, while *Business Week* discussed the barter and self-help activities. See Arthur Hillman, *The Unemployed Citizens' League of Seattle*, University of Washington Publications in the Social Sciences, Vol. V, No. 3 (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1934), pp. 262-64.

<sup>7</sup> *Rocky Mountain News*, June 19, 1932, p. 7.

<sup>8</sup> *Instructions to the Denver Employment Army for the Work [sic] of October 12th to October 14th* (n.p., n.d.), pamphlet in the Western History Department, Denver Public Library.

<sup>9</sup> *Where Did It Go? Report of Denver Citizens Unemployment Committee To March 31, 1932* (n.p., n.d.), *ibid.* For an interesting analysis of the use of war metaphors during the Depression, see William E. Leuchtenburg, "The New Deal and the Analogue of War," in *Change and Continuity in Twentieth-Century America*, ed. by John Braeman et al. (New York: Harper Colophon Books, 1966), pp. 81-143.

By contrast, on August 26, 1932, the Unemployed Citizens' League claimed that 4,780 heads of households with 15,543 dependents were members. By February 1933, this had grown to over 9,000 and 34,000 respectively.<sup>10</sup> There were at least six other self-help organizations active in Denver at this time, with a combined membership of about 600.<sup>11</sup> The census of 1930 gave Denver's population as 287,861, of whom 31,235 were foreign born and 7,204 were Negroes. The percentage of the black population had risen from 2.4 percent in 1920 to 2.5 percent in 1930, while the percentage of illiterates in the total population had fallen from 1.9 percent to 1.4 percent.<sup>12</sup> These figures should be compared briefly to those given for Seattle, where the first of the unemployed leagues was organized. Seattle had a population in 1930 of 365,583. Of its citizens 72,975 were foreign born, but many of these were Canadians. Negroes numbered 3,303 or 0.9 percent, a proportion which had remained unchanged since 1920. Illiteracy had fallen from 1.5 percent to 0.8 percent.<sup>13</sup> The impression that Denver's unemployment problems were greater in part because of the larger number of Negroes in its population is confirmed by the *Unemployment Relief Census* of October 1933, summarized in tables 1 and 2.<sup>14</sup>

TABLE 1

FAMILIES ON RELIEF, OCTOBER 1933, BY COLOR OR RACE, IN DENVER AND SEATTLE.

	DENVER	SEATTLE
White	9,389	9,055
Negro	612	261
Mexican	352	2
Chinese	3	1
Japanese	1	1
Indian	5	5
Filipino	7	23
All other	—	7
Total	10,369	9,355

TABLE 2

PERSONS IN RELIEF FAMILIES, OCTOBER 1933, BY COLOR OR RACE, IN DENVER AND SEATTLE

	DENVER	SEATTLE
White	31,064	29,321
Negro	1,540	701
Other races	1,854	137
Total	34,458	30,159

The Unemployed Citizens' League of Denver eventually had twenty-five locals, a few of which were organized by blacks and Mexican-Americans. All the locals participated in the activities of the league, such as harvesting vegetables for farmers in return for a share of the produce. Using the abandoned Sells-Floto Circus winter quarters as its main warehouse and community kitchen, the league engaged in a wide range of activities, including operating a bakery which turned out five hundred loaves of bread a day, cutting timber and mining coal for fuel, demolishing and repairing unoccupied dwellings, sewing, repairing shoes, and barbering. The league also sponsored concerts by the Denver Philharmonic Orchestra and local music teachers. Weekly instruction was offered in economics, English, and some shop skills. In December 1932 the league acquired an old printing press and began to publish a weekly paper called *Dawn*, but a plan to operate a medical clinic did not materialize. The success of these activities was related, in part, to the trades and professions of the members of the league. At least eighty-four distinct occupations were represented in the list which the league submitted to the Department of Labor in 1933.<sup>15</sup>

Each member was obligated to work a minimum of two days a week for the league, and originally each member was credited with the hours of labor he performed and then allowed to draw supplies against that credit. When the league found it impossible to keep all the members at work, however, it distributed supplies on the basis of need. There was no central registry, but each local kept records on its members which included age, number of dependents, occupation, and period of residence in Denver, as well as forms which rated them from "A" to "E" as to physical condition, ability, and personality. This intriguing scheme, which seems so liable to abuse, reflects the curious mixture of central authority and consciously created local autonomy.

<sup>10</sup> *Rocky Mountain News*, August 26, 1932, p. 15; *Monthly Labor Review*, XXXVI (March 1933), p. 461.

<sup>11</sup> *Monthly Labor Review*, XXXVIII (February 1934), p. 316. These were the Harmon Cooperative Association, the Denver Recovery Exchange, the South Denver Cooperative Industries, the Grace Center Cooperative Association, and the Highland Group of Unemployed. Mosher and Wolfe, in "Self-Help Projects in the United States," p. 12, mention a United Producers of America, Inc.

<sup>12</sup> U.S., Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Fifteenth Census of the United States, 1930: Population*, Vol. III, pt. 1, p. 307.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, pt. 2, p. 1229.

<sup>14</sup> Federal Emergency Relief Administration, *Unemployment Relief Census, October 1933*, Report No. 1 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1934), pp. 78, 98, 102.

<sup>15</sup> *Monthly Labor Review*, XXXVI (March 1933), pp. 461-66; interview with Charles D. Strong, August 5, 1968. Mr. Strong had had a long-standing interest in public health and had been involved in efforts to get a sewage treatment plant on the Platte River.

As indicated above, the committee which called the league into existence did so by announcing the place and time of eight local meetings. Each local elected a chairman, secretary, treasurer, and one representative to the city executive committee. The city officers were elected by the entire membership. The chairman of the city-wide organization appointed from the membership a supervisor for each line of activity—clothing, food, fuel, health, housing, labor and transportation, publicity, recreation, solicitation, utilities, and wrecking of buildings. The local chairmen also appointed supervisors for various activities. By February 1933 there were signs that the obvious weaknesses of this structure were beginning to show. Six locals had broken away from the league, and there was criticism of the appointment rather than the election of supervisors. Some locals were duplicating the work of the city office in contracting work and collecting materials, to the annoyance of employers and relief agencies.<sup>16</sup> Nevertheless, if one compares the record of Denver's Unemployed Citizens' League with Seattle's or any other, one of the chief sources of its success appears to be its leadership.

Charles D. Strong, who served as executive chairman of the league during its year of existence, brought several important assets to his post. Born in Georgia and raised on farms there and in Oklahoma, Strong studied engineering and architecture at Georgia Tech, graduating in 1917. He settled in Denver in 1922, after serving as an officer in the army. When business failures and the decline in construction destroyed his architectural practice, Strong drew upon his boyhood experience with poverty and deprivation in the South to organize the league. He also utilized his contacts in the Chamber of Commerce, local government, American Legion, and National Guard.<sup>17</sup> Acting solely on his own authority, a friend of Strong in the National Guard lent the league trucks, stoves, and tents. Although the league collected only a few hundred dollars in cash, it received a small grant from the mayor's committee to buy supplies for its house repair work and a modest loan from the Reconstruction Finance Corporation to buy food.<sup>18</sup>

Mass unemployment and poverty, especially among people who had never been on relief, was a disorienting experience.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 465, 468. For the suggestion that some individuals in Denver were shifting from self-help to protest see Leab, "Barter and Self-Help Groups 1932-33," p. 21.

<sup>17</sup> Interview with Charles D. Strong, August 5, 1968. For a plan by the American Legion to provide a million jobs in July 1931, see *Monthly Labor Review*, XXXV (August 1932), pp. 275-76.

<sup>18</sup> *Monthly Labor Review*, XXXVI (March 1933), pp. 462, 467; interview with Charles D. Strong, August 5, 1968.



# 4 TONS OF BEANS FOR JOBLESS

## Farmer Donates Truckload of Pods Rather Than Sell It for \$15

### Less Than \$100 in Cash Received by League Since Founding

BY JACK CARBERRY  
He was tired and weary. He had driven all night and most of yesterday behind the wheel of a heavy truck. All afternoon he had gone from door to door along Commission House Street offering his cargo for sale—the four tons of beans. Many an hour of labor had gone into the growing done on his farm at Blaine, Colo., in the San Luis Valley. He had hoped...



Bootleggers' Materials to Be Confiscated for League

His hopes were raised to such a point that when a man in a suit, accompanied by a woman, came to his door he felt that he had found a buyer. The man, who was a member of the Denver League, had come to see the farmer about the beans. The man told the farmer that the beans were needed for the unemployed in Denver. The farmer agreed to sell the beans for \$15, but the man offered him less than \$100 in cash. The farmer refused the offer and donated the beans to the league.



Other Cases in File

It is not only the unemployed who are suffering from the effects of the war, but also the farmers. Many farmers are having difficulty selling their crops. The price of many crops has fallen to a point where it is no longer profitable to produce them. This is due to the fact that there is an overabundance of crops on the market. The government has taken steps to help farmers, but these steps are not enough. The government should take more steps to help farmers, such as buying their crops at a guaranteed price.

### Critics of Bonus Battle Snubbed

Secretary Sidetracks Protest to President

The battle over the bonus has reached a new stage. The secretary of the War Relieph Administration has announced that he will not accept the protest of the critics of the bonus. The critics have argued that the bonus is a waste of money and that it will do little good. They have also argued that the bonus is a violation of the law. The secretary has replied that the bonus is a necessary part of the war effort and that it will help the unemployed. He has also said that the bonus is in compliance with the law.

### ARMY TOLD ACUATE CAMP

Miliken Says Veterans' Place on Par with Regulars

The Army has been told that the conditions at the Acuate camp are not as good as they should be. A report from the Miliken commission says that the veterans at the camp are being treated as second-class citizens. The report says that the veterans are not allowed to vote and that they are not given the same benefits as the regular army soldiers. The report also says that the veterans are being housed in shacks and that they do not have enough to eat. The Army has promised to investigate the report and to take steps to improve the conditions at the camp.

### M'CORMICK FUNERAL RITES SET FOR TODAY

Rockefeller Jr. to Attend Chicago Services

Funeral services for John D. Rockefeller Jr. will be held today in Chicago. The funeral will be held at the Rockefeller Chapel and will be attended by a large number of people. Rockefeller Jr. died last week and his funeral has been a subject of much public interest. Rockefeller Jr. was one of the richest men in the world and his death has led to many questions about the future of his fortune.

### ROOSEVELT LEADING IN STRAW VOTE HERE

Buller Are Cast by Voters to Court

Mr. Roosevelt is leading in the straw vote here. The voters have cast their ballots for Mr. Roosevelt in the straw vote. This is a good sign for Mr. Roosevelt, as it shows that he is popular with the voters. Mr. Roosevelt is a strong candidate for the upcoming election and he is expected to win. The voters have shown their support for Mr. Roosevelt and they are confident that he will lead the country in the future.

# GREAT AND FR... SIDE O...

The situation encouraged innovation and radical views. Strong staged "sit-ins" to force oil companies to extend credit and reduce rates for gasoline. J. I. Moore, the league's transportation supervisor, led several members to found a Utopian colony at Dove Creek in western Colorado. And, on the eve of the election in 1932, Strong met with the governor and representatives of organized labor, the National Guard, the American Legion, and the Veterans of Foreign Wars to plan an economic takeover of the state if Hoover were reelected.<sup>19</sup> It is difficult to know how seriously these activities should be taken. Perhaps they are only on the level of the story of the two vice-squad policemen who contributed to the league barrels, crocks, and jars which had been seized in a raid on some bootleggers.<sup>20</sup> The question of what might have occurred if the government had not taken any action must remain unanswered. The Denver league and most similar organizations ceased to operate after the Civilian Conservation Corps Reforestation Relief Act, the Federal Emergency Relief Act, and the National Industrial Recovery Act were passed in 1933. But seven years later, while serving in the Colorado State Legislature, Strong submitted a plan to President Roosevelt for a permanent and cooperative Works Progress Administration, "based upon the assumption that under our present economic system we are confronting a condition of permanent unemployment of millions."<sup>21</sup>

Protest by the jobless is not new in America. Herbert Gutman has described one attempt by the unemployed to organize in New York City in 1873.<sup>22</sup> And both the Socialists and the Communists were active on behalf of the unemployed throughout the 1920s and 1930s.<sup>23</sup> Even the Industrial Workers of the World experienced a brief revival in 1931 by creating an IWW Unemployed Union.<sup>24</sup> What was new in the unemployed leagues was the emphasis, in what William Leuchtenburg calls "a pecuniary economy," on self-help projects which do not require large amounts of capital. The value of the projects may only

<sup>19</sup> Interview with Charles D. Strong, August 15, 1968.  
<sup>20</sup> Rocky Mountain News, August 27, 1932, p. 9.  
<sup>21</sup> Mimeographed copy in the possession of the author.  
<sup>22</sup> Herbert G. Gutman, "The Failure of the Movement by the Unemployed for Public Works in 1873," Political Science Quarterly, LXXX (June 1965), pp. 254-76.  
<sup>23</sup> Daniel J. Leab, "United We Eat": The Creation and Organization of the Unemployed Council in 1930," Labor History, VIII (Fall 1967), pp. 300-15; Bernard Karsh and Phillips L. Garman, "The Impact of the Political Left," in Labor and the New Deal, ed. by Milton Derber and Edwin Young (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1957), pp. 86-97.  
<sup>24</sup> Industrial Solidarity, XII (March 24, 1931), p. 1. "New York, Chicago, Seattle, and San Francisco, all cities of outstanding economic importance, have swung into action under the leadership of the IWW to picket the industries, demanding the Six Hour Day, and work for the unemployed workers instead of the humiliation, the degradation, the danger and misery of bread lines." Ibid.

### News Want Ads Will Do the Job!

The weather was very important, and the job was very important. The news want ads will do the job. The news want ads will do the job. The news want ads will do the job. The news want ads will do the job. The news want ads will do the job.

have been cathartic, but their functions are mirrored in many of the poverty programs and communal experiments today. There appears to be even some support for the kind of separate economic system for the unemployed that Charles Strong visualized thirty years ago.<sup>25</sup> It should be instructive, then, to review the apparent successes and failures of the Unemployed Citizens' Leagues of Denver and Seattle.

The Unemployed Citizens' League of Seattle began on the local level in July 1931, when Carl Brannin, editor of *Vanguard*, the newspaper of the Seattle Labor College, organized the Olympic Heights Unemployed Citizens' League.<sup>26</sup> By September there were twenty locals and a central federation. J. F. Cronin, an unemployed building contractor and former member of the Knights of Labor, was elected president; Brannin was elected executive secretary. The goals of the organization were: (1) employment through public works, (2) self-help, (3) unemployment insurance, and (4) direct relief. The self-help projects included harvesting crops, cutting wood, fishing, barbering, tailoring, and shoe repairing. Early in 1932 the Seattle league merged with the Mayor's Commission for Improved Employment and the combination became known as the Local District Relief Organization. One consequence of this was that the city insisted on an investigation of each member of the league by trained social workers. The investigation was resented and contributed to the growing dissension within the league. By June 1932 the league claimed 13,000 members representing a total of 44,000 dependents. The Communists, who had been operating their own Unemployed Councils, began to infiltrate the league; and the Capitol Hill local, which had a higher proportion of single men than any of the other locals, began to urge a more militant approach. Under these influences the league all but abandoned self-help and engaged in local and state politics. As the organization fell apart there were a few spontaneous demonstrations by the jobless, but a Communist-sponsored boycott of the schools failed to receive the support of the rank-and-file members of the league even though the officers supported it. Mounting

charges of graft and waste led to the inevitable attack by the press which found some welfare recipients wearing fur coats.<sup>27</sup>

Unquestionably, Seattle had a more turbulent history of labor conflict than Denver. Strong could not recall any IWW or even Mine, Mill, and Smelter Union influence in his league.<sup>28</sup> Arthur Hillman, on the other hand, writing on the Seattle league, attributes the league's prominence in that city to IWW and trade union strength which had been evidenced in the general strike in 1919 and in the consumer cooperatives of the 1920s.<sup>29</sup> Another manifestation of the strength of the radical minorities in Seattle was the public demonstration on March 6, 1930, which had been designated "International Day for Struggle Against World Wide Unemployment" by the Comintern. According to the testimony of a member of the Seattle Police Department, March 6 was the "largest single Communist meeting" until that time, and one of the "most difficult" to handle.<sup>30</sup> There were Communists in Denver, but Strong was able to undercut their programs and keep them out of his meetings. Strong even went beyond this by refusing to allow Republican and Democratic party members to make partisan speeches at league meetings. In this way he was able to avoid much of the factionalism which plagued the Seattle league. By refusing to distribute public welfare funds through his organization, Strong also avoided exposing his local officers to the temptations of graft. The Denver league also seems to have enjoyed better community relations and a good press. Although both the Denver and the Seattle leagues had members from several occupations, the Denver group appears to have had slightly greater variety, with all skills evenly represented. As table 3 shows, the Seattle league had a disproportionate number of loggers and lumbermen.<sup>31</sup>

TABLE 3

PERCENTAGE OF MALES TEN YEARS OLD AND OVER IN SELECTED OCCUPATIONS COMPARED TO THE PERCENTAGE OF LEAGUE MEMBERS IN THOSE OCCUPATIONS IN SEATTLE.

	PERCENTAGE EMPLOYED IN	PERCENTAGE OF LEAGUE MEMBERS IN
Forestry and sawmills	4.4	12.9
Fishing	1.3	5.2
Mining	0.8	1.2
Building industry	9.6	13.0
Iron and steel	6.3	5.6
Transportation	7.7	7.0

<sup>25</sup> William E. Leuchtenburg, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and the New Deal* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1963), p. 23, warns: "Since the barter groups reflected the tradition of self-reliance, they won an inordinate amount of attention. Yet, in a pecuniary economy, a man needed money, and self-help groups solved few of his problems." The author's disagreement with this position should be evident, but the caveat should be noted. On contemporary programs, see Frank Riessman, "Self-Help Among the Poor: New Styles of Social Action," *Trans-Action*, II (September-October 1965), pp. 32-37.

<sup>26</sup> Hillman, *Unemployed Citizens' League*, p. 185. This paragraph follows his account. For another account, see Harvey O'Connor, *Revolution in Seattle: A Memoir* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1964), pp. 219-24.

A disproportionately large number of members from any occupational group will tend to disrupt an organization attempting to deal with unemployment in general because they will have special interests and demands. One self-help project of the period 1931-33, the Natural Development Association of Salt Lake City, limited the number of its members in each occupation in order to maintain a balance among them. Another factor in the success or failure of self-help organizations is the role of the professions. Approximately fifteen percent of the members of the Seattle league came from the professions, while other estimates range from twenty percent in Kansas City, Missouri, to nine percent in Oakland and five percent in Alameda, California.<sup>32</sup>

Although the successful projects are more easily studied, they were only a fraction of those begun. More typical was the experience of the League of the Unemployed in Des Moines, Iowa. Incorporated on July 20, 1932, the objectives of this organization were: "To obtain and render relief to the needy of Polk County in the necessities of life, food, shelter, curtailment of water supply, eviction from homes, and other oppressions resulting from loss of employment or other income." The Des Moines league, which harvested crops and preserved food, claimed a membership of 14,000 but soon dissolved into three factions—the Brotherhood of the Unemployed, the Polk County Unemployed League, and the Citizens' Unemployed League—none of which performed any kind of function that would permit its classification as a self-help organization. The Brotherhood of the Unemployed claimed 480 members and existed "to receive gifts of personal property, real property, and other commodities; to buy, sell, give, trade in, transfer and negotiate in all commodities, for the purpose of caring for unemployed, or providing employment for persons unemployed or partially employed."<sup>33</sup> The league left scant record of its brief activities

<sup>27</sup> Hillman, *Unemployed Citizens' League*, p. 218. For an explanation of this canard, see A. J. Liebling, *The Press* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1964), p. 79: "One way to rationalize the inadequacy of public aid is to blackguard the poor by saying that they have concealed assets, or bad character, or both."

<sup>28</sup> Interview with Charles D. Strong, August 5, 1968.

<sup>29</sup> Hillman, *Unemployed Citizens' League*, p. 249. See also O'Connor, *Revolution in Seattle*, and Robert L. Friedheim, *The Seattle General Strike* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1964). For Denver in 1919 see Philip L. Cook, "Red Scare in Denver," *The Colorado Magazine*, XLIII (Fall 1966), pp. 309-26.

<sup>30</sup> Leab, "United We Eat," p. 307. Apparently there was no March 6 demonstration in Denver.

<sup>31</sup> Compiled from *Fifteenth Census: Population*, Vol. III, pt. 2, p. 1235, and Hillman, *Unemployed Citizens' League*, p. 268, who gives the preferred occupations of a sample of 501 members of the league.

<sup>32</sup> *Monthly Labor Review*, XXXVI (March 1933), p. 456; (April 1933), p. 760; (June 1933), p. 1231.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.* (May 1933), pp. 1000-01.

and what remains is suggestive of its weaknesses. On August 7, 1932, Local 1 of the league held a benefit vaudeville show to raise money for cans, sugar, and spices needed in canning. The entertainment was well reported, but the self-help projects were hardly mentioned. A month later the newspapers carried the story of the split in the league.<sup>34</sup>

Research on the unemployed leagues will have to continue on a city-by-city basis. Obviously there is much to be learned about their operations and membership which would benefit current poverty programs. The final judgment, however, may remain that of an anonymous leader of the Seattle league:

The principal value has lain in the more intangible field of moral and sociological reactions. For the individual to have felt that his efforts would have paid in full for his food meant that he kept his self-respect and no material value could be placed on such results.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> *Des Moines Register*, August 7, 1932, p. 1; September 8, 1932, pp. 1, 5. The author would like to thank Shirley Shisler, head of the reference department of the Des Moines Public Library, for calling this second item to his attention.

<sup>35</sup> Hillman, *Unemployed Citizens' League*, p. 245.