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.¹

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

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.

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.”

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. 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.

---

23 Started for Pikes Peake from La Salle 22 Feb 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.


25 Put our teams and wagons aboard the cars for Quincy.

26 Put our teams and wagons aboard the cars for Quincy. Left Princeton 1 oclock A.M. 25th. Paid 130. for 4 Co1—13 Horses 4 wagons & 10 men; snow 10 inch.

27 Arrived at Quincy 6 oclock P.M. took our Horses from cars & put them up at a Livery Stable.

28 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.

29 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 putting our wagons abord cars; Palmira has 6000 inhabitants.

30 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.

Mch

1 Arrived at St. Joe 10½ 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.

---

2 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 1981), pp. 147-56.

3 Palmyra, Missouri, was a station on the Hannibal and St. Joseph Railroad.

4 St. Joseph, Missouri, was a favorite "jumping off place" for the Platte River.
10 Started on our way for Kinnekuk\textsuperscript{a} 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.

\textsuperscript{a} 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\textsuperscript{a} our horses at Grasshopper Creek after driving 10 miles. Drove 1\frac{1}{2} 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 21\frac{1}{2} miles. Kinekuk is the eastern boundary and Powhatan the western boundary.\textsuperscript{b}

\textsuperscript{a} A phonetic speller at best, Bowen here means "baited," referring to giving food and drink to the animals.

\textsuperscript{b} 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 1834 this tract was given back to the government, except for 150,000 acres.

\textbf{Map from Horner's 1859 guidebook to the goldfields.}
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.11
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 hall 3½ 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.12
20 Sabbath Day. Remained in camp all day. Was very pleasant day with S. wind. Had some hull[ed] corn which was very nice.
21 Our Co. started early in the morning having been much recruted Our first Co. layed over at Nemahah Creek opposite Seneca five days waiting for the roads to dry up. Our Co. when starting for Nemahah numbered 21 men, 21 horses & miles, 6 wagons—Drove to Ash Point & bated our horses. Hitched up & drove to Elm Creek & camped for the night.13
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.14 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.15 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 Pawneee Ranch.16
26 Started ½ past five o'clock. Drove 18 miles up L. Blue.

11 The party was now in Nemaha County, Kansas.
12 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, M. R. Warsham, E. Bowen, W. G. Telfer, N. Groole, Jas. C. Strout, Libby, G. Shepherd, S. C. Metcalf, J. Velie, P. C. Gould, W. L. Allen, A. Givens, W. H. Allen, W. H. Allen, W. H. Allen,
13 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 north of Big Sandy, Kansas, was one of these. Ibid., pp. 151-52.
14 Rock Creek Station, six miles southeast of Fairbury, Nebraska. Ibid., p. 152.
15 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 1/2 past 5. Distance to Elm Crk. 10 miles; 32 mile crk. 5. Mole in Prairie 12 mile—Platt River 10 mile; Fort Kearny 7 mile. We drove to Platt Riv. & camped after dark in a snow storm without wood & water.


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 & kenyans 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 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 verry 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 nucked 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.

30 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 ocolck & continued all day & most all night of the 1st. We stayed in camp all day. Waied the Platt for our wood. Got ash & dry willows.

2 Snowstorm continued until about nine oclok A.M. 4 of us went out on a hunt. Saw no game but Geese. Nick shot one & waied 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.

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'Fallon's Bluffs at 1 oclock & camped. Distance 20 miles fr. F. Springs. Saw some 20 elk about a mile from us.—It was verry tedious 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. 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 & begged 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 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 saw a view of two peaks of the Rocky Mountains, a distance of 150 miles. We could not see these peaks 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 antelope early in morning. Drove 30 miles. Passed one Indian Lodge at the Kiowa Creek, some dz Indians & Squaws—Chinani—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. 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 & camped 12 oclock—distance 20 miles. We camped for the purpose...
of crossing the Platt to prospect for gold on the Cache a La Podre [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.24 Started on frozen ground. We are tonight about 28 miles from Cherry Creek.

14 Started 5 oclock. Mounted my pony & reached Denver City 10 a.m. Teams arrived 12 oclock. 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.25 Four of our Co. went up to Arapahoe City on Clear Creek to prospect.26 Found plenty of water & very fair dirt. Resolved to go up there on Monday. About 11 oclock a.m. John Scudder shot P. T. Basset through the lungs. Both parties from St. Louis, Mo. There was difficulty between them.27

17 Sabbath day. Remained in camp. P. T. Basset died this morning. Went to his funeral today at 3 oclock p.m. A Methodist preacher by the name of Fisher28 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 oclock. Started for Arapahoe City on Clear Creek. Arrived at 12 oclock. Arapahoe is about 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.29 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 Ralston's Creek, but could not find the color. Saw no game—reached camp 5 oclock, 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.30

24 Being Sunday I remained all day in camp. Was a very fine day. Enjoyed my-self very much.

25 Commenced snowing 5 oclock a.m. Continued to snow & rain until 4 oclock, 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 concerned for the boys in the mountains.

24 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.

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

26 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. 17n. Never very large, it soon disappeared.

27 The Rocky Mountain News, April 23, 1859, p. 3, gave a similar account of the Bassett-Scudder affair. Editor William N. Rivers thought Scudder would have hanged if his friends had not helped him escape. Scudder came back voluntarily because he acquitted himself of the grounds of self-defense.

28 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, Early from Peak and Plains (Cincinnati: Curtis & Jennings, 1861), pp. 228, 356-358. Bowen was a lifelong Baptist.

29 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.

30 This was only one of several such projects; see the Rocky Mountain News, April 23, 1859, p. 3, and May 7, 1858, p. 5.
Warm & Pleasant. I herded the horses all day. Snow all gone by night on the bottom of the creek.

Worked all day on the dam. Very pleasant weather. Found a peculiar species of cactus. Took it up & put into a box to take home.

Worked on dam & ditch all day.

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 o'clock A.M. Found gold at every prospect but not very rich. Went some 50 miles in the mountains. Found snow 15 feet deep in some places. They had a very hard time.

Worked on the ditch in forenoon. Soon after dinner a thunder storm came up & lasted several hours. It came very near upsetting our tent.

May

1 Being Sunday 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.

Monday Strout Liby & Telfer left our camp for Denver City 9 o'clock 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. but 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 very 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 very 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 o'clock p.m. Ran it until night with four men. Retorted our silver at night & found we had 40 cts in gold.31

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 getting gold on this Creek. Our only hope is in the mountains. It commenced raining 5 o'clock & rained all night. Velie's t'wo mares strayed away from the rest this afternoon.

7 Raining until 9 o'clock. Four went early after Velie's horses & came back 3 o'clock, 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 o'clock. 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 on 1 o'clock.

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 o'clock to prospect for gold. Went some 20 miles & camped. We packed 4 horses. Valentine, Miley, Velie, Hefner & myself composed the Co.


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 took us to his lead on the mountain & paneled 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 Gregory's 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 Digings32 on

31 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.
32 John Gregory, discoverer of Gregory Digings. 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.
33 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.
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 o'clock 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 very 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 Jackson’s 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
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 moun­
tains. 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.

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.

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.

Got up early in the morning to start for Gregory's dig­
gings 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.

Sun rose very clear & warm. Snow commenced melting
early in the morning. Velie & myself went to Arappo­
hoe in the afternoon. We concluded to start for Greg­
ory's digings tomorrow morning.

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.
Stopted 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 & made
Gregory's 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 too 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. A good many present.

34 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
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 o'clock P.M. on the afternoon. We both worked on the claims to open them.

Continued to sink down on the claims but often was almost discouraged on account of the stone which impeded our progress.

Started for Fred & Nick out of the mountains as we had grub enough for our diners only, reached them 4 o'clock 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\(^35\) from Elgin, Ill. Nick took them down 3d June.

Sunday. Remained in camp until 2 o'clock. 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 a mile from creek where we left the wagon; camped for the night.

Started for the mountains 8 o'clock. 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.

Started 7 o'clock & reached Gregorys digings two o'clock 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.

Commenced sinking hole on our claims. Found the color as usual. Took a pan full down to creek at noon. Got 25 cts worth to pan. weather good.\(^36\)

Continued to sink the hole. Went & got a drill made. Put in several blasts which tore up the rock well. Rainy in the afternoon.

Continued to blast the rock in hopes to get through & strike the crevice. Nick & myself went of prospecting in the afternoon some two miles but found no better indication than the claim we were working on.

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.\(^37\) 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 handk. Washed it out & got 40 cts. Our claim looked a little more like a lead tonight, but the rock troubles us very much.

Sabbath. Remained in camp in forenoon. Went down the Creek to hear preaching in the afternoon, but

---

\(^35\) D. M. Cole owned a farm and ranch a couple of miles above Denver. Rocky Mountain News, May 7, 1859, p. 3.

\(^36\) Bowen makes no mention of the visit of Horace Greeley and party to the diggings, nor apparently did he go to his speech.

\(^37\) 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 verry 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 off[f]. The elk was about 8 rods just across the gulch. Clear Creek is high & verry 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 verry 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 dinner 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\(^{28}\) while I went around the mines to see if I could buy a good claim. Did not succeed. We all made up our 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\(^{29}\) 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 & sluice, 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 & mushed 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 ock 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

\(^{28}\) 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.

\(^{29}\) 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.

Started for Denver to make out deed for Defres on Monday. 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.

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 Wagoner⁴⁹ 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 settling up with Mr. Defres & writing a letter to my wife, I started for the mountains. Reached Clear Creek about 7 o'clock 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 Downing's camp but did not succeed.

Started up the mountains 5 o'clock. Went to foot of mountains & bated my horse. Reaching the digings 4 o'clock P.M. Found that Nick & Velie had taken the stock down to ranch. William Hassett Smith from Lamoille came to our camp this evening.

Brot 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 dollars 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.

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

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 4½ peniweights of gold.

Nick & Fred went to work on claim. Velie & myself tinkered on the machine & commenced running the same ⅔ 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.

Sundy—remained in camp all day.

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 worked on the sluice cleaning up & fixing the rifels. The rest worked on the claim.

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

⁴⁹ S. W. Wagoner was elected probate judge, March 28, 1859, for Arapahoe County, Kansas Territory. Rocky Mountain News, April 23, 1859, p. 3. He was active in the early attempt for statehood.

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 by the Ute Indians. A party of 3 went over the Snowy range to prospect. Two of the party was shot. The other made his escape by hiding until after dark. Returned to this digings tonight having traveled two nights one day & a half. The man that got away was Slauter Kenady & Dock Shank was killed.42

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, halting 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 volunteered to give them fight. I loaned them my gun. Velie & myself made another windless. Fred & Nick timbered claim. The volunteer 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 contract 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 foot 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 putting 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.

3 Sunday. Enjoyed the day very much, having moved our tent from a very 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.43 Text Isa 43:10—You are my witnesses. A fair audience was present. Sermon very good. Returned home & baked bread. Weather cool & pleasant. Cloudy & smokey.

4 Being the 4th of July we commenced running our sluice.44 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.

---

42 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.

43 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.

44 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 remained 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 by the Indians. Report says that this man found him in a sitting 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 Slauffer 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 very 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 very 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 very 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 very 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 very 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 afternoon—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 Salle Press. Rainy in the afternoon.

---

45 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 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 160 Dollars.

26 The sluice in the afteroon 5 hours with good show. Was not able to get dirt to run more. Fair weather 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 off in the forenoon to prospect some Gulch claim—reported unfavorable—could not get the color. Smith of LaMoille took dinner with us. Said he was doing well.

29 Run the sluice 8 hours. Fair weather all day. In the afternoon we ran 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 upper 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 weather all day. Could not run all the time as we could not get dirt. Bruce's 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 forenoon 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 & 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 & P. 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 Lapoude 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 Arappahoe 5 o'clock. Found Gregory & others ready to start. Farwell went to Denver yesterday & got my mules. Left Arappahoe at 7 o'clock in the evening & went to Rallston's Creek & camped 4 miles from Clear Creek. Our Co. consisted of 12 named as follows:

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.

47 Reports of rich gold discoveries in South Park produced a rush into the area and the establishment of Tarryall and Fairplay. See the Rocky Mountain News, August-September, 1859.
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. 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 very 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 hoof & 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. 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 City.

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 very 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'clock tied the mule to grass & layed down & went to sleep. Arose at 5 o'clock & 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 City 11 o'clock. Went some two miles below & bated mule & layed in shade an hour or two. The sun is very scorching on the planes. Reached Clear Creek at Dark. Tied my mule to grass & ate my grub & layed down to rest, but was annoyed very much by mosquitoes.

15 Arose at 5½ o'clock & 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 Ranch 8 o'clock. Fed Cub Hay & went to bed in a wagon box. Had a good night's rest. Wall paid me 5, which he owed me.

---

48 Rumors of gold on the Cache la Poudre had been circulating for some time; Gregory and Archibald Defres 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.

49 The small cluster of cabins, called Coloma, 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.
16 Started up the mountains 7 o'clock. 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] very 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 very 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. 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 amount 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 Did 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 getting 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 did not find any good claims for sale on the Russell Gulch.

23 Run the sluice in the forenoon. Did not run the sluice 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 notes & took his interest in the claim off his hands. I now own 34 of the claim & Sherman 14 interest.

25 Discharged all hands on claim this morning. Fred started to Denver to get ready to start 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 upper 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 eat a watermelon with him which I excepted. The melon was a good one from Mr. Walls Garden on Clear Crk.

50 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 Hallister, Mines of Colorado, p. 94, Henderson and Gridley made $17,000 that summer from the claim.

51 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.

52 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.

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.

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.

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.33

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.

Went to work to make arrangements to sluice quartz. Set the sluice & got all things ready in the forenoon 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.

2 Hired Downing to work until I got through sluicing. Run the sluice 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 very heavy shower with hail which made it very cool.

3 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 off 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 Mountains34 was covered with snow several days ago while it rained here. It is very evident that the weather is changing colder in the mountains. The trees are covered with snow.

4 Weather fine & pleasant. Run the sluice 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.

5 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.

6 Sherman & Downing run the sluice all day. 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.

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 very fine & beautiful. Cool nights have had no rain this week.

33 In his placer operations Bowen had uncovered gold-bearing quartz, which had to be crushed before the mineral could be separated.

34 Located southwest of Gregory Diggings.
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.

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.

S & D run the sluice all day. Fair weather. Settled with Farwell Bros. & took their note for 72.67 being for dust loaned.

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 copy. Left the contract with Samuel M. Link. 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.

Run the sluice all day & finished the quartz. Baked bread as usual. Rather windy & cold. Threatened to storm. No doubt but it snowed back in the mountains.

Cleaned up sluice & pane 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.

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. Will remain there until 3d Oct. at which time shall leave for the states all things being ready.

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. 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.

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 Arappohoe 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.

Started with Sherman at 8 o'clock for the foot of the mountains. We packed our blankets, mine with some

---

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.

20 Arose early & started for Arappaho to find the Farwell Bros. They left Gregory's on the 17 with my things & went to Arappaho. 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 Jackson's after his wagon & was now on his way to Gregory's. 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. Brought my mules up to Coles & put them in his Corall.

21 Hitched up in the morning to go to Arappaho 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 read in this country. Cyrus Farwell came down from Arappaho 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 Arappahoe 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 $14.75. Sold Cole 50 lbs of the same.

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
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 & illegible]. 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 o’clk—went to Express Office—did not get any letters—was considerably disappointed—bot a lead chain—Went back to Coles about 3 o’clk. 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 fallen—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 very beautiful this clear sunny 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 very good size but very ugly—

2 Sunday—Went over to Denver & Auraria—took diner with Lutz—found him very 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]

DUANE A. SMITH, associate professor of history at Fort Lewis College, Durango, is the author of Rocky Mountain Mining Camps: The Urban Frontier, published in 1967.

30 Liberus 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. 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. 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 mining companies 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. 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.

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.

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

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

1 For a survey of some of these early organizations see Vernon Jensen, Heritage of Conflict: Labor Relations in the Nonferrous Metals Industry up to 1920 (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1960), pp. 10-18.


5 Leadville Democrat, May 29, 1880, p. 8; Engineering and Mining Journal, XXIX (June 5, 1880), p. 387.
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. 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. 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.” 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 shift, barricaded and guarded by heavily armed men. A report of this development incensed the miners, and they sent a committee to verify the rumor. However, it is likely that the rumor was false, as Mooney was an ad hoc leader.

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, 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. 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.

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. 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 throughout the district, promptly closed the Little Chief and other mines which were under his direction.

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, 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. 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.

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. 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 throughout the district, promptly closed the Little Chief and other mines which were under his direction.

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, and before the day was over the procession had taken on the aspects of a parade, even to the inclusion of a band.
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.

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." 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.

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. 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-

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. 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. 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

---

\[\text{Leadville Democrat, May 29, 1880, p. 8.}\]
\[\text{Ibid., p. 4.}\]
\[\text{Ibid., May 29, 1880, p. 8.}\]
\[\text{Labor Disturbances in Colorado, p. 70.}\]
proposed an eight-hour day at forty cents per hour, but again no official statement was issued.\(^{21}\)

An official statement condemning the use of violence was released, however. The statement was signed by 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.\(^{22}\)

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.\(^{23}\)

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."\(^{24}\)

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.\(^{25}\)

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.\(^{26}\)

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

\(^{21}\) Labor Disturbances in Colorado, pp. 70-71. The union's offer was reported in the Leadville Democrat, June 1, 1880, p. 8.

\(^{22}\) Leadville Democrat, June 1, 1880, p. 8.

\(^{23}\) Ibid., June 6, 1880, p. 8. 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.

\(^{24}\) Dill, "History of Lake County," p. 284.
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.27

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 favor­
able development was a report that Keyes thought the situation
was exasperating.28 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 be­
because the state could not support one.29

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 responsi­
bility therefor, and promised that his influence, and that of

the miners' league, should be used for the protection of prop­
erty 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.30

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 superin­
tendents 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.31

Union leaders repeatedly denied that union men were re­
ponsible 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.32 Regardless of who was
responsible for the threats and innuendos circulating in the dis­
trict 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 com­
munity 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 concili­
ator's role and asked each side for one last bargaining effort.33

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.34 Two days later the union proposed a wage

27 Ibid.
28 Ibid.
29 Governor Frederick W. Pitkin, Letter Copy Book, State Historical Society of
Colorado Library. The events of the Leadville strike are covered on pages
274-277.
30 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.
31 Leadville Democrat, June 5, 1880, p. 8.
33 Leadville Democrat, June 9, 1880, p. 6.
34 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.\textsuperscript{35} 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 interference in the size of the Executive Committee is of some interest.

The only effect it produced was to inflame the passions of the miners.\textsuperscript{37} Collective bargaining was at an end.

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 [Leadville's main street], and, as the column passed, assailed the participants with approbrious [sic] epithets and jeers.\textsuperscript{37} 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.\textsuperscript{38}

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.\textsuperscript{39} 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 law and property.\textsuperscript{40}

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."\textsuperscript{41} The "leading men" had decided.

\textsuperscript{35} Ibid., June 11, 1880, p. 6.
\textsuperscript{36} Ibid., June 13, 1880, p. 8. In the Democrat this group is identified as the Citizens' Executive Committee of One Hundred, in Labor Disturbances in Colorado, p. 256.\textsuperscript{37} Olden Times in Colorado, p. 256.
\textsuperscript{38} Davis, 1880 Labor Disturbances, p. 244.
\textsuperscript{39} Leadville Democrat, June 13, 1880, p. 5.
\textsuperscript{40} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{41} Davis, Olden Times in Colorado, p. 256.
and on the same day Pitkin declared that a state of martial law existed in Leadville.\footnote{Ibid., p. 319.}

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.\footnote{Ibid., p. 73.}

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."\footnote{Ibid., p. 74.}

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.\footnote{Leadville Democrat, May 27, 1880, p. 8.}

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-

\footnote{Labor Disturbances in Colorado, p. 76-84.
“Being a proletarian in good standing is no bed of roses,” wrote Heywood Broun in the Nation on March 26, 1930. 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. 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. 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. 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. The meetings were called by a committee 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. 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.”

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

---

7 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." 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.9

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.10 There were at least six other self-help organizations active in Denver at this time, with a combined membership of about 600.11 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.12 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.13 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 2.14

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>FAMILIES ON RELIEF, OCTOBER 1933, BY COLOR OR RACE, IN DENVER AND SEATTLE.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DENVER</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexican</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japanese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filipino</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>PERSONS IN RELIEF FAMILIES, OCTOBER 1933, BY COLOR OR RACE, IN DENVER AND SEATTLE.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DENVER</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other races</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---


8 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.

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 1933.15

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.

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.16 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.17 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.18

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

---


16 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.

17 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.

4 TONS OF BEANS FOR JOBLESS

Great Falls, Montana

Farmer Donates Truckload of Poda Rather Than Sell It for $15

Less Than $100 in Cash

Received by League Since Founding

By Jack Campbell

ALSO CAMP

Utopian Fan and Friend

Great Falls Daily Times

114 East Main Street

Boothe of the American Legion

Cuba City, Idaho

Close to Home

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.19 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.20 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.”21

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 1873.22 And both the Socialists and the Communists were active on behalf of the unemployed throughout the 1920s and 1930s.23 Even the Industrial Workers of the World experienced a brief revival in 1931 by creating an IWW Unemployed Union.24 What was new in the unemployed leagues was the emphasis, in what William Leuchtenburg calls “a pecuniary economy,” on self-help projects which did not require large amounts of capital. The value of the projects may only

19 Interview with Charles D. Strong, August 15, 1968.
20 Rocky Mountain News, August 27, 1932, p. 9.
21 Mimeographed copy in the possession of the author.
24 “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.
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. 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. 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 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

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. 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. 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.” 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.

**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.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Percentage Employed in Seattle</th>
<th>Percentage of League Members in Seattle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Forestry and sawmills</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>12.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fishing</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>1.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building industry</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>13.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iron and steel</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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.

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.32

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.”33 The league left scant record of its brief activities.

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.35

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 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.

BERNARD MERGEN, formerly on the faculty of Grinnell College, is assistant professor of American civilization at George Washington University. He holds a doctorate from the University of Pennsylvania.

32 Hillman, Unemployed Citizens’ League, p. 216. 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.”
33 Interview with Charles D. Strong, August 5, 1968.
35 Leah, “United We Eat,” p. 307. Apparently there was no March 6 demonstration in Denver.
38 Ibid. (May 1933), pp. 1000-91.
39 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.
40 Hillman, Unemployed Citizens’ League, p. 245.