Guarding capital: Soldier strikebreakers on the long road to the Ludlow massacre

Anthony Roland DeStefanis

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GUARDING CAPITAL:
Soldier Strikebreakers on the Long Road to the Ludlow Massacre

A Dissertation
Presented to
The Faculty of the Department of History
The College of William and Mary in Virginia

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

by
Anthony Roland DeStefanis
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APPROVAL SHEET

This dissertation is submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

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Approved by the Committee, October 2004

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines the cultural politics of military strikebreaking. By focusing on the contest between striking southern and eastern European and Mexican immigrant coal miners and their employers during the 1913-14 coal strike in southern Colorado, the dissertation demonstrates how the intersection of politics with issues of race, class, gender, and ethnicity shaped the miners’ rebellion and the state and corporate responses to it. The Colorado National Guard was an integral part of how the state and capital reacted to the strike, and makes an ideal focus for this study because it was a prolific strikebreaker during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The guard’s motivations for strikebreaking, however, went beyond restoring order and protecting business interests. Two decades of fighting the Plains Indians after the Civil War and three years of service in the Philippines (1899-1902) helped Colorado National Guardsmen equate the immigrant miners whom they faced in 1913-14 with the "savage tribes" of the western plains and the Filipino “insurrectionists” who resisted American imperialism. Striking immigrant coal miners emerged as racially inferior non-citizens who did not share the white, native-born and middle-class conceptions of masculinity that prevailed in the guard. Guardsmen, therefore, believed they had to defeat these immigrant strikers because they threatened the Anglo-American “civilization” guardsmen had helped spread across the continent and across the Pacific.

The project bridges the often disparate fields of labor, cultural, and political history, broadening our knowledge of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries by demonstrating what military strikebreaking tells us about the era’s complex conflicts over American identity. The social and cultural dynamics that made military intervention possible were inextricably tied to ideas about race, class, gender, and ethnicity. These ideas worked in concert to create a bond between industrialists, state officials, and National Guardsmen that allowed capital to consistently wield the state’s military wing against labor. The dissertation, therefore, also expands our knowledge of how social and cultural forces shape state formation and action.
GUARDING CAPITAL
INTRODUCTION

Sometime in late June or early July 1914, John D. Rockefeller, Jr. received an unusual request from a man he had never met. J. L. Hockersmith wrote the son of one of the wealthiest men in the world asking him to pay for a one-way train ticket from Colorado to Bowling Green, Kentucky for his son, Carl. The elder Hockersmith explained to the younger Rockefeller that Carl, "a boy still in his teens," had recently moved from his home in Bowling Green to Colorado, where he joined the Colorado National Guard. Coal miners in southern Colorado organized by the United Mine Workers of America had gone on strike in September 1913 and, as was so often the case in Colorado in the decades around 1900, the state's governor called out the guard. Young Carl Hockersmith was one of the 1,600 Colorado National Guardsmen who served in southern Colorado from late 1913 until April 1914.1 After spending time in Denver, Hockersmith returned again to southern Colorado as a guard with the Royal Coal Mining Company in Aguilar. It was in Aguilar, Hockersmith's father told Rockefeller, that Carl "was brutally murdered by a lot of irresponsible foreign strikers."2

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2 J. L. Hockersmith to John D. Rockefeller, Jr., 20 June 1914, "Business Interests," Papers of the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company, RG 2, Box 19, Folder 172, Rockefeller Foundation Archives, Rockefeller Archive Center, Sleepy Hollow, New York. J. L. Hockersmith told Rockefeller, Jr. that his son was working as a mine guard when he was killed, but others gave conflicting reports. In his testimony before the United States Senate's Industrial Relations Commission, Captain Philip Van Cise refers to the "horrible mutilation of the bodies of Pvt. Martin and Hockersmith by strikers." This statement indicates that Van Cise thought Carl Hockersmith was still a member of the National Guard when he was killed. See this testimony in U.S. Senate, Commission on Industrial Relations, The Colorado Coal Miners' Strike, 64th Cong., 1st sess., 1916, S. Doc. 415, vol. 8, 7328. Hereafter cited as CIR Testimony. Also, the National Guard’s official report on Ludlow refers to the “maiming and mutilation of Privates Martin, Hockersmith,
Carl Hockersmith was dead, and his father wanted Rockefeller, Jr., the owner of the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company (CF&I) to reimburse him for shipping his son's corpse back to Bowling Green. After consulting with CF&I officials to find out if his family owned the Royal Mine (alas, they did not), Rockefeller still agreed to send Hockersmith's father the $450 he had spent to transport and bury his son because, as he explained in the letter that accompanied his check: "all of us who are interested in any of the mines of Colorado have a bond of sympathy in that we are all suffering from the wicked and criminal conspiracy which has been established and carried out by the United Mine Workers of America."3

Carl Hockersmith was not the only person killed in the 1913-14 southern Colorado coal strike. The strike, which lasted from September 1913 to December 1914, was one of the most violent labor conflicts in American history. More than sixty people were killed during those months and it produced the Ludlow Massacre, in which two women, twelve children ranging in age from three months to eleven years, six miners and union officials, and one National Guardsman were killed in a day-long battle between the Colorado National Guard and residents of a tent colony near the Ludlow, Colorado railroad station.4 Ludlow was the largest of seven tent colonies that the United Mine Workers (UMW) set up to house the more than 9,000 mostly southern and eastern European and Mexican immigrant miners who

4 "Those Killed in the Colorado Strike," The Papers of Edward Doyle, Box 2, Envelope 18, Western History Collection, Denver Public Library, Denver, Colorado.
were thrown out of company housing when they went on strike.\textsuperscript{5} The massacre set off a ten-day long war between National Guardsmen and incensed miners who were intent on exacting revenge for the Ludlow killings. More that two dozen people, including Carl Hockersmith, were killed during those ten days, before President Woodrow Wilson sent the Army to Colorado to restore order.\textsuperscript{6}

Carl Hockersmith’s poignant story and the exchange of letters between his father and John D. Rockefeller, Jr. highlights the deep-set assumptions about the immigrant working class, ethnicity, and American identity that are important for understanding how and why southern Colorado’s coalmine operators, state officials, and the Colorado National Guard broke the 1913-14 strike. This dissertation focuses on this strike and the Colorado National Guard to examine how ideas and attitudes about race, class, gender, immigration, and ethnicity shaped military strikebreaking in the United States. Both the 1913-14 strike and the Colorado National Guard are ideal for such a study. The Colorado legislature formed their National Guard shortly after Colorado achieved statehood in 1876. For the next fifty years, strikebreaking was virtually all the guard did. Between its creation in 1879 and 1928, the Colorado National Guard was called out on duty twenty-two times. Sixteen of those call outs brought the guard into a strike situation, where it


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almost always acted to break the strike. The Colorado National Guard’s officer corps also had much in common with their comrades across the country. Like many other National Guards, the Colorado National Guard’s officers were white native-born business owners, professionals—attorney, physician, and engineer were common civilian occupations among the guard’s officers—and white-collar men who held civilian jobs as clerks, bookkeepers, accountants, civil servants, or managers. As in most states, the Colorado National Guard also had a full-time adjutant general appointed by the governor and enlisted men elected their officers. Election of officers was a point of contention with the regular army, where officers were trained and then assigned commands. Army officers believed their system put the best men in leadership positions while officer elections put the most popular men in charge. Elected officers in the guard, however, were also more likely to share the general views and specific understanding of strike duty that prevailed among enlisted men. Thus, the Colorado National Guard provides a good example for deciphering how guardsmen thought about strike duty and strikebreaking.

7 See U.S. Senate, A Report on Labor Disturbances in the State of Colorado from 1880 to 1904, Inclusive with Correspondence Relating Thereto, 58th Cong., 3rd sess., 1905, S. Doc. 122, 360 and “Active Duty-Colorado Military Forces,” Colorado State Department of Military Affairs Collection, Colorado State Archives, Denver, Colorado. The one instance where the Colorado National Guard did not act as a strikebreaker was in the 1894 Western Federation of Miners strike centered in Cripple Creek, Colorado. That Governor Davis Waite was a Populist elected with labor’s help, and that the Adjutant General of the National Guard shared the governor’s political allegiances helps explain the guard’s refusal to break that strike. See Elizabeth Jameson, All That Glitters: Class, Conflict, and Community in Cripple Creek (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1997), 53-61.

8 “Minutes of the Court of Inquiry Established by an Executive Order of his Excellency, George A. Carlson, Governor of the State of Colorado, 28 August 1915,” Papers of Hildreth Frost, Box 00254, Colorado Historical Society, Denver, Colorado. This document, which contains over 1,000 pages of testimony from National Guardsmen, provides much information about the socio-economic background of many National Guard officers. Also see “Official List and Directory: The National Guard of Colorado, 6 October 1912, Office of the Adjutant General,” Papers of Hildreth Frost, Box 1, Envelope 2, Western History Collection, Denver Public Library, and “The Rosters of the Colorado National Guard, 1912-15,” Colorado State Department of Military Affairs Collection, Colorado State Archives.

The 1913-14 southern Colorado coal strike is a good choice for examining how National Guards broke strikes. Like many other Gilded Age and Progressive Era strikes that saw military intervention, the 1913-14 coal strike was a long, violent battle between business owners and a largely immigrant workforce. Southern Colorado’s mine operators consciously recruited that workforce, in part, because they believed that southern and eastern European and Mexican immigrants were of less concern to the American Federation of Labor (AFL), which showed little interest in organizing unskilled immigrant workers at the turn of the century.10 The United Mine Workers, however, was willing to organize these immigrants and, as one of the AFL’s more progressive unions, sought to organize industrially. That is, the UMW accepted everyone who worked in the mines, not just the predominantly native-born miners who held skilled jobs.11

The 1913-14 southern Colorado coal strike makes a good case study for investigating military strikebreaking for several other reasons. First, the strike was only the latest in a long string of violent labor conflicts in Colorado and the United States. It was also part of an exceptionally turbulent few years inside an already contentious era in relations between capital and labor in the United States and around the world. The surge of labor unrest in the United States was much on Colorado State Senator Helen Robinson’s mind when she shared with the Industrial Relations Commission her

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explanation of the Colorado National Guard’s action during the 1913-14 strike. For her, “the causes of bitterness down there in the southern Colorado field . . . were the same in Lawrence, Mass., Paterson, N. J., and various other places.” Indeed, between 1909 and 1914, thousands of southern and eastern European immigrant workers in Lawrence, Massachusetts, Paterson, New Jersey, New York City, and Michigan’s Kewlenaw Peninsula staged prolonged strikes organized by the radical Industrial Workers of the World and Western Federation of Miners and the AFL’s International Ladies’ Garment Workers’ Union. The conflicts in Lawrence and the Kewlenaw Peninsula brought state military intervention, and all four strikes produced violence that made newspaper headlines across the country.

At the same time, labor unrest reached a fevered pitch in other parts of the world. A 1912 military massacre of workers in Russia’s British-owned Lena goldfields spurred a flurry of strikes against employers and the czarist regime. Seven hundred thousand Russian workers struck in 1912, 900,000 walked off their jobs in 1913, and about 1.5 million stayed home during just the first half of 1914. This militancy caught Russian officials by surprise because strikes were few during the years immediately after the failed 1905 revolution. Workers’ willingness to strike came with a high price, though. As

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12 Testimony of Senator Helen Ring Robinson in CIR Testimony, vol. 8, 7212.
Ballard Campbell points out, the "scale and scope of strikes surged between 1910 and 1913 in Europe, Britain, and the United States. Repression of working men and women was common everywhere, but Russia and the United States formed a league of their own in terms of the high number of strike-related fatalities." 14

Second, like the biggest and most violent labor conflicts of the era, the 1913-14 southern Colorado coal strike involved one of the wealthiest people in the world. John D. Rockefeller, Sr. owned the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company (CF&I), which was the largest coal mining company in southern Colorado and the largest employer in the state. The Rockefeller family, along with most American industrialists and business owners, took an energetic anti-union stance, arguing that unions were bad for the economy, created a union-controlled monopoly on labor, interfered with management’s ability to manage and thus violated property’s sanctity, and finally, were fundamentally un-American because they were a socialist, European invention that ran counter to the American faith in individualism. 15 As perhaps the most visible example of American wealth and power at the turn of the century, the Rockefeller family could ill-afford defeat in a union organizing campaign. Such a defeat would be a painful blow to the moral, cultural, and political leadership of American society claimed by not just the Rockefellers, but by the entire capitalist class. Most turn-of-the-twentieth-century industrialists detested unionization and


15 For expressions of these views in the context of the 1913-14 southern Colorado coal strike, see John D. Rockefeller’s testimony, CIR Testimony, vol. 9, 8592-8715; "Un-addressed letter," 20 May 1914, Papers of Jesse Welborn, Box 1, File Folder 49, Colorado Historical Society. For a more nuanced expression of these ideas, see "Addresses by John D. Rockefeller, Jr., delivered at Pueblo, Colorado at a Joint Meeting of the Officers and Representatives of the Employees of the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company, 2 October 1915" and "Denver, Colorado Before the Denver Chamber of Commerce, 8 October 1915," Papers of Jesse Welborn, Box 1, File Folder 50, Colorado Historical Society.
did everything they could to keep unions out of their shops, factories, mines, and mills, but the Rockefellers' involvement in the 1913-14 strike meant that the CF&I had the ability to resist the United Mine Workers' efforts to organize more vigorously than most other business owners and had more ability to lobby state officials for protection.

This "employer extremism," as Michael Mann puts it, helped make late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century American labor history exceptionally violent. All told, Mann found that between 500 and 800 workers were killed in U.S. labor conflicts between 1872 and 1914. Only Russia, with between 2,000 and 2,500 workers killed during the same years, eclipsed the United States among industrialized nations. By comparison, the death toll in Great Britain was seven; in Germany sixteen; and in France, after the Paris Commune, around thirty-five. Capital's determination to resist unionization is one of several reasons historians have offered to explain this violence.

Before 1935, there were no governmental procedures for certifying unions desired by a majority of workers in a given workplace and there were no legal protections for workers organizing unions. Workers had the legal right to form unions, but employers were not obligated to recognize unions or negotiate contracts with their representatives. The resulting battles were often fierce. Indeed, the 1913-14 southern Colorado coal strike grew out of the UMW's successful organizing campaign there and the mine operators'  

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16 Michael Mann, *The Sources of Social Power, Volume 2: The Rise of Classes and Nation-States, 1760-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 635, 640. Mann also found that ninety people were killed in the 1877 railroad strike, thirty-four in the 1894 Pullman strike, and the 1902-04 strike wave produced 198 deaths, 1,966 injuries, and 5,000 arrests. The vast majority of those killed were workers. Philip Taft and Philip Ross estimate that approximately 700 people (not workers exclusively) died in U.S. labor conflicts between 1870 and the 1960s, although they say that their count is a "gross underestimate." See Taft and Ross, "American Labor Conflict: Its Causes, Character, and Outcome," in *Violence in America: Historical and Comparative Perspectives*, eds. Hugh Davis Graham and Ted Robert Gurr (Beverly Hills, California: Sage Publications, 1979), 187-241.
absolute refusal to bargain with the union. Capital had a powerful ally as they sought to maintain workplace control. By ruling in capital’s favor and issuing injunction after injunction against labor, the late nineteenth-century federal judiciary worked tirelessly to stymie labor union challenges to capital’s control of the workplace. Finally, state officials’ willingness to use force to impose judicial decisions and side with capital even when the enforcement of a judge’s decision was not at issue stood in sharp contrast to the course labor conflicts took in other countries. In czarist Russia, business people supported military repression of labor, but had little ability to influence the autocratic monarchies that controlled the army. Elsewhere in Europe, capitalists could not count on state backing once they imported non-union workers to break a strike. State officials often decided that the imported strikebreakers were more threatening to law and order than the strike and would side with the striking workers and their union. In the United States, state officials were much more likely to side with capital and importing strikebreakers or hiring a private detective agency to violently break a strike rarely dissuaded state actors from backing capital against labor. The question is why did state officials and National Guardsmen, who had the autonomy to resist capital’s dictates, so often chose to do capital’s bidding?

Historians have not fully addressed this question. Indeed, the Ludlow Massacre is one of the most well-known events in American labor history, but the massacre and the strike that spawned it raise a number of other questions that historians have not answered.

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How could the Colorado National Guard carry out a prolonged assault against civilians and burn their homes to the ground? What led the officer corps of the Colorado National Guard to direct their troops to act with the brutality that was common throughout this strike? Why did the laborers, clerks, teachers, farmers, accountants, doctors, and lawyers who made up the guard’s officer and enlisted ranks believe that such behavior on strike duty was both acceptable and necessary? Why did so much animosity exist between guardsmen and the striking miners during the five months the guard was on strike duty before the Ludlow Massacre? How had the state of Colorado created a military organization that so clearly sided with capital in this strike and in the several others in which the guard intervened since its establishment in 1879? Why were southern Colorado’s mine operators so intent on maintaining complete control over their employees?

Historians have accepted these actions and beliefs as almost inevitable. As a result, they have failed to probe beneath the obvious— but only partial— explanation that state officials acted to protect capital’s interests. Scholars of the 1913-14 southern Colorado coal strike, along with labor historians who have studied the many strikes that saw military intervention, military historians who have examined the development of the National Guards, historians and political scientists who have explored the relationship between the state, capital, and labor have all demonstrated that military intervention helped business owners break strikes, but they have failed to explain why such intervention was possible. In their work on the 1913-14 southern Colorado coal strike, George McGovern, Leonard Guttridge, and Priscilla Long acknowledge the importance of military intervention in deciding the outcome of the strike, but do not attempt a
sustained analysis of why the Colorado National Guard acted as it did. In his biography of Louis Tikas, the Greek union organizer who was killed at Ludlow, Zeese Papanikolas observes that the Colorado National Guard’s previous experience fighting the Plains Indians and in the Spanish-American-Filipino War shaped their view of immigrant miners when called out on strike duty, but he does not analyze how these previous experiences influenced guardsmen’s understanding of strike duty.

Historians of the many other late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century labor conflicts that saw military intervention have forwarded several explanations for why the National Guards so often broke strikes. In his study of the Wisconsin National Guard’s involvement in an 1886 strike in Milwaukee, Jerry Cooper argues that these guardsmen did not see themselves as strikebreakers but rather as agents of law and order. Others have emphasized the common class interests and sympathies of state officials, National Guard officers, and industrialists when explaining why state troops backed capital. The line between the state and capital was indeed very blurry during late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century labor conflicts, but such an emphasis largely ignores the social and cultural dynamics that made military intervention possible. The existing literature also does not explain why National Guardsmen understood—and accepted—strikebreaking as a legitimate use of military power.

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21 Early treatments of strikes that saw military intervention pay only passing attention to the role of the National Guards in breaking those strikes See, for instance, Louis Adamic, Dynamite: The Story of Class Violence in America (New York: Chelsea House, 1931); Robert Bruce, 1877: Year of Violence (Chicago: Quadrangle books, 1959); David Brody, Labor in Crisis: The Steel Strike of 1919 (Philadelphia: Lippincott,
Other scholars have touched on military strikebreaking by examining the relationship between labor and the state. By concentrating on the federal government and the judiciary, Melvyn Dubofsky, Christopher Tomlins, Victoria Hattam, and William Forbath, for example, show how capital maintained its dominance in relations with labor and how workers and their unions benefited from state intervention in the economy and in relations with employers. Their focus on the federal government and the courts, however, prevents these scholars from exploring in depth how and why state government officials came to see military force as an acceptable tool for squashing labor unrest and how the National Guards came to be the premiere strikebreaking force in United States history.22

Military historians leave the same questions unanswered. These scholars have established that the 1877 nationwide railroad road strike convinced many state officials that they needed a more effective strikebreaking force and that many states proceeded to reorganize their militias and form National Guards.23 Their general histories of the National Guard, however, tell us little about how guardsmen understood strike duty.24

1965). Melvyn Dubofsky’s brief exploration of the 1903-04 Western Federation of Miners’ strikes in Colorado and the Industrial Workers’ of the World’s 1912 strike in Lawrence, Massachusetts in We Shall Be All, 42-56, 245-46, and George G. Suggs, Colorado’s War on Militant Unionism: James H. Peabody and the Western Federation of Miners (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1972) argue that common class interests and sympathies between state officials, National Guard officers, and industrialists were important in determining how the National Guards approached strike duty. Jerry M. Cooper argues the same in his analysis of the United States Army’s interventions in labor conflicts. See The Army and Civil Disorder: Federal Military Intervention in Labor Disputes, 1877-1900 (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1980).


23 Riker, Soldiers of the State; John K. Mahon, History of the Militia and the National Guard (New York: Collier Macmillan, 1983); Cooper, The Rise of the National Guard. Riker’s Soldiers of the State argues that many states re-organized their state militias and created National Guards in the wake of the 1877 railroad strike. Recently, Cooper and Eleanor L. Hannah, “Manhood, Citizenship, and the Formation of the National Guards, Illinois, 1870-1917” (PhD diss., University of Chicago, 1997) have challenged this contention.
Hannah, in particular, adds nuance to the explanation of the forces motivating the states to re-organize their militias. She shows how interest in joining the Illinois National Guard skyrocketed as residents of the state anticipated the 1876 Centennial celebration. It is clear that Riker’s central claim—that the 1877 strike was a turning point in the development of state military organizations—still stands.

Cooper’s work is the most recent of these general histories. While *The Rise of the National Guard* has some of the same shortcomings as previous histories of the National Guards, Cooper has compiled the most complete statistics on National Guard intervention in labor conflicts. He found that between 1868 and 1899, state military organizations were called out to “suppress labor-related incidents” at least 118 times. He also found 121 call-outs described as either “aiding civil authorities, or “quelling riots” that could have involved labor unrest.

I cite Cooper’s figures on the frequency and nature of late nineteenth-century National Guard duty because his work is the best source available. Cooper, however, seeks to de-emphasize the importance of the 1877 railroad strike in pushing states to re-organize their militaries and dismisses the notion that National Guards served primarily as strike breaking forces. To build this argument, Cooper points out that strike duty did not become a common experience for all National Guards after 1877. Officials in southern states called out their guards in instances of racial turmoil far more often than to suppress labor unrest. Cooper found that southern states used their guards to prevent lynchings, “protect prisoners,” “quell riots,” and “police racial incidents” 258 times between the mid-1870s and the late 1890s. David Montgomery found that these call outs included suppressing African-American political activism, evicting black squatters, and enforcing laws against gathering oysters. See David Montgomery, *Citizen Worker: The Experience of Workers in the United States with Democracy and the Free Market During the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 95-96.

The nature of National Guard duty did vary in different regions of the nation, but there are obvious problems with Cooper’s numbers. For example, he claims: “Many states escaped industrial policing because there were few workers to police, particularly in the Plains region and in much of the West” and that outside of Illinois, New York, Ohio, and Pennsylvania, “strike duty was an uncommon experience for the state soldiery.” See Cooper, 45, 49. These assertions ignore the Colorado National Guard’s five strike appearances between 1879 and 1899, the use of state militaries to break the 1886 Knights of Labor railroad strike in Missouri and Kansas, the Wisconsin National Guard’s efforts to break an 1886 general strike in Milwaukee, and the Idaho National Guard’s service in the Coeur d’Alenes 1890s mining wars. Cooper also contradicts his own statistics. Thirty-eight of the 118 instances of military strike duty between 1868 and 1899 he reports occurred in Pennsylvania, Illinois, Ohio, and New York. This total leaves eighty, or 68 percent, of National Guard interventions in labor conflicts occurring outside of these four states. On the 1886 Knights of Labor strike, see Philip S. Foner, *History of the Labor Movement in the United States*, vol. 2, *From the Founding of the American Federation of Labor to the Emergence of American Imperialism*, 83-86; On the 1886 Milwaukee General strike, see Cooper, “The Wisconsin National Guard in the Milwaukee Riots of 1886.” On the Coeur d’ Alenes, see Smith, *The Cœur d’Alene Mining War of 1892*. It is also important to note that southern governors did use, or threaten to use, their National Guards to quell labor unrest during the late nineteenth century. See Robert D. Ward and William W. Rogers, *Labor Revolt in Alabama: The Great Strike of 1894* (University, Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1965); Karin A. Shapiro, *A New South Rebellion: The Battle Against Convict Labor in the Tennessee Coalfields, 1871-1896* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 1998); Eric Arnsten, *Waterfront Workers of New Orleans: Race, Class, and Politics, 1863-1923* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991). Jeremy Brecher’s *Strike!* rev. ed. (South End Press, 1997) also recounts many instances of southern military strikebreaking between the 1870s and 1899.

Cooper also found that nineteen of the forty-five states that made up the Union in 1899 had no strike breaking record between 1868 and 1899. He also claims that of the twenty-five states that did use its National Guard in strike situations, five used their troops just once in the twenty years after the 1877 strike. See Cooper, 45. These figures obscure the country’s geographic expansion during the last thirty-two years of the nineteenth century. Nevada (1864), Nebraska (1867), Colorado (1876), Montana (1889), North Dakota (1889), South Dakota (1889), Washington (1889), Wyoming (1890), Idaho (1890), Utah (1896) joined the Union during or just before the years between 1868 and 1899. None of these states could have called out troops during a strike until sometime after their admission and the new state legislature’s establishment of a National Guard. Still, adding the strike call outs from Illinois, Pennsylvania, Ohio, and New York (thirty-eight) to the five call outs from the states that used their National Guards just once in a
Although they do not explicitly address military intervention in labor conflicts involving immigrant workers, social and cultural historians have contributed to my thinking about military strikebreaking. Mathew Frye Jacobson’s *Whiteness of a Different Color* and Gail Bederman’s *Manliness and Civilization*, in particular, have shaped my understanding of immigrant racial identity and native-born middle-class masculinity at the turn of the twentieth century. Bederman’s definition of “civilization” as a discourse that many turn-of-the-twentieth-century Americans used to link male dominance to both strike creates a sum of forty-two. According to Cooper’s own figures, seventy-six, or 64.5 percent of state military strike intervention occurred in the *sixteen remaining states that called out troops during strikes between 1868 and 1899*. These numbers strongly suggest that state military intervention in labor conflicts was a common occurrence between 1868 and 1899 in many states beyond Illinois, Pennsylvania, Ohio, and New York.

Cooper also chose to stop counting instances of state militia strike duty in 1899. His premature termination of the count excludes the Colorado National Guard’s ten strike call outs between 1900 and 1928 and many other well-known post-1900 instances of National Guard efforts to suppress labor unrest. Such instances include the West Virginia National Guard’s duty during violent coal mining strikes in 1912 and 1920, the use of state troops in Butte, Montana’s 1917 mining strike, and the multiple state call outs, including Colorado, during the post-World War I steel and coal mining strikes. Although Cooper states that the Massachusetts National Guard “performed no strike duty after 1877,” that state’s guard attempted to break the 1912 textile strike in Lawrence, Massachusetts Organized by the Industrial Workers of the World, the 1912 strike of over 30,000 southern and eastern European immigrants, many of them women, is one of the most thoroughly studied labor conflicts in American history. Governor Calvin Coolidge also called out the Massachusetts National Guard also helped break the 1919 Boston police strike. Cooper’s count also excludes the continued use of states troops to break strikes in the 1920s and the flurry of National Guard callouts that sought to counter labor’s resurgence during the 1930s. For example, four New England and five southern states sent their National Guards into the field during the 1934 textile strike.

Finally, it is true that policing racial incidents, preventing lynchings, evicting black squatters, suppressing black social and political activism, and denying southerners the delights of an oyster or two brought state militias out more often than labor unrest between the 1870s and 1899, but that statistical fact does not negate the importance of the 1877 strike in the National Guard’s development. No one knew in the immediate aftermath of the 1877 strike how often state troops might be needed in strike situations. Those troops, furthermore, were only marginally effective in ending the 1877 strike. It was the federal army, not the militias, who defeated the strike. There was also significant opposition to using state troops in strike situations. Labor union advocates and supporters and many workers, for instance, did not want to see state militias intervene in strikes. Despite this uncertainty and opposition, most states re-organized their state militias and created National Guards in the years immediately after 1877 and some provided their National Guards with more financial support. Collectively, these states called those militias out on strike duty hundreds of times between 1877 and the 1930s. The prevalence of military strikebreaking during these decades made the labor history of this period exceptionally violent, thus demonstrating that the 1877 strike was far more important than Cooper allows.

white supremacy and middle-class rule is particularly important to my analysis of the Colorado National Guard’s history in Chapter Four. Jacobson’s rigorous analysis of the splintering of whiteness that came with the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century immigration from southern and eastern Europe is crucial through the dissertation. Both books, however, leave vital pieces of American thought about immigrant racial identity and native-born middle-class masculinity largely unexamined. Both authors acknowledge that working-class immigrants sharpened labor competition, and how, in response, native-born workers thought about the racial identity of these immigrants. But neither pays more than passing attention to how labor conflicts—which happened so often and captured so much attention during the years between Appomattox and Pearl Harbor—focused these ideas and gave native-born men license to act on them. Bederman’s analysis is also too black and native-born white (with a little red mixed in). She uses several prominent white Americans and one prominent black American as subjects to reveal the historical relationship between race and manhood at the turn of the twentieth century. This approach helps her make brilliant connections between seemingly disparate subjects’ thoughts about racial supremacy and civilization, but she largely ignores how southern and eastern European immigrants shaped the same thinking. Indeed, I will show in the following chapters that many native-born National Guardsmen, state officials, and mining company executives were convinced that labor unrest threatened male, white native-born supremacy over the North American continent. Acknowledging the importance of that belief adds to our understanding of why late-nineteenth and early twentieth-century labor conflicts were often so intense. Though economic concerns certainly drove the actions of employers and state actors in these strikes, it is also clear.
that the challenge workers made to the established economic, political, and social order convinced many that nothing less than American civilization was at stake.

In *Strikebreaking and Intimidation*, Stephen Norwood uses some of Bederman’s theoretical framework to examine strikebreaking. For Norwood, strikebreaking provided some men with a means of expressing their masculinity in a rapidly industrializing nation. The strikebreaking business, Norwood argues, allowed men to revive the role of the “brave, self-reliant frontier gunslinger.”²⁶ Many Americans, furthermore, identified with this “character” who rode into town to re-establish law and order in the face of striking workers. On the other hand, striking workers and their unions saw professional strikebreakers as representative of “the debauchery of contemporary urban society, despoiling family based communities by sexually harassing their wives and daughters, violating the sanctity of their homes, and tormenting the elderly.”²⁷ Strikebreaking, therefore, was a site within which masculinity was contested by strikebreakers and striking workers. For Norwood, this contest was at the center of early twentieth-century strikebreaking.

Norwood applies this thesis to an array of people and organizations that broke strikes from the turn of the twentieth century to the eve of World War II. He examines strikebreaking by private detective agencies, private company guards, Pennsylvania’s coal and iron police, traveling bands of mercenaries, college students, African-Americans recruited in the south, the Ford Motor Company’s Service department, and auto industry-sponsored vigilante groups. Norwood, however, does not explore the hundreds of

²⁷ Ibid., 170.
National Guard interventions in labor conflicts or the other myriad ways in which state actors allied with capital to break strikes.28

The book has other, more significant shortcomings. In his chapter on private detective agencies and private company guards, Norwood considers a flurry of mining industry strikes between 1912 and 1915 in West Virginia, Colorado, Arkansas, Pennsylvania, and Michigan. His investigation of the Baldwin-Felts Detective Agency’s role in breaking the 1913-14 southern Colorado coal strike focuses on the gendered rhetoric and propaganda that the United Mine Workers and the striking miners on one side, and the coal operators and Baldwin-Felts on the other, used to describe their adversaries. Norwood emphasizes, for example, the instances in which the UMW and the striking miners cast Baldwin-Felts and the mine guards they hired as “pleasure-seeking agents of a ribald, seemingly unrestrained new urban culture whose weapons and aggressive orientation made them especially threatening” to the miners and their wives and children. To the UMW and the striking miners, Baldwin-Felts threatened the “feminine virtue and childhood innocence” embodied in the traditional, separate spheres model that governed family life among the miners.29 This interpretation has several flaws. Baldwin-Felts’s headquarters in Bluefield, West Virginia and Roanoke, Virginia—far from representative of the turn-of-the-twentieth-century’s new, urban culture—certainly calls this claim into question. The miners’ objection to the presence of Baldwin-Felts detectives in southern Colorado had far more to do with the abuse that those detective

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28 Ibid., 13.
29 Ibid., 115, 118.
meted out to men, women, and children than with the cultural values those detectives might (or might not) have represented.

The wives and daughters of the striking miners in Colorado and other coalmining regions around the country were also far from docile inhabitants of a separate, private sphere. While some miners might have preferred if women stayed at home and out of the business of their workplaces and unions, mining camp women were active participants in their communities and became stalwart supporters of their husbands, brothers, and fathers in both the private and public spheres during the many labor conflicts they experienced.

Finally, Norwood focuses on gendered propaganda, but he accepts at face value one of the most blatant pieces of propaganda disseminated during the 1913-14 coal strike. The mine operators, Baldwin-Felts, and the Colorado National Guard asserted that many Greek residents of the Ludlow tent colony were veterans of the Balkan Wars that Greece fought against the Ottoman Turks and then against Bulgaria in 1912 and 1913. The miners’ enemies used this claim to portray the inhabitants of the Ludlow tent colony as a fierce, male enemy that had military combat experience. This portrayal of the Greeks who lived at Ludlow allowed the Colorado National Guard, in particular, to claim that they faced a formidable enemy at Ludlow. Norwood, however, missed that the residents of Ludlow knew of only a few Balkan Wars veterans living in the tent colony. Tent colonists certainly had reason to hide the presence of war veterans among them, but it still would have been quite difficult for veterans of conflicts that happened in 1912 and 1913 to gain discharge from the Greek military and then travel all the way to southern

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30 Ibid., 114.
31 Papanikolas, Buried Unsung, 119, 297.

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Colorado by early 1914. Turn-of-the-twentieth-century immigrants were certainly mobile, but not that mobile. Norwood's work has many strengths, but his wide-ranging study lacks the depth and nuance necessary for his thesis to succeed. The contestation of masculinity that Norwood identifies certainly played a role in strikebreaking, but it was by no means the only reason why the various groups Norwood explores broke strikes.

This dissertation addresses many of these shortcomings in the historiography by bridging the often disparate fields of labor, political, social, and cultural history. In the process, it broadens our knowledge of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries by demonstrating what military strikebreaking tells us about the era's complex conflicts over American identity. Before the state of Colorado was admitted to the union in 1876, the fledging coalmining industry in southern Colorado began crafting a state that served their interests. Creating that state put the coalmine operators on the road to building an empire over the next four decades. By building and controlling the housing in which their workers lived, the schools that educated those workers' children, and the churches where everyone worshipped, the operators gained enormous control over their employees' social and cultural lives. The operators' control of politics in southern Colorado was just as sweeping. By the turn of the twentieth century, the operators dominated the Republican Party in Las Animas and Huerfano Counties. Their surrogates in the party and in elected office used patronage and coercion to ensure that Republicans dominated politics in Las Animas and Huerfano and that juries in the two counties would never reach a verdict that harmed the operators' interests. A series of strikes organized by the Knights of Labor and the United Mine Workers during the 1880s and 1890s drove the operators to enact a plan they believed would cement their domination of southern...
Colorado. To defeat these strikes, the operators purged the native-born and old-stock immigrant men who toiled in their coal mines and replaced them with southern and eastern European and Mexican immigrant workers whom they believed were racially inferior, and therefore, more malleable, marginalized, and difficult to organize.

The coal operators created an empire in southern Colorado, but that did not necessarily mean that they could wield the state itself as a club against labor. The British Empire could use British soldiers and armies recruited from the population of their colonies to crush rebellions, but outside of Las Animas and Huerfano Counties, Colorado was a functioning democracy, not a colony, and its governor—who controlled the National Guard—was an elected leader, not a colonial satrap. When their employees struck in September 1913, the mine operators organized themselves to convince Governor Elias Ammons to send the National Guard south to restore order. The operators used coercion as much as persuasion to convince Ammons, who was a Democrat and had been elected in 1912 with labor’s support, to put the guard in the field. They had good reason for putting so much pressure on the governor. Once out on duty, the National Guard worked furiously to break the strike. Though the guard was, to a great extent, independent of the coal operators' control, many guardsmen shared with the operators strong assumptions about the racial inferiority of southern and eastern European and Mexican immigrants. Two decades of fighting the Plains Indians after the Civil War and three years of service in the Spanish-American-Filipino War (1898-1902) helped Colorado National Guardsmen equate the immigrant miners whom they faced in 1913-14 with the "savage tribes" of the western plains and the Filipino “insurrectionists” who resisted American imperialism. Striking immigrant coal miners emerged as racially
inferior non-citizens who did not share the white, native-born and middle-class conceptions of masculinity that prevailed in the guard. Guardsmen believed they had to defeat these immigrant strikers because they threatened the Anglo-American "civilization" they had helped spread across the continent, the Caribbean, and the Pacific. As it turned out, Governor Ammons was also uncomfortable expending energy and political capital on defending a group of impoverished immigrants in a remote corner of Colorado. Ammons was not a strident nativist, but like his National Guard and the mine operators, he did not hold the miners in very high regard. Thus, we must understand the conflicts over race, ethnicity, and gender as well as class that emerged as the United States entered the modern age to understand why the Colorado National Guard broke this strike and why the Ludlow Massacre occurred.

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The Colorado National Guard’s efforts to break the 1913-14 southern Colorado coal strike were part of a long and bloody history of military strikebreaking in the United States. From the end of the Civil War until World War II, business owners regularly wielded state military power against labor in some of the most well-known labor conflicts this country has witnessed: the nationwide railroad strike of 1877, the 1892 Homestead steel strike, the 1894 railroad and Pullman Palace Car strike, the 1892 and 1899 Coeur d’Alene, Idaho mining strikes, the 1903-04 Colorado mining wars, the Industrial Workers of the World 1912 strike in the textile mills of Lawrence, Massachusetts, the 1919 nationwide steel strike, the decade-long Mingo County, West Virginia mining wars from 1912 to 1922, the 1934 Minneapolis General Strike, and the 1934 textile strike that brought out 376,000 mill workers in New England and five southern states, to name just a
few. Employers wanted state troops to help them bring non-union workers into their factories, fields, mines, and mills, but these efforts often turned violent, as the National Guards and the federal army used all manner of weaponry—intimidation, bare knuckles, rifles, machine guns, and artillery—to defeat these strikes. The bodies of hundreds of workers and union organizers, and to a much lesser extent, soldiers and company officials, are strewn across the decades between the two most costly wars working-class Americans have fought.\textsuperscript{32}

Only in the biggest of these strikes, however, did the president call out the United States Army. In the multi-state conflicts of 1877, 1894, and 1919, the Army was the strikebreaker of choice. As \textit{The Nation} described it in 1877, the army was the “most terrible of all the machines invented by man, by which the wills of a thousand are wielded, even unto death, by the will of one . . . and when it strikes, it strikes like the flail of destiny, without remorse, or pity, or misgiving.”\textsuperscript{33}

The state National Guards, however, not the U.S. Army, saw the lion’s share of military strike duty, and thus proved themselves a terrible enough machine to do this job. These National Guards did not materialize out of thin air. Officials in states across the


\textsuperscript{33} “The Late Riots,” \textit{The Nation}, 2 August 1877, 68. Jerry M. Cooper’s \textit{The Army and Civil Disorder} examines the role of the United States Army in breaking strikes.
country busied themselves with the task of re-organizing their state militaries in the wake of the 1877 railroad strike. That strike began on July 17, 1877 when workers on the Baltimore and Ohio railroad in Martinsburg, West Virginia walked off their jobs to protest their second ten-percent wage cut of the depression that plagued the country during the 1870s. West Virginia Governor Henry M. Matthews called out the state militia, but these soldiers proved ineffective in dealing with labor unrest. Because the militia units in Martinsburg were made up of local residents, they inevitably included men who were the friends and relatives of strikers and sometimes were on strike themselves. These troops refused to break the strike and many fraternized with the striking railroad workers. With the urging of Pennsylvania Railroad president Tom Scott and other business leaders, Matthews asked President Rutherford B. Hayes to send the federal army to West Virginia. Hayes complied, but the army's presence in Martinsburg created widespread anger throughout the country. Popular outrage at the use of military force in the wake of Hayes's withdrawal of federal troops from the South and animosity toward the railroads in general helped spread the strike to other rail lines and other industries, as discontented workers in cities across the country walked off the job.

The 1877 strike made state officials recognize that their militias as they were then organized might not be very effective when it came to ending labor conflict. Troops had certainly been used before 1877 to suppress labor unrest. Andrew Jackson, for instance,

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35 See Bruce, *1877: Year of Violence*, and Philip S. Foner, *The Great Labor Uprising of 1877*. In *Streets, Railroads, and the Great Strike of 1877* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), David O. Stowell argues that anger over the unsafe and noisy conditions that railroads created in American cites explains why the strike spread so quickly and why middle-class urban dwellers supported the strike.
called out the federal army in 1834 to put down a strike by Irish laborers working on the Chesapeake and Ohio canal in Williamsport, Maryland, and the Pennsylvania National Guard intervened in coal strikes four times from 1871 to 1875. Those troops were largely successful in ending these conflicts. As it spread across the country, the 1877 strike, on the other hand, produced many reports of behavior similar to the Martinsburg militia’s refusal to break the strike. An officer in one New York unit explained that the members of his regiment were “in perfect sympathy with their oppressed fellow workingmen. Many of us have reason to know what long hours and low pay mean and any movement that aims at one or the other will have our sympathy and support. We may be militiamen, but we are workingmen first.”

This sentiment, and the refusal to break the 1877 strike that grew out of it, spurred officials in many industrial states to think about how to reform their militias. The country’s militia system was in poor shape by the 1870s. The militia as a military entity separate from the federal army was established in 1792 when Congress passed the Militia Act. This act made every free, white male citizen between the ages of eighteen to forty-five members of the unorganized militia, and each state legislature was charged with picking officers and organizing military units. This was the “well-regulated militia” stipulated in the second amendment of the Constitution, but the federal government did not provide funding for arms and equipment. Men were supposed to arm themselves and

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37 See Foner, *The Great Labor Uprising of 1877* for a discussion of the ineffectiveness of many militia units as the 1877 railroad strike spread across the nation. Also see Cooper, *The Army and Civil Disorder*, 91.
38 Quoted in Foner, *History of the American Labor Movement in the United States*, vol. 1, 469.
39 In 1873, fifteen of the thirty-seven states reported no organized militia in the state. See Cooper, *The Rise of the National Guard*, 25.
be ready for military service should they be called. Most did neither, and the well-regulated militia became something of a national joke.\(^{40}\)

Voluntary militias, on the other hand, became popular in many states during the first half of the nineteenth century. These voluntary militias were ostensibly state organizations, but they received little state supervision. Members of voluntary companies came under state control only during yearly inspections, periodic training camps, and when a state’s governor called them into service. Many Civil War veterans interested in maintaining a connection to things military and who enjoyed the military’s all-male culture joined the voluntary militias. The militias were also popular as fraternal clubs during a period when middle-class men began socializing more frequently outside their homes and away from their wives and children. The election of officers in the voluntary militias, a practice that army officers frowned on but that lasted well into the twentieth century, was a reflection of the militia’s social function. Men interested in joining the voluntary militias formed companies and petitioned their state’s governor and adjutant general for admission. These officials consulted with prominent politicians and businessmen about the character and reputation of the potential enlistees and would muster in the company if the reports proved satisfactory.\(^{41}\)

As these militias grew, many members sought to distinguish themselves from the unorganized militia established in 1792. The first step toward creating such a distinction was to convince states to establish an organized militia, and the 1877 railroad strike was


\(^{41}\) Cooper, *The Rise of the National Guard*, 65-70.
key in persuading states to take this step. Some of the men called to break the 1877 strike were unorganized militia and thus had received little or no training and were either unwilling or unable to break the strike. Organized militias were meant to address the problems faced in Martinsburg and elsewhere during the 1877 strike. By 1892, every state had established an organized militia and most states labeled this new militia a "National Guard." By 1914, only three states continued to use the term "militia" when referring to their organized military organizations.

To create more professional and disciplined National Guards, many states recruited regular Army officers who were interested in pursuing second careers to improve training and instill discipline in state troops. After 1900, many of these retired regulars were Spanish-American War veterans. Businessmen in several states helped finance National Guard units, and they continued to be part of the vetting process for companies seeking admission to the guard. National Guards relied on volunteers because state officials believed they were more likely to break a strike than men who had no choice but to serve as unorganized militia. In Indiana, for instance, eleven companies were organized during the 1877 strike. According to the state’s Adjutant General, these new units “were composed of our best citizens, and commanded by some of our most

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42 Derthick, *The National Guard in Politics*, 16. The distinction between “militia” and “National Guard” is important. Colorado National Guardsmen always referred to their organization as the “National Guard” while the United Mine Workers almost always use “militia” to refer to their adversaries during the 1913-14 southern Colorado coal strike. Colorado National Guardsmen certainly heard “militia” as an insult to their skills and training as soldiers. There was a politics to each term, and thus I will use “militia” when referring to miners and the United Mine Workers and “National Guard” when referring to guardsmen.

43 The Indiana militia, for instance, was known as the Indiana Legion until 1895, when it changed its name to the Indiana National Guard.

44 Cooper, *The Rise of the National Guard*, 143.

distinguished men.” The officers of these companies included a prominent banker in the city, the son of a noted author and politician, and future President Benjamin Harrison.46

In Pennsylvania, a committee of state legislators who investigated the 1877 strike in Pittsburgh concluded that the state needed a more effective state militia. Governor John F. Hartranft used the legislators’ findings to dismiss officers and entire units whom he thought might support labor in a strike, increased weapons spending, and built his National Guard armories around the state. The state legislature also completely reorganized the militia between 1878 and 1881. “The result,” Paul Krause observes, “was a well-disciplined and well-trained cadre that, over the next forty years, remained an ardent supporter of corporate rule.”47

The new National Guard units attracted many prominent men, and the guards often emphasized the social attractions of membership to draw these men. Although skilled, native-born and old-stock immigrant working-class men joined the National Guards in large numbers, some state organizations made a point of recruiting middle and upper middle-class members and others specifically barred labor union members from joining.48 By the early-1890s, the National Guards had 100,000 members nationwide drawn primarily from the middle class. In 1884, Wisconsin National Guard Captain Emil Baensch forwarded a rationale for recruiting from the middle class. Baensch argued: “Society is like a barrel of pork. Remove the top and bottom of society and you have

46 Quoted in Riker, Soldiers of the State, 50. Also see Riker, 53 and Cooper, The Rise of the National Guard, 65.
some good material left. It is to the middle classes that you must look for the best material.\footnote{Quoted in Cooper, \textit{The Rise of the National Guard}, 72. Millet and Maslowski, \textit{For the Common Defense}, 248-49.}  

By 1896, the states spent $2.8 million annually on their National Guards and their membership of 100,000 men was four times the size of the United States Army. Seventy thousand of these 100,000 guardsmen were in the industrial states. Many state officials also authorized funds for armory construction, and wealthy businessmen often contributed money for armories. These armories were often located in working-class neighborhoods, and their architecture featured imposing towers, turrets, and stone parapets. Their placement and construction was a not-so-subtle reminder of what awaited workers who went on strike.\footnote{Montgomery, \textit{Citizen Worker}, 95; Robert M. Fogelson, \textit{America's Armories: Architecture, Society, and Public Order} (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1989) examines armory construction and placement in late nineteenth-century New York. Doubler, \textit{I Am the Guard}, 119-20.}

Gradually, the National Guards came under more and more federal control and supervision as they traded their independence for federal money. Formed in 1879, the National Guard Association (NGA) lobbied Congress to make a formal distinction between the unorganized militias and the National Guards. The NGA finally succeeded in 1903 when Congress passed the Dick Act. Named for Ohio Senator, head of the Ohio National Guard, and National Guard Association president Charles W. F. Dick, the Dick Act and the 1908 amendment to it formalized the relationship between the federal army and the National Guards. The act gave the president authority to call out National Guards to “repel invasion, suppress rebellion, or enforce federal law;” made the militias a regular army reserve; provided the guards with significant federal financial support; and gave
state militias access to regular army weapons and supplies.\textsuperscript{51} Thus, military organizations that were not linked to the state at their inception became state militaries. The 1877 strike certainly helped this transformation along, but guardsmen also played a significant role in creating the National Guards. Civil War veterans and the patriotic outpouring that accompanied the 1876 centennial celebration swelled the voluntary militias’ ranks. Without the voluntary militias the states would have had to build militaries instead of latching onto existing military organizations.\textsuperscript{52} As Robert Fogelson concludes, the antebellum volunteer militia system, “which had served as a check on the state, a means of helping to preserve liberty, [became] an agency of the state, a means of maintaining order and protecting property.”\textsuperscript{53} This function of state militaries flourished in the post-bellum United States, as the National Guards consistently protected capital whenever labor challenged its dominance.

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April 20, 1914 was one of the most violent days in the history of American military strikebreaking. Before the day was over, twenty residents of a tent colony the United Mine Workers had built to house striking members and their families, including twelve children and one Colorado National Guardsmen, were dead, and Colorado National Guardsmen had burned the tent colony to the ground. Chapter One describes the events of April 20 that led to the Ludlow Massacre. Chapter Two then takes a leap back to the 1870s to examine how the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company, in particular, built an

\textsuperscript{51} Doubler, \textit{I Am the Guard}, 143; Millet and Maslowski, \textit{For the Common Defense}, 309-12.
\textsuperscript{53} Fogelson, \textit{America’s Armories}, 41.
industrial empire in southern Colorado. The chapter argues that over more than four decades, the coal operators became the state in Huerfano and Las Animas Counties while also mustering state influence and force from outside these two counties to protect their interests. The chapter also explores the CF&I and the other coal operators’ recruitment of an immigrant workforce during the 1880s and 1890s. The operators’ belief in their employees’ racial inferiority was most evident in the social welfare work the CF&I undertook after 1901 aimed at turning their immigrant employees into Americans while creating a more docile and compliant workforce. This welfare work, the chapter argues, reflected the imperial ideology that drove the operators’ domination of southern Colorado. Finally, the chapter examines how the operators’ political domination of southern Colorado was crucial to maintaining its empire. Chapter Three demonstrates how the miners challenged that empire and how the operators organized to meet that challenge. The chapter shows that mine operators hired the Baldwin-Felts Detective Agency to turn southern Colorado into a volatile and violent place. This strategy succeeded in forcing a recalcitrant Governor Ammons to call out the National Guard. Chapters Four and Five examine the Colorado National Guard’s history fighting in the Plains Indians Wars and in the Spanish-American-Filipino War to reveal how these past experiences shaped guardsmen’s understanding of strike duty. The chapters argue that ideas and attitudes about race, ethnicity, and gender were as important as guardsmen’s understanding of class and class conflict in placing the National Guard on the mine operators’ strikebreaking team. Chapter Six demonstrates how the Colorado National broke the 1913-14 strike and argues that Governor Ammons’s nativist thinking pushed him to allow the National Guard to break the strike once in the field. In the conclusion, I
consider why Americans largely accepted the use of military force to break strikes so often over such a long period of time.

Like many well-known historical events, the Ludlow Massacre has often been distorted by overstatement and exaggeration. For example, though many histories of the Ludlow Massacre state that the Colorado National Guard planned an attack on the Ludlow tent colony for the morning of April 20, 1914, the truth was more complicated. Instead, the fighting that produced the Ludlow Massacre resulted from a rather bizarre set of circumstances that played themselves out on that day.\textsuperscript{54} We will now turn to that story.

CHAPTER I
THE LUDLOW MASSACRE

On the morning of Monday, April 20, 1914, M. G. Low was working on the boiler in the pump house near his home in Ludlow, Colorado. Low worked as a pump man for the Colorado & Southern Railroad, and lived appropriately in a railroad boxcar fitted with an addition Low had built himself. Low’s wife had taken the train to Trinidad, Colorado that morning, leaving their five-year old daughter at home with him. As Low worked, his daughter ran into the boiler room and cried, “Take me, daddy, there is going to be a fight.”\(^1\) At that moment, a bomb exploded, but Low thought little of it. He stepped outside, picking up his daughter as he went, and looked toward the tent colony two hundred yards to the south that the United Mine Workers had established to house their members who had been thrown out of company housing when they went on strike seven months earlier. Low saw some dust in the air, but was unfazed because National Guardsmen occasionally found dynamite when they searched the Ludlow tent colony for weapons. The Guard took the dynamite into the hills and detonated it, which was what Low thought he was hearing on this morning. He went back inside and continued his work with his daughter in his arms. A few minutes later, another explosion detonated and when Low stepped outside this time, he saw people “running from the tent colony in all directions.” Low was still focused on his work, but soon heard a rifle shot and then a


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general volley of rifle fire. Several bullets hit the boxcar, and Low later found 109 bullet holes in his house.²

The rifle fire convinced Low that his daughter was right and, holding her in his arms, he fled the boiler room. A bullet whizzed by his right ear. He later said: “If I had had my little girl in my right arm she would have been killed, but she was in my left arm.” Some women and children from the tent colony were trying to escape the rifle fire by climbing down a nearby water well. The well had a large opening with steps and three landings that could hold more than a few people. Low stopped to help them negotiate the rickety steps that led 100 feet below ground, and then ran into a nearby arroyo for protection. The rifle fire only increased, and he later took his daughter to the safety of a friend’s ranch.³

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By the time the Ludlow Massacre occurred, the strike that precipitated it was almost over. Having succeeded in convincing Governor Elias Ammons to call the National Guard to southern Colorado and having used the guard to help bring non-union workers into their mines, the coal mine operators had effectively defeated the UMW. The successful importation of non-union workers left the United Mine Workers with little leverage with which to negotiate a strike settlement. Noting that the strike had cost the union over $2.6 million, some officials at the United Mineworkers’ headquarters in Indianapolis were ready to shut the strike down. With the Guard’s mission completed, Governor Ammons had pulled his troops out of southern Colorado in late March, leaving

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² Ibid.
³ Ibid., 6854; Testimony of Margaret Dominiske, CIR Testimony, vol. 9, 8189.
behind one company and a hastily organized troop of men consisting of mine guards, coal company supervisors and non-union miners. There was no reason for the guardsmen who remained in southern Colorado to believe that the striking miners and their families presented a significant threat. As we shall see, however, relations between guardsmen and the striking miners were far from harmonious during the five months the guard was on strike duty. The poisoned atmosphere between the Guard and the miners created the conditions necessary for the Ludlow Massacre.4

On Sunday, April 19, 1914, the day before the battle at Ludlow, the Greek immigrant miners in the Ludlow tent colony had treated their neighbors to a celebration of the Greek Orthodox Easter, a holiday that fell a week after the Roman Catholic and Protestant celebrations of Christ’s resurrection. In the morning, the colonists played baseball on a field established early in the strike for such games, roasted lamb for dinner, and afterward went back to the ball field for a game of men against women. It was a good day for baseball by all accounts. The winter freeze was retreating and the colonists looked forward to spring after toughing out a cold and snowy winter living in tents. The combination of an old country holiday with the most popular game in the United States also suggests that the miners and their families were adapting nicely to their adopted country.

In what was perhaps an apocryphal story, several women participating in the game said later that a few National Guardsmen showed up at the ball field. Insults were

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4 As a neighbor of the tent colony, M. G. Low was well aware of this animosity. In his testimony about the strike before the Industrial Relations Commission, Low said: “they [guardsmen] abused them [strikers] when any of them would go to the depot or any place, and they would run them off. . . . They [the miners] seemed to be kind of restless and scared all the time for fear of something was going to happen.” See Low’s testimony, CIR Testimony, vol. 7, 6853.
exchanged between the guardsmen and the colonists, and as the soldiers left, one said: “Go ahead, have your good time to-day, and to-morrow we will get your roast.”\(^5\) It was this story that has perhaps left the impression so many years later that the guard attacked the camp the next day.

That night, there was a dance in the colony. The camp band played and many attendees no doubt continued to drink from the several barrels of beer they had acquired for the celebration. Next morning, the celebration continued in some corners of the tent colony. Louis Tikas, a Greek immigrant who had become a union organizer and then the popular leader of the Ludlow tent colony, was with Maggie Dominiske and Pearl Jolly looking at some photographs taken during the previous Sunday’s Easter celebration. A detail of soldiers led by Corporal Patton found him and told Tikas that the wife of an Italian miner had come to the guard’s camp looking for her husband. Lieutenant Ray W. Benedict later testified that the woman asked “that some soldiers be sent to the Ludlow Tent Colony and to ask her husband to come up to the depot to talk with her; she had been unable to get him away from there and wanted to see him.” According to Dominiske, Tikas asked Patton “who gave him authority to get this man, and did he get his authority from the civil authorities. The soldier told him no; he got it from the military authorities.” Tikas told Patton that military authority no longer held sway in southern Colorado. Patton then said: “If you don’t produce this man by afternoon, we will search the tent colony.” Tikas said the man in question was not in the tent colony and asked if

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\(^5\) Testimony of Margaret Dominiske, *CIR Testimony*, vol. 9, 8185. Also see the testimony of Pearl Jolly, *CIR Testimony*, vol. 7, 6349.
Major Patrick Hamrock, the National Guard’s commanding officer, was at the military camp.\textsuperscript{6} Hamrock was a Denver saloonkeeper who had regular army experience and had participated in the last significant “battle” between the army and Native Americans at Wounded Knee, South Dakota in 1890. As we shall see, such service was important for shaping how some guardsmen understood their adversaries on strike duty, but Hamrock was a good natured fellow and he got along well with Tikas. Patton led his detail out of the tent colony and reported to Hamrock, who called Tikas on the phone and asked him to come to the military camp. Tikas told Hamrock that the man in question was not in the tent colony and refused to comply. Hamrock thought Tikas sounded nervous and found this strange because in his experience, Tikas was always cool and calm. Hamrock then called Lieutenant Gary Lawrence, who was at the militia’s larger Cedar Hill camp in Berwind canyon to the southwest. Hamrock told Lawrence to get his men ready to come down and search the tent colony for the missing man. Hamrock could see the tent colony from his tent, and noticed that there was a great deal of activity as men in the tent colony ran from tent to tent. Hamrock got back on the phone to Cedar Hill and got Lieutenant Karl Linderfelt this time. Linderfelt was notorious among the striking miners because of his brutal treatment of them during the strike, but Hamrock thought him a good soldier. Hamrock told the lieutenant to “put the baby in the buggy and take it along.” “We always nicknamed a machine gun,” Hamrock later said in his testimony about Ludlow.\textsuperscript{7}

\textsuperscript{6} Papanikolas, \textit{Buried Unsung}, 212-13; Affidavit of Maggie Dominiske, \textit{CIR Testimony}, vol. 8, 7380.  
\textsuperscript{7} Testimony of Lieutenant Ray W. Benedict and Major Patrick Hamrock, \textit{Record of the General Court Martial, Military District of Colorado, In the Matter of Edwin F. Carson, Captain, 1st Cavalry, National Guard of Colorado, Case Number 2}, 38, 232, Western History Collection, the Denver Public Library.
Back at the tent colony, word had spread that the militia was coming to search for the missing man. The guard had recently torn down a smaller tent colony at nearby Forbes and the miners had vowed that they would not allow guardsmen into their camp again for fear that Ludlow would suffer the same fate. This news was what got the miners scrambling from tent to tent, which in turn prompted Hamrock to ask for the machine gun. Tikas then called Hamrock and agreed to meet him at the Ludlow train depot. Tikas preferred this location because it was between the tent colony and the military camp, and he felt safer there. Hamrock had also been right about how Tikas sounded on the phone. He was nervous because he knew that the miners would not allow the guard to search the tent colony. Before he left for the depot, Tikas quieted his comrades and asked them to do nothing until he returned.8

Hamrock brought the woman looking for her husband to the depot and Tikas recognized her, saying that her husband had been in the tent colony on Saturday but was no longer there. As this conversation continued, the troops that Hamrock had called from Cedar Hill began their drill on Water Tank Hill to the south. Water Tank Hill was visible from both the railroad depot and the miners’ tent colony. As Hamrock sat on an overturned breadbasket discussing the situation with Tikas, Marian Derr was washing her hair at home near the railroad depot. Her husband came in the washroom and asked her to look out the window across the nearby steel railroad bridge to Water Tank Hill. She saw

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“two machine guns and saw men fixing breastworks and men all along the tracks with rifles.”

The tent colony residents could plainly see what Marian Derr and her husband saw. Believing that the guard was about to attack the tent colony, the men gathered up their guns and ran southeast out of the colony toward a sand cut with a protective embankment that provided good cover. At the same time, a larger number of men, women, and children fled out of the tent colony to the northwest into an arroyo that also provided protection. Sitting near the railroad depot that blocked their view, Tikas and Hamrock could see neither the military activity on Water Tank Hill nor the flight out of the tent colony. At this point, Lieutenant Gary Lawrence galloped up to report that his detail had arrived on Water Tank Hill. Lawrence then began his ride back and saw the armed men running out of the tent colony toward the sand cut to the east. Realizing that their position was perfect for shooting at his men on Water Tank Hill, Lawrence galloped back to Hamrock yelling “Major, my god – look at all those men going over the hill.” Both Tikas and Hamrock looked around the corner and Tikas said: “I will stop them.” Hamrock replied: “Go ahead Louie, you have got to get busy.” This was the last time a guardsmen and a striking miner would agree about anything.

As Tikas ran back toward the tent colony waving a handkerchief, Lieutenant Linderfelt’s men on Water Tank Hill could see the armed men running east into the sand

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10 There is also some evidence that the miners had tapped the guard’s phone and had heard Hamrock’s request for the machine gun see George S. McGovern, "The Colorado Coal Strike, 1913-14" (PhD diss., Northwestern University, 1953), 279 and Papanikolas, Buried Unsung, 217. Testimony of Major Patrick Hamrock, Record of the General Court Martial in the Matter of Edwin F. Carson, 233; George S. McGovern and Leonard F. Guttridge, The Great Coalfield War (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin), 215.
cut and begged him for the order to fire. For his part, Hamrock sent Lawrence back to Water Tank Hill and went to his tent to call Adjutant General of the National Guard John Chase back in Denver. Chase asked to be informed if shooting started and once it did, Chase promised Hamrock that he would get forty-one additional men, seven boxes of ammunition, and another machine gun by 2 o'clock in the afternoon. The guard was intent on a fight.\textsuperscript{11}

After ending his first phone call with Chase, Hamrock ordered the explosion of three dynamite bombs. Lieutenant Linderfelt had fashioned these bombs as a signal to the main militia camp at Cedar Hill if trouble was imminent at Ludlow. It was these explosions that M. G. Low and his daughter heard as they tried to figure out what to do. Linderfelt later described these bomb signals as a “precaution that any military commander would take.” Not surprisingly, however, the miners believed these bombs were a “new kind of ammunition” or artillery that the guard now possessed. It is impossible to know who fired the first shot. The eyewitness accounts vary widely on this point, but it is clear that rifle fire began in earnest soon after the explosion of the three bombs.\textsuperscript{12}

For several hours, the guardsmen on Water Tank Hill and those hiding in several steel railroad cars near the Ludlow military camp along with civilians hidden in stores and houses to the west of the Ludlow tent colony traded fire with miners hidden in the sand cut and in the arroyo to the northwest. Margaret Dominske, her children, and


\textsuperscript{12} Testimony of Karl Linderfelt, CIR Testimony, vol. 7, 6891; Ludlow: Being the Report of the Special Board of Officers, 15.
seventy or so other women and children had run west out of the tent colony before the fighting began in earnest and, with Low’s help, ended up in the well.13

Charlie Costa, an Italian immigrant and striking miner who would die that day along with his wife and children, told Dominske as they ran in opposite directions that the miners had to “lead the fight away from the colony, or those machine guns will kill every woman and child in here.” Costa’s plan failed. In addition to keeping the miners pinned down in the sand cut, the Guard poured rifle and machine gun fire into the tent colony, trapping other women and children in their tents. These tent colony residents rightfully believed that fleeing would get them shot, but the canvas tents provided little protection from the gunfire. With little choice, these women and children climbed into the pits that many colonists had dug in the earth beneath their tents early in the strike after the Baldwin-Felts detectives hired by the coal operators attacked the tent colonies with gunfire. These pits served as hiding places.14

The battle lasted from ten in the morning until five or six in the afternoon. Guardsmen slowly moved down Water Tank Hill toward the steel railroad bridge that led north to the railroad depot and the tent colony just beyond it. Captain Carson and his men from Troop “A,” non-union workers from the mine at Hastings to the west, and mine guards from both Delagua and Berwind canyons joined Lawrence and Linderfelt’s men as the day progressed. These troops also brought a second machine gun with them.15

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13 *Ludlow: Being the Report of the Special Board of Officers*, 16; Testimony of Margaret Dominske, *CIR Testimony*, vol. 9, 8187.
14 Affidavit of Margaret Dominske, *CIR Testimony*, vol. 8, 7380; Testimony of Pearl Jolly, *CIR Testimony*, vol. 7, 6350.
15 Affidavit of Margaret Dominske, *CIR Testimony*, vol. 8, 7380; *Ludlow: Being the Report of the Special Board of Officers*, 16-17.
Back in the tent colony, Pearl Jolly, a miner’s wife who also worked as a nurse in the colony during the strike, was putting on her Red Cross uniform believing that the Red Cross markings would keep guardsmen from shooting at her. Jolly stepped out of her tent and bullets fell all around her. She ran, and a bullet took off the heel of one of her shoes before she scampered into another tent. Louis Tikas and three other men were in this tent calling the union offices in Trinidad to ask for help. Jolly set about preparing sandwiches. As she entered the tent’s kitchen, a mirror in the corner caught her reflection. Jolly later testified that she believed the guardsmen on Water Tank Hill could see the reflection because a hail of bullets immediately ripped through the tent. Jolly hit the ground, but continued to prepare the sandwiches.16

Jolly and Tikas later left the tent for the colony’s dispensary to get a dressing for a wounded man. Bullets chased them until they dove behind a small coal pile. Jolly later said that the Guard directed the machine gun on the coal pile, and she and Tikas along with three other men lay behind the pile for an hour. Only a grieving father who emerged from his tent to tell Tikas and Jolly that his son had been killed drew the machine gun away from the coal pile, allowing all five to flee.17

The gunfire from the guardsmen became more intense around three o’clock in the afternoon as more troops arrived and advanced closer to the tent colony. Private Albert Martin was killed as the Guard made this advance. The miners reported later that Martin was one of the soldiers who threatened them at the Easter baseball game. As we shall see in Chapter Four, the condition of his corpse when his fellow guardsmen recovered it

16 Testimony of Pearl Jolly, CIR Testimony, vol. 7, 6350
17 Ibid., 6350-51.
became evidence of what the Guard described as “the savage blood-lust of the Southern European peasantry.” Eventually, the Guard’s superior firepower drove the miners out of the sand cut and the arroyo into the Black Hills to the east. As the Guard concentrated their fire in those areas, Jolly and Tikas managed to gather about fifty women and children who had been hiding in pits below their tents and Jolly led them northwest out of the colony toward the arroyo. Tikas stayed behind.18

By 5:30 pm, Lieutenant Linderfelt reported that the tent colony was on fire. The Guard’s investigation of Ludlow found that the fire started when “Major Hamrock tested his range with the machine guns on Water Tank Hill and sent them directly into the first tents of the colony itself, at the same time that the strikers’ fire drew” return volleys from guardsmen into the same tents. The concentration of gunfire into these tents set them ablaze. It took another hour and a-half for the guard to fight their way to the tent colony. During that time, the 7:20 pm Colorado and Southern train pulled through Ludlow on the tracks that ran north to south past the tent colony. The passing train provided temporary cover for all the women and children who were hiding in the well and in M. G. Low’s barn house. As the train blocked the militia’s view, these women and children fled east into the Black Hills.19

Many of these tent colony refugees end up at the ranch of Frank Bayes and his wife. Both Bayes were sympathetic to the miners’ plight during the strike, and they fed their unexpected guests and found places for them to sleep with like-minded friends when

18 Ibid., 6351; Testimony of Margaret Dominiske, Ibid., vol. 9, 8187; Testimony of Karl Linderfelt, Ibid., vol. 7, 6891-93; Ludlow: Being the Report of the Special Board of Officers, 16-18.
19 Ludlow: Being the Report of the Special Board of Officers, 18; Testimony of Margaret Dominiske, CIR Testimony, vol. 9, 8187; McGovern and Guttridge, The Great Coalfield War, 225.
space on their property ran out. The Bayeses, however, insisted that all the men leave
their ranch because they were afraid their presence would bring an attack. Guardsmen fire
at the ranch anyway on Tuesday morning, and the Bayeses left with their guests for safer
ground. When they returned, they found that soldiers and Baldwin-Felts detectives had
broken into their house. Amid the destruction inside the Bayes's found a note that read:
"This is your pay for harboring the Union. Cut it our, or we will call again. (signed) B. F.
and C. N. G."\textsuperscript{20}

As guardsmen streamed into the tent colony, they used coal oil to set tents not
already burning on fire. Guardsmen also found women and children still hiding in the tent
pits, but had a very difficult time getting them to come out because they understandably
believed that the soldiers were going to kill them. The guard eventually pulled more than
a few women and children out of the fire that was quickly engulfing the entire tent
colony. One survivor, however, later claimed that the soldiers forced women and children
back into the tents and assaulted them.\textsuperscript{21}

As guardsmen saved women and children from the fire that other guardsmen were
spreading, Mary Petrucci tried to decide where she and her three small children should
go. She had pulled her children out of their own tent because it was on fire, but
guardsmen shot at her as she left the tent, and she led the children into a nearby tent to


\textsuperscript{21} Testimony of Karl Linderfelt, \textit{CIR Testimony}, vol. 7, 6894; Testimony of Lieutenant Karl Linderfelt, \textit{Record of the General Court Martial in the Matter of Edwin F. Carson}, 147; \textit{Ludlow: Being the Report of the Special Board of Officers}, 19-20. In an interview conducted in 1993, Helen Korich Krmplotich, who lived in the Ludlow tent colony when she was seven years old, claimed that such assaults occurred. Korich Krmplotich did not say that she witnessed these assaults, and did not say if women and children were sexually assaulted. See "Barbed Wire and Easter Lace: Helen Korich Krmplotich," 11.
escape the bullets. The entrance to the pit in this tent was open and she climbed down inside with her children. She found familiar faces there. Charlie Costa’s wife Cedi Costa and their two children, Onorfo and Lucy, ages four and six, were in the pit along with Patricia Valdez and her four children, Rudolph, Elvira, Mary, and Eulala, ages three months and seven, eight, and nine years old, and Cloriva and Roderlo Pedregon, who were four and six years old.22

Mary Petrucci was twenty-four years old in 1914. Her parents were Italian immigrants who worked in the mining camp at Hastings just to the west of the Ludlow tent colony. She had attended company schools, married a local man, and lived in several nearby mining camps before her husband went on strike in 1913. She was well acquainted with the abuses the miners endured and was a vocal supporter of the union’s efforts to organize in southern Colorado. As she and her children got into the pit, Petrucci told Cedi Costa: “They are burning the tent and we had better get out, but Costa responded: “Oh, Mary, you had better stay in, because it is safer in here, and we could not burn.” Neither thought about the smoke that would invade their hiding place when the tent was set on fire.23

Meanwhile, guardsmen continued to set tents on fire and otherwise destroy the colony. Soldiers also engaged in what the Guard’s investigation later called “the usual loot. Men and soldiers seized from the tents whatever appealed to their fancy of the moment. In this way, clothes, bedding, articles of jewelry, bicycles, tools, and utensils

22 Testimony of Mary Petrucci, CIR Testimony, vol. 9, 8193-94; “Those Killed in the Colorado Strike,” Papers of Edward Doyle, Box 2, Envelope 17, Western History Collection, Denver Public Library. The spelling of the victims’ names varies from source to source.
23 Ibid., 8194.
were taken from the tents and conveyed away."

The guard also managed to take Tikas prisoner along with James Fyler, who was the UMlW local’s treasurer, and John Bartoloti, another striker and resident of the tent colony. Tikas and Karl Linderfelt had had a number of run-ins during the strike and now Tikas feared for his life. His captors turned him over to Linderfelt, who mocked Tikas for not stopping the battle from happening.

Linderfelt said later that Tikas then called him “a name that no man will take and I stuck him with my gun.” Holding the barrel of this rifle, Linderfelt hit Tikas hard in the head with the other end, breaking the stock in the process. Tikas did not fall, and the crowd of fifty or seventy-five soldiers who had gathered started calling to lynch him. One soldier threw a rope over a nearby telegraph pole, but Linderfelt would not allow the lynching to proceed. Instead, he placed Tikas and Fyler in the custody of Sergeant Cullen from his company. What happened next is clouded, but it seems that the strikers began firing in the general vicinity of where Tikas, Fyler, and Bartoloti were standing with their captors. Everyone ran for shelter, and all three prisoners, but no soldiers, ended up dead. The National Guard’s inquest later found that two bullets that had passed through Tikas’s body were of the steel-jacketed variety used by the guard while a third the coroner removed was a type of ammunition the soldiers did not use. The guard did not have any information on the ammunition that killed Fyler and Bartoloti.

The next morning, Susan Hollearin rushed to the Ludlow tent colony. She was the postmistress at the Ludlow train depot and her father had leased the union the land on which the tent colony stood. Hollearin had made friends with many of the men and

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women who had lived for seven months next to her place of work. She found the colony completely destroyed, but more distressing for her was that she found her friends Mary Petrucci and Alcarita Pedregon wandering around in a daze unsure where their children were. Fearing the worst, Hollearin put both women on a train bound for the nearby town of Trinidad, and went looking for Karl Linderfelt. She found him asleep in the railroad depot, woke him up, and asked that he get her an escort to search for the missing children. Linderfelt did not want to conduct the search, and it was not until later in the afternoon that the bodies of Cedi, Onorfo, and Lucy Costa, Patricia, Rudolph, Elvira, Mary, and Eulala Valdez, Joe, Lucy, and Frank Petrucci, and Cloriva and Roderlo Pedregon were found in the pit beneath their tent.26

The National Guard was uninterested in removing the bodies from the pit. Tikas, Fyler, and Bartolotí's bodies also remained lying by the railroad tracks on Tuesday. The sight of their corpses created no small amount of dismay among the passengers on the trains that passed through the Ludlow depot. Only after railroad engineers sent word to the union offices in Trinidad that bodies remained in the pit and beside the tracks did the county coroner sent his wagon to collect the dead.27

At this point, all the union and the miners who had escaped Ludlow could think about was revenge. On April 22, 1914, officials from District 15 of the United Mine Workers sent out an appeal to their members unprecedented in American labor history:

Organize the men in your community into companies of volunteers to protect the workers of Colorado against the murder and cremation of men,

women, and children by armed assassins in the employ of the coal corporations, serving under the guise of the state militiamen.

Gather together for defense purposes all arms and ammunition legally available. Send name of leader of your company and actual number of men enlisted at once by wire, phone or mail to W. T. Hickey, secretary of the State Federation of Labor.

People having arms to spare for those defensive measures are required to furnish same to local camps, and where no camps exist, send them to the State Federation of Labor.

The state is furnishing us no protection and we must protect ourselves, our wives, and children from these murderous assassins. We seek no quarrel with the state and we expect to break no law; we intend to exercise your lawful right as citizens to defend our homes and our constitutional rights.28

The miners who had melted into the Black Hills were already planning a counter attack when the union declaration went out. They knew before the county coroner how the women and children in the Ludlow pit had died. The National Guard tried to claim that the opening of the pit had been sealed and that its thirteen occupants had suffocated long before soldiers set the tent ablaze. The coroner’s report, however, found that all occupants of the pit “came to their deaths by asphyxiation or fire, or both, caused by the burning of the tent of the Ludlow tent colony. . . .”29

As George McGovern and Leonard Guttridge have pointed out, the miners were not as interested in fighting the guard as they were in destroying the mine operators’ property. They did so with a vengeance. By April 23, the day after the union call to arms, six coalmine properties were on fire. John Lawson, the very capable organizer who had engineered the union’s successful efforts to recruit workers in southern Colorado, also fueled the flames. Lawson had never been much of a radical, but the deaths at Ludlow made him one. He told reporters that he “declined to state where the strikers secured the

28 Papers of Edward Doyle, Box 2, Envelope 17, Denver Public Library.
guns they used. I am sorry they haven’t got ten thousand times as many.” He also blamed John D. Rockefeller, Jr., who he declared: “may ease his conscience by attending Sunday school regularly in New York but he will never be acquitted of committed these horrible atrocities . . . The murder of the men and women at Ludlow has cinched the determination to fight to the finish.”

Other union leaders were more intent on convincing President Woodrow Wilson to send federal troops to Colorado. Edward Doyle, treasurer of the UMW’s district 15 in Colorado, implored other labor leaders and Colorado’s congressional delegation to petition President Wilson for troops. President of the UMW John P. White also asked Wilson to send troops. These requests were unprecedented because the federal army had always acted to break the strikes in which they intervened. As a result, union leaders had never before asked for federal military intervention.

Wilson, however, had already asked Congress for approval to send troops to Vera Cruz, Mexico on the afternoon of April 20 as the battle at Ludlow raged. Wilson sought to use the arrest of American sailors in Tampico, Mexico as an excuse to send troops to drive Victoriano Huerta from power. Within days, the 800 American sailors and marines Wilson sent to Mexico were in a fierce battle with Huerta’s forces that killed over 200 Mexicans and nineteen Americans. Wilson was therefore reluctant to burden his relatively small military with another commitment.

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That Governor of Colorado Elias Ammons was in Washington, D. C. to meet with the Secretary of the Interior and with the congressional committee that had just finished investigating the coal strike only made matters worse. In his place, Lieutenant Governor Stephen Fitzgerald was reluctant to put his state's National Guard back in the field because, as we shall see, the Colorado treasury was empty, and it had taken a great deal of financial imagination to fund the Guard's first trip to southern Colorado. The mine operators, however, were anxious to get the Guard back in the field because they feared their replacement work force would disappear from the mines if the violence continued. Constant appeals from the mine operators eventually convinced Fitzgerald to send the guard back to southern Colorado.\footnote{Testimony of Elias Ammons, \textit{CIR Testimony}, vol. 7, 6415-16; Jesse Welborn to J. H. McClement, May 27, 1914, \textit{CIR Testimony}, vol. 8, 7121.}

Adjutant General John Chase set off from Denver with 369 National Guard troops on April 23. By the next day, Chase had 650 soldiers in the field, but they were unable to stop the miners' rampage. They burned another mine property on Saturday, April 25, and although a brief truce arranged by Fitzgerald and UMW attorney Horace Hawkins held for two days, the miners soon attacked and burned the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company's (CF&I) property at McNally. Two hundred and fifty miles away, miners in Colorado's northern coalfield expressed their solidarity by burning a mining property in Louisville County. Back in southern Colorado, the miners were able to take the high ground when they finally met the guard in battle at the mines around Walsenburg, the largest town in Huerfano County. There they routed the guard troops near the former site of the tent colony at Forbes that the guard had destroyed a month earlier. The strikers
killed nine guardsmen and lost one of their own before withdrawing back to their camp near Trinidad.34

Upon his return to Colorado, Governor Ammons pleaded with President Wilson for federal troops because he did not think his Guardsmen could end the violence in his state. Colorado’s congressional delegation and business leaders in the state also wrote Wilson asking for troops. The president eventually decided to grant Ammons’s request, but tried to settle the strike before sending the army. Wilson asked John D. Rockefeller, Sr. to submit the industrial conflict to arbitration. Having recently retired from the day-to-day operation of his companies, the elder Rockefeller told the president that he knew nothing about the situation in Colorado. He referred the president to his son, who maintained the position that his executives in Colorado held during the entire strike: The only issue up for consideration, he explained, was union recognition, and neither the CF&I nor any other coal operator was willing to entertain that possibility.35

Seeing no chance of getting the operators to reconsider their position, Wilson ordered the army to Colorado. On April 30 and May 1, 475 men from the fifth and twelfth cavalry units at Fort Robinson, Nebraska and Fort Leavenworth, Kansas arrived in southern Colorado. Within a week, 1,590 army troops had arrived. More than thirty people had been killed at Ludlow and in the battle that followed, but the presence of the federal army ended the conflict.36

34 RMN, 23 April 1914; The West Report, 133-35.
35 L. M. Bowers to John D. Rockefeller, Jr., Rockefeller, Jr. to Bowers, Bowers to Starr J. Murphy, and Murphy to Bowers, 27 1914, 28 April 1914, and 29 April 1914, CIR Testimony, vol. 9, 8433-34.
36 The West Report, 134-35.
At least twenty-nine people were killed in the ten days of fighting that followed the Ludlow Massacre. This conflict looked much like a wartime battle. The miners and the National Guard focused on taking control of territory and both sides reported their causalities to the local newspapers and estimated how many “enemies” they had killed.37 To understand how the Colorado National Guard got to Ludlow and the battle that followed, we must examine how southern Colorado’s coal mining industry came to dominate that region of the state. After decades of fashioning a state that serve their interests, the coalmine operators had come to expect state protection. Chapter Two will explore how the mine operators came to dominate social, cultural, economic, and political life in southern Colorado.

37 Ibid., 136.
CHAPTER II

AN EMPIRE WITHIN: THE SOUTHERN COLORADO COALFIELD, 1872-1913

I found that while the counties of Las Animas and Huerfano Counties are geographically a part of Colorado, yet industrially and politically they are a barony or a principality of the Colorado Fuel and Iron Co.¹

--State Senator Helen Ring Robinson describing her impression of southern Colorado after spending time there during the 1913-14 coal strike.

In a series of advertisements published in 1943, the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company (CF&I) departed from the path that so many advertisers took during the Second World War. While producers of pots and pans, bed sheets and towels, and silverware and dishes made Herculean advertising efforts to connect these products to the war effort, the CF&I said nothing about the crucial war materials like the coal and steel it produced. Instead, it highlighted the company's role in settling the American West. One ad declared that the company “had a profound influence on the creation of this Western Empire,” while others focused on the benefits that CF&I employees enjoyed. Another ad celebrating the company’s involvement in building schools near its mines and mill explained that “as colonization advanced westward, educational institutions became necessary; the little red school... [was] the foremost factor in the advancement of civilization.”²

The imperial claims made in these advertisements inadvertently but neatly summarized what the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company and the other two large coal

producers in southern Colorado accomplished in the years between 1870 and the 1913-14 strike. Working within the larger territorial empire that the American nation-state had carved out in the West since the late eighteenth century, these coal operators built and maintained a private empire in southern Colorado’s Las Animas and Huerfano Counties. Mining enterprises were crucial to imperialism’s expansion across the world because

Definitions of imperialism vary and there has been a long scholarly debate about what constitutes imperialism. With this debate in mind, Raymond Williams observed in *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 132: “Imperialism, like any word which refers to fundamental social and political conflicts cannot be reduced, semantically, to a single proper meaning. Its important historical and contemporary variations of meaning point to real processes which have to be studied on their own terms.”

Historians, political scientists, and social theorists studying the many forms of relations between nations on their own terms have created a fairly broad definition of imperialism. Scholars such as Frank Ninkovich in *The United States and Imperialism* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2001) have distinguished between the imperial competition among expansionist nations and the formal colonial relationship between colonizer and colonized while others have included, for example, the economic domination and significant political influence that the United States enjoyed over the ostensibly sovereign states of Latin America for much of the twentieth century and the enormous economic and cultural influence that this country enjoys in the post-cold war world in their definition of imperialism. See William Appleman Williams, *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1959, revised 1972) and Walter LaFeber, *The New Empire: An Interpretation of American Expansion, 1860-1898* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1963) for their ground-breaking work on American imperialism. Also see the definitions of imperialism in Michael W. Doyle, *Empires* (Ithaca, New York: The Cornell University Press, 1986), 45 and Benjamin J. Cohen, *The Question of Imperialism: The Political Economy of Dominance and Dependence* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 15-16.

Arguing for the utility of these more expansive definitions, Mathew Jacobson writes in *Barbarian Virtues: The United States Encounters Foreign Peoples at Home and Abroad, 1876-1917* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2000), 6: “a broad construction of the term ‘imperialism,’” one that “encompasses a mere projection of vested interest in foreign climes at one end of the spectrum, and overt practices of political domination at the other is useful in identifying the underlying similarities among otherwise diverse international encounters.”

Whether direct or indirect, formal or informal, whether the ‘projection of vested interest in foreign climes’ or overt political domination, scholars think about imperialism as a state endeavor. Companies, however, have played key roles in the more formal conquest of foreign lands for quite some time. The Virginia, Plymouth, London, British East India, and Dutch East India Companies, for instance, were three groups of investors granted charters by the English and Dutch crowns to colonize American South Asian territory. Thus describing the coal operators’ domination of southern Colorado as imperial places them in a long historical pattern of private conquest. Imperialism, however, is also usually thought of an international endeavor. As Benjamin Cohen puts it in *The Question of Imperialism*, imperialism is “a relationship. The relationship itself is international—between two nations” and as an “international relationship characterized by a particular asymmetry—the asymmetry of dominance and dependence.” [Italics in original]. Southern Colorado’s coal operators, on the other hand, established what I label an empire within their native country. Yet, southern Colorado was an industrial frontier that Anglo Americans developed and came to dominate during the four decades after 1870. The United States, furthermore, had recently taken this land from Mexico in the Mexican-American War. Thus the coal operators’ dominance must be seen in this larger imperial context.
industrial production in the United States, Europe, and Japan required raw materials found underground. Hence, it is not surprising that the mine operators' conquest of southern Colorado also mirrors classic examples of state-sponsored and privately initiated imperial conquest all over the globe during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The control of southern Colorado that the coal operators enjoyed by 1913, however, made them look more like a colonial government than merely private companies that exerted great influence over state officials. By 1913, the operators had become the state in Las Animas and Huerfano Counties.

To make this case, this chapter focuses on four aspects of southern Colorado’s labor and corporate history. It first highlights how over more than four decades the strengths and weaknesses of state offices and agencies helped make southern Colorado the operators’ empire. Just as the United States-based United Fruit Company (UFC) gained control of Costa Rica’s Atlantic coast and Ecuador’s southern coast in the early twentieth century through railroad construction and other internal improvements that the governments there encouraged, and as Great Britain’s East India Company increased its influence in India during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries through railroad and road construction, the companies that became the CF&I established a foothold by extending railroad lines into southern Colorado’s rich bituminous coal field. Weak state control in all four places made it possible for United Fruit, the East India Company, and the CF&I to extend their authority into areas usually reserved for the state. All three companies, for example, operated public works, built and ran schools for the children of their workers, and issued their own currency. All three companies also

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effectively mustered state influence and force where it was strongest to protect their interests. Just as the British military repressed the massive 1858 Indian Rebellion against British rule and the East India Company’s presence, and the Central Intelligence Agency overthrew Jacobo Arbenz Guzmán in Guatemala in 1954 when Guzmán’s democratically-elected government threatened United Fruit’s interests, the CF&I received favorable treatment from the United States Supreme Court when it most needed a helping hand and successfully lobbied the Colorado governor’s office for assistance during the 1913-14 coal strike. Over long periods of time, these three companies had all forged important connections with state actors that made the state responsible for their security and prosperity.5

Both state action and state weakness helped the mine operators in southern Colorado create and sustain their empire, but the operators themselves also did plenty of empire building. A crucial step on the road to empire was the operators’ importation of a workforce that they hoped would be complacent, or at least, easily controlled. To achieve this end, the operators changed the ethnic and racial composition of the workers who mined coal in southern Colorado during the four decades before the 1913-14 strike. By 1900, new immigrants from southern and eastern Europe, immigrants from Mexico, and Mexican-Americans had largely taken over these jobs. Southern Colorado’s mine operators brought immigrant workers to Colorado to defeat a series of strikes mounted

first by the Knights of Labor and then by the United Mine Workers of America during the 1880s and ‘90s. Eventually, the operators started bringing in these immigrant workers even during times of labor peace. Doing so mirrored UFC’s importation of labor from Jamaica to Costa Rica at the turn of the twentieth century to work their banana plantations, the British colonial government’s efforts to bring agricultural workers from India and diamond miners from Portuguese East Africa to South Africa during the latter half of the nineteenth century, and the British Colonial Office’s coordination of labor migration from India to Malaysia and Trinidad during the same period to compete against local workers, depress wages, and squash labor militancy.6

Like their colonizing cousins in Latin America and South Africa, southern Colorado’s coal operators had good reasons for replacing their workforce or augmenting it with foreign workers. While the native-born and old-stock immigrant men who toiled in the metal and coal mines elsewhere in Colorado enjoyed better workplace and living conditions, and, through their unions, a discernable voice in Colorado politics, the increasingly immigrant coal miners in southern Colorado worked in dangerous mines and lived squarely under the thumbs of their employers. Like slave owners in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century North America and the Caribbean who preferred that their chattel come from different tribes so as to ensure an ethnic and linguistic variety that would make organizing in the slave quarters more difficult, Southern Colorado’s mining

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companies recruited Poles, Italians, Austrians, Montenegrins, Serbians, Greeks, Bulgarians, Mexicans, and Hungarians to achieve the same ends. The mine operators, therefore, took advantage of some of the most marginalized and least powerful workers available in the early twentieth-century United States. Like the nineteenth- and twentieth-century European empires in Africa, South Asia, and Southeast Asia, the coal operators dominated a group of people they saw as racially inferior. Instead of going abroad to dominate and colonize "others," however, the coal operators brought "others" to southern Colorado for the same purpose.

The corporate welfare work the CF&I undertook beginning in 1901 reflected the imperialist ideology that drove the operators' domination of southern Colorado. Thus, this chapter also explores the racism expressed through this welfare work. Just as United Fruit razed traditional Ecuadorian villages in favor of company towns built on a grid system that reflected the company's understanding of order and hierarchy, the CF&I tore down southern Colorado's adobe housing in favor of wood frame employee housing and also set up on a grid system to make surveillance of their workers easier. Just as both the British East India Company, and after 1858, the British government, pursued educational reform and tried to eliminate aspects of Indian culture that they found objectionable, the CF&I shaped the curriculum of their schools and established social welfare programs aimed at turning their immigrant employees into Americans while still creating a more docile and compliant workforce.

8 Striffler, In the Shadows of State and Capital, 3; Smith, European Imperialism in the 19th and 20th Centuries, 62-63; James, The Rise and Fall of the British Empire, 220-21; Sarah Deutsch, No Separate
Finally, the chapter examines how the operators’ effort to dominate southern Colorado politically was crucial to maintaining its empire. The coal operators co-opted the Hispanic Americans who had come to southern Colorado long before the mining industry arrived. Doing so meant following an imperial pattern well established elsewhere. Just as the East India Company and British colonial officials recruited specific ethnic groups, warrior tribes, traditional rulers, and business people to their Indian imperial project and the Spanish co-opted elite principales as they established a colony in the Philippines, Hispanic Americans helped the coal operators secure political control of southern Colorado. Otherwise, however, the operators mimicked imperial endeavors across the world by relying on intimidation and coercion. In Colorado, coercion helped build super majorities on election day among the southern and eastern European immigrants who increasingly made up their work force. The men who won office in Huerfano and Las Animas Counties, where Colorado’s southern coalfield was based, paid their benefactors back by working enthusiastically to protect the mine operators’ interests.

The operators’ empire did not extend beyond Huerfano and Las Animas Counties. Still, the operators wielded tremendous power in this enormous piece of territory along the New Mexico border. It took tremendous effort to create this empire, and by 1913, the

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Refuge: Culture, Class, and Gender on an Anglo-Hispanic Frontier in the American Southwest, 1880-1940 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 89-90, 105-06.
operators had grown accustomed to the unquestioned rule they enjoyed. They would not surrender such absolute authority without a fight.

**Going West**

Mexican sheepherders and the Ute and Arapaho Indians were the only people with much interest in southern Colorado in the decades before and after the United States wrested control of the region from Mexico in 1848. That changed ten years later, when rumors of gold sent 50,000 fortune seekers toward Pike’s Peak near what would become the city of Denver. These miners had little luck finding gold, and the absence of trees on Colorado’s flat, eastern plain only made matters worse as they tried to keep warm through their first Colorado winter. They were lucky to discover that coal was much easier to come by, and soon they were digging black rather than gold nuggets out of the earth to keep their winter campfires burning.10

Coal solved the “fifty-niners” home heating problems and gave their mining endeavors a new focus, but the coal they found also fueled industrial capitalism’s main engines: the mighty railroads. Railroad companies laid track across the flat, treeless Great Plains with breakneck speed after the Civil War, but wood-burning locomotives could not stray far beyond the tree line before stalling out. Shipping wood across the Plains was expensive, and so it was lucky for the railroads that the West made up for what it lacked above ground with what it had below. Soon, the railroads were following the British practice of burning coal instead of wood in the locomotives that charged around the western frontier. Denver got its first railroad connection in 1870, and the silver boom of

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that decade brought more prospectors to Colorado. More people and more mining created more demand for railroad service, and the riches railroads promised meant there was no dearth of people willing to build them.¹¹

Former Union Army general William Jackson Palmer, who worked as an assistant to Pennsylvania Railroad president J. Edgar Thomson before the war, was a crucial player in extending the railroads into southern Colorado’s Las Animas and Huerfano Counties. After the war, Palmer ventured to St. Louis to look after the Pennsylvania’s investment in the Kansas-Pacific Railroad. Palmer soon left that job and established his own railroad in Colorado. An impressive group of friends helped Palmer achieve this goal. Thomson, Pennsylvania Railroad vice-president Thomas Scott, president of the First National Bank of Denver and Colorado territory delegate to Congress Jerome Chaffee, and William Bell, a wealthy British citizen who invited European friends to invest in Palmer’s railroad, provided financing, while former governor of the Colorado territory Alexander Hunt helped Palmer’s fledging company acquire land for the new railroad. In 1870, Palmer established the Denver-Rio Grande Railroad. Over the next two decades, this company would grow, spin off other businesses, consolidate, and change owners before emerging as the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company.¹²

The Denver-Rio Grande extension southward out of Denver moved through Colorado Springs, which Palmer founded in 1871, reached Pueblo in June 1872, and ultimately stretched into the richest coal deposits in the West when the line reached Trinidad, Colorado near the New Mexico border. The Trinidad coalfield was 1,080

¹² Long, Where the Sun Never Shines, 179-182; Scamehorn, Pioneer Steelmaker in the West, 4, 8-9.
square miles, making it the largest in southern Colorado, and according to the state
geologist, several decades after large-scale mining began the southern field still contained
over 24 billion tons of coal. Palmer set up the Southern Colorado Coal and Town
Company (SCC&T) in 1876 to mine this coal. Many of the Denver-Rio Grande
Railroad’s officers served as executives in this new company and Palmer relied on the
same investors to get this new venture off the ground. In a year’s time, the SCC&T was
the largest producer of coal in the region, but Palmer’s new company was not the only
railroad offspring to succeed in the southern coalfields. The Atchison, Topeka, & Santa
Fe Railroad also showed a keen interest in mining coal and by 1885 produced one-third
of all Colorado coal. Because the large railroads backed by eastern and foreign investors
so quickly established a dominant position, Colorado coal mining would not remain the
enterprise of the small-scale, independent operators who had come west looking for gold.
By 1886, railroad agents sent 1.1 of the 1.4 million tons of coal mined in Colorado to the
surface.13

The railroad companies were not interested in coal solely because it provided fuel
for their locomotives. Southern Colorado’s bituminous coal was also perfect for making
coke, a crucial ingredient in steel. With this in mind, Palmer created the Colorado Coal
and Iron Company (CC&I) in 1880, folded the SCC&T into this new company, and built
a steel mill near Pueblo, which he dubbed the “Pittsburgh of the West.” The same cast of
characters who had helped launch the Denver-Rio Grande and Southern Colorado Coal

13 Long, Where the Sun Never Shines, 174; Testimony of Russell D. George, House Committee on Mines
and Mining, Conditions in the Coal Mines of Colorado, 63d Cong., 2d sess., 1914, part 1, 11. Hereafter cited as
Conditions in the Coal Mines of Colorado; Scamchorn, Pioneer Steelmaker in the West, 27-32; Long, Where
the Sun Never Shines, 177, 179.
and Town backed Palmer in this third venture, but although CC&I became a major player in western steel production and was the only steel mill in the Rocky Mountain area, the company struggled to survive. Two decades later, this weakness would bring the Rockefeller family into the company's mix of investors when its owners sought help in avoiding bankruptcy.14

The first serious challenge to Palmer's ventures, however, came from Washington, D. C. where federal officials began questioning the legitimacy of Southern Colorado Town and Coal's land claims. How these challenges turned out shows how the state ultimately worked in the company's favor. A sympathetic judiciary had final say over the disposition of these claims, and their decision was a major victory for CC&I.

Because his primary responsibility within Palmer's companies was to acquire land, it was Alexander Hunt's actions that attracted the government's attention. As the former governor of the Colorado territory and ex officio Superintendent of Indian Affairs, Hunt was the ideal person for his job. The son of a physician, Hunt had come west with the California Gold Rush and became wealthy selling equipment and other necessary items to gold miners. He lost all his money in the 1857 banking collapse and two years later, he came back east with the "fifty-niners" to Colorado where he tried to recoup his previous wealth. President Andrew Johnson made him governor in 1867, and the next year, he signed a treaty with the Ute Indians that gave all of eastern Colorado to the United States. Having acquired this piece of territory from the Indians, Hunt soon surrendered it to Colorado Coal and Town.15

14 Long, Where the Sun Never Shines, 173; Scamehorn, Pioneer Steelmaker in the West, 4-8.
15 Long, Where the Sun Never Shines, 181; Scamehorn, Pioneer Steelmaker in the West, 8.
Like many western railroads, Palmer's Denver-Rio Grande also received free land grants from the federal government. The railroad's coal mining operations tried to acquire its land at the lowest price possible. Taking advantage of the 1862 Homestead Act, which offered 160 acres of western lands at $1.25 an acre to anyone who lived on them for six months and who committed to farming it for five years, Denver & Rio Grande and Southern Colorado Coal and Town representatives bought land claiming they would abide by the Act's rules, but then handed their claims over to the company. This practice brought many lawsuits, but by the time they came to trial, the Colorado Coal and Iron Company had taken over the SCC&T. Despite the fact that many of the same people owned both companies, the courts ruled that the defendant no longer existed and threw the lawsuits out.16

The CC&I would continue to find a friendly court system indispensable. Though Rutherford B. Hayes’s Secretary of the Interior Carl Shurz convinced Attorney General Charles Devens not to file his own suit against the company in 1878, the United States Attorney for Colorado found the charges so egregious that he brought a case in 1881 contesting the ownership of sixty-one tracts of land that encompassed 10,000 acres of southern Colorado's richest coal lands. The United State attorney charged that Southern Colorado Town and Coal had committed fraud to gain ownership of these lands. Because company officials had no intention of living on or farming the 160-acre parcels available through the Homestead Act, they created imaginary yeomen farmers to gain ownership of the southern Colorado lands they desired. The U.S. attorney produced fourteen local witnesses who testified that no one had occupied or cultivated the land in question, as the

16 Long, Where the Sun Never Shines, 183-84.
Homestead Act required, and that they did not know and had never met the “farmers” listed on the land claim papers. Since figments of SCC&T’s imagination obtained titles to these lands, the U.S. attorney concluded that the federal government still owned the land and asked the court to strip the CC&I of the land granted Southern Colorado Coal and Town before the CC&I absorbed the company.¹⁷

In its defense, the Colorado Coal and Iron Company’s lawyers did not deny that SCC&T officials had creatively acquired land in southern Colorado. Instead, they argued that nine years had passed since the deed had been done, and during that time the land had become the rightful property of CC&I, which had spent great sums of money mining coal it. They also contended that the actual existence of the buyer listed on the title was less important than the fact that the government land office had received full price for the contested property. Hence, no serious fraud had occurred. Moreover, the defendants’ lawyers reasoned, the government could not keep the money paid for the land if it nullified the company’s title to it.¹⁸

The courts in Denver ruled against the CC&I. The company appealed, but the United States Circuit Court concluded that company officials had indeed cultivated farmers in their minds and thus no legitimate transfer of ownership had occurred. The company managed to hold onto its coal lands while preparing an appeal to the United States Supreme Court, but it would forfeit the land and income produced by the mines on

¹⁷ Scamehorn, Pioneer Steelmaker in the West, 33-34, 51.
¹⁸ Ibid., 51-52.
that land if the appeal were denied. The Colorado Coal and Iron Company was at a serious crossroads.  

Fortunately for the CC&I, the Supreme Court in 1887 not only heard the case, but also overturned the Circuit Court's ruling, dismissing the charges. The court ruled that the government had not proven without a doubt that the original buyers of these lands were fictional and that canceling the titles was too harsh a penalty even if a fraud had occurred. The CC&I celebrated by buying up more land in southern Colorado and opening six more mines in 1888 and 1889. Thus the federal government mounted a serious challenge to William Palmer's coal mining operations, but the Supreme Court, which certainly made no secret of its affection for business during the late nineteenth century, stepped in and ensured Colorado Coal and Iron's survival. The CC&I also learned an important lesson about the value of a friendly court system. In the future the company's descendants and the other coal operators in southern Colorado would leave nothing to chance. Instead of merely relying on an independent judiciary that was ideologically sympathetic to protect them from legal threats, the coal operators created a judiciary in southern Colorado that did their bidding at every turn. As we shall see, this domination of the courts was a key component of the operators' empire in southern Colorado.

It would take a strong leader to create such an empire, and while the CC&I was a candidate for that position, the company was losing ground to its competitors even as it expanded its steel operations. By the early 1890s, the Colorado Fuel Company was

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19 Ibid., 52.
20 Ibid., 69.
challenging CC&I for the dominant position on Colorado coal mining. In 1891 alone, CC&I lost over $1 million in business to its rival. Still, both companies believed that competition adversely affected their bottom lines and wished to avoid a bruising battle for preeminence in the industry. In early 1892, the two companies began discussing a merger that would create the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company (CF&I) by the end of the year.21

With this merger, John C. Osgood, the owner of the Colorado Fuel Company, emerged as the head of the CF&I. Osgood was born in Brooklyn, New York and began his corporate career at the end of the Civil War as a fourteen year-old office boy for a Providence, Rhode Island textile company. He moved to New York City and then to Ottumwa, Iowa, in 1870, where he bought a piece of the Whitebrest Coal and Mining Company. The Chicago, Burlington, and Quincy Railroad became Whitebrest’s biggest customer, and in 1882, Whitebrest asked Osgood to look into Colorado’s coal mining potential. He was thrilled by what he found, and with the help of the wealthy friends he made in Denver and old wealthy friends at the CB&Q, Osgood formed the Colorado Fuel Company in 1883.22

Nine years later, Osgood took over a company that, with 70,000 acres of coal lands, was huge by western standards. More than half of that land was in southern Colorado, a third was in the state’s northern coalfield, and 8,000 acres were in Carbon County, Wyoming. Osgood also opened several iron mines in Sunrise, Wyoming. All

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21 Ibid., 71; Long, Where the Sun Never Shines, 190.
told, this property contained approximately 400 million tons of lignite, sub-bituminous, bituminous, and anthracite coal. The company also had its steel mill in Pueblo and its own railroad, the Colorado and Wyoming, which serviced the southern Colorado coalfield. By the turn of the century, the CF&I had twenty-three coalmines in Colorado, nine coke-making plants, the steel mill in Pueblo, and it employed more than 6,000 people in the state. With its coal and iron mines and railroad holdings in Wyoming, Utah, and the New Mexico territory, the company employed 15,000.\footnote{Long, \textit{Where the Sun Never Shines}, 190-91; Scamehorn, \textit{Pioneer Steelmaker in the West}, 119, 126; Colorado had a population of 799,024 in the 1910 census.} Colorado had become the most important coal producing state west of the Mississippi and the CF&I brought around forty percent of the state’s coal to the surface.\footnote{Testimony of John Osgood and Jesse Welborn, \textit{CIR Testimony}, vol. 7, 6451, 6548; McGovern and Guttridge, \textit{The Great Coalfield War}, 8. In 1900, Colorado produced 4,626,943 short tons of coal. Pennsylvania, the leading coal producing state in the country that year, produced 71,287,791 short tons. These figures were 9,518,960 for Colorado and 134,394,220 for Pennsylvania in 1910. In 1911, the CF&I produced 3,285,431 tons of coal. The CF&I ranked first among Colorado coal producers that year. By comparison, the Berwind-White Coal Company in Pennsylvania produced 4,285,521 tons of coal in 1911 and was that year’s fourth largest producer. See Department of Commerce, \textit{Statistical Abstracts of the United States, 1913} (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1914) 220-21; ”Weitzel Exhibit No 3,” \textit{CIR Testimony}, vol. 8, 7253; Mildred A. Beik, \textit{The Miners of Windber: The Struggles of New Immigrants for Unionization, 1890s-1930s} (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania University Press, 1996), 8.} By 1900, the CF&I owned approximately 600 square miles of coal lands, operated thirty-nine large mines, and had become one of the hundred largest corporations in the United States, but Osgood’s success would soon be his downfall. The company’s gains drew the attention of eastern capitalists, and after J. P. Morgan acquired Andrew Carnegie’s steel empire and formed United States Steel in 1901, he tried to buy the CF&I. However, when Osgood insisted on a price of $125 per share, Morgan backed away from the deal. Osgood’s stubbornness infuriated John W. Gates, who held a substantial minority stake in the CF&I. The owners of the Union Pacific and the Denver & Rio Grande railroads, who
also bought a substantial amount of coal from the CF&I, backed Gates. One of those railroad owners was George Gould, who had inherited his father’s railroads. Gates and Gould also owned the Utah Fuel Company, which was in direct competition with the CF&I. Buying Osgood’s company would eliminate one of their competitors. At the same time, Osgood faced formidable financial problems created by his expansion of the Pueblo steel mill. Declining production numbers and labor troubles in 1901 only made matters worse.25

In early 1903, Osgood sought help from Gould and John D. Rockefeller Sr. By this time, Gould had hatched another plan. He thought that if Rockefeller acquired the CF&I, his railroads would prosper from the contracts to ship Rockefeller coal. At Gould’s urging, Fredrick T. Gates, one of Rockefeller’s top advisors, visited the CF&I’s properties. Gates came back to New York thinking about the Rockefeller takeover of the iron ore mines in the Mesabi Range that he had helped engineer during the 1890s. That acquisition made the family millions, and Gates saw the CF&I as an opportunity to duplicate that success. With Gates’s approval, Rockefeller and Gould loaned the CF&I $2.8 million, but because the CF&I was still struggling and a strike loomed, Osgood failed to meet the schedule for the loan’s repayment. Left with few options, he agreed to give up the company if Gould and Rockefeller would save it from collapse. The two robber barons quickly agreed, and the CF&I passed into the hands of two of the richest families in the world.26 Only later did Gates learn that an aide who investigated the CF&I had told Gould before the acquisition

25 Long, Where the Sun Never Shines, 212-14; Scamehorn, Pioneer Steelmaker in the West, 157-64.
26 Scamehorn, Pioneer Steelmaker in the West, 165-67.
that the company was “rotten” and that its managers were a bunch of “liars, “swindlers,” and thieves.”27

**Workers of the World Migrate!**

Losing the CF&I did not force John Osgood into retirement. He remained at the helm of the Victor and American Fuel Companies, which he had acquired in the years just before losing the CF&I. In 1909, he merged the two into the Victor-American Fuel Company, and in the process became the second largest coal producer in Colorado and the CF&I’s main competitor.28

Osgood also remained one of the strongest anti-labor union voices among the coal operators in southern Colorado. He had plenty of opportunities to express his opinions. Colorado coal miners struck nine times between 1881 and 1886, and the Knights of Labor had a substantial presence in both Colorado and Wyoming. As members of the Knights of Labor, Colorado’s mostly native-born and English-speaking miners won the first significant coal strike in northern Colorado in 1884, but lost in the state’s southern field, where CC&I used Italians as strikebreakers. Losing the south and winning the north in 1884 created a long-term split between Colorado’s two coalfields. The north’s victory helped miners there remain independent from their employers while also keeping “new” immigrants from taking their jobs. In the south, William Jackson Palmer’s CC&I and the other coal operators continued to bring Italians and other southern and eastern European immigrants into their mines because they believed that an ethnically diverse work force

27 Quoted in Chernow, *Titan*, 571
that lacked a common language would have greater difficulty organizing themselves.\textsuperscript{29} Indeed, by the 1913-14 coal strike, just over twenty-five percent of the men mining coal in southern Colorado could speak English. This change in the ethnic composition of southern Colorado’s workforce was key to the operators’ coal kingdom.\textsuperscript{30}

New immigrants were much more tolerant of the awful conditions that were increasingly becoming the norm in southern Colorado because many had no intention of staying permanently in the United States and because they were often tied to padroni labor bosses by contracts. Those contracts often stipulated that they work for a particular company for a particular amount of time before they were “free.”\textsuperscript{31} Other mining areas in Colorado were also closed to them. The Cripple Creek metal mining district, for instance, where the Western Federation of Miners (WFM) were a powerful presence from 1894 to 1904, was closed to Asian and southern and eastern European workers. Ironically, then, by excluding immigrants from their organizing efforts, Colorado’s labor movement helped southern Colorado’s coal operators build their empire on the backs of immigrant workers.\textsuperscript{32}

\textsuperscript{29} Testimony of Edward Patterson and John McLennan, \textit{CIR Testimony}, vol. 7, 6499 and 6531; Long, \textit{Where the Sun Never Shines}, 194-97. A similar change occurred in Crested Butte, a western Colorado coalmining town where the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company had a significant presence. Duane A. Smith’s \textit{When Coal Was King: A History of Crested Butte, Colorado, 1880-1952} (Golden, Colorado: Colorado School of Mines Press, 1984), 18, 65 states that the 1885 Colorado census found the majority of miners in Crested Butte were English, Scottish, Welsh, and Irish immigrants and native-born men with mining experience who came to Colorado from Pennsylvania. After 1900, however, southern and eastern European immigrants increasingly worked the mines there.


\textsuperscript{31} Peck, \textit{Reinventing Free Labor}.

By bringing in "new" immigrants as well as Mexicans and Mexican-Americans, John Osgood imitated a strategy that the state of Colorado had instituted in the early 1870s. Eager to draw more people to Colorado, the state legislature created a Board of Immigration that promoted Colorado in California, the east, and overseas. In 1884, businessmen in Denver formed a Chamber of Commerce for the explicit purpose of attracting immigrants as well as investors and businesses. By then, acquiring cheap immigrant labor had also become a nationwide strategy for fighting union organization and creating a more compliant work force. A complex system of labor agents and padrones quickly grew up in the United States to move immigrants from the eastern port cities where they arrived to places like southern Colorado. The contractors and employers who hired these agents worked from an ethnic and racial hierarchy of preferred workers. Railroad contractors, for instance, preferred Bulgarians, Croats, Poles, and Hungarians over southern Italians. Slavs, they believed, were stronger because they ate more meat than the very poor southern Italians. These railroad contractors also thought that men from the Mezzogiorno avoided spending money at the contractors’ commissaries and were more likely to join unions or simply quit if working conditions did not suit them.

Others had a different calculus for judging the most desirable workers. In the midst of the 1913-14 strike, Helen Gould Calahan, one of Jay Gould’s granddaughters,

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34 Peck, *Reinventing Free Labor.*

wrote John D. Rockefeller, Jr. with her advice on whom to hire. She told “Junior” that the mine owners should “employ more of the colored race; of the intelligent colored classes and the mine owners in the future will have no trouble with those classes of workmen.” She went on to say how her father “has worked this class of labor and found when they are treated as men with all human rights that belongs to their race they are far more preferable to either the Greeks or the Italians.”

Most American industrialists did not share Gould’s views on African-American workers, but they hired southern Italian immigrants in large numbers despite the prejudice that many had against them. While Italians were not the most desired workers, they were plentiful. Thus it is not surprising that Italians were among the first new immigrants to enter the southern coalfield. The Denver & Rio Grande Railroad, for instance, sent agents to Italy in the early 1880s to recruit workers. Laying railroad track, however, was seasonal work, and hundreds of predominantly male Italian immigrants began congregating around Denver during the winter or whenever they were laid off. Eventually, many of these Italians along with the Greeks, Austrians, and Slavs who came to Colorado to lay railroad track drifted south to work in the mines.

John Osgood’s CF&I found it difficult to maintain the new ethnic makeup of his workforce. According to Osgood, the eastern labor agents he contacted could not persuade immigrants that a detour to Colorado was worthwhile when they had a predetermined destination upon their arrival in the United States. Osgood solved this

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37 Montgomery, The Fall of the House of Labor, 75-76; Papanikolas, Buried Unsung, 9-34; Dorsett, The Queen City, 96, 99-100.
problem by cutting out the labor agents and encouraging his new immigrant employees to write their relatives and friends in the old country with an offer of employment from the Colorado Fuel Company and later, the CF&I. In the years just after the turn of the century, Italians also began seeing CF&I advertisements for labor in their hometowns.38

While Osgood and other mine operators and railroad contractors got the workforce they wanted, nativism helped keep these workers at the mercy of their employers. In Colorado, Chinese and Italian immigrants occupied the lowest rungs of the labor hierarchy. Denver’s Chinese community grew as Chinese immigrants were increasingly run out of the railroad construction work that had brought so many to the United States before and after the Civil War. To many native-born Americans, the Chinese were clearly racially inferior.39 Italian immigrants did not fare much better in Denver. Native-born residents’ hostility toward Italian immigrants was most pronounced during the depression that began in 1893, and the economic downturn helped transform resentment against Italians into violence. One such incident saw an Italian bartender named Dan Arata lynched after he was arrested for murdering one of his customers. Soon after his arrest, a lynch mob of more than 10,000 assembled outside the jail. Shouting “hang the dago,” the mob attacked, dragged Arata into the street, hung him, and fired


39 Dorsett, The Queen City, 99-101. That the Chinese practiced Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism, dressed differently, and cooked an unfamiliar cuisine only confirmed these racist judgments against them. The Anglo perception that Chinese immigrants were willing to work for very low wages, seemed able to tolerate living conditions that native-born Americans would reject, and lived in almost exclusively male communities made the Chinese appear not only inferior, but also threatening.
dozens of bullets into his body. Mob members then cut down the blood stained tree branches and sold sections as souvenirs.40

Union Anyway

The combination of nativism and a mixed ethnic and racial workforce often kept workers divided, but the mine operators did not succeed in preventing their immigrant workers from organizing and striking. In 1901, members of the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) in the northern field organized a strike that quickly spread south. The grievances southern field miners articulated during the weeks leading up to the 1901 strike were important because all these issues remained sources of disagreement and discontent right up until the 1913-14 strike. The strike also showed that the southern Colorado’s coal miners were not complacent as their employers hoped they would be.

Worker resistance in western mines often began independent of labor unions. Like their southern and eastern European counterparts, the Chinese came from a pre-industrial culture that resisted the work discipline that many American supervisors and managers enforced. In response, Chinese workers insisted on holding on to cultural practices established across the Pacific. In the mines around Rock Springs, Wyoming, for example, Chinese workers stopped production in February 1886 to celebrate their New Year. As the New Year approached in 1887, one supervisor reported that his Chinese workers

40 Ibid., 101. Similar judgments plagued the Italians. Their Catholicism and lack of English made them suspect. That the vast majority of Italian immigrants in the West were also young, single men who moved from job to job and who often had no intention of remaining permanently in the United States also made them appear threatening. These “birds of passage” often came to make the money they needed to improve their lot back in Italy. Thus, like the Chinese, these immigrants were without the “civilizing” company of wives and children. Their lack of family connections in Colorado also made them, like the Chinese, appear threatening to native-born white womanhood.
claimed they were too tired to work, and were still too exhausted to swing a pick two weeks later.41

Italian immigrants mounted similar resistance. In 1891, a group of mostly Italian and Austrian miners working for the CC&I in Crested Butte walked off the job after the company cut their wages. Announcing that they were not part of any union, strikers armed with rifles and pistols set up a picket in the middle of town. Sheriff’s deputies showed no patience for this rebellion. They fired their weapons into the picket, wounded several men, and effectively brought this strike to an end. Adhering to the well-established perception that Italian immigrants were troublemakers, the CC&I promptly blamed them for this uprising and refused to rehire those Italians who had gone on strike.42

These independent strikes did not mean that union organizing had ceased in Colorado. As the Knights of Labor slowly disintegrated after 1886, other unions moved in to take the Knights’ place. The United Mine Workers of America was born when the Knights’ mining division split away in 1890. Many Knights of Labor chapters in Colorado’s mining towns immediately switched their allegiance to this new organization. Like the Knights of Labor, UMW leaders believed that organizing immigrants was crucial to the labor movement’s success. In 1892, the UMW made Colorado, Wyoming, Utah, and New Mexico District 15 of the union, and set about trying to organize all the coal miners--immigrant and native-born--in these states. While the rival Western

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Federation of Miners (WFM), a much more radical organization that officially embraced socialism and organized primarily among Colorado’s metal miners, won an important victory in an 1894 strike at Cripple Creek, the UMW struggled through several strikes in the 1890s that did not bring the new district much success.43

Southern miners’ first demand was an end to the requirement that they buy food, mining equipment, and other supplies in the company store, where prices were always higher than in independently run shops. The Colorado Supply Company, which the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company owned, had no competition in half the company’s camps and in the years after 1900, returned a twenty percent annual profit. The company made this handsome profit in part by firing any miner who dared shop elsewhere.44 Paying miners in company scrip redeemable only at the company store also helped maintain miners as loyal, if not voluntary, company store customers. Although the Colorado legislature outlawed the scrip system in 1899, many mining companies in southern Colorado paid their workers in scrip until 1913.45

The miners also asked that they be paid every two weeks rather than once a month. Their low wages and the limited number of workdays available every year made it difficult to get through an entire month without pay, especially if an unexpected expense arose.46 With those difficulties in mind, the Colorado legislature had passed a law in 1901 requiring all but a few corporations to pay their workers at least twice a month, but most coal operators in the southern Colorado simply ignored that law as well because monthly

46 In 1910, for instance, CF&I miners averaged 252 workdays. See “Weitzel Exhibit No 1,” CIR Testimony, vol. 8, 7252.
pay made it easier for the coal operators to get their workers in debt to the company store. At
the CF&I, where miners were always paid in cash, not in scrip, superintendents filled the
inevitable requests for wage advances from men who could not make it through the month
with an "order" good only at the company store. If the "order" requested was for five dollars
and the miner bought three dollars worth of goods at the store, he received the two dollars
change in scrip, not in cash. This "truck system," as it was called, helped the CF&I pull
workers into the company store's orbit.47

The miners' third demand in the 1901 strike was the right to choose their own
checkweighmen. The question of who monitored the weight of the coal coming up from
underground was very important because coal miners were paid not by the hour but by the
ton of coal mined. The Colorado legislature authorized the employment of checkweighmen
chosen by the miners in 1897, but few mine superintendents followed that law either.48
Many miners believed that their superintendents often shorted them on the weight, or
worked in a measuring system of their own design where 2,400 pounds rather than 2,000
pounds equaled a ton. While Colorado law permitted miners to elect their own
checkweighmen and also called for state inspection of the scales, Deputy Colorado Labor
Commissioner Edwin Brake found the scales he inspected in bad repair. Many
superintendents simply refused to let Brake see the scales.49

Testifying years later, CF&I chairman Lamont Bowers admitted that many
companies cheated their workers on weights. Bowers was concerned that such cheating also

admitted that he knew of only one mine that consistently employed checkweighmen chosen by their
employees. See CIR Testimony, vol. 7, 6446.
49 Testimony of Edwin Brake, Conditions in the Coal Mines of Colorado, part 1, 78.
allowed his competition to undercut the CF&I’s prices. John Osgood dismissed the miners’
grumbling about weights, however, asserting that he only heard them when a strike
threatened. He also thought that it was “just as difficult . . . for the housewife, and a little
more so, perhaps, to make sure that she gets the correct weight from her grocer or butcher.”
Like the housewife, Osgood said, “the miner, if he wants to think so, or if someone puts the
thought in his mind, can believe that he is being robbed in his weights.” To Osgood, his
employees were not only similar to unreasonable housewives, they were also unable to
bridge the ethnic divisions that he and the other mine operators had created by bringing
“new” immigrants, Mexicans, and Mexican Americans into their mines. “In a large mine,”
he contended, “… they have so many nationalities that they distrust their own man [as
checkweighmen] if he is of another nationality. If an Italian is appointed checkweighmen
the Austrians and the Greeks many think he is not doing justice to them, and vice versa.”

The miners’ final requests were for union recognition and a wage increase. The
strike spread quickly to the south because conditions there had deteriorated rapidly after
1884. A Colorado legislative committee investigating the 1901 strike found that miners in
the north maintained a relatively independent political, social, and cultural life. While
safety conditions left much to be desired, many northern miners, who remained largely
native-born and old stock immigrant, did not live in company housing, and miners
elected men from their own ranks to political office. In the south, however, the committee
could not get the Italian, Slavic, and Mexican miners to talk to them. These miners feared
that if they testified before the committee, their supervisors would fire them. While

50 Testimony of Lamont Bowers and John Osgood, CIR Testimony, vol. 9 and vol. 7, 8741, 8743, and
6445. Bowers also believed that ethnic differences prevented, a miner-elected checkweighmen system from
working effectively. See his testimony on p. 8743.
southern miners were willing to strike, they understood how thoroughly their employers dominated southern Colorado. Their employers were well on their way to establishing, as Senator Helen Ring Robinson put it, a barony or a principality of their own in southern Colorado.51

**Huerfano**

Despite the miners' hesitance to talk, it is clear that working conditions in southern Colorado were abysmal. Coal mining was already a dangerous occupation, but conditions in Colorado made them even more treacherous. The state's dry climate made the mines incredibly dusty, which heightened the risk of explosions and of the lung diseases that plagued miners everywhere. Water was often scarce, making the sprinklering that would keep the dust down difficult. The Rocky Mountains' geology also made coal mining more dangerous. The violence unleashed in the Rockies' creation cracked the rock that lay over the coal the miners were after. Once mining began, those cracks widened, but were often difficult or impossible to see. As the miners dug deeper, the chances that the cracked roof would cave in on them increased dramatically.52

These conditions helped transform Colorado coalmines into death traps. Between 1886 and 1913, 1,738 men died in the mines and between 1883 and 1909, Colorado coal miners died at a rate that was twice the national coal mining industry average. Between 1909 and 1913, the gap between the Colorado's average and the national average increased to three and a-half to one.53

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A look at the 111 fatalities in 1913 gives us a clearer understanding of who died in Colorado’s mines. Of the seventy men for whom information is available, fifty-two died in southern Colorado’s Fremont, Las Animas, and Huerfano Counties. Southern and eastern European and Mexican immigrants and Mexican Americans accounted for forty-two of those fifty-two deaths. Italians died most frequently—thirteen fatalities—while Slavs (ten), and Mexicans (nine) took second and third place in this grisly contest. In northern Colorado, native-born Americans died most frequently (seven), followed by the English (two), Germans (two), Italians (two), and Austrians (two). Because almost seventy-two percent of Colorado’s coal miners worked in the southern field, these figures are roughly proportional. Still, southern Colorado’s coal miners believed they were dying far too frequently in mining accidents. Of the men who died in 1913, seventeen were single, twenty-four were married, and seventeen were fathers. While their fathers’ deaths did not necessarily make their children orphans, it seems strangely appropriate that Huerfano, the county in which ten miners died, is Spanish for orphan.54

While the geology and climate certainly made coal mining in Colorado more dangerous than in other parts of the country, other factors contributed to making Colorado’s coal mines some of the most dangerous in the world. The immigrant men who came to Colorado after 1884 had no experience as coal miners. It did not help that by 1912, these men represented thirty-two nationalities and ethnic groups and spoke twenty-seven languages. This tower of babel certainly made communication between miners

54 Testimony of James Dalrymple, *Conditions in the Coal Mines of Colorado*, part 1, 21; First Annual Report of the State Inspector of Coal Mines (1913), 39-45; There were approximately 12,717 coal miners in southern Colorado in 1913. 9104, or 71.59%, worked in southern Colorado. See the Papers of Edward Doyle, Box 2, Envelope 18, Western History Collection, Denver Public Library, Denver, Colorado.
very difficult. The Colorado coal operators also drew some of the most economically
disadvantaged immigrants who made their way to the United States after 1880. While
southern Colorado contained only 1/18 of the state’s population, 1/3 of the state’s
illiteracy was found there.\footnote{Camp and Plant, 5 September 1903; Testimony of Helen Ring Robinson, \textit{CIR Testimony}, vol. 8, 7211.}

The miners’ lack of experience often had tragic consequences. Supporting a
mine’s roof with timber was a crucial part of mine safety, but state mine inspector
Dalrymple found that no coal mine in the state was properly timbered. He also estimated
that timbering the mines correctly would cut the death toll in half.\footnote{Testimony of James Dalrymple, \textit{CIR Testimony}, vol. 7, 6469; Testimony of James Dalrymple, \textit{Conditions in the Coal Mines of Colorado}, part 1, 22.} Sprinklering,
furthermore, would have helped eliminate the dust that was so common in Colorado’s
coal mines, but the mine operators were unwilling to foot the bill for the irrigation
projects proper sprinklering would entail. In 1910, the CF&I sprinklered one part of their
Primero mine in southern Colorado only after the dust became so thick that the mules
used to haul coal to the surface could not work. The flammable gases present in this mine
and in many other mines only increased the danger that dust presented. Explosions were
inevitable. The one at Primero killed seventy-five miners. The state inspector who probed
this disaster wrote: “To compel men who are working in a gaseous mine filled with dust,
to work under the conditions imposed by the company at the time of the explosion was
cold-blooded barbarism.”\footnote{Quoted in McGovern, “The Colorado Coal Strike, 1913-14,” 29.}

The difference in company domination between Colorado’s southern and northern
coalfields was evident in the 1901 strike’s outcome. In the north, the Northern Coal and
Coke Company, the largest company operating there, granted all the union’s demands except union recognition. In the south, however, the strike was a complete failure. Law enforcement officials in Las Animas and Huerfano County, who were firmly in the pockets of the mine operators, played no small role in bringing about this defeat. Huerfano County Sheriff Jefferson Farr and his deputies corralled miners who attended an outdoor union meeting into a gulch and beat them with pistols. Such tactics succeeded in driving the striking miners back to work.  

(Social) Engineering Better Workers

Conditions in the southern Colorado coalfield remained unchanged after the strike, but the light the legislative investigation shone on conditions there forced John Osgood to think about repairing the CF&I’s public image after the legislative committee’s revelations. His solution was to form a Sociological Department (SD) charged with improving conditions in the coal camps. In 1901, Osgood charged Doctor Richard W. Corwin, who in 1881 had established a company hospital near the CF&I’s steel mill in Pueblo, and Julian A. Kebler, a partner in the CF&I, with creating social welfare programs for employees. These programs mirrored the curriculum that Jane Addams, Vida Scudder, and other settlement house founders established for the immigrant poor in Chicago, Boston, New York, and other industrial cities. Corwin’s

58 Long, Where the Sun Never Shines, 211.
59 Long, Where the Sun Never Shines, 211; Scamehorn, Pioneer Steelmaker in the West, 149.

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goals, however, were different from Addams and Scudder’s, who often worked with labor unions in the neighborhoods near Hull House and Denison House. Corwin clearly aimed at Americanizing the company’s immigrant workforce, but the desire to head off union organization was also a primary motivation for the company’s social welfare efforts. The SD, moreover, believed that their work helped counter the threat that the CF&I’s immigrant workers posed to the cultural, social, and economic order that Anglos had established in Colorado during the late nineteenth century. That perceived threat shaped the methods the Sociological Department used and the views it expressed about

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61 In The Business of Benevolence: Industrial Paternalism in Progressive America (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1997), Andrea Tone argues persuasively that welfare work like that carry out by the CF&I and so many other companies during the progressive era was aimed at much more than simply stopping union organization. In doing so, Tone challenges the conclusion of scholars such as Irving Bernstein, The Lean Years: A History of the American Worker (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1960), 145-89, Milton Derber, The American Ideal of Industrial Democracy (Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Pres, 1970), and Alice Kessler-Harris, Out to Work: A History of Wage Earning Women in the United States (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982). Tone allows that anti-unionism certainly motivated some companies’ welfare work, but by focusing on corporate welfare work among women, she shows that other factors drove welfare capitalism. Working women were a common target of company welfare work, but union membership among these women was miniscule at the turn-of-the twentieth-century. Employers in industries that employed large numbers of women, therefore, were confident that they were largely immune from the union organizing drives that plagued so many of their brethren.

Employers also saw progressive efforts toward, for instance, a state-run workers’ compensation system and legislation to limit the number of hours in the workday and make workplaces healthier and safer as an attack on their ability to control the shop floor. These employers, therefore, implemented and expanded the welfare programs to prove that state intervention was not needed to make both better workplaces and better workers. Hence, such welfare work was as much a response to progressivism as it was to the threat employers perceived from unions.

The CF&I’s Sociological Department was not focused on women employees, but it is clear that Corwin and his staff were interested in the wives and daughters of miners. Indeed, the SD tried to fashion the women and girls in the coal camps into their version of ideal femininity. There was also a gendered component to the SD’s work among miners. Promoting temperance and encouraging men to take their families to the alcohol-free social clubs the SD had established certainly reflected the SD’s understanding of respectable, middle-class manhood.

Still, John Osgood seemed primarily interested in stopping future union organizing drives while countering the bad publicity that the 1901 strike heaped on his company. Once the stridently anti-union Rockefeller family controlled the company, it kept the SD in place and continued Osgood’s and Corwin’s efforts to achieve labor discipline. Corwin, in fact, stayed on with the CF&I after the company changed hands and he worked for the Rockefellers until 1929.
its immigrant clients. The SD’s work also demonstrated that the department was as much about maintaining the CF&I’s empire as it was about improving the lot of the company’s immigrant employees.62

Corwin’s Sociological Department eventually had a staff of about thirty men and women. The SD published Camp and Plant (CP), a weekly and then monthly newsletter for CF&I employees. Such company newsletters were fairly common at the turn of the twentieth century. H. J. Heinz Company, for instance, started publishing The 57 in 1899. Its goals were similar to those of the CF&I, as Heinz sought to bring “their employees in touch with one another, and teach them the higher principles of life that leads to happiness and success.”63

The SD divided its work among the CF&I’s employees into five fields: education, housing, social training, industrial training, and communications. For Corwin, “these endeavors are not a passing fancy or an expression of sentiment, but implementation of a functional science called sociology.”64 Corwin was following the path that William Tolman, an early booster of industrial paternalism, charted in his 1909 book, Social

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62 The Sociological Department’s work also had much in common with state efforts to “reform” and assimilate immigrants. In 1913, Progressive governor of California Hiram Johnson established a permanent Commission on Immigration and Housing to work among the state’s growing population of Mexican and southern and eastern European immigrants. While most California progressives viewed the state’s Asian immigrant population as “unassimilable,” the CIH’s work in northern California, in particular, mirrored Addams and Scudder’s work. In 1923, however, a more conservative administration in Sacramento shut the CIH down and folded its operations into the state Department of Education. By then, California’s immigrant assimilation program reflected the views of Stanford University’s Ellwood P Cubberley. In 1909, Cubberley, who was a leading advocate of efforts to assimilate immigrants in California, argued that the purpose of such programs was “To break up these settlements, to assimilate and amalgamate these people as part of our American race, and to implant in their children, so far as can be done, the Anglo-Saxon conception of righteousness, law, and order, and popular government.” See George J. Sanchez, Becoming Mexican American: Ethnicity, Culture, and Identity in Chicano Los Angeles, 1900-1945 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 87-107. Cubberley’s quotation appears on 95.


64 Annual Report of the Sociological Department, 1901-02, 5.
Engineering: A Record of Things Done by American Industrialists Employing Upwards of One and a Half Million People. Tolman also headed the American Institute of Social Service, an organization that the Protestant minister and nativist Josiah Strong founded in 1898. To promote the welfare work efforts of American businesses, Tolman trumpeted a new profession, which he called social engineering. The social engineer, he argued, could tell employers how to “establish a desired point of contact between himself, his immediate staff, and the rank and file of his industrial army.”

A medical doctor, Corwin also fancied himself the CF&I’s social engineer. As such, he set up programs and classes that focused on the “proper training of children—physically, mentally and morally,” food preparation and cooking, sewing, art, basket making, and housekeeping for miners’ wives and daughters, plus instruction in the English language, and occasionally in history and geography. Adult women usually resisted the cooking and food preparation courses, believing correctly that they already knew how to cook and did not need instruction in how to prepare food “like an American.” Their daughters, however, were more enthusiastic about these courses and attended them more regularly. These classes were self-supporting, charging students one dollar a month to attend.

The Industrial Home had different purposes. It focused on making goods needed or wanted in the coal camps—mattresses, brooms, rugs, hammocks, furniture, and lace—and employed men who were too old to continue working in the mines, or who had been

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65 Tone, The Business of Benevolence, 45; Tolman, Social Engineering, 3.
disabled in the mines, and the widows and children of men who had died in the mines. There were plenty such employees for the Industrial Home.67

Children with parents who remained among the living received a different education from the SD. Corwin focused hard on children, particularly those between the ages of three and six, because it was "difficult to change the ways and manners of adults; their habits have been formed and are not easily altered." Children, on the other hand, were "tractable, easily managed and molded, have no set ways to correct and recast."68 Corwin set up kindergartens for these children, and it was here that he really focused on molding citizens, wishing to place "every class and every nationality on an equal standing, and while recognizing differences of individuals," attempting "to inculcate the true democratic spirit—the spirit of sympathy, of unselfishness, and of equal rights."69

The kindergartens also aimed to influence parents, particularly mothers. Corwin hoped that by teaching classes in basket making and sewing and talking to mothers about their children, the women he recruited to teach kindergarten would be able "to get into the home and win the confidence of the mother."70 These teachers were not only trying to infiltrate their students' homes, they also attempted to bring immigrant mothers into their homes so they could see how "respectable" American women lived. Failing in that goal, the company-provided houses for teachers were supposed to teach the immigrant women who worked as domestic servants for the teachers. According to Camp and Plant (CP),

67 Annual Report of the Sociological Department, 1902-03, 16-17; Annual Report of the Sociological Department, 1903-04, 34.
68 Annual Report of the Sociological Department, 1901-02, 5, 17.
69 Ibid., 16.
70 Ibid., 19. Also see Annual Report of the Sociological Department, 1903-04, 32. Corwin referred to the teachers he hired to teach kindergarten as "kindergarteners." An interested usage since it makes it difficult to distinguish the female teachers from their young students.
“the furnishings of the teachers’ rooms [at home] are thoroughly practical and sanitary and intended to serve as a standard of taste from which housekeepers may realize how much can be accomplished with comparatively little expenditure.”

The Sociological Department was also deeply involved in the education of older children. Because the CF&I was one of the largest taxpayers in southern Colorado, the SD felt entitled to ask for the construction of new schools and helped set the curriculum and guidelines for hiring teachers. Corwin also solicited teachers he wanted on his own and the CF&I occasionally paid teachers’ salaries. The SD planned new schoolhouses independent of the local county school district, and once constructed, these building bore the names of company officials. The Osgood, Kebler, and Corwin Schools were all operating by the end of 1903.

While the SD helped these schools ‘mold citizens,’ they believed that their mission was to supply the next generation of workers. Corwin observed “that most of these children will be manual laborers or the wives of manual laborers, and will find early need for all this practical industrial and manual training.” With girls, he stressed that they learn how to clean house and cook well because “The girl who has learned to keep a tidy home and cook a savory meal is in a fair way to keep at least one man from the saloon.” It was important that boys develop “manual dexterity” because it would help them “command better wages and provide a more comfortable home” once they went to work. Corwin taught ‘manual dexterity’ in training classes where boys built looms, wove rugs, and sewed heavy denim work aprons. Boys also carved “match safes, pen

71 Annual Report of the Sociological Department, 1902-03, 12.
72 Annual Report of the Sociological Department, 1901-02, 6; Camp and Plant, 26 December 1903.
racks, picture frames and similar articles, samples of which form part of the sociological exhibit at the World’s Fair in St. Louis.\textsuperscript{74}

While it is not clear how sewing and woodworking classes would help working-class boys command better wages, such classes obviously helped the Sociological Department promote itself and the CF&I to a large audience at the 1904 World’s Fair. By preparing the next generation of workers, Corwin also took William Tolman advice. In “Efficiency Promotion,” the opening chapter of \textit{Social Engineering}, Tolman argued that “employers are beginning to realize that investment in manhood pays; that improved men for improved machines have economic value, because a more vigorous man can do more work, a more intelligent man will do more intelligent work, and a more conscientious man will do more conscientious work.”\textsuperscript{75} By focusing on children, Corwin was starting the process of “making men” that Tolman had advocated.

Though the Sociological Department trained girls and boys for lives as housewives and wage workers and taught them to be good Americans, the contents of \textit{Camp and Plant} clearly show that the SD had little esteem for all the immigrants they encountered, children included. The racist outlook expressed in \textit{Camp and Plant} contradicted the Sociological Department’s reform and Americanizing agenda and most clearly reveals the SD’s imperial ideology.

\textit{Camp and Plant} was filled with practical advice for readers: “to remove dirt and cleanse the skin a warm bath is best,” “the best substitute of a river or the sea is a shower bath,” and bathtubs have “a large surface whereon germs and dirt may collect.” Accurate

\textsuperscript{74} Annual Report of the Sociological Department, 1903-04, 33.
\textsuperscript{75} Tolman, \textit{Social Engineering}, 2.
information about how germs and disease spread was just becoming available at the turn of the twentieth century, and because the immigrants who worked for the CF&I were from poor and often rural and isolated regions of Europe and Mexico, some of this information may have been useful. Still, many of these immigrants did not understand English and since *Camp and Plant* was published only in English, it was probably of little use to many immigrants unless someone translated it for them.\(^7\)

The rest of *CP* was given over to promoting the Sociological Department’s good works and to describing the challenges that Corwin and his staff faced as they tried to bring civilization to southern Colorado’s coal camps. In an unsigned *Camp and Plant* ethnographic piece about the Mexicans and Mexican-Americans who lived and worked in southern Colorado, for example, the author described these residents as “primitive, fatalists, which they inherit from the Arab Moors (it’s known that fatalism is common among Arabs and Orientals.)” This article also pointed out that Mexicans lived in a patriarchal society and that the “hard scrabble life in New Mexico and Colorado have prevented Mexicans there from accumulating wealth.” Still, according to *Camp and Plant*, the Mexicans and Mexican-Americans who worked for the CF&I were primarily responsible for their poverty. Reflecting Corwin’s support for eugenics, the *Camp and Plant* author argued that “it must also be remembered that a Northern people is more energetic than a southern race and that the master minds who have established the great enterprises on the former American desert were not fatalists and have not worn the

\(^7\) *Camp and Plant*, 5 September 1903; *Annual Report of the Sociological Department, 1901-02*, 7; *1902-03*, 5.
shackles of a patriarchal system, but have felt, as a heritage from their Teutonic ancestors, that they were individual thinking beings.”

This emphasis on the inherent inferiority of a “southern race” and the argument that male control of women and male dominance of social, cultural, political, and economic arrangements among Mexicans and Mexican-Americans kept them poor seems out of place given Corwin’s focus on the young. He was skeptical about his ability to transform adults, but this piece casts an unsympathetic eye on all Mexicans, not just the adults among them. As for the latter critique, Mexicans and Mexican-Americans certainly lived in a male-dominated culture, but as Sarah Deutsch points out, Anglos—whose understanding of Mexican life was often shaped more by novels than by face-to-face contact—consistently believed that male domination in Mexican society was much more rigid than it actually was. Reflecting this belief, the sociologist and eugenicist Edward Ross wrote in his 1913 assessment of the southern and eastern European immigrants who also made their way to southern Colorado that “Until recently nowhere else in the world did women enjoy the freedom and encouragement they received in America. It is folly, however, to suppose that their lot will not be affected by the presence of six millions from belated Europe and from Asia, where consideration of the weaker

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77 Camp and Plant, 19 September 1903. Corwin believed that Italians, Mexicans, and Austrians were the most significant immigrant groups among the CF&I’s employees. See Annual Report of the Sociological Department, 1902-03, 5.


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sex is certainly not greater than that of the English before the Puritan Reformation.” By identifying the Reformation as a turning point in the status of women, Ross sought to blame the Roman Catholic Church for the subjugation of women among the heavily Catholic immigrants who came for southern and eastern Europe. That judgment would also have applied to the Catholic Mexicans and Mexican-Americans had Ross chosen to include them in his analysis. While Ross was correct in pointing out that the Catholic Church helped create formidable structures of male domination in Europe, he and many other turn-of-the-twentieth-century Americans were blind to the apparent evidence of such domination in their own country. Both Ross and Camp and Plant overlooked the limitations or outright restrictions on educational opportunity, the denial of political rights like the right to vote, the right to serve on juries, and general equality before the courts, prohibitions on access to contraception, sex-segregated job advertisements that helped create a sex-segregated labor force, unequal pay, and trade union disinterest and outright hostility toward organizing women. All these realities made the United States similar to rather than different from the rest of the world in terms of the ‘freedom and encouragement’ afforded to women at the turn of the twentieth century.

Italian immigrants did not fare much better than Mexicans and Mexican-Americans in the judgment of Camp and Plant’s writers. When describing the Italian immigrants living in Pueblo, they wrote: “Any occurrence that had any of the elements of excitement--a dogfight or a man fight--brought out crowds of shrieking, shouting,

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gesticulating residents in bright colored costumes, picturesque, though filthy." The mayhem that characterized Pueblo’s Italian neighborhood also made it unsafe, but only for its residents. CP thought residents were “hard working,” but “with enough criminals among them to give the district a bad name at police headquarters. Fortunately, for the other people of Pueblo, most of the crimes committed by the residents . . . were upon one another.” The newsletter’s writers argued that local authorities could do little to rid the Italian neighborhood of crime. “Because the suspicion of the police that seems to be natural to all Latin peoples,” they wrote, “the Italians, like the Mexicans, did not report most of the robberies, shooting, and stabbing affrays that occurred. When a crime was reported, no Italian would talk to the police.”

Having painted a bleak picture of the people they wished to help, CP’s writers wished to make known how difficult their task was. “These remarkable conditions render the sociological work of the Company absolutely unique in scope, variety and difficulty,” they wrote in one issue. In trying to describe relations between different ethnic and regional groups in southern Colorado, CP contended: “The racial differences are even manifested at times by people of different dialects. Northern and Southern Italians and Sicilians are a good illustration of the feelings sometimes displayed. Not infrequently has it developed into a really warlike situation, shown on several occasions on the hospital lawn by convalescent patients hurling at each other canes and crutches and other instruments of war.” These antagonisms among Italians manifested themselves most

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80 Camp and Plant, 26 September 1903.
frequently “in the less dangerous but not less earnest battles among the school children, who forget only occasionally the traditional existing state of war.”

The idea that Italians from the south and north of their country were two distinct and often antagonistic racial groups was widespread at the turn of the twentieth century. Some northern Italians had promoted a racialized understanding of southerners during unification. In this country, the United States Senate’s Immigration Commission drew similar conclusions. In the “Dictionary of Races and Peoples,” volume nine of the forty-one volume argument for restricting immigration from eastern and southern Europe that the issued in 1911 after two years of hearings, the Senate’s researchers sought to establish the racial differences between the two groups, and the superiority of northern Italians over southern Italians. In the Dictionary, north Italians were “broad-headed and tallish” while south Italians were a “long-headed, dark, Mediterranean race of short stature,” with “some traces of an infusion of African blood in this stock in certain communities of Sicily and Sardinia.” Italians from the north also differed from south Italians “as radically in psychic character as they do in physical.” South Italians were “excitable, impulsive, highly imaginative, impracticable; an individualist having little adaptability to highly organized society.” North Italians, on the other hand, were “cool, deliberate, patient, practical, and as capable of great progress in the political and social organization of modern civilization.”

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82 Camp and Plant, September 5, 1903.
Like the “Dictionary of Races and Peoples” and their own assessment of Mexicans and Mexican-Americans, *Camp and Plant*’s writers saw these differences and the antagonism that came with them as determined by birth. For *Camp and Plant*’s writers, racial differences explained antagonism between northern and southern Italians and Sicilians. Even the children, who were Corwin’s special project because of their alleged malleability, did not escape this judgment.

Some examination of their own country, however, might have helped the writers at *Camp and Plant* better understand regional and cultural conflicts within nations. While cultural, social, and economic differences and antagonism certainly did exist and continue to exist between southern and northern Italians, it is a rare nation that lacks regional variations and conflicts. While differences between the Italian south and north were certainly pronounced, both the U.S. and Italy had experienced wars for unification in the mid-nineteenth century, and the American civil war was by far the more violent of the two. It is unlikely, however, that *Camp and Plant*’s writers would have recognized the cultural, social, economic, and regional differences that distinguished and continue to distinguish northern and southern Americans as racial.

Finally, it is easy to chalk up *CP*’s assertion that ‘a state of war’ existed between northern and southern Italians to the newsletter’s obvious fondness for rhetorical flourish. Nevertheless, the idea that the immigrants who journeyed to southern Colorado to mine coal were not only racially inferior but also dangerous is worth further examination. This

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85 It is also important to note that Italian reunification produced a civil war and guerrilla resistance continued for years after unification. See Derek Beales and Eugenio F. Biagini, *The Risorgimento and the Unification of Italy* (London: Longman Press, 1992), 156-61 and Denis Mack Smith, *Victor Emanuel, Cavour, and the Risorgimento* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971).
perception helps us better understand the Sociological Department's goals. Skeptical about the possibility of racial “uplift” among their immigrant clients, the SD was more concerned about creating a “civilized” and disciplined workforce in the present and the future. These “civilized” workers would appreciate middle-class ideals, clean their homes and cook their food like middle-class native-born Americans, obey the rules of middle-class and native-born civility, and most of all, become a disciplined and efficient workforce.

The SD’s crusade against drinking best illustrates this concern about discipline and efficiency. Corwin believed that drinking was the biggest social problem among the miners and worried about alcohol’s effect on miners’ ability to achieve the CF&I’s production goals. In 1903, Camp and Plant described a Fourth of July celebration at the CF&I’s Coalbasin mine that began on June 30 with “eight barrels of beer, four kegs of whiskey, and a proportionately large amount of wine.” According to CP, “The result was a most ‘glorious’ Fourth, followed by a suspension of work in the mines for several days.” The SD saw this celebration as “simply one of many instances far too frequent in occurrence,” and after consulting with CF&I executives and superintendents, Corwin built a “clubhouse” near Coalbasin that had a bar, but sold its liquor “under certain well-defined restrictions.”86 Corwin also prohibited saloons from operating on company property and opened at least one “soft drink club” that had a reading room, billiard room, and a “bar” that served only coffee, chocolate, and bouillon in order to make it a family-

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86 Camp and Plant, 5 September 1903, 188; Annual Report of the Sociological Department, 1901-02, 45-47, 49.
centered meeting place rather than a male-only saloon. Clearly, the SD was as concerned about maintaining order, increasing mine production, and instilling discipline as they were about keeping their the CF&I’s employees from submitting to the evils of the bottle.

As we will see in Chapters Four and Five, the Colorado National Guardsmen called to break the 1913-14 strike also saw the immigrant strikers they faced as members of an inferior race, and like the SD, saw them as a formidable threat to Colorado’s newly established industrial order. The Guard’s tactics for dealing with this threat, however, differed from those of the Sociological Department. While the SD attempted to create and maintain the industrial and racial order with soap, domestic science, basket weaving, and English language classes, the Guard opted for lethal force. Still, the Sociological Department and the National Guard were two sides of the same coin.

**A Stunted State**

The SD’s efforts to improve life in the CF&I’s coal camps grew out of the 1901 strike, but the conditions in the mines that galvanized support for the strike, did not change at all. The strike’s defeat meant that the United Mine Workers would not be part of making southern Colorado’s coalmines safer workplaces. That job fell to the state’s inspector of coalmines, who was responsible for making sure that the mine operators obeyed Colorado’s mining laws. The weakness of this office, however, helps demonstrate how strong the coal operators had become. How the coal operators benefited from state action and inaction is important for understanding why they came to so thoroughly dominate southern Colorado. As a young company faced with serious fraud charges, the

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87 Annual Report of the Sociological Department, 1902-03, 24-25.
Colorado Coal and Iron Company had benefited from state intervention when a United States Supreme Court sympathetic to business interests ruled that the company should not suffer for the fraud it probably committed. That decision ended the federal government’s investigation of CC&I’s land acquisition methods. Over the next two decades, southern Colorado’s coal operators found they did not have to fight state efforts to rein them in. Instead, they could ignore state regulations with relative ease. Seen this way, the operators took advantage of the state at its strongest and at its weakest as they built their empire in southern Colorado.

James Dalrymple, the state deputy mining inspector and then its chief inspector beginning in 1908, wanted to enforce state laws concerning proper timbering, sprinklering, and other rules on mine safety. A former member of the United Mine Workers, he was already critical of how the coalmine operators in southern Colorado ran their mines. Dalrymple, however, discovered that like his predecessors, he was limited in his abilities to enforce Colorado’s mining laws and he also found many mine operators and superintendents uncooperative.  

Dalrymple’s complaints were many. By 1913, ninety-six companies operated between 147 and 200 coalmines in Colorado. These mines were spread through three widely separated regions of the state, but Dalrymple’s office, which had been established in 1883, had only two inspectors in 1904 to cover this immense territory. That number had increased to three by 1913.  

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88 Testimony of James Dalrymple, *Conditions in the Coal Mines of Colorado*, part 1, 32.
89 Ibid., 18-21. Edward L. Doyle, secretary-treasurer of the United Mine Workers’ District 15, believed there were 147 coalmines operating in Colorado. See The Papers of Edward Doyle, Box 2, Envelope 18. James Dalrymple put the figure at 200. See Dalrymple’s testimony, *Conditions in the Coal Mines of Colorado*, part 1, 20, 25; Testimony of James Dalrymple, CIR Testimony, vol. 7, 6473; George G. Suggs,
The scheme for financing the coalmine inspector’s office ensured that it would be chronically under-funded. Mining companies paid one-third of a penny in tax to the mine inspector’s office for every ton of coal they produced. By tying the operation of Dalrymple’s office to coal production, the state left that office exposed to the vagaries of coal production in the state. When the economy was strong and production was high, the office collected more operating money than in times of economic recession or during the many strikes that plagued the coal industry after 1883.90

This financing system also provided superintendents with another reason to short their employees on coal weights. Companies could lower their tax bill by deflating the number of production tons they reported. Under-recording coal tonnage meant a lower payroll and lower taxes. The coal companies sought to starve Dalrymple’s office in other ways. Following the pattern of paying their employees only every month, the operators paid this tax only every three months. Like the coal miners in southern Colorado who had to become expert money managers, Dalrymple had to master budget administration to keep his office operating all year long. To make matters worse, there was no independent

90 Testimony of James Dalrymple, Conditions in the Coal Mines of Colorado, part 1, 22. Colorado coal mines produced 9,268,939 tons of coal in 1913. The 1913-14 coal strike began in September 1913, and therefore, this figure is lower than it would have been without a strike. Production figures for 1912 and 1911 are higher. Still, the 1913 production level should have generated $30,896 in taxes to the state coalmine inspector’s office. While it is difficult to determine how much Dalrymple needed to run his office effectively, $30,896 seems like plenty to operate a department that had a supervisor, three inspectors, and an undetermined number of support staff. I could be mistaken about how much it took to run the state coalmine inspector’s office, and other factors might also explain the state mine inspector’s lack of funding. Perhaps the coal operators were not even paying the taxes their own production figures stipulated, or perhaps some of the tax money they did pay went places other than Dalrymple’s office.
audit of the operators’ production numbers. The coalmine inspector’s office had to take the operators’ word about how much coal they produced.\textsuperscript{91}

Other factors related to the funding of Dalrymple’s office impeded his ability to enforce state law. Colorado statutes mandated that all coalmine superintendents, foremen, assistant foremen, and fire bosses pass a state exam that would certify them in proper safety practices in and around the mines. Because his office was so short of money, however, Dalrymple could not afford to schedule these tests. In his mind, this circumstance also meant that he could not hold these supervisors to the safety standards the state tests required they know and follow.\textsuperscript{92} Dalrymple’s desire not to hold mine supervisors responsible for material they had not been tested on is laudable, but Colorado’s coal miners would have benefited if Dalrymple had been less fair-minded. Shutting down mines where his inspectors found safety violations—which he had the authority to do—regardless of whether or not supervisors had been tested on safety standards would have hit the mine operators where it hurt most: in the wallet. If he had done so, funding for the state tests would have materialized from either the legislature or the mine operators.

Dalrymple had other options for raising the money necessary to run his office properly. He could have asked the Colorado legislature for a direct appropriation for his office, but when asked why he did not make such a request, the chief mining inspector responded: “I would rather ask the devil for a transportation to heaven.” While Dalrymple never explained why he did not trust the legislature, he probably believed many Colorado

\textsuperscript{91} Ibid., 24-25.
\textsuperscript{92} Testimony of James Dalrymple, CIR Testimony, vol. 7, 6466.
lawmakers were more interested in doing the mining industry’s bidding than enforcing the laws they passed.93

His skepticism was warranted. Although Colorado had sold a great deal of coal land to private companies after achieving statehood in 1876, the mine operators in southern Colorado still leased a good portion of the land they mined from the state in the years after 1900.94 Mining the state’s land, however, did not move the legislature to make sure the operators obeyed state law. Mining land not their own also never compelled the operators to abide by their host’s rules. As we shall see, moreover, the coal mine operators and Colorado Governors James H. Peabody and Elias Ammons engaged in a complex set of financial contortions to make sure the Colorado National Guard was properly funded and supplied when called out on strike duty in 1903-04 and 1913-14. Supporting the everyday workings of the state’s regulatory apparatus, however, seemed to be beyond the mine operators’, the governor’s, and the legislature’s capability.

The 1903-04 Strike

The troubles the state mine inspector’s office had enforcing Colorado mining law meant that the immigrant miners in southern Colorado were soon out on strike again. The UMW’s 1903-04 strike showed that both the union and the miners were unprepared to effectively fight the coal operators, who demonstrated their ability to use state military power to protect their interests.

The UMW strike came on the heels of the Western Federation of Miners’ walk out in Colorado’s metal mining districts. The WFM’s members had walked out to protest

93 Ibid., 22-25.
94 Testimony of Russell D. George, Conditions in the Coal Mines of Colorado, part 1, 10, 12.
the Colorado legislature's and Republican Governor Peabody's failure to enforce the 1901 Colorado constitutional amendment that gave Colorado's metal miners, coal miners, smelter men, mill workers, and factory employees the eight-hour day. Voters affirmed the amendment 72,980 to 26,266 in the 1902 elections, but spurred on by the business interests that had helped get him elected, incoming Governor Peabody mounted a successful campaign to keep the amendment from gaining the final legislative approval it needed.95

Anxious to take advantage of Peabody's focus on breaking the WFM metal mining strike, the UMW sought to gain union recognition in Colorado's coalmines. In August 1903, the UMW's District 15 issued a call to arms that listed many of the same complaints that spurred its 1901 strike, pointed out that Governor Peabody's administration did little to enforce the state's body of mining laws, and described the operators' manner of running their mines as "strongly tinctured with the old time feudal slavery."96

Those were fighting words, but UMW officials left plenty of room for negotiation. The coalmine operators in the southern field, however, were not at all interested in talking to the UMW. By this time, the Rockefeller family, which was no more enthusiastic than John Osgood about unions, had taken over control of the company. They had never allowed a union at Standard Oil and broke a strike for union recognition at a company refinery in Bayonne, New Jersey the same year they acquired the CF&I. John D. Rockefeller, Sr., furthermore, was a vocal opponent of unions. "It is all beautiful at the beginning," he


once wrote of unions, "they give their organization a fine name and they declare a set of righteous principles. But soon the real objectives of their organizing shows itself—to do as little as possible for the greatest possible pay." Rockefeller also believed that his workers could not be trusted. Showing his Baptist faith's rejection of alcohol and tobacco and his penny-pinching habits, Rockefeller argued that workers did not deserve higher wages because "They spend their money on picture shows, and whiskey and cigarettes." 97

Despite facing an anti-union family with some of the deepest pockets in the world, the UMW saw more than ninety percent of southern Colorado's miners come out on strike in 1903. Predictably, new CF&I vice-president Jesse F. Welborn along with George Bartlett, general manager of Osgood's Victor Fuel Company, refused to negotiate with the UMW. Following his father, John D. Rockefeller, Jr. was very clear in his instructions to Welborn: "We are prepared to stand by in this fight and see things out, not yielding an inch. Recognition of any kind of either the labor leaders or the union, much more a conference such as they request, would be a sign of evident weakness on our part." 98

Rockefeller Jr. was certainly worried about maintaining his family's reputation for anti-unionism and its unblemished record of keeping unions out of family businesses. Welborn, however, had to deal with a governor who was sympathetic, but tied up with the ongoing WFM strike. Because his attention was elsewhere, Republican Governor Peabody at first resisted the southern operators' calls for the National Guard to break the strike and encouraged the southern operators to settle with the UMW. Many observers

97 Quoted in Chernow, Titan, 574.
believed that the state’s metal mining companies had backed Peabody’s 1902 campaign for governor only after he agreed to use the National Guard against the Western Federation of Miners once he gained office. Peabody was soon fulfilling that campaign promise. He pledged to use the “entire military force of this state” to protect the coal operators’ interests.  

Efforts to resist the use of strikebreakers in the south was met with violent reprisals: company guards killed two strikers and wounded two others in December 1903, masked men attacked two union officials in February 1904, and district 15 financial manager Chris Evans was pistol-whipped on a train near Trinidad in March. By that time, the union was ready to call off the strike, but a truce was not forthcoming. On March 11 Governor Peabody pulled National Guard troops out of Telluride, where they had been sent to break the WFM strike, and promptly sent them to southern Colorado eleven days later. Peabody’s decision to send troops south backfired because it so angered UMW officials that they decided to keep the strike going. But by the summer, it was clear that the operators and the guard had defeated the strike.  

The Operators as the State  

The operators’ success in getting Governor Peabody and the National Guard to do their bidding in the 1903-04 strike reveals how important political influence was to their ability to maintain their dominance. The operators’ ability to control political life in the region more than anything made the region into their empire.


During the United States Senate’s Commission on Industrial Relations (CIR) investigation of the 1913-14 southern Colorado coal strike, Edward P. Costigan, an attorney from Denver, testified that southern Colorado had a “feudalistic system with absentee control, long prevalent . . . on the part of the employers toward their employees; and this system has been perpetuated through the political dominance of great industries. . . .” Costigan went on to relate the conclusions of a Colorado state senator who had recently spent time exploring the political situation in southern Colorado: “He [the state senator] had found . . . that the motto of large industrial concerns, especially in Las Animas and Huerfano Counties might be expressed in two words, ‘We rule.’” Costigan’s informant observed that the coal companies maintain their rule through the ownership of all meaningful institutions. The state senator believed that “the practice of the coal companies . . . had been to assert ownership throughout southern Colorado, the ownership of courts, executive and legislative officials, of coroners and other juries, of churches, of the saloons, of the schools, of the lands, of the houses upon the lands, and eventually a certain ownership over the men who toiled upon the lands.”

Colorado Attorney General Fred Farrar agreed that the operators maintained this ownership in part through political influence. Farrar testified: “I found a very perfect political machine [in southern Colorado], just as much a machine as Tammany in New York . . . just as much of a machine as you will find in any of the places where a great many voters are susceptible to an organization of that character.” Costigan and Farrar were not objective observers of the 1913-14 coal strike. Costigan had represented the

101 Testimony of Edward P. Costigan, CIR Testimony, vol. 8, 7203-04.
102 Testimony of Fred Farrar, ibid., vol. 8, 7179.
striking miners during earlier hearings on this strike that the U.S. House of Representative’s Committee on Mines and Mining had conducted. A southern-born, Harvard-trained attorney from Denver, he was also a reformer and an outspoken critic of the state’s industrialists while Farrar was elected attorney general as a Democrat in 1912. When asked to describe the coal operators’ political machine in southern Colorado, Farrar said: “I am a Democrat; that organization was Republican; and for a good many years my party had been complaining of the control which they had over that county, and I went down there as a Democrat to try and work the thing out from a Democratic standpoint.”

Both these men clearly gave partisan testimony, but Farrar, Costigan, and Costigan’s friend in the Colorado state legislature were not far from the truth when they described southern Colorado’s politics. Even Lamont Bowers, whom John D. Rockefeller hired as CF&I chairman in 1907, agreed with Farrar’s characterization of the operators’ political machine. In his testimony before the CIR, Bowers declared: “They built up a system, as Attorney General Farrar says, that is second only to Tammany Hall, and I say you cannot budge it. They control every man that is put up for office there, and they do it today, and they did it at the last election. I am not dodging a single thing on that point; what we did or what I did.” Bowers went on to provide some detail on how this machine worked: “The Colorado Fuel & Iron Co. for many years were accused of being the political dictator of southern Colorado, and in fact, were a mighty power in the entire

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103 Dorsett, The Queen City, 149, 151. Testimony of Fred Farrar, ibid., vol. 8, 7179.
104 It should also be noted that the coalmine operators endorsed Farrar for re-election in 1914. The operators supported Farrar in part because they thought his legal opinions and advice to Governor Ammons helped them break the 1913-14 strike. See McGovern and Guttridge, The Great Coalfield War, 308.
105 Testimony of Lamont Bowers, CIR Testimony, vol. 9, 8760.
state. When I came here it was said that the C.F. & I. Co. voted every man and woman in their employ, without any regard to their being naturalized or not, and even their mules, it used to be remarked, were registered, if they were fortunate enough to possess names.” Bowers also pointed out that the company maintained a political department, and he found when he started work at the company that it had contributed $80,605 to candidates who supported the company’s interests during the 1904 election campaign. Bowers admitted that the CF&I deserved the criticism it received because of its dominance of southern Colorado politics. “The decent newspapers,” he wrote, “... lampooned the C. F. & I. Co. at every election, and I am forced to say the company merited, from a moral standpoint, every shot that was fired into their camp.”

Bowers was anxious to air the past practices of his company before the CIR because he wished to argue that the CF&I had ceased control over southern Colorado’s politics. Making this same argument in private correspondence shortly before the 1913-14 strike began, Bowers wrote that the company had “forbidden any politician from going into our camps, and every subordinate official connected with the company has been forbidden to influence our men to vote for any particular candidate. We have not lobbied in the legislature, but have gone directly to the governor and other able men and have demanded fair treatment.” Yet, after investigating the 1914 election, the Colorado Supreme Court concluded that voting by illiterate immigrant miners who did not have the legal right to vote continued unabated. Describing the practice, the court stated: “such voters were not choosing candidates, but under the direction of the companies were

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106 L.M. Bowers to Charles O. Heydt, 13 May 1913, CIR Testimony, vol. 9, 8411.

107 Ibid.
simply placing the cross where they found the particular letter ‘R’ [for Republican] on the ballot, so that the ballot was not an expression of opinion or judgment, not an intelligent exercise of suffrage, but plainly a dictated coal company vote.”

The coal operators used several methods to gain political control of Las Animas and Huerfano Counties. They first had to neutralize the Hispanic Americans who wielded significant political power through the Democratic Party. When the mining industry brought large numbers of Anglos to the region in the 1880s and ‘90s, political dominance shifted to the Republicans, the party most identified with business, and most likely to protect the mining industry’s interests. The industry also attracted middle-class men from elsewhere in Colorado and the Midwest, upper Midwest, and Northeast who took jobs as supervisors, accountants, clerks, and managers and tended to vote Republican. To consolidate Republican dominance in southern Colorado, many GOP candidates courted Hispanic Americans, whose citizenship brought the voting rights that newcomer southern and eastern European immigrants did not have. Seeing the shift in population and in political power, some Hispanic Americans changed their allegiance to the Republican Party. In exchange, this new constituency received, among other things, patronage positions with the city and county governments in Las Animas and Huerfano counties.

The Republican Party in southern Colorado quickly took on some characteristics of a political machine. Elected officials in Las Animas County protected gambling dens

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and saloonkeepers in exchange for votes, and prostitutes paid between six and seven
dollars a month to ply their trade in Trinidad. County officials also used election fraud to
maintain Republican control. Precincts that included the coal camps set their polls up on
company property inside the camps. Company supervisors and the camp guards whom
John Osgood claimed were charged with looking after sanitary conditions made sure that
all employees voted, and over time, they began voting even those immigrant employees
who had not become citizens. Poll workers also “helped” illiterate miners mark their
ballots for the Republican candidates the operators supported.\footnote{McGovern and Guttridge, \textit{The Great Coalfield War}, 30.}

The sheriff’s offices in both counties were crucial in maintaining Republican
rule.\footnote{According to Attorney General Farrar, “the head of this political machine is the sheriff, and it was
carried along the lines very similar to those maintained in Tammany; that is, it had a system of relief in
cases of need, had a system of giving rewards to its people . . .” See Farrar’s testimony, \textit{CIR Testimony}, vol.
8, 7179.} In Huerfano County, Sheriff Jefferson Farr was the party’s enforcer. Farr was a
Texan who came to Colorado with his two brothers to become ranchers. The three
brothers eventually became the biggest cattle dealers in southern Colorado. Farr’s brother
Edwin was elected Huerfano County’s sheriff in the mid-1890s. In 1899, a group of train
robbers that included former members of Black Jack Ketchum and Butch Cassidy’s gangs
held up a train just across the state line in the New Mexico territory. Posses raised in
Walsenburg and Trinidad caught up with the robbers, and in the gunfight that followed,
Edwin Farr was shot and killed. Jefferson took his brother’s place as sheriff, and used the
office to help expand his personal real estate holdings. Farr later sat on the board of
directors of a bank in Walsenburg, Huerfano’s largest town. Called an “animated beer
barrel” by some, Farr also dominated the wholesale liquor business in southern Colorado
though his Spanish Peaks Mercantile Company. His position as sheriff helped Farr convince saloon and brothel owners to buy their liquor from him, and he gained control of several such establishments while serving as sheriff. During his fifteen years in office, Farr worked diligently on behalf of the coal operators. In fact, he ruled the county so effectively that many referred to Farr as “Czar Farr” and to Huerfano as the “Kingdom of Farr.”

Sheriff Farr’s primary job was to preserve Republican control. According to John McQuarrie, who worked as Huerfano County under sheriff from 1903 to 1909, Farr made clear to his deputies that he worked in the interests of the coal companies and that they should do the same. McQuarrie also testified that the sheriff was proud of his ability to produce a 2,200-vote majority for Huerfano’s Republican Party. Colorado’s 1908 gubernatorial election bore out McQuarrie’s claim. In that election, Democratic candidate John Shafroth defeated his Republican opponent by a little more than 11,000 votes. The results were fairly close in most Colorado counties, with no county approaching a two-to-one majority for either candidate. The one exception was Huerfano, where Shafroth lost 3,068 to 774. That margin of victory was more than four-to-one in favor of the Republican.

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112 Testimony of John McQuarrie, Conditions in the Coal Mines of Colorado, part VIII, 2381-82; Report on the Colorado Strike Investigation, 23; McGovern and Guttridge, The Great Coalfield War, 30-31; McGovern, “The Colorado Coal Strike, 1913-14,” 60; Barron B. Beshoar, Out of the Depths: The Story of John R. Lawson, A Labor Leader (Denver, Colorado: Golden Bell Press, 1958), 7. When asked at the Commission on Industrial Relations hearings if Huerfano County had a democratic form of government, James Patterson, who managed a coal mine in Walsenburg, answered: “There is no form of government in Huerfano County. They call it the kingdom of Farr. It has been declared by the majority of people down there to be not a part of Colorado; but they call it the Kingdom of Farr, through the influence of the Colorado Fuel & Iron Co., we don’t recognize it as part of the United States.” See the testimony of James Patterson, CIR Testimony, vol. 7, 6784.
113 McGovern and Guttridge, The Great Coalfield War, 32.
As the Republican machine’s enforcer, Sheriff Farr also assisted the coal operators in keeping union organizers out of the camps and in maintaining a blacklist of pro-union men. CF&I’s chief detective William Reno, who had been a railroad special agent, detective for the Thiel Detective Agency, and a Denver police officer, provided descriptions of organizers and suspected organizers, and according to McQuarrie, Farr “would always have his men look out for them and run them out of the county and make things disagreeable for them the moment they would spot them.”

Such intimidation, however, was not limited to Huerfano’s working-class, immigrant miners and union organizers. Farr’s office also kept Huerfano’s business and professional men in line, making it difficult for anyone to challenge the Republican Party’s and the coal operators’ authority. For example, any lawyer who took a personal injury case against one of the coal companies on a miner’s behalf would find it difficult to get any other business in the county. Farr might jail the lawyer on false charges or make it impossible for him to get a bank loan just to make sure the point was getting across. Not surprisingly, only six lawsuits brought by miners against their employers came before Huerfano County courts between 1890 and 1913. The miners went zero for six in these cases. One state district judge who served for six years in Huerfano simply refused to hear personal injury cases, and CF&I president Jesse Welborn could remember only a handful of such cases being brought against his company in Las Animas County during the twenty years preceding the 1913-14 strike. Commenting on his inability to bring cases against the coal companies, J. J. Hendricks, who practiced law in southern...

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Colorado and became district attorney there in 1914, stated: “Some attorneys would bring their suits in Denver or Pueblo in order to get away from those two counties wherever possible. . . . That class of cases—I used to try a great many of them myself—that class of cases has practically vanished from the court dockets of those two counties, because the people there think it is useless to bring them.”115

Sheriff Farr’s domination of the courts also extended to the coroners’ juries that investigated the county’s many coalmine fatalities. Coroner’s juries were important because they decided who was at fault when a miner died on the job. If the jury determined that company negligence had contributed to or was the sole cause of the accident that killed a miner, his family had a much better chance of receiving compensation in the civil courts. The coal operators had already largely denied their employees access to local courts to bring these cases, but they also wanted to ensure that they were never found negligent for an employee’s death in any Colorado court.

The changing stance of courts and juries on workplace accidents intensified the operators’ desire to avoid liability for employees’ deaths. Until the late nineteenth century, English common law and key court decisions in the United States placed all blame for injury and death in the workplace on the worker. In the cases that came before American courts, the assumption was always that a worker knew of the dangers inherent in the job, and thus accepted those dangers when accepting employment. Miners could therefore refuse any assignment they believed too dangerous. Companies were also not liable for the injuries or death caused by the negligence of another employee, and in cases

115 Testimony of J. J. Hendricks, James Patterson, and Jesse Welborn, CIR Testimony, vol. 7, 6910, 6784, 6558.
where both employee and employer were negligent; the employer was not held responsible for injury or death.\textsuperscript{116}

Judges, civil juries, and coroners' juries began challenging these precedents in the 1880s. Colorado courts heard some of the most important precedent-overturning cases, as miners and their attorneys struck at the heart of the common law's assumptions. Describing how hard-rock miners in the Mountain West fought the common law, historian Mark Wyman observes: "It became difficult for hard-rock miners to go along with a common law concept which stated that when they signed the company payroll they accepted the multitude of unknown dangers waiting below. . . . Applying the common law to these situations increasingly strained the credulity not only of hard-rock miners but also of western juries, judges, and legislators."\textsuperscript{117}

The cases that most upset common-law assumptions in Colorado came from the state's metal mining districts, where the WFM was strong and the miners enjoyed much more autonomy from their employers than their counterparts in southern Colorado. A Colorado mine superintendent's 1892 warning to his employers that juries were awarding injured miners between $1,000 and $5,000 reflected how workers and their unions were changing the common law. A jury in Pitkin County awarded a man blinded on the job $37,500 before the Colorado Supreme Court reduced the award. Seven years later, a gold miner who lost a leg and had his skull fractured by a falling one-ton mine car won

\begin{footnotes}
\footnote{Ibid., 140-41.}
\end{footnotes}
$15,000. The Supreme Court heard the Union Gold Mining Company's appeal, but let the award stand.\textsuperscript{118}

No doubt the operators in southern Colorado knew of these verdicts and through Jefferson Farr and O. T. Clark, his counterpart in Las Animas County, they made certain that they would not face the same financial penalties for contributing to an employee's death. The coroner's office in Huerfano County was supposed to convene its own juries, but because of their importance to the operators, Farr often took care of this task. Describing how coroner's juries were formed, Farr's undersheriff John McQuarrie said: “I was always instructed, when called to a mine to investigate an accident, to take the coroner, proceed to the mine, go to the superintendent and find out who he wanted on the jury. That is the method that is employed in selecting a jury at any of the mines in Huerfano County.”\textsuperscript{119}

Not surprisingly, Farr made sure to choose jurors who would rule in the coal companies' favor. In the ninety cases in Huerfano County between July 1905 and November 1914, the coroner's jury judged only one fatality was the company's fault. These juries ruled the cause of five other deaths unknown and concluded that one man had had a heart attack while working in a mine. In all other cases, the juries' rulings were monotonously consistent. Anglo Mattevi “came to his death by unavoidable accident in the Midway mine; we exonerate all parties.” John Langa “came to his death by a fall of rock through his own carelessness, by not securing props.” Joe Martinez “came to his death through his own carelessness in Ravenwood mine at 10:30am on July 27, 1914, by

\textsuperscript{118} Ibid., 137-43.
\textsuperscript{119} Report on the Colorado Strike Investigation, 23. Also see the testimony of Joseph H. Patterson, CIR Testimony, vol. 7, 6784.
being run over by a loaded pit car, and that said death was accidental, and no person or persons were to blame for the accident.” “We the jury in the case of Joe Odarizzi, do find that he came to his death by a fall of rock; that he was warned of its condition; and that he is solely to blame. We hereby exonerate the company from all responsibility.”

In his testimony before the CIR, Farr denied that he had any control over who sat on coroners’ juries. It is difficult, however, to explain why more than a few men served multiple times on these juries in Huerfano and Las Animas Counties. J.C. Baldwin, for instance, who was a bartender and secretary of Las Animas’s Republican Committee, served as coroner jury foreman twenty-four times. In Huerfano County, Israel Frye sat on eleven coroner’s juries between 1910 and 1914 and J. A. Medina served on four juries between October 16, 1912 and November 7, 1913. Others, including members of Farr’s family, appeared over and over again as coroner’s jury members between 1905 and 1914. J. D. Farr served on ten coroner’s juries between 1910 and 1913 and M. Y. Farr and Thomas Farr also appeared as jurors between 1907 and 1914.

Sheriff Farr also often tapped men who had sat on coroners’ juries to serve as deputy sheriffs. While coroners’ jury members might have received some payment for their service, a deputy sheriff’s commission was more attractive because the job paid $3.50 a day during the 1913-14 strike. In a sample of 319 men who served on coroner’s juries between 1905

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120 Report on the Colorado Strike Investigation, 24. Testimony of James Patterson, CIR Testimony, vol. 7, 6784; The ninety cases that came before the coroners’ juries in Huerfano County between 1905 and 1914 are contained in “Patterson Exhibit No.1,” CIR Testimony, vol. 8, 7265-7296.


122 For example, E. L. Trounstine served on two coroner’s juries in 1906 and 1907 and received his deputy sheriff’s commission on 23 September 1913. J. J. Wright served on three coroner’s juries in 1907 and 1908 and received his deputy sheriff’s commission sometime between 10 January 1913 and 1 September 1913. J. D. Farr received his deputy sheriff’s commission sometime between 11 January 1911
and 1914 in Huerfano County, forty-one (12.85 percent) also received a deputy sheriff's commission between January, 1911 and May, 1914. The percentage was higher among the forty-eight men with Hispanic surnames who served on Huerfano's coroner's juries. Eighteen of these forty-eight men (37.5 percent) also received deputy sheriff's commissions.\(^{123}\) Farr also awarded deputy sheriff's positions to county officials. For example, S. J. Lammie, who was Huerfano County's coroner until 1913, received his deputy sheriff's commission on September 29, 1913.\(^{124}\)

Farr also used deputy sheriff's appointments extensively as patronage with Hispanic residents of the county. Four hundred twenty-six of the 1,153 deputy sheriffs' commissions Farr authorized between January 1911 and May 1914 went to men with Hispanic surnames.\(^{125}\) According to John McQuarrie, Farr's patronage among the

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\(^{123}\) Sixteen more men in the larger sample of 319 who served on coroner's juries might have also received deputy sheriff's commissions. Eight more men in the Hispanic sub-sample of 48 who served on coroner's juries might have also received deputy sheriff's commissions. The uncertainty here results from how the names were recorded on each list. Inconsistencies in spelling and in the use of initials for first and middle names makes it impossible to be certain that these men served on coroner's juries and as deputy sheriffs. Men with the same surnames as those who had served on coroners' juries also appeared frequently on deputy sheriff's list. See "Patterson Exhibit No. 2" and "Farr Exhibit," \textit{CIR Testimony}, and vol. 8, 7296-7311 and "Patterson Exhibit No.1," \textit{CIR Testimony}, vol. 8, 7265-7296.

\(^{124}\) J. M. Lammie, who was in all likelihood a relative of the coroner, S. J. Lammie, served on a coroner's jury in 1910 and received his deputy sheriff's commission on 29 September 1913. See "Patterson Exhibit No.1," \textit{CIR Testimony}, vol. 8, 7283 and "Patterson Exhibit No. 2," \textit{CIR Testimony}, and vol. 8, 7299.

\(^{125}\) More than a few Mexicans and Mexican-Americans, it should be noted, worked in the mines, joined the union, and came out on strike in 1913. Testimony of Jefferson Farr, \textit{CIR Testimony}, vol. 7, 6800-6803. The mining companies might have paid Farr for each deputy he recruited. According to Edward Doyle, secretary-treasurer of the United Mine Workers' District 15, the coal operators in Northern Colorado told Boulder County Sheriff M. P. Capp during the 1910 strike that one of his colleagues in southern Colorado had received $80,000 and one dollar per day for each man he deputized during the 1903-04 strike. The operators in Boulder County were trying to convince Capp that he should take the operators side in the strike, but the stalwart Capp steadfastly refused to issue deputy commissions, ask the governor for state troops, or help the operators break the strike in any other way. The $80,000 given to the sheriff in southern Colorado was probably to pay the deputies, not to reward the sheriff for his cooperation. Still, it would not be surprising if some of that $80,000 found its way into the sheriff's pocket. See "Dictation of E. L. Doyle, 30 October 1913," Papers of
county’s Mexican-American population strengthened the Republican grip on Huerfano. “There are Mexicans there that he [Farr] has never been able to turn,” McQuarrie said, but in his judgment, when Farr “would get hold of one of these Mexicans—these Mexican people, the families all stay one with the other, and if he takes the leader of one of these factions and gets him in, then he can bring the balance to come in and vote with him for relief of this other one that he has gotten a hold of.”126 The multiple Martínez, Medinas, Valdezes, Espinozas, and Trujillos on Huerfano County’s list of deputy sheriffs reflected Farr’s ability to recruit entire families to the Republican Party.127

Getting ‘a hold of one of these Mexicans’ extended to the patróns that dominated southern Colorado’s rural Mexican society. A patrón was a large landowner who over time had formed a paternalistic relationship with peasants living on his land or in the surrounding area. This relationship extended to politics, where patróns recommended candidates to their constituency. If Farr could work a patrón into his camp, he would also likely acquire the votes of that patrón’s followers.128

Republican dominance in Las Animas County was not as complete as it was in Huerfano. Mexican-Americans were still elected to Las Animas County offices as Democrats during the decade and a-half before the 1913-14 coal strike, but the mining industry and the Republican Party there were also able to work the patrón system to their advantage. Declaring his admiration for patrón and county Democratic Party chairman

Edward Doyle, Box 2, Envelope 18, Western History Collection, Denver Public Library; McGovern and Guttridge, The Great Coalfield War, 76-77.  
126 Report on the Colorado Strike Investigation, 23. McQuarrie used the term “Mexicans,” but most Hispanics in southern Colorado at the turn of the twentieth century were born in the United States. See Deutsch, No Separate Refuge, 94.  
127 “Patterson Exhibits No. 1 and No. 2” and “Farr Exhibit,” CIR Testimony, vol. 8, 7265-7311.  
José Urbano Vigil, a state politician declared: “He has kept himself a poor man fighting for the Democratic Party in the face of discouragement and defeat and with traitors in his own camp where he could have been a rich man had he let the party go.” Clearly, the Democratic Party was in decline in Las Animas, as the Republicans and the mining industry recruited patróns and as the market economy and the introduction of industrial wage labor undermined the patrón system itself.\(^{129}\)

In Huerfano, Sheriff Farr’s control of juries extended to the county’s district court. To fix these juries, Farr insured that the jury pool was filled with men loyal to him. Of the 300 male taxpayers who appeared on the county district court’s jury duty list in November 1913, forty-three (14.3 percent) also received deputy sheriff’s commissions.\(^{130}\)

The same men, furthermore, appeared over and over again on each new district court jury duty list. Felix Abeyta, for example, appeared on eighteen of twenty jury duty lists compiled between 1903 and 1913. Abeyta received his deputy sheriff’s commission on January 23, 1913.\(^{131}\) If lawyers friendly to Farr did not get the jury they desired from this rigged list, they would reject the pool of potential jurors drawn from the list of 300. Once those jurors had been dismissed, the presiding judge would order the sheriff to convene a new pool. Farr would then have exclusive power to pick a new panel of potential jurors from

\(^{129}\) Ibid. Quotation on 351.
\(^{130}\) T. M. Hudson, the clerk of the Huerfano County district court, testified that in November 1913, he compiled a new list of 300 men from which juries would be chosen. Of these 300 men, 185 had also appeared on the previous jury list. Estimates of the number of male taxpayers in Huerfano County—only male taxpayers were eligible for jury duty—varied greatly. Jesse Northcutt, the attorney who represented the coal operators at congressional hearings on the strike, claimed that there were between 600 and 700 male taxpayers in the county. Hudson put the figure at around 1,500. Even if Northcutt’s low estimate of 600 was correct, it is very unlikely that 185 names would be duplicated in a draw of 300 names if jurors were randomly drawn from the county’s male taxpaying residents. Hudson also testified that Farr had a hand in choosing who sat on district court juries. See the testimony of T. M. Hudson, *Conditions in the Coal Mines of Colorado*, part 7, 2059-62.
\(^{131}\) “Patterson Exhibit No. 2,” CIR Testimony, and vol. 8, 7297.
among county residents. Farr’s handy work was clearly demonstrated in a case that grew out of the 1913-14 strike. Five of Farr’s deputies were charged with murder after they shot into a crowd on Seventh Street in Walsenburg early in the 1913-14 coal strike. The deputies had come there to move the wife of a non-union miner from the town into the CF&I’s nearby coal camp where her husband was already living. The wives of striking miners had come into the street to taunt the deputies, and were later joined by their husbands and children, who were just getting out of school. Soon, between 300 and 400 people were on Seventh Street yelling insults and throwing rocks, tin cans, and dirt at the deputies. As the deputies moved away from the house on Seventh Street, they turned, fired into the crowd, and killed four miners. In the trial that followed, Farr placed eleven Mexican Americans and one Anglo-American on the jury. An interpreter translated testimony, and the judge’s instructions for the several Mexican-American jurors who did not understand English. It took this jury less than three hours to acquit all five deputies.

Hispanic participation in Republican politics created some unique circumstances. European immigrants, who often benefited from machine politics in the northeastern and the mid-western cities, were victimized by what several observers described as a political machine in southern Colorado. Given how marginalized Hispanics and Hispanic Americans were in much of the turn-of-the-twentieth-century southwest, it is certainly surprising to find Hispanic Americans benefiting from a Republican machine that protected a corporate empire. Indeed, the patronage jobs and appointments as deputy

133 I describe the Seventh Street shooting in more detail in chapter 3.
sheriff and coroners' and district court jury members made those Hispanic Americans who switched party allegiance part of the apparatus that helped the coal operators control southern Colorado's European immigrant population.

It is safe to say that men like Jefferson Farr were not enthusiastic about incorporating Hispanic Americans into their ruling party. Not even Farr, however, could use the same tactics the coal camp superintendents used to ensure that their non-citizen employees voted for company-sanctioned candidates. Unlike many southern and eastern European immigrants in the coal camps, a large portion of Huerfano's Hispanic population were citizens who had a legal claim to voting rights on election day. Perhaps more importantly, many lived outside the coal camps, retained their attachment to the land, and often worked in the mines only after the harvest or when their families needed extra money. Because many Hispanic families had been in southern Colorado much longer than the mining industry, they remained in their own villages outside the Anglo towns and coal camps. While Mexicans and Mexican Americans faced segregation in some mines and were barred from working in a few, their relative independence from the camps meant Farr and the mine operators had to form an alliance with Colorado's "native" population instead of simply exerting dominance over Mexican-Americans through coercion. In the end, it was easier to co-opt them than it was to coerce them into submission.

The operators' control of southern Colorado grew out of their ability to dominate the most important parts of state governance in Las Animas and Huerfano Counties.

135 Deutsch, No Separate Refuge 88-90, 94. Deutsch says that most Hispanics in southern Colorado were born in the United States.
Steven Skowronek's *Building a New American State* helps illustrate this point. Skowronek labels the pre-Civil War American state a “state of courts and parties.” This state was decentralized and lacked the large bureaucratic apparatus that characterized nineteenth-century European states. The political parties, which were the wellspring of both patronage and popular democracy, and the courts, which assiduously looked after capital’s interests, were the most important pieces of the American state.

Skowronek argues that state building began after the Civil War, and the Progressive Era was key in spurring the creation of what he calls administrative capacities. As Morton Keller points out, however, it is more accurate to view the late nineteenth century as the period when the “the state of courts and parties” was in its prime. “Never before--or since,” Keller argues, “have political parties been so highly organized, so effective in mobilizing votes and controlling government; never before or since (until perhaps our own time) have the courts been so effective in gathering decision making power to themselves.” Never before, one might add, had the courts done capital’s bidding so tirelessly and so effectively.

In southern Colorado, furthermore, the state of courts and parties was still vigorous in the early twentieth century. The courts were extensions of the coal mining industry. State offices like the coalmine inspection office, moreover, which Skowronek would term an administrative capacity, were weak and ineffectual when it came to enforcing Colorado law. That Colorado had achieved its statehood in 1876 helps explain

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why it was behind the national curve in moving from the state of courts and parties to the modern, administrative state. The state in Colorado simply had not had sufficient time to develop. That Colorado was perpetually broke—a condition that in part grew out of the tax breaks state officials had given extractive industries to attract them to the state—did not make state-building any easier. As we will see in Chapter Three, the state’s lack of funding became very relevant when Governor Elias Ammons tried to decide if he should send troops to southern Colorado in 1913. Colorado’s stunted state formation meant that the state of courts and parties maintained its supremacy in Las Animas and Huerfano Counties into the twentieth century.

In Skowronek’s formulation, the different goals of the courts and parties produced a rough balance between capital’s interests and those of popular democracy, but in southern Colorado there was no such balance of power. Both the courts and the only political party that mattered zealously protected capital. The coal operators had swallowed southern Colorado’s Republican Party whole, and the courts in Huerfano and Las Animas Counties were also firmly under the operators’ thumbs. In the 1870s, the Colorado Coal and Iron Company benefited from a friendly Supreme Court that decided the company’s fraudulent acquisition of land in southern Colorado should not prevent the company from continuing to mine coal on that land. John Osgood and his Rockefeller family successors did not forget how important an ally the courts could be. In southern Colorado, however, the CC&I’s successor companies and the other coal operators did not leave their fate in the hands of judges who might or might not be sympathetic. Instead, they found allies on the bench, and through their surrogates in the sheriff’s offices, they rigged the coroners’ juries to deny their employees’ families compensation for a miner’s
death in the mines. They also denied their employees access to the civil courts and were able to produce the desired results in any criminal or civil proceedings that challenged their supremacy.

This total domination of southern Colorado’s state apparatus challenges how scholars have come to understand the relationship between the state and capital. Most have rejected the Marxist-informed, instrumentalist argument that the state is merely capital’s political wing and have accepted Nicos Poulantzas’s assertion that state actors often act independent of capital’s demands.\textsuperscript{138} Because the state is a cohesive force in any society, Poulantzas argues, the state’s activities in a capitalist system—regardless of the relative autonomy of its managers—will work in the larger interests of capitalists.\textsuperscript{139} Las Animas and Huerfano Counties in the decades before the 1913-14 strike, however, conformed more readily to the instrumentalist model. In fact, the mine operators in southern Colorado did Karl Marx one better. It was not just that the line between themselves and the state became blurred by the operators’ influence over the state. Rather, the line between the state and capital was not blurry at all because the state and capital were the same entity. By the early twentieth century, the coal operators were the state in Las Animas and Huerfano Counties.


Any immigrant miner who worked and lived in southern Colorado for any length of time at the turn of the twentieth century would have sympathized with Thomas Jefferson’s condemnation of tyranny in the Declaration of Independence. They knew that their employers did not obey Colorado’s mine safety laws. They understood that the coal operators forcefully resisted efforts to pass those laws through the state legislature. The miners paid their employers not taxes, but exorbitant prices for powder, blasting caps, tools, and other equipment. Many owed their companies for the cost of transporting them from the eastern ports where they had arrived—the same ports established long ago by the companies the British crown had authorized to colonize the New World. They also knew very well that the prices in the company stores where they were forced to shop were much higher than in Trinidad and Walsenburg’s independent stores. They were aware that they could not get justice from a civil court whether they were alive or dead. Finally, they recognized that the operators had altered fundamentally southern Colorado’s government through their domination of the Republican Party and the court system.

They might also have nodded at Jefferson’s critique of the imperial crown for rendering “the military independent of, and superior to the civil power” and they needed no warning against “large armies of foreign mercenaries” who were coming to “complete the works of death, desolation, and tyranny already begun with circumstances of cruelty and perfidy scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous ages . . .”140 In 1913, southern Colorado’s miners rose up again to challenge the mine operators’ empire. The operators immediately sought military intervention on their behalf, but unlike the British crown, the

operators did not have a military at their disposal large enough to subdue the 1913
rebellion. The state of Colorado had such an army, and the operators would use all of
their considerable power to place that army at their disposal.
CHAPTER III

WORKERS AND CAPITAL ORGANIZE

The masters, being fewer in number, can combine much more easily; and the law, besides, authorizes, or at least does not prohibit their combinations, while it prohibits those of workmen... We rarely hear, it has been said, of the combinations of masters; though frequently of those of workmen. But whoever imagines, upon this account, that masters rarely combine, is as ignorant of the world as of the subject. Masters are always and everywhere in a sort of tacit, but constant and uniform combination... [but] we seldom, indeed, hear of this combination, because it is the usual, and one may say, the natural state of things which nobody ever hears of.1

--Adam Smith in An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations, 1776

September 23, 1913 was a cold and rainy day in southern Colorado. It was also the day that the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) chose to begin their strike in the region. As miners walked off their jobs, superintendents immediately evicted them from company housing. Those evictions started a long wagon caravan through the mud from the coal camps in the canyons to the land the United Mine Workers had leased around Ludlow, Aguilar, Walsenburg, Forbes, and other towns to the east. The union intended to build eight tent colonies to house the striking miners and their families, but the tents arrived late. Some said the railroads, which many of southern Colorado’s mine operators played a role in running, purposefully delayed delivery of the tents and other essential materials. Union organizers improvised and housed as many people as possible in large tents, their union halls, and union supporters’ homes. Still, many families spent their first day on strike

huddled under their furniture or camped out in a rainstorm that by nightfall had turned to snow.2

That so many coal miners threw aside their tools and heeded the strike call shocked many mine operators. A week before the strike began, Colorado Fuel and Iron Company chairman Lamont Bowers confidently told Starr J. Murphy, the Rockefeller family’s lawyer, that just ten percent of the company’s miners belonged to the union. The union members, he added, were “older miners who have belonged to unions in the Eastern states for many years and retain their membership as a matter of sentiment, rather than of protection.”3 Once the strike was underway, however, Bowers told John D. Rockefeller, Jr. that between “40 and 60 percent of the miners have quit work” while president of the CF&I Jesse Welborn wrote in private correspondence that seventy percent of the miners had gone out on strike.4

Establishing exactly how many miners struck is a difficult task. Many Italian and Slavic miners left southern Colorado when the strike began with the intention of returning to Europe while others left, often with the assistance of the United Mine Workers, in search of

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4 L. M. Bowers to John D. Rockefeller, Jr., 29 September 1913, CIR Testimony, vol. 9, 8417; J. F. Welborn to J. H. McClement, 11 November 1913, CIR Testimony, vol. 8, 7117. The CF&I stuck closer to Bowers’s figures throughout the strike. In a series of pamphlets the CF&I produced after the Ludlow Massacre as part of an attempt to defend itself and repair the damage the Ludlow Massacre had done to the company’s image, the company stated that 25 percent of miners went out on strike, 10 percent eventually left the state, and 60 percent remained at work. In another pamphlet published a few days later, the company estimated that in September 1913 there were 12,346 men employed in southern Colorado’s coalmines and that 4,650, or 38 percent of 12,346 heeded the strike. (For accuracy’s sake, 4,691, not 4,650, is 38 percent of 12,346). See “The Real Meaning of the Colorado Strike,” pamphlet number 5, 11 July 1914 and “10,000 Men Now at Work in Colorado,” pamphlet 6, 15 July 1914, “The Struggle in Colorado for Industrial Freedom” series, “Business Interests,” Papers of the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company, RG 2, Box 25, Rockefeller Foundation Archives, Rockefeller Archive Center, Sleepy Hollow, New York.
work in coal mines elsewhere in the country.\(^5\) Not surprisingly, the union's estimates of strike participation were higher. Edward L. Doyle, Secretary Treasurer of the United Mine Workers' district 15, wrote that between ninety-five and ninety-eight percent of the miners came out on strike.\(^6\) While is it unlikely that Doyle was correct, Colorado's largest circulating newspaper, *The Rocky Mountain News*, offered an estimate that fell between those the operators and the union offered, and was probably the most accurate. The paper reported on September 24 that 7,660 of the 9,519 coal miners in southern Colorado (80.5 percent) were out on strike as of September 24th. It is also a certainty that more men left the mines during the following week.\(^7\)

Clearly, the union's ability to organize in a place so thoroughly dominated by the operators was extraordinary, and this chapter will explore how the union managed to sustain an organizing campaign in the southern coalfield. Almost two months into the strike, Welborn reported that the CF&I was operating at only thirty to thirty-five percent of capacity. He also wrote: "the largest among the other operators suffered in a similar way while the smaller operators having but one or two mines have lost practically all of their men."\(^8\) While several small coalmining companies signed contracts with the UMW, the largest employers and several smaller outfits refused to negotiate.\(^9\) Instead, these operators preferred that the Colorado National Guard--which had broken the 1903-04 Western

\(^{5}\) Doyle to Green, 30 September 1913, The Papers of Edward Doyle, Box 1, Envelope 4, Denver Public Library.

\(^{6}\) Edward Doyle to William Green, 30 September 1913 and Edward Doyle to John P. White, President of the United Mine Workers of America, 6 October 1913, The Papers of Edward Doyle, Box 1, Envelope 4, Denver Public Library; *The United Mine Workers' Journal*, 25 September 1913. Hereafter cited as *UMWJ*.

\(^{7}\) RMN, 24 September 1913.

\(^{8}\) J. F. Welborn to J. H. McClement, 11 November 1913, CIR Testimony, vol. 8, 7117.

\(^{9}\) Edward Doyle to John P. White, 6 October 1913, Papers of Edward Doyle, Box 1, Envelope 4, Denver Public Library.
Federation of Miners’ (WFM) and UMWA strikes in Colorado--perform the same task in southern Colorado. However, Governor Elias Ammons, who had authority to call out the guard, refused. As a Democrat who had been elected governor in 1912 with labor’s support, Ammons had good reason to resist the operators’ desire to use state power as a strikebreaking club. Realizing that Ammons would not do their bidding, the mine operators made audible the combination that Adam Smith thought was never heard. They organized themselves to resist unionization and convince the reluctant governor that he must send the National Guard to southern Colorado. Because the mine operators possessed far more political clout and influence in southern Colorado than the governor or anyone else for that matter, they succeeded, with help from the Baldwin-Felts Detective Agency and sheriffs Farr and Grisham, in quickly turning the strike zone into a volatile and violent place.

Eventually, the operators’ ability to create chaos in southern Colorado forced the governor’s hand. Obligated to ensure the safety of his state’s residents, Ammons felt he had no choice but to call out the National Guard.

Still, it was by no means a given that once the guard was in the field it would be able to stay long enough to break the strike. Lack of funding was a chronic problem in Colorado, one that only intensified when the National Guard was on active duty. The mine operators quickly solved this problem with the help of Denver’s most prominent bankers, who promptly agreed to loan the state, in the form of certificates of indebtedness, the money necessary to finance the guard’s stay in southern Colorado. This plan soon encountered a roadblock when State Auditor Roady Kenehan refused to do the paperwork necessary to distribute these certificates. Kenehan lost the court fight that ensued, and an unlikely opponent orchestrated that defeat: Governor Ammons. The governor not only led the charge
against Kenehan, but he was also instrumental in raising the money and supplies necessary to keep the guard on duty while Kenehan’s challenge wound its way through the courts. Ammons’s actions demonstrate how effective Baldwin-Felts’s campaign to create violence was. By late October 1913, Ammons was convinced that the only way he could end the violence and restore order in southern Colorado was to send the National Guard.

**Organizing Against the Empire**

The United Mine Workers took a long and winding road to the 1913-14 southern Colorado coal strike. How the union got there, though, clearly demonstrates how much control the mine operators had over southern Colorado. The UMW’s path to another strike in the region also shows how committed southern Colorado’s miners became to changing their circumstances and how skilled the union had to become to challenge the operators’ empire.

After the 1903-04 strike failed to win the union recognition in southern Colorado, organizers regrouped and started a new campaign in 1907. John Lawson, a son of Scottish immigrants who began working in mines as a boy in Mount Carmel, Pennsylvania, led this new campaign. Lawson had traveled west with his father, who had been a member of the Knights of Labor, living first in Oregon and then in Colorado. Lawson worked briefly for the CF&I and thus knew first-hand the awful conditions that prevailed in the company’s mines. Perhaps that experience was what made him such a tenacious union organizer. During the 1903-04 strike, a mine operator allegedly planted dynamite under Lawson’s
house. The ensuing explosion destroyed the house and nearly killed his wife and infant daughter. A few months later, the same mine operator wounded Lawson in a gunfight.10

By 1907, Lawson had become an international organizer and member of the United Mine Workers' executive board. Working out of the union's district 15, he went back to organizing in southern Colorado. Despite the difficulty of getting into the closed camps where the miners lived in company housing, Lawson and his cadre of organizers succeeded in signing workers up. Their strategy for organizing, however, was faulty because the CF&I employed a detective to conduct its spying operations full time. Spies posed as miners and came to work every day, so by creating a union local whose members were known to each other, Lawson and his men inevitably signed up company spies, who were often the most eager unionists.11

Realizing that organizing in the southern field would be difficult, Lawson shifted his efforts to the smaller northern Colorado coalfield. The organizing there was easier for several reasons. The miners in the state's northern coalfield were primarily native-born and old-stock immigrants from the British Isles, and therefore, they spoke English. Northern coal companies also did not dominate the political, social, and economic lives of their workers to the same extent that southern operators did. Many workers, for example, owned their homes, and therefore organizing in the north field did not mean trespassing on company property to meet with miners.12

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Still, miners in the northern field certainly had grievances against their employers, and they quickly signed up with the union. In 1907 and 1908 the Union Pacific Coal Company, Northern Coal and Coke Company, which had spun off from the Union Pacific Railroad, and several other large mining outfits in northern Colorado signed contracts with the union. This success was short-lived. Just two years later, between 2,200 and 3,000 coal miners in the northern field found themselves on strike. During negotiations leading up to this strike, the CF&I and the Victor American Fuel Company in the southern field pressured Northern not to renew the union contract. Cognizant of this pressure, the UMW’s district 15 goal became to simply renew the conditions of the 1908 contract without making additional demands. When these local leaders attended a UMWA convention in Cincinnati just before the Northern contract expired, they argued that the union should take a conservative path and simply affirm recent victories when it came time to renew contracts. That argument, however, did not sway convention attendees, who voted that each district should request a 5.5 percent wage increase and a half-day on Saturday in negotiations for new contracts. If these conditions were not met, the district in question should call for a strike vote. The union’s hard line made Northern’s decision to reject these terms an easy one. On April 4, 1910, northern Colorado’s coal miners came out on strike.\(^{13}\)

The strike in the north soon became a stalemate. The northern operators immediately asked Democratic governor John Shafroth to send the National Guard to northern Colorado. Instead, the governor sent pro-labor Secretary of State James Pearce and two other state officials to tour the strike zone and investigate the need for troops. Pearce and his companions concluded that the National Guard was not needed to keep the peace, and

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\(^{13}\) Ibid., 75-76; Long, Where the Sun Never Shines, 206.
Shafroth, who courted the northern miners’ vote during his successful campaign for
governor in 1908, declined to overrule their judgment. The sheriffs in Boulder and Weld
counties also refused to cooperate with the coal operators, whose strikebreaking plans were
further stymied when their efforts to gain court injunctions against the union met with only
partial success. The companies, however, did succeed in bringing strikebreakers to their
mines. The operators first surrounded their property with barbed-wire fences and then built
houses for the Mexican and southern and eastern European immigrants whom the
companies began bringing into the state with the help of the Baldwin-Felts Detective
Agency. By all accounts, the northern coal companies were not hospitable to their guests.
Wages were low, managers set no limit on how many hours their new employees would
work, the companies deducted the expense of outfitting the strikebreakers with mining
equipment from their pay, and managers demanded payment before they would give a miner
other tools such as timber to prevent mine ceilings from collapsing. Louis Tikas, the Greek
immigrant who would later play a pivotal role in maintaining the tent colony at Ludlow,
came from Denver to the northern field as one of these strikebreakers, but along with
hundreds of others he soon quit and joined the union.\footnote{14}

The stalemate in the northern field forced the UMW to reconsider its strategy in
Colorado, but first the union had to put its own house in order. Doing so required
eliminating a traitor from their ranks. Tom Lewis, the union’s president when the strike in
northern Colorado began, was in fact, working for the coal companies. After he was voted

\footnote{\textit{14} “Dictation of E. L. Doyle, 30 October 1913,” Papers of Edward Doyle, Box 2, envelope 18, Denver
Public Library; McGovern and Guttridge, \textit{The Great Coalfield War}, 75-76; Long, \textit{Where the Sun Never
Shines}, 251-54; George S. McGovern, “The Colorado Coal Strike, 1913-14” (Ph.D. diss., Northwestern
University), 1953, 126-27; Testimony of Edward Doyle, \textit{CIR Testimony}, vol. 8, 7022-23; Zeese Papanikolas,
\textit{Buried Unsung: Louis Tikas and the Ludlow Massacre} (Salt Lake City, Utah: University of Utah Press, 1982),
46, 48.}

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out of office in 1911, Lewis quickly went to work for the West Virginia Coal Operators’ Association. When new president John P. White and vice-president Frank Hayes took office, they found that Lewis had taken all the UMW’s records over to the union’s largest adversary in West Virginia. To make matters worse, it was Lewis who had presided over the Cincinnati convention that forced district 15 into a strike that would drag on for four years. Many within the union suspected that Lewis backed the ambitious new contract requests that hamstrung district 15 because he knew very well that following such a strategy would damage the union.  

The situation in district 15’s offices mirrored the mess at the very top of the union’s hierarchy, but the 1911 national union election also swept new leadership into the district’s offices. Newly elected district 15 secretary-treasurer Edward L. Doyle quickly understood that his would be a difficult job. Doyle found the district’s financial books in chaos, and he became convinced that outgoing district president Frank Smith was also a spy for the coal operators. Indeed, district efforts to organize in southern Colorado, in particular, were greatly hindered by the many company spies who successfully infiltrated the union in the years after the unsuccessful 1903-04 UMWA strike. 

Realizing that the union had much support in southern Colorado despite the 1903-04 failure to organize these mines, Doyle, the son of an Irish immigrant father who started working in the mines as a boy in Illinois and later moved to northern Colorado, and new district president John McLennan, a Scottish-born miner who had long worked in Colorado, quickly worked up a strategy that called for the union to launch a massive organizing

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campaign in southern Colorado. Such a campaign, they reasoned, would put pressure on operators throughout the state, which would help break the now two-year old stalemate in the north. "The southern coalfield is the key to the situation," Doyle wrote UMW president John White in a letter asking him to consider this plan.17

The union, however, was in no condition to mount such a large organizing operation. The nine million dollars spent to finance strikes nationwide between 1900 and 1910 had depleted the UMW’s treasury and the 1911 recession deprived the union of dues from the thousands of members thrown out of work. While the continuing northern strike only further depleted the union’s resources, White also learned that the northern Colorado coal companies were able to persist in their resistance because the largest southern coal operators were sending them both guns and money. To make matters worse, the Rocky Mountain Fuel Company, which was one of the three biggest coal companies in southern Colorado, bought the Northern Coal and Coke Company in early 1912. White disliked strikes like the one in Colorado’s northern field that ran on with no clear end in sight. This circumstance along with the fact that Colorado’s non-union southern field was a competitive threat not only to the northern field, but also to the unionized coalmines in Montana, Wyoming, and the southwest, pushed the union president further toward striking a decisive blow in southern Colorado. To White, the union’s future not only in Colorado but in the entire mountain West would be decided in southern Colorado.18

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17 Edward Doyle to John P. White, 30 April 1912, Papers of Edward Doyle, Box 1, envelope 4, Denver Public Library.
As the national leadership mulled over Doyle and McLennan’s strategy, district 15 opened an office in Trinidad, Colorado, the largest town in the southern coalfield, in January 1912. By the summer, the success of district organizers had caught president White’s attention and he sent a committee west to assess the situation. This committee made several suggestions for organizing workers in the closed southern coal camps, where mine managers, their private mine guards, and sheriff’s deputies worked overtime keeping union organizers out. First, the committee recommended that the district replace out-of-state English-speaking organizers with immigrant miners who lived and worked in the coal camps. Because it was difficult for a stranger to get anywhere near these mining camps, the committee reasoned that it was better to work from the inside. Such organizers were also less expensive than men from out-of-state who required hotel rooms and train tickets. The committee also counseled district officials to avoid hiring English-speaking miners who lived in the southern coal camps as organizers. Such men, the committee warned, were “hired by the company to play union man and as a rule they have a union card in their pocket and their business is to betray and have discharged good union men.” These “organizers,” the committee concluded, were “spotters, detectives, and man beaters.”

By following these recommendations, Doyle, McLennan, and John Lawson used immigrant workers’ inability to speak English to their advantage. These men knew that Italian and Greek miners in the southern field were strong union supporters, which meant it was unlikely that they would spy for the operators. While the company spy network was extensive—CF&I superintendent E. H. Weitzel had a photograph of William A. Pinkerton hanging above his desk—the mine managers did not try to recruit non-English

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speaking miners as spies.\textsuperscript{20} The language barrier, of course, would have made communication with foreign spies difficult, but neither managers nor detectives believed that immigrant workers were capable of organizing themselves. While expressing union sympathy or being found with a union card would almost certainly get a man of any national origin fired in southern Colorado, it is clear that managers and detectives believed that outside organizers, not inside activists, were the source of unionization efforts.

The American Federation of Labor's (AFL) leadership often argued that the lack of English-speaking skills among immigrant workers was a reason why it was difficult, if not impossible, to organize these workers. The miner's inability to speak English, however, became a union weapon in southern Colorado. But for this weapon to work properly, the union would need interpreters, which was where men like Louis Tikas, who spoke both Greek and English, were most useful. After leaving the mines in the northern field, Tikas joined the union and soon was on the payroll as an interpreter. Along with Mike Livoda, who came to the United States as a boy in 1904 and spoke Russian, Polish, and English, Tikas went to the southern field to assist the immigrant organizers working inside the coal camps.\textsuperscript{21}

Once national union officials gave Lawson the go-ahead for a full-scale organizing drive beginning in the first months of 1913, district 15 supplemented their local immigrant cadre recruited in the coal camps with twenty-one pairs of organizers trained in Denver. One man in each pair worked to organize miners while the other applied for work at the mines.

\textsuperscript{20} Papanikolas, \textit{Buried Unsung}, 39.
This second organizer used anti-union sentiment to help get himself hired, and would then make that sentiment well known among his fellow workers. In this way, he could figure out who else among his co-workers was against the union. At the same time, he worked to gain his supervisor’s trust, and if he succeeded, the organizer would then begin telling his supervisor that men he had identified as anti-union were actually pro-union. The supervisor would then fire these falsely accused “pro-unionists.” This inside “plant” could also help his partner identify men who were genuinely for the union. The district, finally, recruited men who they believed were genuinely for the union to apply for the job openings that the duped supervisors had created by firing anti-unionists.22

Like the decision to recruit immigrant organizers, this strategy neutralized another obstacle to successful organizing: the companies’ spy network. By expressing anti-union sentiment, the organizer who went to work in the mines avoided company spies who worked in the mines and were playing their own game of deception by confiding their (false) support for the union in an effort to identify union supporters. Thus the union “plant” worked on a path that was parallel to the spies rather than on one that brought union organizer and company spy into direct contact and confrontation. The coal companies fired hundreds of men suspected of union sympathy in 1912 alone, but some of those fired undoubtedly scratched their heads in confusion as company guards removed their belongings from the coal camps.23

23 UMW district president John McLennan estimated that superintendents fired 1,200 men suspect of union activity in 1912. There were approximately 9,159 coal miners in southern Colorado, and therefore, McLennan’s estimate seems high. It is unlikely that mine superintendents would have allowed production to decline so significantly. See the testimony of John McLennan, CIR Testimony, vol. 7, 6520.
Despite union efforts to avoid company spies, the coal operators in the southern field became aware that the UMW was making a major push to organize their mines. In response, the CF&I announced a ten percent wage increase in April 1912. Chairman of the CF&I Lamont Bowers also put up a circular in six languages around its mines stating that the company was willing to allow the miners to choose their own checkweighmen. Bowers declared in his testimony before the Commission on Industrial Relations that he did not wish to cheat anyone and believed that such behavior “was the greatest folly, it is the most idiotic thing for any concern to be unfair to anybody, man, woman, or child . . . If I was the coldest-blooded person on earth, and didn’t care a snap of my finger for God, man, or the devil, I would be as straight as one could be.”

Bowers’s statement here certainly reflected his strong Baptist background, but he also had other motivations for making this concession. Of course, he wanted to head off a strike, but he also wanted to keep his company’s smaller competitors from undercutting his prices. If his competitors cheated their workers enough, he reasoned, they could charge less than the CF&I for their coal. Perhaps with this in mind, the other coal operators put up great resistance to Bowers’s suggestion, and mine-elected checkweighmen did not become a reality before the strike began.

Looking for other ways to prevent a strike, the CF&I in early 1913 also stopped using script at the company store, implemented the semimonthly payday, and adopted the eight-hour workday. The other coal operators in the southern field followed the CF&I’s lead, but state law already required all these improvements. The state legislature had

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24 Testimony of Lamont Bowers, CIR Testimony, vol. 9, 8741.
25 Ibid., 8740-43.

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outlawed the script system and implemented the semi-monthly payday more than a decade before the southern coal operators saw fit to make these changes. State law was also behind the operators' "decision" to implement the eight-hour day. After a long battle that extended back to the 1903-04 strikes, the Colorado legislature awarded its miners the eight-hour day in 1911. The law went into effect in 1913 and thus the operators were again only doing what the laws of their state required.26

While the mine operators moved preemptively to placate employees, coalmine managers and mine guards used fists and bullets to deal with union organizers. Mike Livoda, who came from northern coalfield to help organize in the south, received a beating from deputy sheriffs and company guards that prevented him from standing or sitting down without assistance for two months. By the summer of 1913, the CF&I, Victor American and Rocky Mountain Fuel Companies had also hired the Baldwin-Felts Detective Agency, who, according to superintendent of the company Albert C. Felts, eventually had forty to seventy-five men in southern Colorado.27 It was common for employers who faced a strike at the turn-of-the-twentieth-century to hire private detective agencies to run their strikebreaking campaign. Like many such agencies that became private strikebreaking forces, Baldwin-Felts, which had its main offices in Roanoke, Virginia and Bluefield, West Virginia, began life in the early 1890s providing security for railroad companies trying to prevent freight car and payroll theft. In the late 1890s, the company became the police force in southern West


Virginia's mining towns. County officials often could not afford to place deputies permanently in these towns and their remote locations made it difficult for deputies to reach these towns. While William Baldwin, who had established the company, pursued criminal investigations, his partner Thomas Felts focused on expanding the company's industrial security division. Its success in breaking a 1902 United Mine Workers' strike in southern West Virginia established the company's reputation among the state's coal operators, and by 1910, Baldwin-Felts guards were in most of southern West Virginia's company towns. Baldwin-Felts also made its reputation as a strikebreaker during the decade after it first appeared in southern West Virginia. The company helped mine operators resist union organizing efforts in 1902 and 1903, and effectively prevented union organizers from entering southern West Virginia for years afterward. The company won its first contract in Colorado in 1908. Baldwin-Felts detectives worked in the state's northern coalfield before the southern operators hired the company during the months leading up to the strike. As the UMW continued its recruiting drive, the detective agency helped the coal operators recruit mine guards in Denver and in West Virginia. The coal companies, however, not Baldwin-Felts, paid these recruits. As we shall see, more than a few of these mine guards eventually ended up in the Colorado National Guard. 28

At the same time, Jefferson Farr and Jim Grisham, the sheriffs in Huerfano and Las Animas counties where the southern coalfield was located, deputized the Baldwin-Felts detectives and the many mine guards they brought into southern Colorado. Both sheriffs

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were untroubled by the fact that deputizing these men violated Colorado law. A man had to be a county resident for a year before he could receive a deputy’s commission. A new deputy was also required to spend the sixty days in the state before receiving his commission in Colorado. These out-of-state recruits clearly did not satisfy the requirements of these two laws. When El Paso County sheriff M. F. Bowers followed the same strategy for raising a cadre of deputies in the 1894 WFM strike, Populist and pro-labor Governor Davis Waite charged that arming hundreds of illegal deputies was tantamount to raising an army, a power that only the governor had, and demanded that Bowers disband his illegal band of deputies. Governor Ammons, on the other hand, did nothing in the face of Grisham and Farr’s illegal actions.29

The United Mine Workers were very familiar with the Baldwin-Felts Detective Agency, having faced them numerous times in West Virginia’s coalfields. UMW organizers routinely compiled information about deputy sheriffs, detectives, and militiamen—their occupations, politics, arrest records, and company connections—for their lawyers to use at the court trials that almost always grew out of UMW strikes.30

As Baldwin-Felts increased its presence in southern Colorado during the late summer, Sheriff Farr and Grisham raised their own army of deputies in anticipation of a strike. Farr deputized 401 men between September 1 and October 15, 1913. The $3.50 a day these deputies received attracted Mexican immigrants and Mexican-Americans who worked

around the mines and local Anglo shepherders and ranchers. These attractive wages, however, were paid not by the county, but by the coal mining companies.\(^{31}\)

The mine operators spent their money to pay these deputy sheriffs, but they did not directly acquire the guns these sheriffs toted. Instead, the coal operators charged Baldwin-Felts with bringing the necessary deadly hardware into Colorado. The CF&I alone handed over between $25,000 and $30,000 for the purchase of guns and ammunition. Baldwin-Felts also brought at least twelve machine guns into southern Colorado from West Virginia.\(^{32}\)

Despite the operators’ clear intention to vigorously resist unionization, John Lawson was confident enough by midsummer 1913 to announce the UMW’s intention to organize all of Colorado’s coal miners. Frank Hayes, a socialist who had won election as vice president of the UMW in 1911, came to Colorado in late July to take command of the union’s organizing drive. Perhaps mindful that a strike would mean taking on the Rockefellers—who had some of the deepest pockets in the world and who had resisted unionization at Standard Oil and every other business the family owned—Hayes first attempted negotiations with the operators. In early August 1913, he tried to arrange a conference with mining company representatives through Colorado Governor Elias Ammons, but found that the operators were unwilling to even step foot in the same room as

\(^{31}\) Albert Felts also received a deputy sheriff commission in Las Animas County between 1 January 1913 and 1 September 1913. He received his commission in Huerfano County on 19 February 1913. Paterson Exhibit No. 2 Farr exhibit, vol. 8, 7297, 7304. Walter Belk and George Belcher received deputy sheriff’s commissions in Huerfano between 10 January 1913 and 1 September 1913. Farr exhibit, vol. 8, 7308. These Baldwin-Felts were therefore collecting their salaries from Baldwin-Felts the $3.50 a day the coal companies paid to deputy sheriffs.

union officials for fear that such “contact” could be legally construed as de facto recognition of the union.\textsuperscript{33}

The UMW hoped that Governor Ammons would act as an ally in bringing about a settlement, and had some reason to believe he would. Ammons was a Democrat who had been elected to office in 1912 with labor’s help.\textsuperscript{34} For this reason, the United Mine Workers counted Ammons as a friend. Indeed, Ammons was not swayed by the mine operators’ refusal to meet with union officials. On Friday, August 15, 1913 he sent Deputy Labor Commissioner Edwin Brake to southern Colorado with the purpose of negotiating a settlement between the mine operators and the union. Just as Brake arrived in Trinidad, Colorado, Baldwin-Felts detectives George Belcher and Walter Belk, who had been deputized by Jim Grisham, gunned down UMW organizer Gerald Lippiatti on one of Trinidad’s main streets. Lippiatti, who was a veteran UMW organizer and had helped organize the strike in Colorado’s northern coal field, was in Trinidad for the State Federation of Labor’s annual convention that was to begin the following Monday. Belcher and Belk knew Lippiatti was an organizer and the harsh words they aimed in his direction as they passed him on the street sent the organizer into the UMW’s offices looking for his gun. Back on the street, Lippiatti found the Baldwin-Felts detectives and asked if they cared to repeat their earlier comments. Belk and Belcher pulled their guns and although Lippiatti managed to hit Belcher in the leg, the two detectives shot him six times. A coroner’s jury

\textsuperscript{33} McGovern and Guttridge, \textit{The Great Coalfield War}, 88-89.
\textsuperscript{34} Wilbur Fiske Stone, \textit{A History of Colorado}, vol. 2 (Chicago: S. J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1918), 32-38. Also see Ammons’s biography on the Colorado State Archive’s website at http://www.archives.state.co.us/govs/cammons.html/biog

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made up of six businessmen convened in Trinidad ruled that Lippiatti’s death was a justifiable homicide.\(^{35}\)

At the State Federation of Labor convention, a chair covered with a black cloak represented Lippiatti, and the 150 delegates promised their support for the United Mine Workers if they should call a strike in southern Colorado. During the following days, deputy labor commissioner Brake met separately with the mine operators and union officials. These meetings clearly demonstrated where both sides stood. The operators told Brake they would allow the miners to choose their own checkweighmen. This was an important concession because coal miners were paid not by the hour but by the ton of coal mined. Many miners believed that their superintendents often shorted them on the weight, or worked in a measuring system of their own design where 2,400 pounds rather than 2,000 pounds equaled a ton. The operators, though, were unwilling to make their mines a closed shop and would submit to negotiation with their employees only after representatives of the UMW left town.

For the UMW, the operators’ promise to institute checkweighmen meant little. John Lawson, Frank Hayes, and district 15 president John McLennan believed the operators would never make good on that promise and that only a union contract could force the operators to institute checkweighmen and the other demands the union would lay out during the coming weeks. Hayes made this stance clear when he declared: “Checkweighmen without thorough organization doesn’t mean anything, nobody knows that better that the operators.”\(^{36}\)

\(^{35}\) *UMWJ*, 21 August 1913, 1-2 and 28 August 1913, 1; Papanikolas, *Buried Unsung*, 47.

Union officials hammered this point home over the next few weeks, but still remained open to Ammons and Brake’s mediation efforts. Brake continued to meet with officials from both sides and wrote a three-point settlement plan. Brake’s plan required the mine operators to hire workers regardless of their union affiliation, allowed miners to shop at stores other than the company store, and would bring miner-selected checkweighmen into the mines. This proposal gained no ground with either the operators or the union, which continued to insist that only union recognition could bring justice to the southern Colorado coalfield. At the same time, union officials privately continued to seek a meeting with the operators. The operators, however, remained convinced that such a meeting could be legally interpreted as union recognition.37

Realizing that the operators were unlikely to blink, Hayes traveled to Kansas City to meet with the UMW’s international leadership. Because southern Colorado was one of the few unorganized districts west of the Mississippi, the union placed this coalfield at the top of their organizing “to do” list. The union officials also set aside $600,000 for the struggle, and decided to charge each of their over 400,000 members an additional one dollar in dues to support the coming strike. At the same time, the operators declared that they would spend five million dollars on their efforts to break a UMW-called strike.38

The UMW’s apparent seriousness about organizing southern Colorado moved Colorado Fuel and Iron chairman Lamont Bowers to write his boss in New York City. Bowers first told John D. Rockefeller, Jr. that the company profits would have “exceeded

1912 if wages had not been advanced, costing us about $260,000 over the former year.\textsuperscript{39} Still, Bowers reported that net profits for the fiscal year 1913, which ended on June 30th, were $1.647 million. This figure was just $50,000 less than 1912’s net profits, which had been the best year in the company’s history. The company also paid $780,000 in dividends during the 1913 fiscal year. After this rosy report on company profits, Bowers wrote that “there has been a group of labor agitators in southern Colorado for more than a month and [are] threatening to call a strike.” “This,” Bowers admitted, “has kept us all in a state of unrest, so that my vacation has been a season of worry. A disaster of this sort would put us up against a fight that would be serious indeed.”\textsuperscript{40}

As a strike in southern Colorado became more likely, the UMW asked William B. Wilson, whom President Woodrow Wilson [no relation] had recently appointed the first Secretary of Labor, to intervene. Secretary Wilson’s presence in the cabinet gave labor perhaps its first champion inside a presidential administration. William Wilson came to Pennsylvania from Scotland in 1862 and began working in the coalmines while still a boy. He became a master workman in the Knights of Labor and then rose within the United Mine Workers to become its Secretary-Treasurer before he was elected to Congress in 1906.\textsuperscript{41} Once he became Labor Secretary, Wilson made no secret of his support for organized labor. He surrounded himself with like-minded men, and sent one of those assistants, Ethelbert Stewart, the chief statistician of the Bureau of Labor Statistics, in search of a settlement

\textsuperscript{39} L. M. Bowers to John D. Rockefeller, Jr., 4 September 1913, \textit{CIR Testimony}, vol. 9, 8413.
between the UMW and southern Colorado's mine operators.\textsuperscript{42} The new Labor Department did not have the authority to force the antagonists in southern Colorado to accept a settlement of its making, but Stewart hoped to become a mediator between the mine operators and the UMW.\textsuperscript{43}

With his relative weakness in mind, Stewart went right to the top. He arrived at John D. Rockefeller's offices in lower Manhattan in early September, where the family's attorney, Starr J. Murphy, informed him that the younger Rockefeller, who had taken over the family's business concerns from his recently retired father, would not return from vacation for another week. When Stewart called again, Rockefeller remained indisposed, but Murphy agreed to talk with him. Stewart told Murphy about the Colorado operators' refusal to meet with the union, and that he was calling in New York to find out if a trip to Colorado was worth his time. He also wondered if Rockefeller was himself willing to mediate the growing conflict. Murphy told the labor statistician that CF&I's executive officers would have to handle the labor conflict in Colorado because Rockefeller did not know anything about either the labor situation or the conditions that prevailed in southern Colorado and was therefore unwilling to intervene. Murphy later told Bowers that his interview with Stewart "was very pleasant" and that Stewart "does not seem to be at all of the labor agitator type," but that he was on his way to Colorado.\textsuperscript{44}

Likewise, Bowers was pleased with how Murphy had dealt with Secretary Wilson's emissary. He told Murphy that he had "handled the matter raised by Mr. Stewart with exceptional skill," leaving him and company president Jesse Welborn

\textsuperscript{42} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{43} \textit{RMN}, 24 September 1913.
\textsuperscript{44} Starr J. Murphy to L. M. Bowers, 16 September 1913, \textit{CIR Testimony}, vol. 9, 8413-14.
“unhandicapped in [the] event there is a strike among the coal miners in southern Colorado.” Bowers, however, was not looking forward to Stewart’s arrival in Colorado. He would later tell Rockefeller, Jr. that Secretary of Labor Wilson’s union association and the fact that he had placed many former union associates in position throughout the department “bespeaks a rough road ahead for our industrial enterprises during the present administration.” Bowers went on to tell Rockefeller about Stewart’s incessant “hobnobbing... with the most vicious of labor agitators” after his arrival in Colorado.

Like Edwin Brake, the state government’s emissary, Stewart found that the mine operators were uninterested in his services. For all the praise the AFL heaped on President Wilson for making one of their own the nation’s first labor secretary, it was Secretary Wilson’s connection to the labor movement that convinced the mine operators that his office was not to be trusted. The new Labor Department infuriated Bowers. When men like Stewart and Secretary of Labor Wilson “along with the cheap college professors and still cheaper writers in muckraking magazines, supplemented by a lot of milk-and-water preachers with little or no religion and less common sense are permitted to assault the business men who have built up the great industries...” Bowers wrote, “it is time that vigorous measures are taken to put a stop to these vicious teachings which are being broadcast throughout the country.” The CF&I’s chairman finished his manifesto with a dire warning: “If the businessmen do not awaken from their indifference and take aggressive measures... to right the wrongs that are being inflicted upon the business of this country,

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45 L. M. Bowers to Starr J. Murphy, 19 September 1913, ibid., 8414.
46 L. M. Bowers to John D. Rockefeller, Jr., 3 October 1913, ibid., 8419.
we will see a revolution, we will be under military government and our Republic will end where so many others have ended.\textsuperscript{47}

Recognizing that the mine operators were dug in against any negotiation with the union, the UMW scheduled a convention for September 15 and 16, 1913 in Trinidad to decide if the union would call a strike in southern Colorado. UMW president John White arrived in Denver on September 12 and met with Ammons, but the governor asserted that he had done everything he could to avoid a strike.\textsuperscript{48} Like White, UMW vice-president Frank Hayes still held out hope that the operators, who had been invited to Trinidad to meet with union officials, would agree to negotiate. Mary “Mother” Harris Jones, however, was skeptical. One of the most colorful characters in American labor history, “Mother” Jones cherished nothing more than a good fight. Once introduced to a crowd of workers as a great humanitarian, Jones stormed to the dais and shouted, “Get it straight, I’m not a humanitarian, I’m a hell raiser!”\textsuperscript{49}

Her commitment to organized labor was no doubt spurred by her own experience as a poor immigrant in the New World. Jones’s family fled the Irish potato famine when she was a girl and landed in Toronto. She found work in the United States first as a teacher and then as a dressmaker before settling in Memphis, Tennessee, where her husband George worked as an iron molder and was a member of the International Iron Molders Union. Disaster soon struck, however. The 1867 yellow fever epidemic that swept Memphis claimed George’s life and the lives of their four children. Mary Jones

\textsuperscript{47} L. M. Bowers to John D. Rockefeller, Jr., 11 October 1913, ibid., 8420.
\textsuperscript{48} RMN, 13 September 1913.
moved on to Chicago, and that city’s radical labor politics along with the 1886 Haymarket Affair turned her into a union organizer. Her first press notice came through her involvement with Coxey’s Army in 1894, and in 1896, she organized a rally for Eugene Debs after he had served his time in prison for refusing to obey the draconian court injunctions brought against his American Railroad Union during the Pullman strike. Debs praised her as a “modern Joan of Arc,” and she was soon working for the socialist *The Appeal to Reason*, which would become the most successful leftist magazine in American history. She then found her way into the United Mine Workers, where she helped the union achieve spectacular organizing successes. Through strikes and organizing drives in the eastern states between 1897 and 1902, the union grew from 9,000 to over 300,000 members. She became “International Organizer” for the union, and came to Colorado for the second time in 1913—she had spent time in the southern field during the 1903-04 strike—attempting to move the union west.50

Jones’s Trinidad convention speech showed why she was such a popular figure among coal miners and their families. Before the assembled miners in the Trinidad Opera House she was much more direct than other union officials were willing to be. “If it is strike or submit,” she screamed, “for God’s sake strike—strike until you win!” She then addressed the issue that perhaps hit closest to home for these miners. She told her audience that a CF&I supervisor had recently explained that his company treated their mules with more care than their men because “A miner is cheaper than a mule to a coal company.” No doubt the miners in her audience had little trouble believing this assertion. Jones, however, was not satisfied with simply cheerleading for the UMW. She challenged the

50 Ibid., 20, 34-37, 39-87.
miners to overcome their apprehension about coming out on strike: "Fear is the greatest
curse we have. I never was anywhere yet that I feared anybody. If you are too cowardly to
fight there are enough women in this country to come in and beat hell out of you."

Such rhetoric was typical of a Mother Jones speech. She often challenged the
manhood of her overwhelming male audiences and sought to include the miners’ wives in
her interpretation of what it would take to win the strike. Whether her immigrant audience in
Trinidad completely understood this message is difficult to know because Jones delivered
her speech in English, but the crowd roared its approval. The convention went on to list
eight strike demands:

1. We demand recognition of the union
2. We demand a ten percent advance in wages on the tonnage rates
3. We demand an eight hour day for all classes of labor in or around the coal mines
   and at the coke ovens
4. We demand pay for all narrow and dead work, which includes brushing,
   timbering, removing falls, handling impurities, etc.
5. We demand a check-weighmen at all mines to be elected by the miners, without
   any interference by company officials in said election.
6. We demand the right to trade in any store we please, and the right to choose our
   own boarding place and own our doctor.
7. We demand the enforcement of the Colorado mining laws and the abolition of
   the notorious and criminal guard system which has prevailed in the mining
camps of Colorado for many years.

51 "Proceedings: Special Convention of District Fifteen, United Mine Workers of America, Held in
Trinidad, Colorado, 16 September 1913, Papers of Edward L. Doyle, Box 1, Envelope 10, Denver Public
Library; RMN, 15 and 16 September, 1913; Mother Jones Speaks: Collected Writings and Speeches, edited
52 RMN, 15 September 1913.
53 Miners were paid by the coal ton, not by the hour. This payment system meant that the coal companies
did not pay their workers for the time they spent timbering the mines, digging out areas that had caved in, and
removing rock that was not coal. These jobs were necessary, but did not put coal into a miner’s coal bin and
thus did not put any money in his pocket.
54 Paying miners by the coal ton opened up many opportunities for the companies to cheat their employees.
A ton of coal weighed 2400 pounds, not 2000 pounds, for many coal companies in southern Colorado and
company managers otherwise cheated their employees by fixing their scales to indicate a low weight. A miner-
elected check-weighman who would also make sure scales operated correctly was the union’s solution to such
cheating.
55 UMWJ, 25 September 1913, 1.
The convention then agreed to give the coal operators a week to mull over this agenda and set September 23 as the strike date. During that time and the two weeks after the strike began, several small mining companies acquiesced to these requests and signed contracts with the United Mine Workers.\textsuperscript{56} The largest coal companies—the CF&I, the Victor-American Fuel Company, and the Rocky Mountain Fuel Company—along with several smaller companies all refused to recognize the union. Although the eight-hour day, elections to choose check weighmen, and ability to shop in stores not held by their employers were already protected by state law in Colorado, the miners and the UMW knew that their employers could continue to thumb their collective noses at these laws without consequence. They believed that only a recognized union and the contract that would come with recognition would force the operators to obey the law.

**Capital Organizes**

The CF&I’s Lamont Bowers understood that recognition was the most important of the union’s demands. Just before the strike began he wrote that the operators had met all of “the demands being made now by the agitators. The main question and, in fact, the only matter up between the United Mine Workers of America and the Colorado Fuel and Iron Co., is recognition of the union, which we flatly refuse to do, or even meet with these agitators to discuss or take up this question directly or indirectly.”\textsuperscript{57} While president of the CF&I Jesse Welborn was the company’s spokesperson during the strike, Bowers clearly ran the company’s anti-union campaign. These two men along with Albert Felts

\textsuperscript{56} Edward Doyle to John P. White, 6 October 1913; *UMWJ*, 9 October 1913, 2.
\textsuperscript{57} L. M. Bowers to Starr J. Murphy, Esq., 19 September 1913, *CIR Testimony*, vol. 9, 8415.
effectively organized the other mine operators, their friends in Colorado’s banking industry, and Governor Ammons to help win their fight for National Guard intervention in the strike.

That Lamont Bowers headed up the CF&I’s union resistance campaign was unfortunate for the UMW. Bowers began his career as a grocer in Binghamton, New York before moving to Omaha, Nebraska. In 1893, Bowers’s nephew Frederick T. Gates joined the Rockefeller family business enterprises as a confidential advisor to John D. Rockefeller, Sr. Gates was a devout Baptist who graduated from the Rochester Theological Seminary in 1880, led his own congregation for a time before becoming a fundraiser for the American Baptist Education Society. His work brought him into contact with John D. Rockefeller, Sr., who was also a Baptist and gave generously to Baptist causes. Soon, Gates got his uncle, also a devout Baptist, appointed as an advisor to the family. After finding that Lake Superior shipping companies intended to gouge him on prices for transporting iron ore from the family’s mines in the Mesabi Range across the Great Lakes, Rockefeller began looking for a man to organize a fleet of his own. Gates recommended his uncle for the job even though he knew nothing about cargo ships or shipbuilding. Gates told Rockefeller that Bowers had “never set foot on a ship in his life. He probably wouldn’t know the bow from a stern, or a sea-anchor from an umbrella, but he has good sense, he is honest, enterprising, keen, and thrifty.” Gates Bowers got the job, and despite his lack of familiarity with engineering and shipbuilding, he designed the first 500-foot cargo ships ever used on the Great Lakes. In 1901, when Rockefeller sold the

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fleets to United States Steel, the fleet contained fifty-eight ships.\textsuperscript{59}

This extraordinary success cemented Bowers's position with the Rockefeller family. In 1907, he moved with his wife, who was suffering from consumption, to Colorado, believing that the mountain air would help regain her health. Rockefeller gave him the CF&I, which at that time was in terrible financial shape. Bowers moved fast to slash costs and quickly placed the company back on sound fiscal ground. Bowers, however, also worried that tactics such as cutting the number of detectives and mine guards employed by the company might bring him derision from his subordinates within the company and from other mine operators. He recalled that these men derided his approached and labeled him “a tenderfoot from the East.”\textsuperscript{60}

Perhaps in reaction to this perception that he was soft, Bowers became the most vocal opponent of unionization among the operators in southern Colorado, promising that the CF&I would resist the union until “our bones are bleached as white as chalk in these Rocky Mountains.”\textsuperscript{61} Bowers projected some of the doubts about his own manly fortitude onto his second in command, CF&I president Jesse Welborn. Upon joining the company in 1908, Bowers characterized his new partner as lacking the “spunk” he thought necessary to effectively run a large corporation. Welborn, however, was more than up to the job. Born on a farm in Ashland, Nebraska in 1870, Welborn took a job with the CF&I as a salesman before becoming vice-president in 1903, and he quickly helped break the 1903-04 UMW strike. Welborn became president of the company in 1907 and was extremely proud of his rise to the top of one of the 100 largest corporations in the United

\textsuperscript{59} Chernow, \textit{Titan}, 382-86; McGovern and Guttridge, \textit{The Great Coalfield War}, 60.
\textsuperscript{60} Testimony of L. M. Bowers, \textit{CIR Testimony}, vol. 9, 8739; Chernow, \textit{Titan}, 572.
\textsuperscript{61} L. M. Bowers to John D. Rockefeller, Jr., 29 September 1913, \textit{CIR Testimony}, vol. 9, 8418.
States. After becoming president, he collected the many letters of congratulations he received into a scrapbook and carefully alphabetized the correspondence according to the author’s last name.62

His passion for his job was more than enough motivation to join Bowers and the Rockefeller family in defeating the UMW. By 1913, Welborn had learned and accepted the anti-unionism that was so common among the country’s industrialists. In the midst of the strike that would soon begin, Welborn wrote a strong denunciation of organized labor. Welborn argued: “If Haywood, Moyer and Company secure a monopoly of coal production, they will naturally expect that organized labor on railroads throughout the United States will join hands with them and welcome them as allies, who through the control of coal would be a decisive factor in any future railroad labor demands.” Such a monopoly would grow beyond the coal and railroad industries. Before long, “not a wheel could turn . . . whether in industry or commerce, without the consent of Moyer, Haywood and Company.”63

Substituting Bill Haywood and Charles Moyer, leaders of the Western Federation of Miners, for the actual leaders of the UMW was an interesting slip on Welborn’s part.64 He knew very well that the WFM, which was a far more radical union than the UMW, was not involved in the strike that plagued his company. Haywood and Moyer, however, were certainly infamous among industrialists in Colorado and around the nation. With

62 McGovern and Guttridge, The Great Coalfield War, 62; The Papers of Jesse F. Welborn, MSS 1218, Box 1, File Folder 1, Colorado Historical Society, Denver, Colorado.
63 The Papers of Jesse F. Welborn, MSS 1218, unsigned letter dated 20 May 1914, Box 1, File Folder 49, Colorado Historical Society.
64 Lamont Bowers made the same mistake when he first reported to John D. Rockefeller, Jr. that union organizers were at work in the CF&I’s coal camps. See L. M. Bowers to John D. Rockefeller, Jr., 4 September 1913, CIR Testimony, vol. 9, 8413.
Haywood and Moyer at the helm, the WFM had led the 1903-04 strikes in Colorado and both men had been charged with plotting the murder of former Idaho governor Frank Steunenberg. Prosecutors in Boise, Idaho contended that Haywood and Moyer had conspired to kill Steunenberg as payback for the governor’s role in breaking the 1899 WFM strike in Coeur d’Alene. Detectives hired by those prosecutors kidnapped Haywood and Moyer in Colorado and brought them by special train to Boise, but superstar defense lawyer Clarence Darrow won their acquittal in 1906. Seven years later, mine operators across the West were still bitter about letting the opportunity to hang Haywood and Moyer slip through their hands.65

It is therefore not surprising that Welbom confused the WFM with the UMW. Doing so helped him conjure a country that faced “only one danger. That danger,” Welborn wrote, “is not combination of capital, it is not the Mexican situation, it is the labor monopoly; and the danger of labor monopoly lies in its use of armed force, its organized and deliberate war on society.” In Welborn’s estimation, though, the ‘labor monopoly’ could not succeed without help. “The government,” he contended, “violently and passionately attacks all combinations of capital. Men in high places, on the other hand, violently and passionately defend the labor monopoly . . . even when they exercise their tyranny and despotism with secret assassinations, open violence and organized slaughter. Never have the clouds seemed to me so darkly to overspread our land.”66

It is clear then that Welborn agreed with Bowers’s estimation of Edward Brake,

65 On the Steunenberg murder and the trial that followed, see J. Anthony Lukas, Big Trouble: A Murder in a Small Western Town Sets Off a Struggle for the Soul of America (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1997).
66 The Papers of Jesse F. Welborn, MSS 1218, unsigned letter dated 20 May 1914, Box 1, File Folder 49, Colorado Historical Society.
William B. Wilson, and Ethelbert Stewart, and in so doing won praise from his boss for how he handled himself during the strike. In a letter to Rockefeller, Jr. in November 1913, Bowers said: “the strain has been very great on Mr. Welborn,” but instead of reiterating the doubts he harbored about his second-in-charge when he first came to Colorado, Bowers told Rockefeller: “how valuable a man he is when placed in the most trying circumstances: . . . dealing with labor unions whose leaders in this State cannot be regarded as anything less than assassins.”\textsuperscript{67}

As we saw in Chapter Two, John D. Rockefeller, Jr. shared this anti-unionism with his officers in Colorado. Just after the Ludlow Massacre, the younger Rockefeller drafted a public statement that covered the same ground as Bowers and Welborn, but with a different emphasis. The strike against the CF&I, he insisted, “is not merely of local importance. It affects every workingman throughout this land. . . . Surely no thinking man can ask . . . that we will abandon out own employes [sic] and the cause of the workers of the entire country. . . . Are the labor unions, representing a small minority of the workers . . . to be sustained in their disregard of the inalienable right of every American citizen to work without interference whether he be a union or a non-union man?”\textsuperscript{68} Here, Rockefeller, Jr. repeated the argument that for decades had driven business and judicial anti-unionism: workers should be able to freely negotiate wages and terms of employment with their employers without interference from unions. He also worried about the consequences of “losing” a company to unionization, especially a company

\textsuperscript{67} L. M. Bowers to John D. Rockefeller, Jr., 18 November 1913, \textit{CIR Testimony}, vol. 9, 8422.

\textsuperscript{68} Statement of John D. Rockefeller, Jr., 29 April 1914, “Business Interests,” Papers of the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company, RG 2, Box 23, Folder 208, Rockefeller Archive Center. Also see the testimony of John D. Rockefeller, Jr., \textit{CIR Testimony}, vol. 9, 8592-8715 for a longer articulation of this argument.
associated with a family of the Rockefellers stature. Such a loss would set off a catastrophic collapse of capital as more and more workers were brought under union control.

Thus Rockefeller, Jr. Bowers, and Welborn, were all in line with southern Colorado's other mine operators. By expressing anti-union positions and demonstrating their willingness to fight unionization at all costs, Bowers and Welborn proved they belonged among the hard boiled mine operators who had already earned their strike-breaking credentials in the labor conflicts that wracked Colorado during the previous three decades. John Osgood of the Victor-American Fuel Company was one of those veterans, and he joined the trinity at the CF&I by attacking the UMW's decision to strike over issues covered by state law. Osgood wrote: "It is said that in China the doctors are paid only while their patients are enjoying good health, and that the compensation ceases when the patient is ill. A similar system might have good results on the Mine Workers' organization if the salaries of the officials and organizers were discontinued when a strike was called. They would not be so apt to call strikes on such flimsy pretenses..."69

The operators would maintain this hostile stance throughout the coming strike. Months after the conflict had ended, Welborn wrote the following in the company's 1914 annual report: "It [the strike] was neither agitated nor called because of difference between the workmen and employers. It has been in fact a contest between an outside labor organization, known as the United Mine Workers of America, trying to force its regime upon the coal mining industry of this state, on one side, and the operators acting with a large majority of their workmen opposed to an affiliation with that organization on

69 RMN, 21 September 1913.
the other side.”

It is not surprising, then, that during the week before the strike began, the CF&I and the other anti-union coal operators who refused to recognize the union began organizing themselves to resist their employees’ demands. Representatives of most of the coal mining outfits in Colorado met in the Rocky Mountain Fuel Company’s offices in Denver. According to John Osgood, “the opinion was unanimous” that no operator should sign a contract with the UMW “unless their financial condition was such that they could no longer hold out, and then they would notify the other operators of their inability to keep up the struggle.”

It was also agreed at this meeting that Osgood along with Welborn and David W. Brown of the Rocky Mountain Fuel Company would head a committee in charge of directing the operators’ efforts to break the strike. The operators would divide the expenses of these efforts among themselves according to how much coal each company produced. Those who produced the most coal would contribute the most money to the strikebreaking pot. This decision to follow Karl Marx’s dictum--from each according to their ability--did not work out that well. According to Osgood, not all members of the operators’ commune were able to meet their obligation, and the CF&I, Victor-American, and Rocky Mountain, which were the largest coal producers in southern Colorado, ended up footing the strikebreaking bill.

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71 Testimony of John Osgood, CIR Testimony, vol. 7, 6426.
72 Ibid.
To these three operators, the Colorado National Guard was the preferred strikebreaking tool. The guard had enthusiastically broken the 1903-04 WFM and UMW strikes in the state and had participated in crushing labor unrest three other times in the years since its formation in 1879. Hence, much of what Bowers, Welborn, Osgood, and Brown did in the weeks after the strike began was geared toward convincing Colorado Governor Elias Ammons to call the National Guard to southern Colorado.

These efforts ignored the oppressive conditions in their mining camps that created so much support for the union. The largest operators, in particular, explained the strike as the work of outside agitators who, through threats and intimidation, forced their employees to join the strike. This explanation of labor unrest has been around since workers started organizing unions, but it is also not surprising that the coal operators were ignorant of how much union support there was among their employees. As we have seen, many miners were fired in 1912 because their employers suspected that they held union sympathies. Clearly, all who wanted to keep working had to hide their pro-unionism from their supervisors. Still, it is difficult to determine if Bowers, Welborn, John Osgood, and D.W. Brown, really believed that the UMW was forcing their employees out on strike. The zeal with which they expressed this view of the strike in private correspondence as well as in their public comments suggests that they did. Bowers, for instance, told Rockefeller, Jr. in early October 1913 that “most of our miners who remain in the State

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74 Long, *Where the Sun Never Shines,* 262.
would be back at work if it were not for fear of assassination or violence. The union officials have run in a large number of sluggers and Black Hand foreigners from West Virginia who are in the pay of the United Mine Workers of America.\textsuperscript{75} \textquotedblright Black Hand\textquotedblright was the name of the secret Serbian nationalist group that planned the assassination of Austro-Hungarian Archduke Franz Ferdinand in 1914. That assassination set off the chain events that led to World War I. In the pre-war United States, \textquotedblright black hand\textquotedblright was a term often applied to ethnic, usually Italian gangs who, it was believed, made a living from criminal enterprise. What a cadre of Italian gangsters was doing in West Virginia and how they came to be affiliated with the UMW is anyone\textquotesingle s guess. It is clear, though, that whether Bowers was expressing a firmly held belief or simply trying to advance the perception that the strike was illegitimate, he and the other operators pursued a strategy for breaking the strike that relied heavily on the argument that the union and the small number of union supporters among the miners had scared everyone else out of the mines. Given these circumstances, the operators argued, most miners would return to work if they received protection from the National Guard.

Although the coal operators probably believed that authority to call out the National Guard should rest with them, it did not. Petitioning the governor was the most direct way to getting the Guard called out on active duty, but Governor Ammons was an unlikely candidate for the job of helping the mine operators break this strike. Ammons had sought to bring about a settlement before the strike began and he understood that labor was an important part of the coalition that had placed him in the governor\textquotesingle s office a year earlier. Precedent also mitigated against calling out the National Guard. Although Republican

\textsuperscript{75} L. M. Bowers to John D. Rockefeller, Jr., 3 October 1913, CIR Testimony, vol. 9, 8419.
Governor James Peabody had enthusiastically thrown the state behind Colorado's metal and coal mine owners' efforts to break the 1903-04 strikes, Ammons's Democratic predecessor, John Shafroth, had refused the operators' appeal for troops after the UMW strike in northern Colorado began in 1910.76

Ammons's own experience also made him a defender of ordinary people. The governor was born in 1860 on a farm in North Carolina and moved to Colorado with his family in 1871. Although his father was often sick, and young Elias went to work first in a woolen mill in Denver and later in a laundry, he eventually was able to attend school and graduated from East Denver High School in 1880. A severe case of measles during his childhood weakened Ammons's eyesight and a hunting accident in 1880 that left him with a serious head wound further impaired his eyesight. Nevertheless, Ammons succeeded in getting work first as a newspaper reporter and then as an associate editor. His diminished sight, however, forced him to leave that job. Undaunted, Ammons became a cattle rancher. He and his business partner started with just twenty-five head of cattle and eighty acres of land, but the business prospered and soon the partners' ranch was one of the biggest in Colorado.77

His life-long interest in politics led Ammons to run for Colorado's House of Representatives in 1890. He won election as a Republican, and very quickly became known for his strong will and depth of character. Those qualities helped him become the youngest man to ever serve as Speaker of the House. His resolve was on display in 1896 when he left

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76 McGovern and Guttridge, *The Great Coalfield War*, 76.
the GOP because he disagreed with its support for the gold standard. As a silver republican, Ammons won election to the state senate in 1898 and eventually switched his allegiance to the Democratic Party. He twice lost races for lieutenant governor before gaining the governor's mansion in 1912, when the split between Republicans and Progressives allowed Ammons to win a solid plurality. Throughout his political career, Ammons championed the interests of the state's rural and laboring people, and labor's support was crucial in his 1912 victory. Ammons, moreover, did not owe his political success to the state's industrialists, who consistently supported Republican candidates for governor at the turn of the century.78

**Baldwin-Felts at the Operators' Service**

The operators saw Ammons's hesitance to do their bidding as a formidable roadblock but not an insurmountable one. Following a strategy perfected in other strikes, Albert C. Felts of the Baldwin-Felts Detective Agency went about creating as much violence and chaos in southern Colorado as possible so as to leave Governor Ammons with no choice but to call out the National Guard to restore order.

Just a few days before the strike began, district 15 president John McLennan complained to Leonard De Lue, a police inspector in southern Colorado, that the mine operators were bringing armed men from Denver into southern Colorado. De Lue, however, was unwilling to stop these men from entering Huerfano and Las Animas counties. De Lue said that no weapons had been found on these men, "although unloaded revolvers were found in the valises carried by them." Despite this seemingly contradictory statement, De

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78 Stone, *A History of Colorado* vol. 2, 32-38; http://www.archives.state.co.us/govs/eammons.html#biog

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Lue insisted, "the circumstances gave no ground for arresting such men on charges of carrying concealed weapons." 79

The Baldwin-Felts detective agency had hired these armed men to bolster their strikebreaking contingent in southern Colorado. Once the strike began on September 23, Albert C. Felts, who was the younger brother of company founder Thomas Felts, kicked his strikebreaking operation in southern Colorado into high gear. The striking miners committed the first act of violence after the strike officially began. On September 24, five miners shot Bob Lee, who had come to southern Colorado in 1903, took a job as a coal camp marshal, and helped the mine operators defeat the 1903-04 strike. Fred Harrington, general counsel for the CF&I, asserted that the murder was a union effort to get even with Lee. Harrington went on to say that Bob Lee had worked for the CF&I for ten years, that he was "a Virginian and a gentleman," and that his death was "attributable to the incendiary utterances of Mother Jones, who had been urging men to acts of violence in her addresses." 80

The miners in southern Colorado, however, had a different view of Lee. As a camp marshal, company guard, and deputy sheriff, Lee was known among the miners for raping their wives and daughters while their husbands and fathers were underground working during the day. Lee was never charged with rape, but John McQuarrie, a former under sheriff in Huerfano County, stated that Lee "was a brutal man, very brutal" and that a friend of his familiar with Lee’s reputation in the coal camps said "that it was no surprise to him whatever that Mr. Lee had been killed as he was." 81 Initial reports of Lee’s death stated that he had come upon five Greek miners who were tearing up a company bridge near the

79 RMN, 19 September 1913.
80 Ibid., 25 September 1913.
81 Testimony of John McQuarrie, CIR Testimony, vol. 7, 6782.
CF&I’s Segundo coking plant. As Lee attempted to drive them away, one of the miners shot him. In the days that followed, a different story emerged. Governor Ammons said he had received credible reports asserting that the miners had plotted to kill Lee. Despite a $1,000 reward Lee’s murders were never found. Whatever the exact circumstances of his death, it is safe to say that few who lived and worked around southern Colorado’s coalmines mourned for him.  

Even though Baldwin-Felts detectives had killed Gerald Lippiatti a month earlier, coal company officials claimed that the striking miners had resorted to violence first, and used Lee’s death to argue that only the state militia could maintain order in southern Colorado. The minor skirmishes that resulted from the miners’ effort to keep out the strikebreakers that the operators were already bringing into their mines only bolstered the operators’ case. Jesse Northcutt, attorney for the coal companies and publisher of two newspapers in Trinidad, began circulating petitions calling for the governor to send troops among businesspeople in Trinidad, and Jesse Welborn released a statement claiming that the vast majority of men who joined the strike were “threatened with violence and death if they continued to work. . . . The presence of the state militia in Southern Colorado would give assurance to the men of protection from threatened violence, and they would immediately return to work.” Sheriffs Grisham and Farr also wrote Governor Ammons encouraging him to send the militia to southern Colorado soon after the strike began. Grisham, in particular, laid out clearly why he, and the operators, wanted troops. Grisham wrote: “The United Mine Workers of America . . . have been, as I am advised, for many months,

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82 RMN, 25 and 26 September 1913. Also see Long, Where the Sun Never Shines, 264, 278 and Papanikolas, Buried Unsung, 80.
83 RMN, 27 September and 2 October 1913
proselyting [sic] in Southern Colorado, seeking adherents to this organization; and now, in pursuance of their policy, they have established tented villages in various parts of the Country, from which they can and do exercise a surveillance over the miners going to and from the various mining camps in the County.”

Grisham understood very well that the UMW had built their tent colonies strategically because picketing was illegal in Colorado. Unable to set up pickets around the mining camps to discourage strikebreakers from entering, the union decided to use the tent colonies as pickets. To do so, the union built the colonies at the entrances to the canyons leading to the mining camps. This positioning made it difficult for the mine operators to get strikebreakers from the railroad stops at Walsenburg, Aguilar, Ludlow, and Trinidad to the mining camps.

In response, Northcutt, Welborn the other coal operators, and Grisham and Farr wanted the Colorado National Guard to act as bodyguard for the strikebreakers the operators were rounding up through labor agents in from St. Louis, Chicago, Pittsburgh, and New York. Realizing that Governor Ammons, who would have to call the guard out, was not a willing participant in this scheme, Albert Felts, with the help of his detectives, their hired hands, and the sheriffs’ departments of Huerfano and Las Animas counties, worked to put Felt’s strikebreaking plan into effect. Felts brought many of his employees from Baldwin-
Felt’s offices in West Virginia. These employees had just finished helping Felts break a UMW strike in West Virginia, and the strategy of forcing Governor Ammons’s hand and breaking the strike in southern Colorado would closely followed the path traveled in West Virginia.\footnote{Testimony of Edward J. Boughton, CIR Testimony, vol. 7, 6376. On the 1912-13 West Virginia coal strike and Baldwin- Felts’ role in it, see Norwood, Strikebreaking and Intimidation, 133-40.}

Felts got off to a slow start. On October 6, district 15 secretary-treasurer Edward Doyle wrote: “many fake explosions and riots have taken place in the imagination of the operators and reporters of several subsidized papers in the state, but up to date, no one has been injured.”\footnote{Edward Doyle to John P. White, 6 October 1913, Papers of Edward Doyle, Box 1, Envelope 4, Denver Public Library.} The miners, however, had made clear that they would protect themselves and their families. Before the strike even began, The United Mine Workers’ Journal declared: “We will not and should not advise our fellow workers to submit to the will of an illegally constituted government, supinely and without exhausting every possible means of resistance, even force of arms if it came to that. In Rankin, Pa.; in Warton, N. J.; in West Virginia; in Calument, Michigan; in Colorado, our people have been shot down like sheep in the shambles by these hired murderers, while the subservient local officials looked on complacently and hastened to condone the brutal murders.”\footnote{UMWJ, 28 August 1913.}

Felts's strategy eventually produced results. The striking miners were more than willing to fight back when detectives or deputy sheriffs shot up the tents where their wives and children lived and slept. From September 25 to October 29, 1913, eighteen people were killed in the nearly forty armed skirmishes between striking miners on one side and

\footnote{Testimony of Edward J. Boughton, CIR Testimony, vol. 7, 6376. On the 1912-13 West Virginia coal strike and Baldwin- Felts’ role in it, see Norwood, Strikebreaking and Intimidation, 133-40.}

\footnote{Edward Doyle to John P. White, 6 October 1913, Papers of Edward Doyle, Box 1, Envelope 4, Denver Public Library.}

\footnote{UMWJ, 28 August 1913.}
Baldwin-Felts guards and deputy sheriffs on the other. The blow-by-blow details of these battles have been well documented elsewhere, but neither the full significance of the Baldwins' strategy nor the details of their tactics have received sufficient attention.

On October 17, 1913, after battles between the striking miners and Baldwin-Felts and deputy sheriffs had intensified over the previous two weeks, Albert Felts unveiled what the Rocky Mountain News referred to as "the steel battleship." This steel battleship was actually an automobile that Felts had outfitted with armor plating at the CF&I's steel mill in Pueblo. He then topped the car off with a mounted machine gun. After forty-nine strikers were arrested at the McLaughlin mine for picketing, the "steel battleship" rolled along side them as the deputy sheriff's marched the picketers three miles to the county jail. The battleship warded off a crowd of 300 miners who followed behind. "The sight of the machine gun, primed and ready for fire struck terror to their hearts," the News reported.

Later that same day, Walter Belk and George Belcher, the Baldwin-Felts detectives who had killed Gerald Lippiatti, along with Albert Felts and Jesse Northcutt took the "steel battleship" out for a ride. They proceeded to shoot up the miners' tent colony at Forbes, killing Luke Vahwernick, a striking miner, and wounding eighteen-year old Marco Zamboni. Somehow, Zamboni survived the nine wounds to his leg, but he was permanently crippled. There would have been more casualties if many tent colony residents had not fled to a nearby house as soon as the shooting started. John Ure, a sixty-three year old miner who also lived at Forbes, spent the "steel battleship" attack under his bed. When he emerged after

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89 RNM, 28 October 1913.  
91 RNM, 17 October 1913.  
92 Ibid. Also see the testimony of A. C. Felts, Conditions in the Coal Mines of Colorado, part I, 339-40, 368-70.
nightfall, he counted 147 bullet holes in his tent. A veteran of five strikes, “three in the old country and two here,” Ure matter-of-factly stated: “this is the first time in all my experience in strikes that I ever saw a machine gun used.”

Ure’s experience aside, machine guns had become a common tool in labor conflicts by 1913. These weapons had become something of a signature item for Albert Felts and the Baldwin-Felts Detective Agency. Felts was also enamored of combining the relatively new machine gun with the transportation technologies that the industrial revolution had produced. In West Virginia, Felts had outfitted a railroad car with armor plating and loaded the car with two-dozen Baldwin guards armed with rifles and a machine gun. In a perverse reference to Theodore Roosevelt’s 1912 campaign for the presidency, Felts nicknamed this armored car the “Bull Moose Special.” Having christened his car, Felts waited until nightfall to ride it slowly past a miners’ tent colony and shoot it up, killing one miner and wounding at least one other person.

As in southern Colorado, Felts resorted to this tactic in West Virginia only after violence had escalated to a point where he believed that he could characterize such action as self-defense. There is no also no doubt that such tactics were aimed at terrorizing the miners and their families. In southern Colorado’s tent colonies, knowledge of the “Bull Moose Special” was widespread, and people who lived in the colonies along railroad tracks--those

93 *RMN*, 17 and 18 October 1913; *UMWJ*, 30 October 1913.
at Ludlow, Forbes and Walsenburg—lived in constant fear that a “Bull Moose West” would make a late-night foray past their homes.95

Creating terror through indiscriminate violence like that perpetrated in West Virginia and at Forbes had become a common strikebreaking strategy among detective agencies.96 Felts, however, had taken this tactic to a new level. His men did not simply sneak up on tent colonies in the middle of the night and start shooting. Instead, Felts intended to announce the presence of his men by putting them in a noisy machine equipped with 3/8-inch thick armor and a machine gun that fired 400 shots a minute.97

Felts was silent on why he thought this method was better than the more common sneak attack, but it is still important to think about why he added the extra accoutrements to his terror campaign. It is likely that Felts wanted to get results quickly for the mine operators. Thus, his over-the-top displays of brutality were in part, an ostentatious effort to impress his clients. He was showing off, wanting to make clear to the mine operators he was doing all he could to break the strike. The composition of his audience, however, might also have influenced his thinking. Automobiles were a common sight in the United States by 1913. The families who lived in southern Colorado and struck in 1913, however, came largely from poor and rural areas in southern and eastern Europe, where the automobile was more of a novelty. Many of these immigrants certainly had been in the United States for a number of years. Indeed, more than a few came to southern Colorado in 1903 and 1904 as strikebreakers in the UMW’s eight-month long failed strike. Many others, though, were

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95 Edward Doyle believed that the “Death Special’s” only purpose was to intimidate people. See Doyle’s testimony, CIR Testimony, vol. 7, 6951.
96 Norwood, Strikebreaking and Intimidation.
97 Testimony of A. C. Felts, Conditions in the Coal Mines of Colorado, part I, 370.
more recent immigrants who came to Colorado as the CF&I and other companies pursued their strategy of preventing union organizing by creating an ethnically diverse workforce. None of these immigrants, furthermore, could afford an automobile of their own, and thus were faced with a new technology that was beyond their grasp and had been transformed into a weapon. These reasons might explain why Felts made no attempt to hide his armored car. Baldwin-Felts detectives and deputy sheriffs used it to get around throughout the strike and made a point of driving the car past the tent colonies as often as possible. Such public display demonstrated that an attack led by what the miners quickly dubbed the “the Death Special” could come at any time, and that the armored and armed car was a legitimate tool for strikebreaking that Sheriffs Farr and Grisham had apparently sanctioned. The artist’s rendering of “the Death Special” that appeared in the United Mine Workers’ Journal two weeks after its first appearance at Forbes speaks volumes about how the union perceived the car—and wanted it to be perceived. The UMWJ artist drew a sleek machine with gun turrets on each side and two powerful searchlights. The resulting “Death Special” looked like something that had descended to Earth with the Martian invaders in H. G. Wells’s War of the Worlds rather than the boxy ancestor of the modern pick-up truck that it actually was.98

The “steel battleship” was significant in other ways. Although machine guns were not used in every American labor conflict, these weapons were more popular with American strike breaking detective agencies than they were with American military organizations. The United States Army adopted the Gatling gun in 1866, and more advanced versions of this weapon were readily available by the 1870s, but both the U. S. Army and the various

98 UMWJ, 6 November 1913.
European militaries were slow to integrate these new weapons into their arsenals.\(^9\) European governments certainly bought these deadly contraptions in the arms race that developed during the decades before the Great War and then used them to create the carnage at the Somme, Verdun, and the other sites of World War I's trench warfare. Many European military officers, however, rejected the machine gun's usefulness in battle before 1914. When enlisted men in one European army asked their superior what they should do with the machine guns they carried during a training exercise just before the war, the officer responded: "Take the damned things to the flank and hide them!"\(^1\) In *The Social History of the Machine Gun*, John Ellis argues that the origins of the European militaries' officer classes explain this rejection of automatic weapons. Most officers came from the landowning aristocracy that the industrial revolution was leaving behind. Automatic weapons of all kinds, of course, were the products of that very revolution, and many officers, therefore, turned their noses up at the technology that was quickly undermining the position of their class. Change in European militaries also came very slowly. On the eve of the Great War, professional soldiers' training still revolved around the rifle and the bayonet, and Napoleon's and Frederick the Great's tactics still dominated officer training. To the European military establishment, furthermore, one did not prove himself as a soldier--or as a man--by killing the enemy from hundreds of yards away with an automatic weapon doing

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\(^9\) I use the term automatic weapon here because for late-nineteenth-century gun enthusiasts and gun makers, a true machine gun--a fully automatic weapon--began firing bullets in rapid succession upon pulling the trigger, and would not stop firing until the trigger was released. The Gatling gun, therefore, which Richard Jordan Gatling patented in the United States in 1862, was not a machine gun because the Gatling gun's operator had to continually turn a crank in order to make it work. By this definition, true "machine guns" did not appear in the United States until 1884. See John Ellis, *The Social History of the Machine Gun* (New York: Random House, 1975), 26, 29, 33.

\(^1\) Quoted in Ibid., 18.
all the work. Soldiers showed their honor, valor, and skill in the bayonet rush and the cavalry charge.\textsuperscript{101}

In the United States, the army’s officer class was not bound to the land, but shared their European counterparts’ romantic view of the battlefield as a place where men were made. The army shunned automatic weapons after the Civil War, and used them sparingly in the Plains Indian Wars, because transporting the bulky Gatling gun slowed down infantry pursuit of the often fast-moving Indians. Army outfits fired Gatling guns against Indian adversaries just six times between 1874 and 1878. During those years, General George Armstrong Custer left four Gatling guns at headquarters before he and his troops set off toward Little Big Horn in 1876, claiming that the big guns “might hamper our movements through such rugged country.” It is hard to resist wondering if Custer thought about those four Gatling guns as the Sioux overran and defeated him and his troops at Little Big Horn.\textsuperscript{102}

Frontier Army units more frequently included Gatling guns among their weapons after Custer’s defeat, but officers still complained that Gatlings slowed them down and that it was difficult to adjust the gun’s fire. The Army also deployed only a few Gatling guns in Cuba during the Spanish-American War, but used machine guns more frequently and very effectively to suppress the Filipino insurrection and the 1900 Boxer Rebellion in China.\textsuperscript{103} It is possible that the War Department believed it more acceptable to use machine guns against Asian enemies, but even though it was clear that the American military would likely fight

\textsuperscript{101} Ibid., 47-70.
\textsuperscript{103} Armstrong, \textit{Bullets and Bureaucrats}, 82-83, 115-16.
again in Asia, the Army's ordnance department was slow to purchase many machine guns. It took until 1904 for the army to adopt the water-cooled Maxim machine gun as its standard weapon. Training with that gun however, was limited and the army was slow to develop doctrine concerning use of the gun. In 1909, the army approved the French-made Benet-Mercie as its standard machine gun, but soon found serious defects in this gun. It took until the eve of World War I for the army to try and fail to fix the Benet-Mercie and then find a replacement weapon. Following the federal War Department's lead, the Colorado National Guard did not include machine guns as part of its arsenal in 1913. Thus once called out on strike duty, guardsmen used the automatic weapons that Baldwin-Felts had brought to Colorado.104

The one place outside of American labor conflicts where automatic weapons and machine guns became popular before the European and American armies used them widely in World War I was among the late nineteenth-century European militaries, mercenaries, and marauders who conquered Africa. While using a hail of automatic fire against a "civilized" European enemy remained taboo, Africa's European colonizers were untroubled about "civilizing" the "inferior" races who resisted conquest through the muzzles of automatic weapons. Social Darwinism's logic sanctioned the use of a "superior" race's superior technology against an "inferior" race. Other more practical issues also made automatic weapons desirable in Africa. Europeans were often vastly outnumbered, but faced African tribesmen who carried only spears, knives, and shields. Though Africans rarely had muskets or rifles, they could use their numerical advantage to simply overrun their opponents. Automatic weapons eliminated this advantage, and the results were ghastly. In

104 Ibid., 125-88; Testimony of Karl Linderfelt, CIR Testimony, vol. 7, 6878.
1879, the *London Standard* described a British massacre in Zululand: "When all was over, we counted the dead. There lay, within a radius of five hundred yards, 473 Zulus. They lay in groups, in some places, of fourteen to thirty dead, mowed down by the fire of the Gatlings, which tells upon them more than the fire of rifles."105

Albert Felts never claimed that he deployed machine guns in southern Colorado and West Virginia for the same reasons Europeans brought these weapons to Africa. Still, there is a parallel here. The belief that the southern and eastern European immigrants who mined coal in Colorado were racially suspect was certainly widespread among the mine operators and their allies. Describing his employees in 1909, for instance, Lamont Bowers wrote: "these foreigners, who do not intend to make America their home, and who live like rats in order to save money, I do not feel that we ought to maintain high wages in order to increase their income and shorten their stay in this country."106 A mine operator on the other side of the county backed his comrade in Colorado when he described the mostly native-born miners from the mountains of West Virginia as the products of "wild stock" who showed an "antagonism toward the restraints of civilization."107 While machine guns were certainly deployed in strikes that involved large numbers of native-born workers, labor conflicts in the United States became more common—and more violent—as the American working class became more ethnically diverse.108 There is no doubt that heightened class antagonism helped explain why men like Albert Felts believed it permissible to use automatic weapons against striking workers, but the widespread belief that both immigrant and native-born

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105 Ibid., 79-107. The quotation from the *London Standard* appears on 84.
107 Quoted in Norwood, *Strikebreaking and Intimidation*, 130.
workers were primitive and inferior also likely played a role in bringing machine guns into labor conflicts.

The machine gun and "Steel Battleship" were not the only technological tactics of intimidation that Felts and the coal operators pursued. Around the time that the "steel battleship" made its debut, the coal operators installed high-powered searchlights on the hills and bluffs above many of the tent colonies. Lamont Bowers told Rockefeller, Jr. that these searchlights had a range of "five or six miles" and went on to describe the searchlights as a "mighty fine scheme, as we can discover groups or single individuals without the slightest difficulty moving around within the circuit."

To keep the colonies under surveillance, the companies lit the searchlights up every night. The powerful light beams no doubt created a surreal after-sundown atmosphere in the colonies. Because the company housing that many miners had inhabited before the strike did not always have electricity, the high-powered searchlights, like the "steel battleship," must have appeared profoundly alien to the miners and their families. As Zeese Papanikolas has pointed out, the ease with which the light penetrated their flimsy tents also must have made residents all the more aware of how vulnerable they were. If light could reach them so easily through their tents, how much difficulty would a bullet fired from a machine gun have?

The searchlights, no doubt, also kept people awake. Sleep deprivation was recognized then, as it is now, as a form of torture. This was a torture that miners and their families endured every night for months. It is sad, as well as darkly comedic, to imagine the

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109 L. M. Bowers to John D. Rockefeller, Jr., 3 October 1913, CIR Testimony, vol. 9, 8419. Baldwin Felts had used machine guns and searchlights in the 1902 southern West Virginia coal strike that had established the company's reputation in the state. See Hadsell and Coffey, "From Law and Order to Class Warfare," 272.

110 Papanikolas, Buried Unsung, 92-93. Mine operators in West Virginia also set up searchlights around their mines in the 1912-13 coal strike there. See Norwood, Strikebreaking and Intimidation, 134.
exhausted and strung-out Austrian miner who went stumbling into the office of a pro-union dentist in Trinidad who had a high-powered rifle capable of shooting out the lights. Despite the Austrian’s inability to speak English, and the dentist’s inability to speak German, the miner walked away with the gun and enough instruction to successfully destroy at least one searchlight. The Austrian, however, only achieved a temporary rest, as the operators were quick to fix the searchlights.111

The willingness to live month after month under the constant terror threat that Felts’s tactics and the operator’s searchlights created is a testament to the miners’ determination. Postal inspector W. A. Golden saw that determination on display when he visited the Ludlow tent colony soon after the “steel battleship’s” unveiling. He was most impressed by “the wholesome respect they [the strikers] entertain for the machine guns used in guard duty by the operators,” but Golden also said he “saw some funny sights in that camp.” He ran into the Greek organizer and colony chief of police Louis Tikas, who “wore a pie-plated badge emblazoned with ‘Chief of Police.’” In smaller letters along the badge’s bottom were the words “United Mine Workers of America.” Tikas told Golden that the camp “was thoroughly organized with its own peace officers,” many of whom were armed.112 After the organizer John Lawson moved into Ludlow colony just after “the Death Special” made its first appearance, he and Tikas organized various committees—a sanitation committee, a building committee, and a police force—to keep people busy and to help prevent them from taking the bait of the deputy sheriffs and detectives who wanted to draw them into battle.113

111 Ibid., 93; Beshoar, Out of the Depths: The Story of John R. Lawson, A Labor Leader, x-xi.
112 RMN, 21 October 1913.
113 Papanikolas, Buried Unsung, 92; Testimony of John Lawson, Conditions in the Coal Mines of Colorado, part 1, 219.
Golden was impressed, and as he left the colony, he saw around 200 children following their teacher on a march around the camp. They sang a song that went something like: “We are going to win the strike, oh, we are going to win the strike, we’re going to win the strike, Hallelujah!”

The willingness to live above ground under these horrific conditions also clearly demonstrates how awful life underground was. When John Lawson was asked why he opposed Ammons in sending troops to southern Colorado when miners’ lives were in danger, Lawson responded: “Oh yes, they were in danger all right, but they had been in danger so long that they had kind of gotten to the place that they had made up their minds that they would take care of themselves if they had to.” Lawson was right. Many miners simply decided that random shootings, “the Steel Battleship,” machine guns, and searchlights were easier to negotiate than cave-ins, explosions, and the other accidents that so often took their lives. It was hard to predict when a catastrophic cave-in would occur in the underground world of the mines. In the above ground world of the strike, the miners could at least see Felts coming.

**Road Trip**

Just before the “steel battleship” made its first appearance, Governor Ammons told Edward Doyle that if the violence did not stop, he would have no choice but to send the guard. That option, however, still did not bring the governor any peace. The only decision

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114 *RMN*, 21 October 1913.
Ammons could make was that it was time for a road trip; he was going to see for himself what all the fuss was about in the southern part of his state.\footnote{Lamont Bowers to John D. Rockefeller, 18 November 1913, \textit{CJR Testimony}, vol. 9, 8421; \textit{Minutes from the Meetings of the UMW Policy Committee, 4 August 1913-5 November 1914, } Papers of Edward Doyle, Box 1, Envelope 10, Denver Public Library.}

Predictably, the violence stopped once Ammons arrived on October 21. Indeed, if Ammons had simply moved the state capitol from Denver to Trinidad, he might have permanently nixed Felt’s plan for getting him to call out the guard. Upon his arrival, Ammons encountered a Mother Jones-led march of 4,000 miners and their supporters past his hotel in Trinidad. The miners carried signs that read: “We Are Not Afraid of Gatling Guns, We Have to Die Anyway; “You Cannot Whip Us into Citizenship with Sheriffs and Gatling Guns;” “The Democratic Party is on Trial.”\footnote{UMWJ, 30 October 1913.}

Indeed, labor organized its own campaign to influence a governor they thought of as a political ally. On October 20, the Trinidad Trades Assembly met to declare that the state militia was not needed in southern Colorado and 3,000 Trinidad residents signed a petition asking the governor not to send troops. For their part, Lawson and Doyle implored the governor to keep troops out, and UMW vice-president Frank Hayes tried to keep attention focused on methods short of calling out the militia which could bring peace to the strike zone. As Ammons toured the coal camps and tent colonies, Hayes excoriated the operators for bring machine guns into southern Colorado. “I consider the use of machine guns the most outrageous [sic] in the history of America,” he declared. “The officials of the coal companies ought to instruct their representatives to take them away.” In perhaps the biggest
understatement of the strike, Hayes asserted: “the appearance of a machine gun is a source of aggravation to the strikers and is not conducive to peace and good order.”

Ammons’s tour of the strike area proceeded smoothly except for the Victor-American mine guard who denied the governor and his party access to his mining camp. The guard doubted that the man at his gate was actually the governor, but offered to get his superintendent to straighten things out. Ammons, however, was in a hurry, and left without seeing the camp. Despite this slight, Ammons said he was glad he came, but that he had "talked with no one who had offered . . . a satisfactory solution of the difficulty." Perhaps to indicate that he was still undecided about what to do, Ammons also said that "The strike is no Sunday school picnic, but conditions aren’t as bad as I had been led to believe."

Forcing the Issue

As soon as Ammons left southern Colorado, Albert Felts and Las Animas County sheriff Grisham decided to help the governor make up his mind. Zeke Martin, Grisham’s under-sheriff, marched twenty-five armed deputies, the “steel battleship,” and three other machine guns into the Forbes tent colony and arrested six miners just hours after Ammons left the south. The charges against the miners all grew out of the Forbes “battle” that “the Death Special” had engaged in the previous week, including the murder of Luke Vahwernick, who, of course, was himself a striking miner.

At the same time, Shorty Martinez, one of Jefferson Farr’s under sheriffs in Huerfano County, brought fifteen deputies to Walsenburg, where the wife of a strikebreaker had requested assistance with moving to the CF&I’s nearby Walsen mining camp. Her

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118 RMN, 21 and 23 October 1913.
119 Ibid., 23 October 1913; Quoted in Papanikolas, Buried Unsung, 95.
120 Ibid.
husband had already moved from town to camp, but his wife, who faced increasing hostility from the wives of striking miners, needed help moving her furniture and other belongings the half-mile to the Walsen camp. As the deputies loaded the wagon in front of her house, a crowd of women joined by their children, who were just getting out of school, gathered in the street. Soon, between 300 and 400 people were on Seventh Street yelling insults and throwing rocks, tin cans, and dirt at the deputies."

Martinez’s deputies waited until they had moved about 100 yards down Seventh Street away from their antagonists. They then turned and began shooting back into the crowd. An eight-year old boy had his cap removed by a bullet, but was otherwise unharmed while a woman in the crowd had a bullet pass through the sleeve of her blouse. H.C. Wetmore, the only deputy wounded by the gunfire returned from the crowd, said later that a bullet clipped his ear and shaved off a piece of his scalp. Cisto Croci, Chris Kokick, Andrew Anwin, and Charles Yost were not so lucky. All were miners and all died from wounds received on Seventh Street. Croci’s wife and child were still in Italy on the day he died. None of the deputies involved in the Seventh Street shooting was ever charged with a crime. Two days later, however, seven men working in the CF&I’s Walsen mine, including the superintendent, laid down their tools and joined the union.

Sheriff Farr expected the worst as the sun set on Walsenburg after the Seventh Street shooting. He placed twelve deputies in the courthouse and barricaded the building. Feeling

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121 Testimony of Tony Belich, “Doyle Exhibit No. 1,” CIR Testimony, vol. 8, 7338. Also see the testimony of Albert Zink, H.C. Johnson, Samuel Haurez, Maurice Trujilo, Alexander Osvirk, Anna Pisarczyk, Mose Nelson, Mr. Romarowski, Fred Henney, and William Proffitt, all of whom were in the Seventh Street crowd in Walsenburg, CIR Testimony, vol. 8, 7334-7343; RMN, 25 and 27 October 1913.

the same way, union officials in Walsenburg barricaded their building believing that Baldwin-Felts detectives and Farr’s deputies would continue their attack during the night. As news of the arrests in Forbes and the shootings in Walsenburg spread, miners in every tent colony began clamoring for revenge. The events of the next few days are quite complicated, but what is clear is that the UMW leadership gave up trying to stop their members from seeking revenge while Albert Felts, the sheriff deputies in Las Animas and Huerfano Counties, and the mine operators continued to draw these angry men into battle because it served their larger purpose of bringing the Colorado National Guard out on strike duty. In this final push for troops, the operators’ allies had help from an unexpected source. Karl Linderfelt, a lieutenant in the National Guard whom Adjutant General John Chase had sent south to assess the need for troops, quickly accepted a deputy sheriff commission from Jim Grisham, and was soon leading a group of deputies in battle against the miners.1 2 3 While Linderfelt steadfastly maintained that there was nothing untoward about his presence in southern Colorado before the guard was called, it seems clear that Linderfelt became part of the larger plan to bring the guard to the strike area.1 2 4

It was not hard to provoke the miners as rumors swirled in the Ludlow tent colony that a “Bull Moose West” would arrive at any moment to rake the colony with machine gun fire. There was some truth to these rumors. Sheriff Farr called Albert Felts after the Seventh Street shootings asking for help. In response, Felts and Jesse Northcutt sent deputies and several machine guns to Walsenburg. Two days later, Sheriff Grisham loaded a train with

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123 RMN, 9 October 1913; McGovern and Guttridge, The Great Coalfield War, 126; The testimony of Karl Linderfelt, CIR Testimony, vol. 7, 6870-78.
124 On Linderfelt’s presence in southern Colorado before the guard was called out, see McGovern and Guttridge, The Great Coalfield War, 124-127. With Adjutant General of the Colorado National Guard’s blessing, Linderfelt activated a company of National Guardsmen stationed in southern Colorado before Governor Ammons called the guard out. See ibid., 6876-78.
deputies and machine guns, but could not convince the union locomotive crew to drive it toward Ludlow. Grisham eventually found a Baldwin-Felts detective capable of driving a locomotive, but it seems that this train's purpose was not to shoot up the Ludlow colony. Instead, Grisham's train traveled west of Ludlow to Berwind, where Linderfelt and his men were engaged in battle. Still, John Lawson, who was by this time living in the Ludlow tent colony, certainly believed that the train was on its way to Ludlow. A fierce battle quickly broke out between the deputies riding the train and strikers who were determined to stop it. It had taken less than a month for Albert Felts to create the level of chaos he desired in southern Colorado.  

As the battles in the south raged, Governor Ammons was still deliberating how to proceed. After returning from his tour, Ammons considered calling out a limited number of mounted guardsmen as a state constabulary, rather than as National Guardsmen. Such a deployment would be cheaper than calling out the entire guard. In 1905, Pennsylvania had established a state constabulary, or state police force, in part to relieve the National Guard of their responsibility for policing strikes. Many guard officers across the country supported the creation of state police forces because they believed that strike duty impeded the National Guards' ability to recruit working-class men and because strike duty interfered with their role as a reserve for the United State Army.  

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125 McGovern and Guttridge, *The Great Coalfield War*, 126. It seems hardly a coincidence that a Baldwin-Felts detective knew how to operate a locomotive. More than a few Baldwin-Felts detectives came to work in Colorado straight from West Virginia's coalfields, where the "Bull Moose Special" had terrorized striking miners earlier the same year. *RMN*, 28 October 1913.  
Calling out guardsmen as a state constabulary, however, did not satisfy the operators. In response to the operators' reticence, the governor decided to make a last ditch effort to settle the strike before acquiescing to a full National Guard call out. On Sunday, October 26, he called John Osgood, Jesse Welborn, and David Brown and union officials to the state house. To buttress the UMW's waning faith in him, Ammons called in former United States Senator Thomas Patterson to help him mediate negotiations between the union and the operators. Patterson was the publisher of The Rocky Mountain News, a paper that remained neutral in its strike reporting, but was known as a friend of labor in Denver. Patterson first met with UMW president John White and vice-president Frank Hayes. According to Patterson, White agreed to abandon the union's request for recognition—the issue that in the operators' collective mind was completely unacceptable—in exchange for a meeting with the operators.127

Patterson left the state house office White and Hayes occupied, and went to the adjoining office where the operators' committee cooled their heels. Upon hearing the union's proposal, the operators got angry. They asserted that they would never meet with the union and, according to Paterson, argued that the union officials "were merely interlopers, intermeddlers" who "had no business here" because they "did not live in the state." The operators went on to use "bitter names" to describe White and Hayes and "placed responsibility for the violence that occurred in the South upon their shoulders." They also held to their contention that any meeting with union officials could be interpreted as

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127 In Patterson's recollection of his conversation with White, Hayes, and John Lawson, the former senator said that these union representatives clearly indicated that they were willing to end the strike without union recognition. See the testimony of Thomas Patterson, CIR Testimony, vol. 7, 6480, 6483. On Patterson, see Sybil Downing and Robert E. Smith, Tom Patterson: Colorado Crusader for Change (Niwot, Colorado: University Press of Colorado, 1995).
recognition. Patterson rejected this characterization of the situation, told the operators that they were being unreasonable, and pointed out that only a brick wall separated Osgood, Welborn, and Brown from the union officials who wished to meet with them. Filled with horror, the operators declared that they would leave the room if White and Hayes stepped over the threshold.\textsuperscript{128}

Welborn later contended that Senator Patterson had never asked him, Osgood, and Brown to meet with White and Hayes, but Patterson’s description of their reaction to the proposed meeting with the union officials was wholly consistent with the position they had staked out on this issue earlier in the strike.\textsuperscript{129} Ammons, however, still clung to the hope that a settlement could be reached. He called Jesse Welborn that night, either to tell the CF&I president for the first time that the union was willing to waive recognition, or to simply reiterate what Welborn already knew—depending on whether Welborn or Patterson was telling the truth—and asked if the operators could “do some small thing to help out.” Welborn said he had “no concession to make to that element to cause it to cease its murderous attack on our people.” Welborn, however, did suggest that the governor draw up a letter “setting forth the points in the demands of the strike leaders which were covered by law, and ask us whether or not we would obey them, that we would gladly answer in the affirmative.”\textsuperscript{130}

The next day, Ammons, Patterson, Welborn, Osgood, and Brown all met in the governor’s office. What followed was a tragicomedy in which Patterson, Ammons, and the operators’ committee tried to write a letter acceptable to all present as well as to those

\textsuperscript{128} Ibid., 6480-81 and the testimony of Elias Ammons, \textit{CIR Testimony}, 6413.
\textsuperscript{129} The testimony of Jesse Welborn, ibid., 6602.
\textsuperscript{130} Ibid., 6601.
conspicuously absent: White, Hayes, and the striking miners. This effort to write by committee went nowhere, and Patterson was left to compose the letter alone. The operators quickly rejected the results, stating that Patterson had altered the meaning of several Colorado statutes in his letter. They also rejected the requirement that they rehire striking miners “without discrimination.”

As the operators spent Monday working up their own letter without Patterson’s help, a detective approached UMW district 15 president John McLennan on the street in Denver, and offered information about the operators if McLennan would accept the operators’ soon-to-be-completed settlement proposal. For added incentive, the detective then showed McLennan the vouchers he used to sign strikebreakers up back east. Signaling his increasing distrust of the governor, Edward Doyle believed that Governor Ammons, not the operators, had sent this detective to pressure McLennan into accepting a settlement.

Indeed, relations between Ammons and union officials had become increasingly strained. In a meeting with Doyle several days earlier, the governor expressed his misgivings about calling out the militia and declaring martial law, but also related that Sheriffs Grisham and Farr were having difficulty making arrests in the tent colonies. Doyle recalled the militia’s work in 1903 and 1904, arguing “that although the Militia deported a great many men from the State and shot the remainder into submission, that it did not settle the question involved in the strike. . . .” Doyle then asked if Ammons could help John Lawson keep the peace at Ludlow. Not “while he has armed murderers in that tent colony,”

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131 Jesse Welborn stated that in reference to the Colorado law that guaranteed workers the right to join a lawful union, Patterson had omitted the word “lawful.” See ibid., 6604. The letter Patterson drafted as presented to the Commission on Industrial Relations, however, does include the word “lawful” in the section on the right to join a union. See the testimony of Thomas Patterson, ibid., 6485.

132 “Timeline,” Papers of Edward Doyle, Box 2, Envelope 19, Denver Public Library.
came the governor’s response. Doyle exploded: “Then why,” he asked, “will you give to the
sheriffs of those counties who have imported murderers from West Virginia, deputized as
deputy sheriffs, your help, and refuse it to Mr. Lawson, on the grounds that he has murderers
in that tent colony?” Predictably, Ammons got angry, but only said he thought the problems
at Ludlow could be remedied if the miners would move the tent colony away from the
railroad station and the entrance to the mining camps. Doyle retorted that, if the governor
wished, the UMW “would move the strikers to Nebraska.”

Despite this disagreement with Doyle, Ammons was disappointed when he read the
operators’ substitute for Patterson’s letter of agreement. The mine operators had stated
only that they would obey Colorado law and stipulated that they would rehire strikers only
into jobs strikebreakers had not filled. Ammons knew the union could not accept this plan.

By this time, Ammons had called Adjutant General of the National Guard John Chase to the
state house. Chase, who had been in constant communication with Karl Linderfelt, began
feeding the governor the telegrams Linderfelt was sending from southern Colorado:

Berwind, October 27

THE ADJUTANT GENERAL:

There has been a continuous battle for 40 hours. We have no expectation of
ever receiving help from Sheriff Grisham. Too damned much politics to do anything
from Trinidad. We must have ammunition and high-powered rifles to hold this place
and protect women and children. The guard who was killed yesterday was robbed
and shot into after death five or six times. The only solution is troops, and at once.
No help can be expected but from troops.

LINDERFELT

133 Unsigned statement, ibid., Papers of Edward Doyle, Box 2, Envelope 18.
134 Unsigned statement, ibid., Papers of Edward Doyle, Box 2, Envelope 18.
135 RMN, 27 October 1913.
THE ADJUTANT GENERAL:

October 28

Mounted man from Tabasco reports special with deputies and soldiers driven back. I don’t question report. Large body of men leaving Aguilar to reinforce. Rebels at Ludlow openly make statements they are going to clean up Berwind and Hastings. Situation looks hopeless. No hope can be expected only troops, as there is nothing left to hope for.\(^{136}\)

LINDERFELT

It is clear that intense fighting had broken out in southern Colorado immediately after Governor Ammons left. It is also clear that Albert Felts and sheriffs Grisham and Farr did all they could to incite that violence. What Karl Linderfelt did to support that mission is difficult to ascertain, but the tone of his telegrams—his pleas to save women and children, his identification of the miners as 'rebels,' and his repeated insistence that only troops could remedy the situation—certainly suggests that he sided with Felts and the sheriffs. A few hours after midnight on October 28, Ammons relented and called the National Guard to southern Colorado.\(^{137}\)

Following the Money

As the National Guard made its way south, Governor Ammons still had to figure out how he was going to pay for this deployment. In his history of the Colorado National Guard, long-time Guard officer John Nankivell wrote that during the 1913-14 strike, the guard had to cover "an uninviting country larger than the state of Rhode Island. . . . All of this vast territory had to be occupied by the military forces, a meager 1600 officers and men, to protect the numerous small mining properties and their inhabitants, to maintain the lines of communication, and to checkmate the movements of the roving bands of belligerent

\(^{136}\) The testimony of Karl Linderfelt, *CIR Testimony*, vol. 7, 6873.

\(^{137}\) *RMN*, 28 October 1913.
It took a significant cash outlay to pay, feed, cloth, house, arm, and otherwise equip these 1,600 guardsmen, and the state of Colorado was in no position to provide this funding in the fall of 1913. Because Colorado was a relatively young state—it achieved statehood in 1876—only 20 million of Colorado’s 66 million acres were actually owned by a person or business in 1913, and almost all of Colorado’s tax revenue was generated by just 1/11 of this territory. In the era before the personal income tax, this low level of land ownership meant that Colorado’s tax base was puny. It did not help that state officials had cut many sweetheart deals with extractive industries like southern Colorado’s coal mine operators. These deals often meant that industrialists paid little or no property tax on the land they owned and leased from the state. Indeed, the state received just $12,378.67 in yearly property taxes from the coal lands in southern Colorado. Ammons was well aware of the state’s empty coffers and he knew as the strike approached that the state did not have the $4000-5000 per day it would take to finance the National Guard on strike duty. In fact, the state had no money at all in its general fund. During the strike he complained that as a young state, Colorado had “many necessary institutions to build within a brief period of time. Our burdens of taxation are therefore, necessarily great, especially under the policy adopted by my predecessors of withdrawing and withholding lands and resources from . . . taxation.”

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139 RMN, 9 and 13 November 1913.
140 Governor Elias Ammons to President Woodrow Wilson, 25 May 1914, Papers of Governor Elias Ammons, Box 26750, File Folder 1, Colorado State Archives, Denver, Colorado; United Mine Workers of America, “Militarism: What It Cost the Taxpayers,” Papers of Josephine Roche, Box 6, Folder 9, Norlin Library, University of Colorado, Boulder, Colorado.
However, there were ways of raising money to fund the guard. The state of Colorado had floated $900,000 in debt to finance the National Guard during the 1903-04 strikes. The state also received financial help from the mining companies involved in these strikes. The Colorado Fuel and Iron Company allied with other coal companies and the pro-business Citizens’ Alliances that cropped up during these strikes contributed an additional $200,000 for maintaining the National Guard in the southern coalfields. As we have seen, the guard ruthlessly broke these strikes, which sent the WFM spiraling into deep decline and crippled the UMW’s efforts to organize workers in southern Colorado for several years.\(^\text{141}\)

As Albert Felts pursued his strategy for bringing the National Guard to southern Colorado, the mine operators kicked off their fund-raising drive. Following a familiar path, the operators enlisted a group of Denver-based banks known as the Denver Clearing House Association to advance the state an initial $150,000 at six percent interest. The state would then issue certificates of indebtedness to, for example, merchants who supplied the National Guard, and to guardsmen as payment for their service during the strike. Recipients would then take these certificates to a bank, where they would receive cash for the amount indicated on the certificate.\(^\text{142}\)

The mine operators’ ability to convince the Clearing House Association to participate in their plan is, in part, explained by the tight relationship the CF&I had established with several bank directors. In late 1912, John D. Rockefeller, Jr. asked Lamont


\(^{142}\) Papers of Roady Kenehan, “ Scrapbook 2,” Box 1, 327, Norlin Library, University of Colorado, Boulder, Colorado; RMN, 16 November 1913.
Bowers why the CF&I used Colorado banks when more attractive interest rates were available elsewhere in the country. Bowers told him that labor’s influence in the Colorado legislature meant the company had to make sure its political interests were looked after when the legislature met in Denver. According to Bowers, the officers of Denver’s prominent banks “play a mighty important part in this state in dictating laws,” and therefore, the CF&I’s money was “a very important matter to them and they will go to great lengths to prevent assaults upon us.”

Bowers had good reason to believe these bankers would look after his company’s political interests. The First National Bank of Denver, which had deep roots in Colorado’s gold mining industry, was one of the Clearing House’s major members. David Moffat and Eben Smith were major executives at the First National in the 1860 and ‘70s, before their Smith-Moffat mining syndicate became a major concern. Moffat eventually served as president of the bank from 1880 to 1911. Aware of these connections, Bowers realized there was no need to bribe legislators. He simply placed the company’s money in the care of men who could influence how those legislators voted. He told Rockefeller, Jr.: “without our direct solicitation, we are able to secure the cordial cooperation of the wealthy officers and stockholders of several influential banks who . . . will give us their support.” If Rockefeller, Jr. disagreed with this use of his money, there is no record that he ever said so.

As Felts readied the “steel battleship” for its assault on the Forbes tent colony, the mine operators increased their pressure on Governor Ammons to accept their financing plan. On October 15, the Clearing House Association bankers met with Ammons and urged him

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143 Bowers quoted in McGovern and Guttridge, The Great Coalfield War, 78-79.
to call out troops and formally offered their help through the certificates of indebtedness.\textsuperscript{145}

Ammons was still undecided, but the operators and their banker allies continued to hound him. As this campaign continued, Bowers told Rockefeller, Jr.:

> We have been able to secure the cooperation of all the bankers of the city [Denver], who have had three or four interviews with our little cowboy governor, agreeing to back the State and lend it all the funds necessary to maintain the militia and afford ample protection so that our miners could return to work, or give protection to men who are anxious to come here from Texas, New Mexico, and Kansas, together with some from States farther East. Besides the bankers, the chamber of commerce, the real estate exchange, together with a great many of the best business men, have been urging the Governor to take steps to drive these vicious agitators out of the State.\textsuperscript{146}

The pressure worked. Even before Ammons traveled to southern Colorado, he met with Clearing House members and signed off on their financing plan if he decided to send the guard to southern Colorado.\textsuperscript{147} Nothing, however, came easy for Governor Ammons during this strike. As the governor agreed to this plan, State Auditor Roady Kenehan was already publicly announcing his opposition to it.\textsuperscript{148} Because Kenehan had to sign the certificates of indebtedness and do the paperwork necessary to distribute them, his opposition meant something. The state auditor pointed out that interest payments coupled with the widespread abuse of the certificates meant that the guard’s service in the 1903-04 strikes would eventually cost the state six million dollars. Kenehan was appalled by this figure, charging that the guard spent “thousands of dollars for balls, parties, and other entertainments . . . to which questionable women were invited and hundreds of dollars for carriages to take these women to the land of the forbidden.”\textsuperscript{149} Kenehan also argued that

\textsuperscript{145} RMN, 16 October 1913.
\textsuperscript{146} Lamont Bowers to John D. Rockefeller, 18 November 1913, \textit{CIR Testimony,} vol. 9, 8421-22.
\textsuperscript{147} RMN, 21 October 1913.
\textsuperscript{148} Ibid., 21 and 27 October 1913.
\textsuperscript{149} RMN, 30 November 1913.
four percent was the highest interest rate Colorado law allowed and that the coal strike did not meet the legal conditions necessary for issuing certificates of indebtedness under Colorado law.\textsuperscript{150}

The state auditor had other reasons for refusing to administer these certificates. As a resident of Colorado and member of a blacksmith’s union, he was well aware that the National Guard would break the miners’ strike. Kenehan dug in and refused to participate, declaring that “the coal mine owners should be required to negotiate with their employees concerning a settlement of the strike,” and that only a court order could compel him to go to work.\textsuperscript{151} By refusing to administer the certificates, Kenehan essentially called a strike of his own, and like so many workers who choose to go on strike, he dared the judiciary to issue an injunction against him. But instead of hanging around and waiting for the court to act, Kenehan skipped town to attend the American Federation of Labor’s convention in Seattle.\textsuperscript{152}

Kenehan was not the only member of Ammons’s administration who resisted the operators and the Clearing House. Secretary of State James B. Pearce publicly declared his support for the miners early in the strike. Agreeing with Adam Smith, Pearce pointed out that “doctors, lawyers, merchants all have the organizations for mutual protection and benefit.” Unions, furthermore, he declared, “have been with us since the beginning of organized society.” Pearce, who was also a Democrat, offered dubious proof. “During the construction of King Solomon’s Temple,” Pearce asserted, “the workmen were organized

\textsuperscript{150} “Scrapbook 2,” Papers of Roady Kenehan, Box 1, 327, Norlin Library; \textit{RMN}, 27 October 1913 and 16 November 1913.

\textsuperscript{151} \textit{RMN}, 27 October 1913.

\textsuperscript{152} Ibid., 7 and 9 November, 1913.
into unions and labored only eight hours a day."\textsuperscript{153} Pearce also pointed out that the mining companies in southern Colorado leased a good deal of land from the state and that the money collected from those leases went into the state’s permanent school fund. Because, as Pearce put it, the mine operators acted in the interest of “their excessive gain” and because “they are in constant quarrel with their employes, [sic] they keep the state in turmoil, they are arrogant and oppressive to the public and paralyzing to general business,” he recommended that the governor take over the operation of the mines. This arrangement would allow the state to collect the profits of coal production, which, in turn, would place more money into the state’s school fund.\textsuperscript{154}

Given his hesitancy to call out the guard and his concern that doing so would alienate a group that had helped him get elected, Ammons might have used Kenehan’s obstinacy and Pearce’s opposition as excuses to further delay calling out the guard or to abort their mission once in the field. However, Ammons had become convinced that only the guard could stop the violence in southern Colorado. Felts’s plan had worked well, and now the governor embarked on a mission to make sure the guard had all it needed despite the objections of those within his administration.

Governor Ammons had other problems in addition to his feisty state auditor. Just after troops entered the strike zone on October 29, Ammons told Adjutant General John Chase that “Some of the politicians around town got a report... that the banks have turned down my proposition to finance the troops in the field.” Ammons instructed Chase to deny

\textsuperscript{153} Ibid., 9 October 1913.
\textsuperscript{154} Secretary of State James B. Pearce to Ammons, 13 October 1913, Papers of Governor Elias Ammons, Box 26751, File Folder 6, Colorado State Archives; \textit{RMN}, 14 October 1913.
this story if he should hear it because “there is not a particle of truth in it whatever,” but then Ammons wrote that he “had gone to the C.F.&I and made an arrangement with them.”\textsuperscript{155} 

Ammons, therefore, took credit for the financing plan that the mine operators and the Clearing House had initiated. Nevertheless, the record is silent on whether Ammons arranged with the CF&I to fund the guard while he figured out how to deal with Kenehan and with any problems the banks may have had. Almost two months later, however, James Roberts of the Chicosa Fuel Company wrote Ammons to say the following: “I was very sorry that I could not be of assistance to you in the payment of the troops in Las Animas County, but I would be glad of the opportunity to serve you in any way . . . [and] to show my loyalty to the government of the state of Colorado.”\textsuperscript{156} Although Roberts declined Ammons’ request for help in paying the guard, this letter suggests that Ammons tried to round up donations from mine operators for paying his National Guardsmen after he called them out on strike duty.

In all likelihood, Ammons received some financial assistance from coal mine operators as he worked to overcome Kenehan’s challenge to the certificates of indebtedness. He also managed to neutralize his striking state auditor by striking a deal with five Denver-based clothing and supply companies--several of which were company stores for the mine operators--for $2,000 in food and other supplies. The governor also received an

\textsuperscript{155} Ammons to General John Chase, October 31, 1913, Papers of Governor Elias Ammons, Box 26751, File Folder 7, Colorado State Archives.

\textsuperscript{156} James H. Roberts to Ammons, 19 December 1913, Papers of Governor Elias Ammons, Box 26747, File Folder 6, Colorado State Archives.
offer from a group of Pueblo businessmen to underwrite $50,000 in military expenses, and he brought in uniforms and other army supplies from the federal War Department.\textsuperscript{157}

Having temporarily solved the guard’s food and supply problem, Ammons still needed the certificates to pay the guardsmen. On Thanksgiving Day, 1913, guardsmen camped at the adjutant general’s headquarters in southern Colorado burned Roady Kenehan in effigy because, by this time, they had not been paid for almost a full month of strike duty.\textsuperscript{158} The Colorado Supreme Court came to the rescue within a few days by treating Kenehan like any other striking worker: they ruled against his claims and ordered him to produce the certificates at four percent interest. Colorado issued these certificates through the fall of 1914, and eventually spent $673,000 on National Guard payroll, supplies, and other more extravagant purchases. The list of certificate recipients kept by the state treasurers’ office lists hotels and restaurants where guard officers stayed and dined. The list also includes many private individuals and businesses, including coal companies involved in the strike. Three of the biggest coal companies struck by the United Mine Workers—the CF&I, the Victor-American Fuel Company, and Sunnyside Mining Company—received a total of $4,300 in certificates of indebtedness. The guard most likely bought coal from these companies to heat their living quarters during a strike that stretched through a cold Colorado winter, and the guard bought rifles and machine guns from the coal companies and from Baldwin-Felts.\textsuperscript{159}

\textsuperscript{157} \textit{RMN}, 15 November 1913. The companies making these donations were the Daniels & Fishers Stores Company, the Joslin Dry Goods Company, the A. T. Lewis and Sons Dry Goods Company, the May Clothing Company, and the Denver Dry Goods Company.

\textsuperscript{158} Testimony of Professor James H. Brewster, \textit{CIR Testimony}, vol. 7, 6660.

How Elias Ammons came to call out the National Guard and guarantee its financial viability reveals how complex the relationship between the state and capital had become in Colorado by the early twentieth century. Governor Ammons was not a dupe for Colorado’s mine operators. Instead, their relationship was decidedly adversarial, and as a result, the operators organized themselves, their Denver-based banking friends, and with Albert Felts’s help, the sheriffs’ offices in Las Animas and Huerfano Counties to convince Ammons to accede to their demands.

Still, it is also clear that the governor had a great deal of autonomy to use state power as he saw fit. He would not have been the target of all that pressure if this were not the case. Not coincidently, the autonomy of state actors has been at the center of a long debate about the relationship between the state and capital. Seeking to move beyond the New Left’s explanation of that relationship, Theda Skocpol, Nicos Poulantzas, and other historians and theorists have argued that recognizing the existence of state autonomy is crucial to understanding how the state works in capitalist countries. In her work on the history of social policy in the United States, Skocpol argues that because state structures and political parties have their own histories and fashion their own agendas, they sometimes express that autonomy by working independent of capital’s demands. Hence, the autonomy of the state creates a space where state actors can at least on occasion advocate for the interests of subordinated people.160

Poulantzas, on the other hand, has a darker view of state autonomy. Like Skocpol, he embraces a position that accepts the ability of state actors to act independently. But he also argues that because the state is a cohesive force in any society, the state's activities in a capitalist system—regardless of the relative autonomy of its managers—will work in the larger interests of capitalists. Because working-class unity threatens capitalists, Poulantzas argues that the state acts to divide workers by making concessions that do not fundamentally change the relations of power in a capitalist system, but do divide workers into separate and competing groups.\textsuperscript{161} For Poulantzas, the state is "basically a vehicle of system maintenance."\textsuperscript{162}

The 1913-14 coal strike suggests there is a "middle ground" between these two explanations of how state actors work in a capitalist system. While Colorado governors and governors in other states were often enthusiastic advocates for capital's interests when labor unrest occurred, others resisted the calls of their industrialists to use military force against striking workers.\textsuperscript{163} Elias Ammons fell into the latter category, and was


\textsuperscript{162} Skocpol, "Political Response to Capitalist Crisis: Neo-Marxist Theories on the State and the Case of the New Deal," 171.

\textsuperscript{163} The 1892 Homestead, Pennsylvania steel strike, the 1894 WFM strike centered in Cripple Creek, Colorado, and the 1894 Pullman strike are three notable examples of governors resisting capital's calls for state military intervention. In 1892, Governor Robert Pattison resisted calling state troops to Homestead, but like Elias Ammons, ultimately relented as employer-instigated violence escalated. In Colorado, that Governor Davis Waite was a Populist elected with labor's help, and the Adjutant General of the National Guard shared the governor's political allegiances helps explain why Waite refused to break the strike with military force. In Illinois, Governor John Altgeld opposed the Cleveland administration's insistence on sending federal troops to Chicago to break the Pullman strike. Altgeld, lost this battle, and the Army and U.S. Marshals, with help from the court injunctions pursued by Cleveland's attorney general Richard Olney, successfully broke the Pullman strike. See Paul Krause, \textit{The Battle for Homestead: Politics, Culture, and Steel}. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1992), 29-32, 328, 334-39; Jameson, \textit{All That Glitters}, 53-61; Richard Schneirov, \textit{Labor and Urban Politics: Class Conflict and the Origins of Modern Liberalism} (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press), 303, 338-39. The examples of governors intervening

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clearly an autonomous actor who managed to fight off the mine operators’ calls for troops for more than a month. Ammons, however, could not marshal his autonomy to, as Skocpol would have it, work in the interests of the striking miners, or as Poulantzas would have it, become a cohesive force for capital in Colorado. Ammons could take neither course because while he was head of the state of Colorado, he did not have complete control over the state. While he wanted to help settle the strike and was by no means a puppet for the mine operators, the operators had found others representatives who wore the uniform of state authority. Sheriffs Jefferson Farr and Jim Grisham clearly did not work for the state. Instead, they worked for the mine operators, and did everything they could to carry out Albert Felt’s strikebreaking plan. The mine operators were convinced, moreover, that the Colorado National Guard would act to break the strike if only they could get Ammons to put the guard in the field. Again, the mine operators believed that the guard would work for them, not for the governor.

At the same time, Ammons’s inability to put the National Guard—a state institution—in the field without financial help from the mine operators and private bankers clearly shows that the state lacked independence when faced with capital’s demands. The operators’ success at getting Ammons to perform the financial gymnastics necessary to keep the guard paid and supplied while on strike duty shows how effective willingly on capital’s side in labor disputes are legion. For some notable examples, see Robert W. Smith, The Coeur d’Alene Mining War of 1892 (Corvallis, Oregon: Oregon State University Press, 1961); Dubofsky, We Shall be All on the 1903-04 WFM strikes and the 1912 Lawrence, Massachusetts textile strike; Jerry M. Cooper, “The Wisconsin National Guard in the Milwaukee Riots of 1886,” Wisconsin Magazine of History (Autumn 1971): 31-48; George G. Suggs Colorado’s War on Militant Unionism: James H. Peabody and the Western Federation of Miners. (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1972); Philip S. Foner, The Great Labor Uprising of 1877 (New York: Pathfinder Press, 1977); Arthur Thurner, Rebels on the Range: The Michigan Copper Miners Strike of 1913-4 (Lake Linding, Michigan: John H. Forster Press, 1984); J. Anthony Lukas, Big Trouble: A Murder in a Small Western Town Set Off a Struggle for the Soul of America (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1997). Jeremy Brecher’s, Strike! (Boston: South End Press, Revised 1997) contains examples of governor supporting and resisting capital’s position during a labor conflict.
they had been in organizing themselves and their allies, but it also shows how dependent on private capital the executive branch of the state government was.

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However much Ammons may have wanted the National Guard to act as a neutral force, guardsmen knew why they were going to southern Colorado. Nonetheless, as the National Guard made its way to southern Colorado, the United Mine Workers were not as convinced as the mine operators that the guard would break the strike. The United Mine Workers' Journal observed that Ammons had sent troops to restore peace in southern Colorado and argued that the governor could take one of two paths in the days and weeks that followed. To illustrate these two paths, the Journal juxtaposed former Colorado Governor James Peabody, who had enthusiastically backed the guard’s efforts to break the 1903-04 strikes, with labor supporter and former Illinois Governor John R. Tanner.164 “One way” to restore peace, the Journal wrote, is “by suppressing every expression of discontent on the part of the workers who are demanding some share in the civilization their arduous and dangerous labor makes possible. That was the way of Peabody. [That way] does not remove the cause of discontent . . . [it] will smoulder [sic], to break out again with added force. Express itself it will and it must.” The Journal preferred a different method for restoring peace. “The other way, the way of the late governor Tanner of Illinois, to recognize the rights of those whose labor is the real value in productive property” and to realize that workers have “a right to confer with owners of the mines,

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factories or mills, and with these decide what would be fair compensation and conditions. Governor Ammons assures us he will follow in the footsteps of Governor Tanner. If he does, and we believe he will, the peace he will bring to Colorado will be a permanent peace.\textsuperscript{165}

As the guard marched into Walsenburg and Trinidad, miners and their families lined the streets, cheered, and waved American flags. They were relieved that the Baldwin-Felts siege they had lived under for the previous month was over, but they also worried about how militiamen would act on strike duty. Their apprehension was on display when John Chase led a troop of soldiers into the Ludlow tent colony for the purpose of disarming the strikers. Chase described the scene this way:

The parade of troops at the Ludlow tent colony was memorable. The road for a half-mile or more between the point of detraining and the entrance to the colony was lined on either side by men, women, and children. Many of the men were in the strange costume of the Greek, Montenegrin, Servian, [sic] and Bulgarian armies; for the colony numbered among its inhabitants many returned veterans of the Balkan wars. The little children were dressed in white, as for a Sunday school picnic. All carried small American flags and sang continually union songs. Through this line of men, women, and children the troops paraded . . . Flags were waved in welcome, and an improvised band of the strikers heralded our approach. At this point occurred the first instance of bad faith on the part of the striking people. Expecting to receive hundreds, if not thousands, of arms, there were delivered into my possession some twenty or thirty weapons, many of them of obsolete pattern, the strikers topped off the humor of the situation by including in the delivery of arms a child’s toy pop-gun.\textsuperscript{166}

Clearly, the miners knew the state militia’s history and were therefore unwilling to give up their weapons. Chase’s description of his early experience at the Ludlow tent colony also foreshadowed the guard’s later actions. His reference to a ‘striking people,’ as if they were a foreign group completely separate from the rest of Colorado’s

\textsuperscript{165} \textit{UMWJ}, 6 November 1913.

\textsuperscript{166} \textit{The Military Occupation of the Coal Strike Zone}, 14.
population, his attention to the ethnic make-up of the crowd and the ‘strange’ costumes that he believed indicated that many miners had European military experience, and the significance he attached to his inability to disarm the miners are all good indicators of how the guard would act during this strike. Chase’s perceptions were no doubt informed by the guard’s history, which also provides a clear picture of how guardsmen would act on strike duty.
CHAPTER IV
CREATING A KILLER:
RACE, GENDER, CLASS, AND THE COLORADO NATIONAL GUARD

In her testimony before the United States Senate’s Commission on Industrial Relations a year after the 1913-14 southern Colorado coal strike had ended, Colorado State Senator Helen Ring Robinson described her thoughts after spending time in Las Animas County just before the Ludlow Massacre. Senator Robinson left convinced she knew why her state’s National Guard acted with such brutality while on strike duty. “I have seen little boys playing with tin soldiers,” she said, “and I know that the little boys . . . have to have one set of soldiers that are the enemy . . . I found that the militia . . . were not far beyond the little boys’ stage” and they “had followed that boyish example . . . it was necessary to have an enemy, and they had chosen the strikers as their enemy. . . .”

Robinson also believed that three other factors were “the causes of bitterness down there in the southern Colorado field. First, “of course, there was the contest between capital and labor.” But underneath that source “was the question that grows out of our tremendous immigration problem and the question of racial hatred which has developed in America today . . . “I found the great bitterness of class hatred,” she continued, “which was fearfully strong in Colorado at that time, and particularly in the southern coal fields.” Many guardsmen told her that they disliked organized labor and “indicated a feeling of bitterness

toward the strikers. This was so more particularly," she said, "because they repeated
constantly that the strikers were of such inferior character. One militiaman told me that if
they had been American men or men of higher intelligence they would have gone back to
work when the militia told them to." For Robinson, the National Guard's understanding of
the striking miners as their enemy combined with racial and class hatred created "a vortex of
mad, swirling hate that I did not know existed in the world until I went down there. I have
read somewhere . . . that a man when angry will exude poison enough to kill a dog. I found
enough mad hatred in those coal fields to kill all the men and women that were killed at
Ludlow and Forbes."²

As Robinson suggested, class and class conflict tell us a great deal about why
Colorado's labor history was so contentious and violent. Moreover, as J. Anthony Lukas
puts it, "If the United States has ever approached outright class war, it was probably in
Colorado during the first years of this century."³ The 1913-14 southern Colorado coal strike
and the fifteen other strikes in the state that saw military intervention between 1880 and
1928 were, after all, battles between workers and their employers.⁴

Yet this chapter and Chapter Five assert that class conflict alone cannot explain the
National Guard's actions while on strike duty. The mine operators might have expected the

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² Ibid., 7212.
Colorado National Guard troops called out in 1913 to do their bidding, but that fact does not explain these soldiers’ actions, nor does it clarify why they were so unrepentant about the killings at Ludlow. While acknowledging that class conflict was at its height in Colorado and much of the American West at the turn of the twentieth century, the next two chapters will demonstrate that notions of class difference among Colorado National Guardsmen were inextricably tied to ideas about race and masculinity. The political, social, and cultural conflicts that shaped the four decades after the Civil War helped Colorado National Guardsmen create an institutional culture that accepted strike duty and gave them a way to understand that duty.

The first of these conflicts was the Plains Indians Wars. The Colorado National Guard began its life fighting the Plains Indians who continued to resisting white conquest after the Civil War. This chapter shows that guardsmen who served in 1913-14 saw immigrant strikers as similar to the “savage” Indians their predecessors faced several decades earlier. The legacy of western conquest was strong within the guard, and its largely native-born and middle- and upper-class officer corps came to see strikebreaking as a continuation of the guard’s frontier-era efforts to spread civilization across the continent by bringing “law and order” to the “Wild West.” Likewise, Chapter Five will show that for some guardsmen, service in the Philippine Islands during the Spanish-American War reinforced the idea that the southern and eastern European working-class immigrants they faced during the 1913-14 southern Colorado coal strike were, like both Indians and Filipinos who opposed American imperial conquest, racially inferior “savages” who threatened the civilization—and the American empire—that they and their predecessors had helped create. When Adjutant General John Chase, for example, wrote that southern Colorado’s striking
southern and eastern European immigrant miners possessed a “quiet, savage hatred,” he expressed a perception common among guard officers who served in the 1913-14 coal strike.5

Chase, furthermore, articulated a sentiment common in turn-of-the-twentieth-century America. Colorado National Guardsmen were not the first Americans to insist that immigrant workers were a threat to civilization similar to that posed by the “savage” Indian tribes of the western plains. Indeed, the nativism that became widespread during these decades only bolstered the idea that southern and eastern European immigrants were racially inferior.

Ideas about masculinity also played an important role in creating guardsmen’s understanding of strike duty. The widespread turn-of-the-twentieth-century concern that working-class and immigrant men not only menaced civilization, but also challenged the position of native-born, middle-class white men was clearly reflected in the guard’s explanation of their actions on strike duty and at Ludlow. By taking political control of many cities, possessing a perceived potency and virility that some saw as lacking in the “over-civilized” and “effeminate” native-born Anglo middle class, and most of all, by going on strike in significant numbers, working-class and immigrant men challenged native-born and middle-class control of American society. Colorado National Guardsmen responded to this challenge with a strong and virulent vision that boldly asserted the superiority of white,

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native-born and middle-class men. The 1913-14 southern Colorado coal strike gave guardsmen the opportunity to put this vision into action.6

Likening labor conflicts to the Indian wars and the defeat of the Filipino “insurrection” against American rule, comparing striking workers to Indian “savages,” and framing strikes as an assault on respectable middle-class, native-born masculinity did not guarantee that striking workers would face hostile military intervention or would lose a given strike. However, intertwined issues of gender, race, and class played crucial roles in shaping the guard’s actions during the 1913-14 coal strike. Examining these issues reveals how the guard and others who defended capital viewed their working-class adversaries. Indeed, their belief in the threat labor unrest posed to white native-born supremacy over the North American continent helps explain why turn-of-the-twentieth-century labor conflicts were often so intense. These chapters will show that the challenge workers posed to the established economic, political, and social order convinced many that nothing less than American civilization was at stake.

6 Peter Filene, *Him/Her/Self: Sex Roles in Modern America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 69-93 and Michael Kimmel, “The Contemporary ‘Crisis’ of Masculinity in Historical Perspective,” in *The Making of Masculinities: The New Men’s Studies*, ed. Harry Brod (Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1987), 121-54 argue that there was a crisis in masculinity at the turn-of-the-twentieth-century. While I rely on the content of the “crisis” these historians have identified, I am skeptical about the existence of such a crisis beginning in the 1890s. Labeling the concerns I have identified here as a crisis implies that men’s position in society was, at other times, stable and unquestioned. While upheaval in the American sex/gender system might have been more evident during the 1890s, middle- and upper-class American men have never enjoyed unquestioned and unchallenged dominance. The more salient question is, when haven’t American men been in crisis? As a number of historians have shown, native-born working-class men, in particular, faced significant challenges for most of the nineteenth century as opportunities to become independent yeoman farmers, artisans, and craftsmen declined and dependent wage labor became more and more prevalent. European immigrant men, furthermore, were often confronted with the same difficulties as they made the transition from the often rural, traditional sex/gender system of the southern and eastern European peasantry. If working-class men were also in “crisis,” how did they manage to make such a potent challenge to middle-class men? Weren’t they wrapped up in their own insecurities? It seems that the analytical framework of the “crisis” is faulty. It is perhaps more accurate to see gender as always in flux, as being constantly negotiated and renegotiated. See Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Race and Gender in the United States, 1880-1917* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 11 for her argument against the “crisis” model.
Colorado had long been caught up in the struggle for control of North America. Utes had lived in the mountains of southern Colorado for centuries before the 1913-14 coal strike, only to be pushed aside by the Cheyenne and Arapaho tribes who came to the area in the late eighteenth century. Mexico gained control of the region when that country won independence from Spain in 1821, only to lose it to the United States twenty-seven years later in the Mexican-American War. The militias that the Colorado Territory originally raised to defend the Union in the Civil War found themselves fighting against Indians rather than confederates in battles that blazed on the western plains from the early 1860s through the 1880s. These battles began the Colorado National Guard’s education in how to understand strike duty.

As the Civil War drew to a close, John Evans, governor of the Colorado Territory, wanted to eliminate Indian claims to southeastern Colorado. Because Congress had just approved Colorado’s application for statehood, Evans thought that taking aggressive action against Indians who lived in this part of Colorado would increase his popularity, and therefore, his chances of gaining election to the United States Senate once Colorado became a state. Evans found a willing partner in Colonel John M. Chivington, a former Methodist minister and Colorado militia officer who was positioning himself for a seat in the House of Representatives.

Chivington and Evans, however, found that southeastern Colorado’s Indian tribes were reluctant to fight. Chivington overcame this obstacle by gunning down Cheyenne

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8 Robert M. Utley, The Indian Frontier of the American West, 1846-1890 (Albuquerque, New Mexico: University of New Mexico Press, 1984), 87-88; White, “It’s Your Own Misfortune and None of My Own,” 95-96.
Chief Lean Bear in May 1864 as he approached on horseback showing papers he had received from President Abraham Lincoln on a trip to Washington, D.C. The letter described the chief’s friendly disposition. Chivington’s men then opened fire on Lean Bear’s people with artillery. Despite these atrocities, the Cheyenne remained reluctant to fight. After rejecting the efforts of several Cheyenne and Arapaho chiefs to make peace, Chivington attacked a Cheyenne and Arapaho camp at Sand Creek in late November.

According to one of Chivington’s soldiers, Chief Black Kettle ordered the Indians in his camp to stand around an American flag he had raised while others raised white flags. The troops ignored this gesture and in the massacre that followed, Chivington’s third regiment killed 133 people, mostly women and children. The soldiers scalped many corpses and otherwise mutilated their victims’ bodies. Many of these scalps were soon on display at a Denver theater during intermission.9

One of the most infamous Indian “battles” in American history, the Sand Creek Massacre established early on Colorado military organizations’ proclivity for indiscriminate violence.10 The massacre, however, did not change the militia’s mission. The territory’s military outfits fought Indians for another decade, and after Colorado achieved statehood in 1876, all these militia units were officially organized into the Colorado National Guard. In a fit of overzealousness, the Colorado legislature authorized a 118-company guard consisting

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10 Governor John Evans lost his job as territorial governor in the fallout that followed the Sand Creek Massacre and never succeeded in becoming a United States senator. See the biography of Evans available through the Colorado State Archives at http://www.archives.state.co.us/govs/evans.html
of approximately 12,000 men. The legislature soon realized that a new state could not sustain such a large force and reduced the guard’s size to around 1,200 troops.\textsuperscript{11}

The Colorado National Guard concentrated on Indian fighting for another decade, but in 1887 the guard fought its last battle for western conquest. Adjutant General George West described the motivation behind that fight as an “earnest endeavor and patriotic desire inherent in the American citizen-soldier to . . . rescue the almost defenseless women and children of that country from the horror of an Indian War.”\textsuperscript{12} West was hyperbolic, to say the least, given the greatly diminished capacity of the Plains Indians to resist conquest by 1887. But while it was true that Colorado’s militia units defeated the Cheyenne and Arapaho with ease at Sand Creek and in subsequent battles, the Plains Indians staved off final conquest for almost thirty years after the Civil War. As the 1876 defeat of General George Custer and his troops at Little Big Horn, Montana demonstrated, the Plains Indians were significant in number and capable of fighting—and beating—the United States military. Hence, the Plains Indians presented a formidable threat in the West while they also lived in a world that was completely foreign to white settlers. Thus the presence and resistance of the Plains Indians helped white Americans justify western conquest and helped Colorado National Guardsmen explain their actions against “alien,” immigrant working-class miners who also seemed to threaten the “American civilization” that conquest had brought to the West.

John C. Bell, who served in the Colorado National Guard during the late 1870s, provides a good example of how guard members made this connection between fighting a

\textsuperscript{11} Jerry M. Cooper, \textit{The Rise of the National Guard: The Evolution of the American Militia, 1865-1920} (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), 31.  
\textsuperscript{12} Nankivell, \textit{History of the Military Organizations of the State of Colorado}, 89, 494.
formidable Indian enemy and policing workers. Bell, a lawyer who came to Colorado in 1874 and served from 1893 to 1903 as member of the United States House of Representatives, recounted his experience as a guardsman in *The Pilgrim and the Pioneer: The Social and Material Developments in the Rocky Mountains*, which he published in 1906. Though he described the book as a work of fiction, it was actually a thinly veiled autobiography. In his tales of Wild West adventure Bell transforms himself into Mr. Campbell, the pseudonym he used for himself throughout the book. One story, which took place in the summer and fall of 1879, tells us much about the interplay between masculinity, class, and race in guardsmen’s attitudes toward their military service on the frontier.13

Beginning with an actual Indian conflict that occurred in 1879, Bell’s story describes the western frontier as a place where guardsmen overcame their fears and learned to fight like men and accept the responsibilities of middle-class manhood. Relations between the Ute Indians and white settlers in Colorado took a turn for the worse early in 1878 when Nathan C. Meeker became the government-appointed agent for the White River Utes. According to Colorado National Guard historian John Nankivell, who was himself a long-time guard member, Meeker was “a venerable philanthropist . . . thoroughly imbued with the idea of educating, christianizing, and making the Indians self-supporting instead of idle wards of the government.” The Utes, however, resisted Meeker’s efforts. “They preferred hunting to farming, a teepee to a house,” Nankivell wrote, “and as for education, they would have none of it. Though kind and just, Meeker was very methodical in all his ways, and when seriously opposed in any undertaking he became obstinate and unyielding.” In Nankivell’s estimation,

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Meeker's dogged efforts to "civilize" the Utes "had much to do with the ill-will of the savages, and by the summer of 1879 the situation became ominous." After the Utes learned that Meeker had asked for military protection from the Army, they attacked the White River Agency, burned it to the ground, and killed Meeker and six of his employees. In John Bell's account of the Meeker Massacre in *The Pilgrim and the Pioneer*, "these red fiends" drove barrel staves through Meeker's body. The Utes also took women and children hostage (they were eventually released) and ambushed three troops of regular army cavalry as they made their escape.

According to John Bell, these events "stirred the martial spirit of the people of Colorado to a fighting heat." Governor Frederick Pitkin called out two companies of the National Guard: the Pitkin Guard (Company C), which was named after him, and the Downer Guard (Company F). The Pitkin Guard was from Lake City, Colorado, a mining town with about 2000 residents near the White River Agency. John Bell's alter ego, Mr. Campbell, who was a young lawyer in Lake City, became involved in the guard's efforts to end the Ute uprising when a guard recruiter asked him to join Company C. Campbell quickly impressed his superiors with his dutiful conduct as a private, and when a corporal dropped out of the company, every officer "made it his pleasure that Mr. Campbell was elevated to that place." However, the enlisted members of Company C "became green-eyed with envy" at the thought of "this tenderfoot being elevated over their heads," so they set about trying to bring Campbell down.

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16 Bell, *The Pilgrim and the Pioneer*, 446-47.
Upon calling the guard out, Governor Pitkin ordered them to “Bring in, dead or alive, all hostile Indians found off reservation.” The conspirators against Campbell tore this order off the wall and brought it to their new corporal’s quarters at three o’clock in the morning. “How,” they asked him, “can we tell a hostile from a docile Indian?” Without hesitation, Campbell edited the order so that it read: “Consider all Indians off the reservation hostile, and bring them in dead or alive, and we will determine their docility afterward.” Next morning at reveille, the enlisted men “derisively pointed” to the edited order, “expecting a harsh reprimand to Mr. Campbell” from the company’s officers. But after a captain and lieutenant read Campbell’s revisions, they declared: “This is the kind of material that makes a great soldier. This young man is a bright and rising star in this company.” Campbell was soon promoted to sergeant. “His traducers,” Bell concluded, “turned black in the face and about faced.”

In this story, the guard’s officers, with Corporal Campbell’s help, taught their charges to use indiscriminate violence to defeat the Plains Indians. This ability to “out savage the savage,” a trait that Theodore Roosevelt celebrated in his four-volume *The Winning of the West* published in 1896, was crucial to the battle for western conquest’s success because it helped proved that white American men were capable of beating the Indians at their own game. “Out savaging the savage,” as Gail Bederman puts it, showed that American men were “the most masculine of all men and the most advanced of races.”

That Campbell, the hero of this story, led the way in teaching this savagery—and the

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17 Ibid.
approval gained from his superiors in doing so—demonstrates that John Bell condoned the violence that the Colorado National Guard and many American military units employed on the Plains.

Another mission, however, awaited the Colorado National Guard that was equally important to maintaining the superiority of white men. This mission involved bringing law and order to the “Wild West.” Later in the same campaign against the Ute Indians, Company C happened upon a lynch mob in Lake City. The murder of the town’s sheriff, who was a mineworker, brought five hundred miners from the surrounding area into town “demanding vengeance on the murderer.” A man named Benton, who was a “petty thief” and the unwitting accomplice of the real murderer, had been arrested for the crime. Campbell was charged with protecting this prisoner, but his lieutenant told him that because the suspect “deserves hanging,” he should “make the appearance of resisting, but don’t resist or hurt any of them.” The lieutenant added: “The leaders [of the mob] have been informed that you will make much pretense of resisting without real resistance.” Campbell wanted no part of this charade. He refused to obey this order and instead pleaded with the crowd not to lynch Benton. He told them that mob violence was “beneath the aspirations of a civilized being,” and he managed to cut the rope around Benton’s neck three times before the mob succeeded in hanging their innocent victim.19

Campbell was distraught by his inability to stop the lynching. He believed that he “was asked to play the part of a tin soldier. Why are militia called tin soldiers? It is because of their poor mettle, their proverbially unsoldier-like conduct,” he declared. “Ignoble, indeed, is he who conspires in these uniforms against the laws he is sworn to uphold. The

crimson blood of that petty thief is indelibly impressed on these uniforms. What a causeless and inhuman disgrace!” Campbell’s anguish was only heightened by the revelation that Benton had not shot the sheriff. He was, in fact, guilty only of offending a local politician, who “had quite a coterie of friends and had conspired with them to take advantage of the occasion and hang Mr. Benton, the petty thief, not because he had done anything to the sheriff, but to glut the politician’s vengeance.”

As serious as this disaster was, it did not destroy the Pitkin Guards. Bell’s colleagues in the guard quickly cleared him for disobeying his lieutenant’s orders not to resist Benton’s lynching. At the same time, the captain who originally gave that order apologized “for permitting the promulgation of this unsoldierly order,” and assured the company that “the laudable conduct of the sergeant should be the future rallying cry of the Pitkin Guards.”

Campbell’s—and the Pitkin Guards’—rehabilitation, however, was not complete until a few weeks later when a man named Dan Early assaulted a “scarlet woman” who frequented a popular dance hall in Lake City. The town’s new sheriff learned that dance hall and saloon customers had organized a lynching party, and Sergeant Campbell and twelve other guardsmen were assigned to the jail where Early was being held. “At two o’clock in the morning, a mob of 200 motley men approached the jail with a sledge hammer and a rope.” The crowd, again made up mostly of miners, stopped and the leader, addressing Campbell, declared: “Sergeant we are friends of yours and of the people. You give us the keys and

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20 Ibid., 448-52.
21 Ibid., 452.
retire and we will do our work orderly and quickly, and you will have done your full duty, as it would be folly for you to try to keep back these two hundred men."\(^{22}\)

Campbell refused to back down, and after several increasingly heated exchanges with the lynch party leader, he ordered his troops to raise their rifles and bellowed: “If anyone advances a step, fire and then charge, and keep firing and charging as long as a man has his face toward this jail!” The lynch mob backed down, muttering “It is folly to give twenty-five good men for this worthless one.” “The newspapers,” Bell’s story concludes, “were full of praise for the conduct of this troop.”\(^{23}\)

John C. Bell’s account in the *Pilgrim and the Pioneer* is probably apocryphal; yet, it suggests how Bell thought about the origins and purpose of the guard.\(^{24}\) His “creation myth” clearly defined masculinity in a way that celebrated violence while casting the guard as a manly agent of civilization. The story extols the guard’s role in clearing the way for white settlers, a duty that meant killing Indians. The guard also acted as a protector—another manly duty—when it prevented lynchings of white men. By celebrating efforts to bring civilization to the “Wild West,” Bell glorified one type of violence—state-sanctioned Indian killing—while denigrating another kind of violence—the illegitimate, vigilante violence perpetrated by lynch mobs. Finally, it is telling that the story concludes in a mining town and that the lynch mobs the guard encountered were made up of miners. Because Bell and his charges

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\(^{22}\) Ibid., 452-53.
\(^{23}\) Ibid., 453-54.
\(^{24}\) In his study of lynching in Colorado, Stephen J. Leonard found no lynchings that came close to matching the events Bell described. Leonard does describe an 1882 lynching that might have been Bell’s historical template for the story he wove in the *Pilgrim and the Pioneer*. In 1882, George Betts and James Browning were lynched in Lake City. Like the lynching Bell described, these lynchings grew out of the murder of a sheriff. The murdered sheriff, E.N. Campbell, also shared a surname with Bell’s pseudonym. See *Lynching in Colorado, 1859-1919* (Boulder, Colorado: University Press of Colorado, 2002) and the email correspondence with Stephen J. Leonard dated 21 and 28 April 2004 in the author’s possession.
stopped miners from carrying out a lynching, the story’s conclusion connects the guard’s early history to the job that would become its primary duty for the succeeding fifty years: policing mine workers.

Twenty-one years after Ludlow was destroyed, guard historian John Nankivell, a druggist from Denver who served during the 1913-14 southern Colorado coal strike and later in the First World War and in the Panama Canal Zone, copied verbatim John C. Bell’s telling of his guard experience into his *The History of the Military Organizations of the State of Colorado, 1860-1935*. Nankivell included Bell’s story in his history because he wanted to celebrate Bell’s accomplishments and the guard’s contributions to bringing both civilization and law and order to the West.25 Nankivell also approved of the guard’s strikebreaking mission, and he believed that the strikers in southern Colorado were more threatening than the “street parading, brick throwing, jeering crowds of the larger cities.” He also described the Ludlow tent colony as a “hotbed of lawlessness and anarchy,” and he contended that the miners were “an organized force of armed and paid men; the agitators and their satellites, well paid and experienced in planning campaigns and in inciting the ignorant to follow them.”26

This distinction between the guard’s adversaries at Ludlow and the working-class crowds that assembled in turn-of-the-twentieth century city streets for strikes and demonstrations is significant because, while Nankivell did not explicitly compare the strikers to the Plains Indians, he seemed to believe that they constituted a similar threat. For Nankivell, the strikers the guard faced in 1913-14 were not an unorganized mob. Instead,

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26 Ibid.
they were—like the Plains Indians—an organized army that constituted a formidable threat capable of doing the guard significant harm. Given this understanding of strike duty, the inclusion of John C. Bell’s story in Nankivell’s history takes on added significance. Having cut their teeth on killing hostile and docile Indians alike, and preventing the lynchings planned by working-class men, the guard, in the estimation of an officer who served during the 1913-14 strike, had the tools to beat the army of hostile immigrant men who threatened the economic, political, and social order that had developed in the decades since the guard faced the Plains Indians on the frontier.

The legacy of western conquest so apparent in Bell’s autobiography and Nankivell’s history also emerged among the National Guard officers who served in the 1913-14 coal strike. In the immediate aftermath of the Ludlow Massacre, Governor Ammons authorized a three-person board of National Guard officers to investigate what had happened at Ludlow. Adjutant General of the National Guard John Chase placed Major Edward J. Boughton, Captain William Danks, and Captain Philip Van Cise on this board, but Boughton, perhaps with some assistance from Captain Danks, was most responsible for the board’s final report.

It is worth noting how these officers came to investigate Ludlow. In his testimony before the Industrial Relations Commission, Major Boughton stated that the impetus for forming the committee came from both himself and Captain Danks. Captain Van Cise told Danks in the days immediately after the Ludlow Massacre that he had collected statements from Ludlow survivors describing “horrible atrocities committed by the militia at Ludlow.” Upset by what the miners claimed, Van Cise intended to go to the newspapers in Denver with these statements, but after Danks told Boughton about Van Cise’s plan, Boughton arranged a meeting with Governor Ammons. At that meeting,
Boughton, Danks, and the governor managed to talk Van Cise out of telling the press what he had discovered. In an effort to explain why Van Cise wanted to go to the press with the statements he had collected, Boughton recalled a conversation he had with Danks in which his fellow officer said: "Captain Van Cise is younger than you and me . . . he is very much shocked; he is assuming that everything he heard was true." Boughton went on to say that he and Danks "deplored what we considered the hotheadedness of our fellow officer. We thought right at that particular time, in the inflamed state of public sentiment, that it [going to the newspapers] was a very unwise thing for Capt. Van Cise to do. And between us we determined to prevent its being done, if we could. . . ." 27

In 1914, Danks was thirty-six or thirty-seven years old. He had been a member of first the Illinois and then the Colorado National Guard since 1898, and had served in the Philippines. Boughton was thirty-five while Van Cise was in his mid-to-late twenties. To rein in his younger colleague whom he believed was not acting in the best interests of the guard, Boughton encouraged Adjutant General Chase—with Governor Ammons's approval—to appoint a board of officers to investigate Ludlow, to place him at the head of this board, and to also appoint Van Cise and Danks. Boughton's goal was to give Van Cise the opportunity to continue his investigation, but to also make certain that he did so in a way that he, as head of the board, had to approve. This strategy also ensured that Boughton could control the findings made by the board of officers and use the board's final report to defend the National Guard. As we shall see in Chapter Five, though, Philip

27 See the testimony of Edward J. Boughton, CIR Testimony, vol. 7, 6840-41.
Van Cise still managed to become a vocal critic of the National Guard’s actions on strike duty and at Ludlow.\textsuperscript{28}

Like John C. Bell, Boughton and Danks were lawyers in civilian life, and as in Bell’s account of his experiences on the frontier and his showdown with Lake City’s working-class miners, Boughton and Danks’s report on Ludlow depicted strike duty as a contest that would prove guardsmen both racially superior to and manlier than their adversaries.\textsuperscript{29}

In their report, Boughton and Danks focused as much on the character of the people who resided in the Ludlow tent colony as on what happened there on April 20, 1914. Their judgments were not kind. They observed that the southern and eastern European immigrant families at Ludlow had “little in common ... with the few Americans residents among them. The percentage of American citizens, even naturalized citizens was small” and “it will readily be seen that these people did not possess much means of interchanging information or social ideas.”\textsuperscript{30}

Later in the report, Boughton and Danks described how Albert Martin, a private in the National Guard, died during the battle at Ludlow. Martin’s body was found with his arms broken, and “he had been shot through the mouth, powder stains evidencing that a gun

\textsuperscript{28} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{29} Among Boughton legal clients was the Cripple Creek Metalliferous Mine Owners’ Association. This association was instrumental in the successful drive to defeat the 1903-04 Western Federation of Miners’ strikes in Cripple Creek and elsewhere in Colorado. See George G. Suggs, \textit{Colorado’s War on Militant Unionism: James H. Peabody and the Western Federation of Miners} (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1972), 86-129.


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had been held to his lips. His head had been caved in, and his brains exuded on the ground.” This act, the officers wrote, revealed “the savage blood lust of this Southern European peasantry. In this connection we find also that without exception where dying or wounded adversaries, whether soldiers or civilians, had fallen into the hands of these barbarians, they were tortured or mutilated.” In their conclusion, these officers laid some blame for Ludlow on the coal mine owners, but only because they “established in an American industrial community a numerous class of ignorant, lawless, and savage Southern European peasants.” The presence of such a community necessitated a state police force, Boughton concluded. This new force would report for “duty in disturbed regions of the state, whereby the young men of our volunteer National Guard may be relieved from engaging in riot duty with a people numbering among them ferocious foreigners whose savagery in fight [sic] we found exemplified in the killing of Major Lester while under the Red Cross protection and the maiming and mutilation of Privates Martin, Hockersmith, and Chavez.”

Although the medical examiner’s statement and the guard’s report on Ludlow differ in their descriptions of Albert Martin’s corpse, it is probably true that the striking miners mutilated Martin’s body. Moreover, Major Lester and Privates Hockersmith and Chavez were among the casualties of the ten-day war that followed Ludlow. It is also true that these killings happened only after months of violent confrontations between Baldwin-Felts guards, deputy sheriffs, and National Guardsmen on one side and striking miners and their families on the other. These battles, which the miners and their families often lost, were topped off by the Ludlow tent colony’s fiery destruction and the resulting deaths of two

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31 Ibid., 16-17, 24, 28.
32 McGovern and Guttridge, The Great Coalfield War, 222.
women, twelve children, and at least six miners. These violent deaths along with the many preventable deaths in mine accidents that preceded the strike were the likely if not justifiable cause of the miners' own violence. The Colorado National Guard officers who sought to explain striker violence, however, obscured class anger in favor of a racialized understanding of their adversaries. Describing the killings of Martin, Lester, Hockersmith, and Chavez as "savage" certainly recalled the sensationalism that often characterized reports of Indian atrocities during the late nineteenth-century Plains Indian Wars. Indeed, borrowing the language of western conquest to explain the world of industrial capitalism was a powerful tool because it allowed the guard to portray strikers as savage threats to white civilization—a kind of threat that white native-born residents of their state understood very well. In this formulation, the miners' actions were not attributable to class resentment growing out of the horrific conditions in which miners and their families worked and lived, but were instead explained by the "fact" that immigrant, working-class miners were, like the Plains Indians, racially inferior savages.

Southern Colorado's coal miners certainly were not the first immigrants that native-born Americans thought savage. The equation of working-class men and women with American Indians was widespread during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In 1869, for instance, the Scientific American welcomed the "ruder" laborers coming to the United States, but warned: "If some of these are likely to prove hard to assimilate into an homogeneous whole, the result will be a quiet but sure extermination. They will share the fate of the native Indian, who, unwilling to accept civilization, has been gradually driven..."
away by its advance." Coming in 1869, this warning was aimed at Irish-Catholic and Chinese immigrants, for the "new" immigration from southern and eastern Europe had not yet started in earnest. Immigrant workers, moreover, were not alone in facing charges of savagery. As Richard Slotkin has shown, some popular press outlets described all the workers involved in the 1877 nationwide railroad strike as savage and barbaric. In a strike that coincided with the Nez Perce Indian War in the Northwest, workers, like the Nez Perce, became the enemy of the state. Other publications, however, insisted that the 1877 strike was evidence of a foreign proletariat promoting class war in the United States. The Nation, for example, argued that "Vast additions have been made to our population . . . to whom American political and social ideals appeal but faintly, if at all, and who carry in their very blood traditions which give universal suffrage an air of menace to many of the things which civilized men hold dear." In this analysis, the strike and the violence that came with it could not be fully understood without acknowledging that immigrant participants had, like the Nez Perce, blood flowing through their veins that would forever prevent them from becoming worthy American citizens.

Observers of the many labor conflicts that followed the 1877 railroad strike continued to compare striking immigrant workers to Indians. Indian savagery was how one contemporary chronicler explained the actions of the seven German immigrant anarchists and one native-born American convicted and sentenced to death for throwing a bomb at police in Chicago's Haymarket Square on May 4, 1886. That none of the convicted was

35 Quoted in Slotkin, The Fatal Environment, 495.
actually in Haymarket Square on May 4 did not stop Michael Schaack, a Chicago police officer who published a book about Haymarket, from describing anarchist women as “squaws” or from asserting that the anarchists held “war dances.” According to Carl Smith, this comparison asserted that like the “feared and hated Indians . . . the anarchists were hostile and dangerous savages who only understood force and had no justifiable claim on American space.”

A decade later, when the “new” immigration hit its stride, Fredric Remington, the painter and chronicler of the American West, expressed similar sentiment in Harper’s Weekly during the 1894 Pullman strike. It is clear that the Plains Indians were never far from Remington’s mind as he described the immigrant strikers in Harper’s. His assertions that the “big foreign population . . . in Chicago . . . isn’t American in any particular,” and that “Eventually, this unlicked mob will have to be shot up a little, or washed, before it will get into a mental calm” echoed the common late nineteenth-century claim that Indians could be civilized—or eliminated—simply by giving them soap or by killing them. Earlier, as federal troops entered the city, Remington wrote: “the soldier mind doesn’t understand this Hungarian or Polack, or whatever the stuff is.” According to Remington, a soldier asked him: “Say, do you know them things ain’t human?—before God I don’t think they are men.” While criticizing Illinois governor John Altgeld, who had tried to dissuade President Grover Cleveland from sending federal troops to Chicago to break the strike, Remington lamented

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how the governor had taken the "raging, savage, unthinking mob, as it stands in front of
the police and the soldiers, into partnership." 38

A similar mindset prevailed among state officials and National Guardsmen who
served during the series of strikes that gripped Colorado’s mining industry in 1903-04. The
1903-04 strikes were important in the Colorado National Guard’s history because they
cemented its reputation as a strike breaking force. The guard’s first strike duty call out was
in 1880, when miners in Leadville returned to work four days after the guard arrived. In its
next three missions—the 1894 WFM strike in Cripple Creek, the 1896 Leadville strike, and
1899 Lake City strike—the guard broke the strike twice (1896 and 1899), but in the 1894
WFM strike, when the guard was out on duty for six months, they remained neutral and
even helped stop a renegade pro-mine operator sheriff and his deputies from harassing
striking miners. That Governor Davis Waite was a Populist elected with labor’s help, and
the Adjutant General of the National Guard shared the governor’s political allegiances helps
explain the Guard’s refusal to break that strike. 39

The 1903-04 strikes, therefore, were crucial in determining the future path of the
Colorado National Guard. Most miners involved in the WFM’s 1903-04 strike were native-
born Americans of Irish, English, Scottish, Welsh, Canadian, Swedish, or German descent
or immigrants from Canada, the British Isles and northwestern Europe. Italian immigrants,
however, made up a significant minority of union members and strikers. At Telluride,
National Guard Major Zeph T. Hill focused on what he called this “lot of ignorant Italians

and Pullman, see Richard Slotkin, Gunfighter Nation, 95-101.
39 Elizabeth Jameson, All That Glitters: Class, Conflict, and Community in Cripple Creek (Chicago:
University of Illinois Press, 1997), 53-61; U.S. Senate, A Report on Labor Disturbances in the State of
Colorado from 1880 to 1904, Inclusive with Correspondence Relating Thereto, Prepared Under the

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and other foreigners." Hill and Governor Peabody also went to extraordinary lengths to investigate the backgrounds of Italian immigrants in the city, contacted the Italian consul in Denver to ask for information on immigrants living in Telluride and the surrounding area, and arresting Italians with previous criminal records. Hill thought all these actions would "put a new terror into the rest of the foreigners living here and now, and those deported."40

By March 1904, the guard had already gone a long way toward breaking the WFM strike. Fresh from Telluride, Hill was also in charge of the troops that Peabody sent south. Southern and eastern European immigrants were a far more substantial presence in the coalfields than in the metal mines and, as in Telluride, Hill focused on these immigrants. He outlawed telephone conversations in languages other than English, closed down the pro-labor Italian language newspaper, and deported its editors along with union leaders because he feared that articles appearing in the paper might send the Italians, in particular into "riot or disturbance." Predictably, the vast majority of those deported out of state from southern Colorado were Italian immigrants. Governor Peabody hired the Pinkerton Detective Agency to investigate the Italian strikers and because the United States Secret Service thought "many desperate criminals" lived in southern Colorado, the governor had Hill gather information about his Italian and Austrian prisoners. It turned out that the Secret Service’s suspicions were groundless. Nevertheless, Hills’ tactics were effective. By June 1904, when Peabody pulled the troops out of southern Colorado, the guard had helped the operators bring in enough strikebreakers to keep their mines running at an acceptable level. The

40 Jameson, All That Glitters, 140-47 shows these ethnic groups living in Colorado’s Cripple Creek mining district, one of the biggest metal mining areas in the state. On the Italian presence in the WFM and in the 1903-04 strike, see Mark Wyman, Hard Rock Epic: Western Miners and the Industrial Revolution, 1860-1910 (Berkeley, California: University of California Press, 1979), 32-50 and Suggs, Colorado’s War on Militant Unionism, 128, 133-34. Hill quoted on 128 and 134.
miners, however, held out until October when they finally accepted defeat and went back to work.41

The National Guard used most, but not all, of these tactics in every region of Colorado affected by the 1903-04 strikes. Still, the southern and eastern European immigrant miners in southern Colorado were not members of the WFM, a union that Colorado capitalists believed was radical and dangerous, and they did not violently resist either the importation of strikebreakers or the abuse meted out by National Guardsmen to anywhere near the same degree as their native-born and old-stock immigrant counterparts elsewhere in the state. Nevertheless, Governor Peabody and the National Guard paid extra attention to these “new” immigrants, particularly the Italian ones, because they somehow appeared most responsible for causing labor unrest. In this way, the National Guard expressed the same concerns as the CF&I’s Sociological Department about the “new” immigrants in southern Colorado. As representatives of the guard and the state of Colorado, Major Hill and Governor Peabody clearly worried that the working-class Italian immigrant miners involved in both the WFM and UMW strikes lacked discipline, were dangerous, and thus required special attention.

This focus on immigrants as the worst agitators during labor conflicts reflected the increasing concern that many nativist intellectuals, physicians, journalists, and academics

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voiced about the threat that southern and eastern European immigrants posed to American civilization. For instance, John R. Commons, who spent his academic career championing labor’s cause in the United States, supported the American Federation of Labor’s position that Congress should restrict immigration from southern and eastern Europe. In *Races and Immigrants in America*, which he published in 1907 after President Theodore Roosevelt appointed him to the U.S. Immigration Commission, Commons argued that “the peasant of Europe, especially of Southern and Eastern Europe, have been reduced to the qualities similar to those of an inferior race that favor despotism and oligarchy rather than democracy.”

Commons also believed that degeneracy among southern and eastern European immigrants would prevent them from thriving in the American political system. “Our democratic theories and forms of government were fashioned by but one of the many races and peoples . . . and that race, the so-called Anglo-Saxon, developed them out of its own insular experience unhampered by inroads of alien stock,” Commons wrote. “When once thus established in England and further developed in America we find that other races and peoples, accustomed to despotism and even savagery, and wholly unused to self-government, have been thrust into the delicate fabric.”

Commons contended finally that the state would have to keep its boot on these immigrants’ throats to keep them in line. “We have begun actually to despotize our institutions in order to control these dissident elements,” he wrote—a statement which could

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43 Ibid., 5.
be read as a not-so-veiled reference to the use of military force to crush the labor activism of immigrant workers. Yet as an intellectual deeply committed to democracy, Commons was not consoled by the notion that the state would club inferior immigrants into submission. Instead, he worried that this creeping authoritarianism “undermined the democratic ideals of native-born Americans and might ultimately destroy American democracy.” Hence, Commons concluded, “it behooves us as a people to enter the practical study of this problem, for upon its outcome depends the fate of government of the people, for the people, and by the people.”

Commons’s fears about southern and eastern European immigrant workers who had lived in “savagery” for centuries, who were not endowed with the tools necessary for self-government, and were the cause of increasing labor unrest were certainly widespread. As Mathew Jacobson points out, men and women across the turn-of-the-twentieth-century American political spectrum—from leftists like Margaret Sanger, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, and Jack London to progressives like Woodrow Wilson, Edward Ross, Frederick Jackson Turner, and Theodore Roosevelt to conservatives like Madison Grant, Calvin Coolidge, and Herbert Hoover—all expressed ideas that comfortably complemented the arguments Commons made in _Races and Immigrants in America._

This is not to say that there was broad consensus on the question of immigrant racial inferiority. Immigrant workers, whether German, Irish, Italian, Jewish, or Greek certainly did not believe they were hopelessly backward savages unable to function in a democratic system, but it is clear that during the four decades between the 1860s and the 1907

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44 Ibid., 5, 12.
45 Jacobson, _Whiteness of a Different Color_, 88.
publication of *Races and Immigrants in America*, the idea that savagery was loose among the immigrant working class had became commonplace among the nation's many nativists and proponents of immigration restriction.

Still, the assertion that workers were savage, or at least, shared traits that white Americans disdained in Indians, also cropped up in strikes that did not involve immigrants. In the 1892 revolt against the use of convict labor in Tennessee’s coalfields, for example, adjutant general of the Tennessee National Guard Sam T. Carnes characterized the mostly white and native-born miners as “mean, cowardly, bullying outlaws, narrow-minded and intensely prejudiced against anything that smatters of authority, and without the manhood to back their opinions save when they possess every advantage. They are more treacherous than Indians and nearly as shiftless.”46

It is possible that Adjutant General Carnes thought, like West Virginia’s mine operators, that coal miners from the hills of Tennessee were as “primitive” and “uncivilized” as miners from the hills of southern West Virginia. Or one could say that comparing workers to Indians and describing them as savages was not strictly a means of indicating racial inferiority. After all, Colorado Governor James Peabody complained that the entire WFM, not just its immigrant members, were “the occasion of more trouble and expense to the state than all other causes combined, including Indian raids.”47 Either way, Antonio Gramsci’s observation that “for a social elite the features of subordinate groups always


display something barbaric or pathological” is particularly instructive. Gramsci’s point is certainly helpful in thinking about why images of warlike Indians who violently resisted white conquest leapt into the minds of the academics, journalists, doctors, and police and military officers cited here when they described workers who challenged the established social and economic order and, in the process, violated middle-class norms of decorum and civility by marching, picketing, and demonstrating in the streets.

John R. Commons and a whole host of other nativist thinkers believed that southern and eastern European immigrant workers were primitive, “backward,” savage, and generally less evolved. Social Darwinism and ideas culled from eugenics science, both of which enjoyed wide popularity among nativists at the turn of the twentieth century, led them to argue that these immigrants were racially inferior. The form of their inferiority, however, resembled something Americans had seen before. By engaging in strikes that produced violence, these immigrants—who often spoke little or no English, looked strange, dress oddly, and to some noses, even smelled funny—resembled the best example of a racially inferior, but formidable enemy that the country had ever known: the American Indian. No doubt, then, in nativist thinking, the Old West and the new scientific racism worked in tandem to explain the participation of southern and eastern European immigrants in labor conflicts.

While seeing striking immigrant miners as racially inferior threats to civilization was an important part of how these guard officers sought to explain and justify their actions at

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Ludlow, it is evident that gender and class, as well as race, informed their interpretation of the massacre. As they had done in 1903-04, guardsmen singled out one ethnic group for special attention. Ten years earlier the guard had focused on the Italians, but in 1913, they singled out the Greek strikers at the Ludlow tent colony as troublemakers. In their report, Boughton and Danks characterized the Greeks as “aggressive fighting men” who “imposed their desire on the rest” and “were vociferous and insistent upon giving battle to the soldiers at once if they should appear.”

The guard’s uneasiness with the Greek miners reflected the significant role this group played during the strike. Louis Tikas, the Greek immigrant who was murdered at Ludlow, was instrumental in maintaining the tent colony there and was very popular among its residents. Striking miners, moreover, no matter their ethnicity, defended themselves against provocation and violent assault with violence of their own. Some miners owned pistols and rifles, and the United Mine Workers spent $7,500 bringing more weapons to Colorado when it became clear that the Colorado National Guard and the mine operators—the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company, the largest coal mining company in southern Colorado, spent between $25,000 and $30,000 on guns and ammunition and furnished the guard with several machine guns—were bent on using violence to break the strike. Still, many miners were not armed, and often faced guardsmen with nothing but fake, wooden rifles they had fashioned from tree branches. Lack of armaments among the miners, moreover, explains why the guard was often frustrated in its attempts to disarm the miners during the strike. Although guardsmen

51 On Tikas, see Papanikolas, Buried Unsung: Louis Tikas and the Ludlow Massacre.
searched homes and bodies for weapons on a daily basis, they met much resistance and only partially succeeded in carrying out this mission.\textsuperscript{52} Knowing the history of violent western labor conflict, guardsmen sought to define the striking workers in terms that marked them as dangerous and alien. In Boughton and Danks's official report on Ludlow, they referred to Louis Tikas as the "master of the tented city" and asserted: "the Greeks were regarded as heroes, for many of them, we are told, had seen service in the Balkan wars."\textsuperscript{53} Greece fought the First and Second Balkan Wars in 1912 and 1913 against the Ottoman Turks and then against Bulgaria. That many veterans of these conflicts had made their way to the Ludlow tent colony by the fall of 1913 is not very likely, but because military service was compulsory in Greece, some male residents of the tent colony had military experience. Stretching that experience to claim that these men had fought in the Balkans Wars allowed Boughton and Danks to suggest that they were not fighting the women and children killed at Ludlow, but instead a formidable, male enemy who, like many guardsmen, had military combat experience. Lieutenant Karl Linderfelt, another guard officer, followed similar logic when he asserted that "an Apache Indian belonging to the WCTU [Women's Christian Temperance Union]" could not match what "the Greeks and the Bulgarians had done to each other in the Balkans."\textsuperscript{54} By emphasizing

\textit{The Military Occupation of the Coal Strike Zone by the Colorado National Guard, 1913-1914, Report of the Commanding General to the Governor for the Use of the Congressional Committee, Exhibiting an Account of the Military Occupation to the Time of the First Withdrawal of Troops in April, 1914 (Denver, Colorado: The Smith-Brooks Printing Company, 1914), 12-14; Long, Where the Sun Never Shines, 278; See the testimony of Reverend Eugene S. Gaddis, \textit{CIR Testimony}, vol. 9, 8762.}\textsuperscript{52}  
\textit{Ludlow: Being the Report of the Special Board of Officers, 7.}\textsuperscript{53}  
\textit{Military District of Colorado, "Record of the General Court Martial in the Matter of Karl Linderfelt," vol. 20, 280, Western History Collection, Denver Public Library, Denver, Colorado. Native Americans’ problem with alcohol abuse was well known by 1914. Many Anglos, furthermore, believed that the Apaches were one of the fiercer tribes in the American West. Lieutenant Linderfelt’s reference seems to be to what he thought a sober, and therefore, particularly "savage" Apache could accomplish on the battlefield, and how he thought Greeks and Bulgarians were capable of equaling such “savagery.”}\textsuperscript{54}
the Greeks’ previous combat experience, and in Linderfelt’s case, the “savagery” of their actions in the Balkans, Boughton, Danks, and Linderfelt attempted to evade responsibility for killing women and children, an act they certainly considered unmanly, by casting the tent colony’s Greek residents as a fierce, savage, masculine foreign army that had “invaded” southern Colorado.

Contending that many Balkan wars veterans lived at Ludlow helped bolster this position, but Boughton, Danks, and Linderfelt were not the only ones who found this story compelling. Local newspapers, mine owners, and other guard officers highlighted the presence of these “fierce” Greek “warriors” in the Ludlow tent colony. The Rocky Mountain News, for instance, published letters from Greek soldiers to their families describing atrocities they committed in the Balkan wars just a few weeks before the 1913-14 coal strike began. These letters, which allegedly fell into the hands of the Bulgarian army during a battle, described the murders of children and various methods of torture Greek soldiers employed before killing prisoners. One letter from a corporal writing to his brother said:

“Not even a cat has escaped where we have gone. We have burned every Bulgarian village through which we have passed. This is all I can tell you.”

While it is not clear if these letters were authentic or merely a propaganda tool manufactured by the Bulgarian government, The Rocky Mountain News told Denver’s residents that Greek soldiers were guilty of killing civilians and otherwise conducting “savage” warfare. Given warfare’s inherent barbarism, it would not be surprising if the letters published in the News were authentic. Whether or not it was, such accounts might have influenced the guard. When the National Guard was called out on strike duty in

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55 The Rocky Mountain News, 4 September 1913.
October 1913 several weeks after the News story appeared, Denver resident Captain Philip Van Cise told his troops on the train ride to southern Colorado that “You are on serious business. There are 1,000 Greeks, veterans of the Balkan war, in the strike district. They are trained soldiers and they are heavily armed, armed to the teeth. If you have to shoot, shoot to kill.” The Trinidad Chronicle-News bolstered Van Cise’s claim when it reported early in the strike that Greek organizer Louis Tikas was “shrewd and fearless—a veteran of the Balkan war, and he controls the Greeks at the tent colony with a spoken word, a lift of the eye brows or a gesture of his hand.” In fact, Louis Tikas had come to the United States half-a-dozen years before the Balkan wars began and became a U.S. citizen just after the southern Colorado coal strike began in September 1913. Nonetheless, this myth about the savagery of the miners who lived at Ludlow continued to spread. Jesse Welbom, president of the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company, wrote in his company’s 1914 annual report that the Ludlow tent colony’s population was “largely veterans of the Balkan Wars of various nationalities.”

Residents of the tent colony, in contrast, remembered no more than five Balkan war veterans among them, but it is perhaps more important that none of these outside observers realized that Greek sojourners in the American West were ambivalent about both their country’s involvement in the Balkan wars and about military service in general. In fact,

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56 The Denver Post, 28 October 1913.
57 The Trinidad Chronicle-News, November 13, 1913.
58 Papanikolas, Buried Unsung, 9, 88, 90.
60 In his research for Buried Unsung, Zeese Papanikolas interviewed several Greek miners who lived in the Ludlow tent colony. In one of these interviews, Michael Lingos remembered three Balkan veterans in the tent colony on the day of the massacre. See pages 119 and 297, endnote 119.
many young men left Greece for the United States seeking to avoid military service.\textsuperscript{61} Some Greek Ludlow residents had been members of the Greek military and these men certainly looked proudly on the success that their native land had enjoyed in the Balkan wars, but that pride certainly did not make these men experienced soldiers.\textsuperscript{62} Publicizing the “presence” of Balkan war veterans at Ludlow was aimed at creating an enemy that the guard and others who wished to defend their actions could fit into an understanding of the Ludlow Massacre that justified guardsmen’s actions.

Boughton and Danks also wrote: “there were no Greek women or children in the colony” and they found the absence of women and children “strange” and “important.”\textsuperscript{63} This observation might have been another way of saying that Ludlow was, in fact, an armed camp occupied by soldiers who lacked the “civilizing” company of women and children. It is just as likely, however, that Boughton and Danks were questioning the Greeks’ manliness while raising questions about their racial identity. The guard was correct about the absence of Greek women in the Ludlow tent colony. The 300 to 350 Greeks (not the 1,000 that Captain Van Cise claimed) working in southern Colorado’s coal mines were predominantly young, without family in Colorado, and therefore, fairly mobile.\textsuperscript{64} That mobility influenced how Americans defined the Greeks’ racial identity. The racial status of “new” immigrants to the United States at the turn of the twentieth century varied widely, but native-born, white

\textsuperscript{61} Peck, \textit{Reinventing Free Labor}, 171-72.
\textsuperscript{62} Papanikolas \textit{Buried Unsung}, 119.
\textsuperscript{63} \textit{Ludlow: Being the Report of the Special Board of Officers}, 7. In the “Findings of the Board” section of the report, Boughton and Danks repeated this observation when they wrote: “The Greeks, always warlike and obstreperous, had no women or children in the colony.”
\textsuperscript{64} Louis Tikas estimated that there between 300 and 350 Greeks were working southern Colorado’s coal mines just before the 1913-14 strike began. See Papanikolas, \textit{Buried Unsung}, 72. This figure is in line with number of Greeks (589) the United Mine Workers estimated worked in all the state’s coal mining regions. See “Nationalities Employed in Mines of Colorado During the Year 1912,” Papers of Edward Doyle, Box 2, Envelope 18, Western History Collection, Denver Public Library, Denver, Colorado. Also see Peck, \textit{Reinventing Free Labor}, 158-73.
Americans often saw transience as evidence of racial inferiority and an inability to assimilate. Writing in 1914 about Italian immigrants, another group widely represented among the miners who struck in southern Colorado, the sociologist and eugenicist Edward Ross asserted that “not being transients, the north Italians do not resist Americanizing influences,” but “the South Italians remain nearly as aloof as did the Cantonese who built the Central Pacific Railway. Navvies who leave for Naples when the ground freezes and return in April, who huddle in a ‘camp’ or a box-car, or herd on some ‘Dago Flat’ are not really in America.”

Many southern Italians had no intention of staying in the United States. The goal for many of these immigrants was to make money in the New World and then return to the old. Others were “birds of passage,” men who worked in the U.S. and/or Canada during the summer and then traveled to Argentina or other South American countries when the weather in the northern hemisphere turned cold. Indeed, 56.4 percent of the southern Italians who came to the United States between 1899 and 1924 did not stay.

Northern Italians who came to the United States between 1899 and 1924 were only slightly less transient, but there were far fewer immigrants from the north than from the south. To Ross, northern Italian immigrants were “more intelligent, reliable, and progressive than the south Italian” and well on their way to becoming Americans. The

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65 On racial hierarchies in the West, see Peck, *Reinventing Free Labor*, 166-173.
66 Edward Alsworth Ross, *The Old World in the New: The Significance of Past and Present Immigration to the American People* (New York: The Century Company, 1914), 111. “Navvies” or “navvy” is a British term for unskilled laborers. The term was most commonly applied to men working on road or railroad construction.

Many of the people who emigrated from the Italian peninsula to southern Colorado and the United States
transient south Italians, on the other hand, who Ross categorized as a “race” separate from
and inferior to north Italians, had more in common with the Chinese, a group that many
turn-of-the-twentieth century Americans saw as clear racial inferiors with no chance of ever
successfully assimilating themselves into American society, and who had been long
excluded from legally emigrating to the United States. Put simply, the more mobile an
immigrant worker was, the more inferior—and less American—he was.

The transience that made working-class immigrants racially suspect also called
their manliness into question. Their lack of wives and children in the New World, and
therefore, of the domestic attachments and responsibilities that defined middle-class, native-
born manhood, made them seem unmanly, uncivilized and “savage.” As Gunther Peck has
shown, however, the very presence of Greek working-class men in the West often had much
to do with carrying out duties that native-born, middle-class American men might have seen
as “manly.” Many single Greek men worked in the American West to earn dowries for their
sisters. Married men had different motivations. In Greece, brides commonly moved into
their father-in-laws’ houses after marriage. Some husbands came to the United States to earn
extra money for their father’s newly expanded household, and perhaps, to save enough to
bring the family to the New World. Both duties had rewards for men who carried them out
successfully. For single men, earning dowry money meant accomplishing a task that was
expected of them. Married men, on the other hand, received the cultural and economic
benefits of marriage and helped maintain their father’s estate, which they might inherit in the

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between 1880 and 1924 were from southern Italy. That the U.S drew this inferior “race” made Ross all the
more adamant about the need for legislation that would restrict immigration.

69 For a general discussion of definitions of middle-class manliness at the turn of the century, see
Rotundo, American Manhood, 222-46; also Peck, Reinventing Free Labor, 130-31.

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future. Only in a literal sense, therefore, was it true that Greek immigrants did not have their families with them.\textsuperscript{70}

The guard's account of the Ludlow Massacre reveals not only ignorance of the realities that Greek working-class immigrant men faced in southern Colorado, but also an overwhelming desire to escape blame for the events of that day. Boughton and Danks' blamed not only the Greeks, but all the striking miners for leaving their women and children behind in the utter chaos that reigned in the tent colony once fighting began. Charlie Costa, who was killed at Ludlow, told Margaret Dominiske as they ran past one another when the shooting began in the tent colony that he was leading his fellow miners out of the tent colony in an effort to draw the National Guard's fire away from the women and children still in the tents.\textsuperscript{71} For Boughton and Danks, however, retreating from the colony was a cowardly act. Seeing it as such allowed them to praise other National Guardsmen because they risked their lives rescuing, as they put it, "these deluded people," as the battle raged around them. In doing so, Boughton and Danks sought to show that their fellow guardsmen were more masculine than their adversaries in the tent colony. They wrote: "We find that the work of rescuing these women and children . . . was under the circumstances, truly heroic and must stand out boldly in contradistinction to the abandonment of the helpless women and children by their own people . . ." The officers, finally, lamented their comrades' inability to find the two women and eleven children who died before fire consumed their tent.\textsuperscript{72} CF&I president Jesse Welborn took a similar position when he sought to explain

\textsuperscript{71} Affidavit of Margaret Dominiske, \textit{CIR Testimony}, vol. 8, 7380.
\textsuperscript{72} \textit{Ludlow: Being the Report of the Special Board of Officers}, 19-20. The guard's report was published in 1914 while Margaret Dominiske testified before the CIR in February 1915. An affidavit that came along with her testimony contains an account of her conversation with Costa in the tent colony, but it is not clear
Ludlow. He wrote that the women and children who “lost their lives in this affray were
smothered in a covered cave through the foolish, if not criminal, act of their own men who
put them here and sealed the cover with dirt.” For Welborn and the two officers who wrote
the guard’s official report on the event, the guard who fired their machine guns into the
Ludlow tent colony and eventually burned it to the ground had nothing to do with who died.

Over a fifty-year odyssey that began at Sand Creek, wound through Lake City,
and a half-dozen labor disputes before the 1913-14 coal strike, Colorado National
Guardsmen had violently defended the civilization that their organization had helped
create. Violence undoubtedly helped defeat the 1913-14 strike, but guardsmen had to
constantly justify their brutality. As we have seen, those justifications consistently used
the guard’s evolving understanding of masculinity, race, and class to transform their
adversaries into deviant, “savage,” and unmanly enemies of civilization.

The attributes of the enemies guardsmen created in their public comments on the
strike, however, were not complete fabrications. It is likely that the striking miners
mutilated Private Martin’s body and they certainly did kill other guardsmen in the ten-
day war that followed the Ludlow Massacre. A few Greek Balkan War veterans were
present in the Ludlow tent colony, and those Greeks, along with the other immigrant men
who lived at Ludlow, did leave the colony without their women and children during the
battle at Ludlow. The Colorado National Guard used these facts to attack all of these
people with words and with weapons because they challenged the guard’s sense of

if Boughton and Danks knew about Dominiske’s explanation of why the male residents of the tent colony
retreated when they wrote their report on Ludlow. See the Affidavit of Margaret Dominiske, CIR
Testimony, vol. 8, 7380.
of the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company, RG 2, Box 25, Rockefeller Archive Center.
masculine, racial, and class dominance. The striking miners at Ludlow--Greek and otherwise--defied middle-class manhood by going on strike and taking up arms against a National Guard commanded by Colorado’s native-born white middle and upper-middle class. Seen in this light, the Greek men at Ludlow did not appear dangerous solely because guardsmen believed that they were Balkan War veterans. They appeared dangerous because they were strangers in Colorado who dared to challenge their “betters” in the guard, and because they were men who lacked the civilizing presence of women. They built tents, bought weapons, ignored the guard’s authority as enforcer of the state’s will, and refused to end their strike no matter how brutally the guard treated them. They also appeared dangerous because they were desperate, and their desperation only became more apparent as they toughed out a Colorado winter living in tents. It is no coincidence that the Ludlow Massacre happened in late April 1914, after the relationship between the guard and the striking miners had become increasingly poisoned over the course of a long, cold winter.

How guardsmen understood both the challenge that immigrant, working-class men made to their authority and the desperation that challenge created tells us much about the Colorado National Guard. On one level, it is useful to think of the guard as a modern institution, a product of the modern state and modern industrial capitalism. In 1913, National Guards were relatively new institutions, created by many states after the 1877 railroad strike to counter what many observers saw as the inevitable labor unrest that would accompany the second industrial revolution. The Colorado National Guard, however, did not talk, write, and think entirely in the new terms of class and class conflict that were certainly an important part of the battle between labor and capital during the
Gilded Age and Progressive Era. The guard often obscured class in favor of gender and race, and thus invoked not the modern industrial world, but the West's romantic past. By continually asserting the white man's masculine superiority over Ludlow's Greek residents while equating the striking, immigrant miners with the "savage" Plains Indians, the guard cast strikebreaking as a continuation of their frontier-era efforts to defend the civilization that white settlers had brought to the West, rather than as the brutal use of state power against working people at capital's urging.

Reading these same descriptions as a reflection of the eugenics-influenced scientific racism that enjoyed widespread popularity by the 1910s shows that guard officers were capable of using the new tools that the modern world offered. At once, the guard looked back longingly to the nineteenth century, when white manly men, unfettered and unquestioned by women, wrested control of the West from its "inferior" Indian inhabitants while also casting a cautious glance toward the new century.
CHAPTER V

"IN THE ISLANDS, WE DONE EXACTLY THE SAME THING":
THE SPANISH-AMERICAN-FILIPINO WAR, STRIKE DUTY,
AND THE COLORADO NATIONAL GUARD

We shall continue as we have begun, to open the schools and the churches, to set the courts in operation, to foster industry and trade and agriculture, and in every way in our power to make these people whom Providence has brought within our jurisdiction feel that it is their liberty and not our power, their welfare and not our gain, we are seeking to enhance. 1

--President William McKinley in his annual message to Congress describing the purpose of the American war in the Philippines, December 5, 1899.

On July 18, 1898, 1,086 Colorado National Guardsmen arrived in the Philippine Islands. Once there, the guard quickly saw American goals turn from defeating the Spanish to suppressing Filipinos not enthralled with the idea of Americans ruling their islands. The war against Spain had begun several months earlier in Cuba. President William McKinley's Secretary of State John Hay called the fight there "a splendid little war" because it took just four months for the United States to wrest Cuba from Spanish control. Filipino revolutionaries and the American military also had little difficulty booting the Spanish out of the Philippines. The McKinley administration, however, did not have a plan for what to do with the archipelago once the Spanish were gone. Filipino leader Emilio Aguinaldo led a revolutionary movement weakened by factionalism, but he enjoyed significant support on the issue of independence for the Philippines. McKinley,

Congress, and the military were slow to act on that question, and growing mistrust soon became open conflict.²

If by some lights the war in Cuba was small and splendid, the American effort to deny Filipino independence was big and ugly. Two hundred thousand American troops, or four times the number that served in Cuba, fought in the Philippines. The United States suffered just 379 combat fatalities in Cuba, while diseases such as malaria, typhoid, and dysentery took the lives of more than 5,000 American soldiers. The war in the Philippines was more costly. Approximately 4,200 American soldiers were killed and 2,800 more were wounded during the four years it took to subdue Aguinaldo and the Filipino independence movement. The war was devastating for the Filipinos. Americans killed between 16,000 and 20,000 Filipino soldiers, and at least 200,000 Filipino civilians died in the conflict. Filipino and American soldiers committed many atrocities—killing captured and defenseless troops was common—and American servicemen destroyed scores of Filipino villages and massacred men, women, and children while army policies designed to starve Filipino guerillas induced famines that killed thousands of civilians.³

As this chapter's opening epigraph suggests, President McKinley, along with many other supporters of American imperialism overseas, had goals similar to the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company's Sociological Department. McKinley and other advocates of establishing a Pacific empire certainly understood the political, economic, and geo-strategic advantages of controlling territory so close to the coveted China

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market. Like the Sociological Department, though, McKinley thought that racial uplift, proper education, and turning the targets of such presumed largesse into Americans were also important parts of empire building and maintenance.\footnote{McKinley quoted in Grunder and Livezey, \textit{The Philippines and the United States}, 60.}

While the McKinley administration had these goals, most American soldiers who squashed Filipino resistance were not much interested in “making Americans.” To the contrary, the ferocity of the American war in the Philippines provided Colorado National Guardsmen who later served in the 1913-14 coal strike with combat experience against guerilla fighters whom many American servicemen saw, like the Plains Indians, as a formidable but still racially inferior enemy. Many of these officers subsequently believed that their service in both the Philippines and Cuba made them “real” soldiers who, therefore, knew best how to handle a similarly formidable but racially inferior immigrant “enemy” on strike duty. Not all the guardsmen who served during the 1913-14 strike agreed with this understanding of strike duty. Dissent was certainly present, but the expression of that dissent only more clearly demonstrates the strength of guardsmen’s vision of the guard as defenders of a civilization defined and dominated by white, middle-and upper-class, native-born men.

\textbf{The Philippines and Cuba}

The Colorado National Guard’s tour of duty in the Philippines helped mold its understanding of strike duty. Upon their arrival in the islands, the First Colorado Infantry was charged with guarding the water works outside the capitol city of Manila. On March 16, 1899, Companies B, K, and I of the First Colorado crossed the Mariquina River and came face-to-face with a group of Filipino “insurgents.” A prolonged battle ensued in the
small village of Mariquina before the Colorado troops drove their enemies into the surrounding hills. Those troops then burned the village to the ground.\(^5\)

This atrocity occurred a few weeks before the first large American offensive on the main island of Luzon. The offensive was largely successful, but the rapid American advance left many Filipino troops behind enemy lines. These soldiers took to conducting sniper attacks against the Americans. To remove the snipers’ cover, General Elwell S. Otis ordered his troops to burn all the territory, including villages, behind the American line.\(^6\)

Burning villages also became a common method for preventing civilians from supporting Filipino guerrillas. Soon after the initial Luzon offensive, General Lloyd Wheaton attempted to push south out of Manila, the Philippine capital and Luzon’s largest city, along the narrow isthmus separating Manila Bay from Laguna de Bay. Wheaton’s troops, however, were soon bogged down. Filipino guerrillas isolated two American companies, and the Filipinos’ ambushes and deadly booby traps produced many American casualties. Wheaton then ordered the first of many reprisals against the civilian Filipino population. American troops burned down every town within a twelve-mile radius of the ambush area.\(^7\) The First Colorado Infantry’s destruction of Mariquina happened almost three weeks before the ambush and Wheaton’s subsequent order to destroy all nearby villages. Though it is possible that Mariquina fell within Wheaton’s twelve-mile circle, the First Colorado destroyed Mariquina before it became military policy to incinerate Filipino villages.

\(^5\) Ibid., 140.
\(^7\) Ibid.
Colonel Frederick Funston, who according to H. W. Brands was “to the Philippine war what Theodore Roosevelt was to the war in Cuba except that Funston actually made a military difference,” exemplified the attitudes that allowed American soldiers to treat Filipino civilians so brutally. The colonel described the Filipinos as an “illiterate, semi-savage people, who are waging war, not against tyranny, but against Anglo-Saxon order and decency.” Many American soldiers certainly shared Funston’s view of their Filipino enemies. Reporting on a battle in which they trapped a contingent of Filipino soldiers in the Pasig River, several infantrymen from western states said: “... the fun was fast and furious” as they easily killed the Filipinos and stacked their bodies “thicker than buffalo chips.” These same soldiers also thought “picking off niggers in the water was more fun than a turkey shoot.” American soldiers routinely used racial epithets common in the United States to describe the Filipinos. The casualties Filipino guerillas inflicted on Americans, moreover, exacerbated the racial hatred that was at the root of such descriptions. This inflamed racial hatred, Stuart Creighton Miller has observed, dehumanized the Filipinos, making it easier for American soldiers to commit atrocities against them.

Aside from teaching some guardsmen the tactics that some would later use in southern Colorado, the Colorado National Guard’s role in carving out America’s first overseas imperial claims in the Philippines and Cuba produced men who, if nothing else, relished a good fight and were willing to use whatever tactics they believed necessary to win. Sherman Bell, for example, was one of Theodore Roosevelt’s roughriders in Cuba

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8 Brands, *Bound to Empire*, 58.
9 Quoted in Miller, *Benevolent Assimilation*, 67.
10 Miller, *Benevolent Assimilation*, 188.
before he became adjutant general of the Colorado National Guard. Roosevelt approvingly described Bell as "the gamest man in a game regiment," and Bell and Roosevelt stayed close after their military service together. When Roosevelt came to Victor, Colorado in 1900 to campaign on behalf of himself and William McKinley, Bell helped organize security for his former commander. Like John C. Bell's Lake City, Victor was a mining town and the miners, who supported the Populist, Socialist, and Democratic Parties, were decidedly against the Republican vice presidential candidate. For a time, it looked like the hero of San Juan Hill might get chased out of town, but like Mr. Campbell from *The Pilgrim and the Pioneer*, Sherman Bell saved the day by subduing the unruly miners. Bell, in fact, acted so aggressively that Roosevelt worried he might completely lose control. During the fracas, Roosevelt yelled, "Sherman, I am still Colonel. Get back!" as the crowd swirled around them. Later, the shaken candidate said: "My chief fear . . . was that Bell would begin killing people."12

The 1903-04 Strikes Redux

Sherman Bell did more than protect prominent visitors from Colorado's rowdies after returning from Cuba. In 1900, he went to work for the Independence-Wilson Creek Consolidated Mining Company as an assistant manager before becoming manager of all the Smith-Moffat syndicate's metal mines in the Cripple Creek district. Bell then became adjutant general of the Colorado National Guard.

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From this position, Bell played a crucial role in breaking the 1903-04 Western Federation of Miners’ strike. As we saw in Chapter Two, many observers believed that the state’s metal mining companies backed Republican candidate James Peabody’s 1902 campaign for governor after he agreed to use the National Guard against the Western Federation of Miners once he gained office. Shortly after Peabody was elected, he appointed managers and officials of the state’s metal mining companies to the State Military Board and as aides-de-camp to the National Guard. Some newspapers also reported that mine operators were pressuring him to allow them to name the guard’s next adjutant general.13 When the WFM went on strike in Cripple Creek and elsewhere in 1903, Peabody gave the mine operators what they wanted by asking Bell to become the National Guard’s commander. It was no secret that Smith-Moffat, which was one of the biggest metal mining outfits in Colorado and had connections to the First National Bank of Denver, wanted to destroy the WFM, but Bell’s income would shrink from $5,000 to $1,800 a year if he left the company and took the job as adjutant general. Bell’s quick acceptance of the position fueled speculation that mine owners had promised Bell the $3,200 he would lose by switching jobs.14

Once ensconced in his new position, Bell went about the work of eliminating the WFM. Declaring that he “came to do up this anarchistic federation” and stating publicly that he wanted to “kill” and “exterminate” the WFM, Bell shut down pro-labor newspapers in the strike zone, jailed journalists, local politicians, and WFM officials who disagreed with the guard’s strategies, shouted: “Habeas corpus be damned” when the

civil courts ordered him to release his illegally held prisoners, and deported from the state any miner who refused to renounce his affiliation with the WFM. These tactics effectively broke the strike and sent the WFM’s Colorado operations into severe decline.15

Governor Peabody eventually tired of Bell’s wild behavior and replaced him after the strike ended. Bulkeley Wells, the new adjutant general, was not a Spanish-American-Filipino War veteran, but he did share Bell’s experience as a former mine company manager. Wells came to Colorado from Boston in 1896 to look after his father-in-law’s mining investments after graduating from Harvard University. He later worked as a mine manager in Telluride and grabbed Governor Peabody’s attention during the 1903-04 strikes when he recruited his friends from Telluride’s mining offices, banks, and businesses to pay for the National Guard’s deployment there. Wells also organized these same men into a cavalry troop that helped carry out Bell’s ruthless strikebreaking plan.16

While Sherman Bell was clearly allied with the mine operators and wished to protect their interests, we also saw in Chapter Four that his National Guardsmen focused intently on the Italian immigrant WFM and UMW members in Telluride and southern Colorado during the 1903-04 strikes. Guardsmen clearly thought that these immigrants

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15 Bell quoted in Lukas, Big Trouble, 225. On the strike, see Jameson, All That Glitters, 199-225 and Suggs, Colorado’s War on Militant Unionism.
16 U.S. Senate, A Report on Labor Disturbances in the State of Colorado from 1880 to 1904, Inclusive with Correspondence Relating Thereto, Prepared Under the Direction of Carroll D. Wright, Commissioner of Labor, 58th Cong., 3d sess., 1905, S. Doc. 122, 200-05. Hereafter cited as A Report on Labor Disturbances in the State of Colorado from 1880 to 1904. Wells rose to prominence in Telluride after replacing a mine manager who was murdered during a WFM strike there in 1902. Because of the circumstances of his demise, the company could not find anyone to replace this manager. Wells then stepped forward to take the position, leaving his comfortable job as secretary of the Smuggler-Union gold mine and his family behind in Colorado Springs. See Lukas, Big Trouble, 201, 226-228.
were the most dangerous threat they faced, and this racially inflected view would continue to shape the guard’s mission.

**Manhood, the Spanish-American-Filipino War, and the Court of Inquiry**

By the 1913-14 coal strike, the guard’s officer corps looked like a combination of Sherman Bell and Bulkeley Wells. Many officers who went to southern Colorado in 1913 had served in the Spanish-American-Filipino War as regular army or guard members and almost all the officers were business owners, professionals--attorney, physician, and engineer were common occupations among the guard’s officers--or white-collar workers who held jobs as clerks, bookkeepers, accountants, civil servants, or managers.¹⁷

Despite these similarities, a 1915 Court of Inquiry into the condition of the Colorado National Guard revealed that it was hardly a harmonious organization. Many officers had little positive to say about each other, and much infighting and intrigue existed between different officer cliques. The most obvious source of this tension was between officers who had served in the Spanish-American-Filipino War and those who had not. Many Spanish-American-Filipino War veterans believed that officers who had not served overseas could not count themselves as “real” soldiers who possessed military expertise, but this conflict only partially explains why the guard experienced so much

¹⁷ In his testimony before a 1915 Court of Inquiry into the condition of the Colorado National Guard, Adjutant General John Chase said that two to three percent of the National Guard was made up of ex-regulars, but that “many officers seem to be ex-regulars or at least served in the Spanish War.” See the Testimony of Adjutant General John Chase, “Minutes of the Court of Inquiry Established by an Executive Order of his Excellency, George A. Carlson, Governor of the State of Colorado, August 28, 1915,” 1053, Papers of Hildreth Frost, Colorado Historical Society, Denver, Colorado. Hereafter cited as “Minutes of the Court of Inquiry.” This document, which contains over 1,000 pages of testimony from National Guardsmen, provides much information about the previous military service and socio-economic background of many National Guard officers. Also see “Official List and Directory: The National Guard of Colorado, October 6, 1912, Office of the Adjutant General,” Papers of Hildreth Frost, Box 1, Envelope 2, Western History Collection, Denver Public Library, Denver, Colorado, and “The Rosters of the Colorado National Guard, 1912-15,” Colorado State Department of Military Affairs Collection, Colorado State Archives, Denver, Colorado.
internal strife. The Court of Inquiry testimony and the courts martial the guard conducted during and after the 1913-14 coal strike reveal that this internal struggle sprang from conflicting ideas about how to conduct oneself as both a National Guard officer and as a man. The winner and losers in these battles reflect the set of ideas about service, duty, and manhood guard officers accepted as legitimate.

Adjutant General John Chase provides a good introduction to the simmering internal conflicts that bubbled to the surface during and after the 1913-14 strike. In his testimony before the Court of Inquiry, Chase contended that Spanish-American-Filipino War veterans believed that they all deserved officer commissions, which the guard simply could not provide. He also described these veterans as “know it alls” who did not make effective officers. Chase may have taken this critical position on Spanish-American-Filipino War veterans because he was not one. After he graduated from the University of Michigan in 1881 with a degree in medicine, Chase served for a number of years in the Michigan National Guard, and then moved to Colorado, where he set up shop as an ophthalmologist and rose to prominence quickly in his new home state’s National Guard. An administrative problem with the officer’s commission Governor Alva Adams granted Chase in 1898 prevented him from fighting in the Spanish-American-Filipino War, and Chase left the guard altogether before rejoining as a private in 1899. His service during that year’s Lake City strike got him promoted to sergeant. By 1903, Chase was a

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commander, and it was the courthouse spectacle he created in Cripple Creek shortly after the WFM strikes began, not overseas exploits, that brought him fame.19

In Cripple Creek, Chase used tactics that would become familiar when the National Guard was on strike duty. Knowing that Justice W. P. Seeds intended to liberate four union miners and officials he was holding in violation of the writ of habeas corpus, Chase surrounded the courthouse with National Guard troops for four consecutive days in September 1903. He also stationed sharpshooters on the National Hotel’s roof across the street to “command streets leading to the courthouse,” set up a Gatling gun nearby, and had guardsmen with loaded rifles and fixed bayonets lead the prisoners into court and stand guard during the court proceedings. This commotion caused Eugene Engley, the attorney for the prisoners, to declare: “the court is no longer a constitutional court, but an armed camp,” before he walked out in protest two days into the hearing.20

Remarkably, Judge Seeds defied Chase and ordered the prisoners’ release. Chase would not be beaten, though. Upon hearing Seeds’s verdict, he rose and announced: “Acting under the orders of the Commander and chief [Governor Peabody], I must at this time decline to obey the order of the court.” Without any means of his own to enforce his ruling, and with the state militia intent on defying him, Justice Seeds adjourned his court and Chase’s troops returned the prisoners to jail. Governor Peabody, however, was not as strong-willed as Chase. Believing that his field commander had set the right tone early in

19 Unsigned and undated biography of Adjutant General John Chase, Papers of Governor Elias Ammons, Box 26751, File Folder 5, Colorado State Archives, Denver, Colorado.
the strike and wishing to avoid a fight with the judiciary, the governor ordered Chase to release his prisoners.21

Still, these decade-old exploits were not enough to earn Chase the respect of some Spanish-American-Filipino War veterans once he became adjutant general. Captain Rice Means, a fifteen-year National Guardsman and veteran of the war in the Philippines, typified some veterans’ view of Chase that some veterans held. In his Court of Inquiry testimony, Means made clear that his criticisms had nothing to do with Chase’s general conduct. Means insisted that he counted Chase as a friend, and that he had even seen Chase for eye exams. Still, Means asserted that Chase “had created a click [sic] around him and he is only interested in promoting the interests of himself and those select people.” Means also thought Chase “incapable by reason of prejudice and narrowness of mind, and of jealousy of anyone who knows anything of military duty, as to be unable to select any officer from the standpoint of capacity or ability as a military man, and therefore, is incompetent to be a commander of any troops.”22 He insisted that Chase, who had been in the guard since the 1880s, knew nothing about military affairs or how to run a military organization because he lacked both regular army and overseas experience.23 In making this critique, Means mirrored John C. Bell’s Mr. Campbell in The Pilgrim and the Pioneer. Like Bell, who believed that his superiors were not capable of resisting the Lake City lynch mob, Captain Means thought General Chase was not up to the job of commanding the Colorado National Guard. Essentially, Means thought Chase was the “tin soldier” that Bell feared becoming.


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The experiences of Captain Philip Van Cise, Lieutenant Karl Linderfelt, and Lieutenant Henry Keeley present more chilling examples of how Guard officers punished men who did not conform to the dominant understanding of what constituted a “real” soldier and officer and rewarded and protected those who did. Philip Van Cise, who like Chase had not served in the Spanish-American-Filipino War, was a young lawyer from Denver who received his officer’s commission in 1910. He commanded the National Guard’s camp at Ludlow for much of the strike and served with Major Boughton and Captain Danks on the board that penned the guard’s report on the Battle at Ludlow.\textsuperscript{24} He also received much criticism from the men under his command and from his fellow officers. Veteran guard officer Captain Hildreth Frost testified at the Court of Inquiry that Captain Van Cise “was beyond all question the most unpopular officer in the National Guard during the campaign in the southern coal fields.” Others who served under Van Cise or knew men who did expressed similar opinions about him.\textsuperscript{25} Frost, who was one of the presiding judges at the Court of Inquiry, came down off the bench to testify that he had observed Van Cise at military courts martial and noticed that “when he [Van Cise] commenced prosecution of a case, his eyes would show a change in color and appearance, such as I had called to my attention in cases of insanity.” Frost went on to say that a criminal lawyer who specialized in prosecuting insanity cases told him that Van Cise “exhibited a form of insanity he described as believing that everyone in whom he

\textsuperscript{24} Van Cise, however, had little role in writing the guard’s official report on Ludlow. See the testimony of Philip Van Cise, \textit{CIR Testimony}, vol. 7, 6806; Philip Van Cise to John D. Rockefeller, Jr., February 2, 1915, “Business Interests,” Papers of the Colorado Fuel and Iron Company, RG 2, Box 20, Folder 175, Rockefeller Foundation Archives, Rockefeller Archive Center, Sleepy Hollow, New York.

\textsuperscript{25} Testimony of Captain Hildreth Frost, “Minutes of the Court of Inquiry,” 320. Also see the testimony of Lieutenant Lawrence Griffin, Captain John Philip Donovan, and Lieutenant Karl Linderfelt, 318-20, 345, 1084.
met opposition was seeking to do injury to him.” Clearly, Frost and his lawyer friend were suggesting that Van Cise was paranoid.26

Captain John Donovan later testified that Van Cise was indeed aggressive at courts martial, but that he did not see his expression or eye color change during these hearings. Nevertheless, the Court of Inquiry turned Frost’s testimony on Captain Van Cise over to Captain Edward Lazell, the National Guard’s alienist, who was charged with taking a closer look at his mental state.27

Van Cise may have suffered from mental illness, but other circumstances more effectively explain both his behavior and lack of popularity during the strike. Captain Van Cise’s First Infantry Company K was known within the Colorado National Guard as the “college company” because most of its members were either college students or college graduates. When called out on strike duty for a prolonged period of time, the company lost a significant number of its members because, as Van Cise explained, “Many of my men were business and professional men and had to leave.” The captain was generous in relieving his regular charges of their duty so they could attend to their civilian responsibilities, but his magnanimity meant that he had to find new men in the midst of the strike. Although his recruiters “were instructed to be careful in the class of

26 Testimony of Captain Hildreth Frost, ibid., 318-19.
27 Testimony of Captain John Philip Donovan and Frost, ibid., 345 and 318-19. Doctor Edward Lazell was also an advocate of eugenics who sat as a judge in the eugenics-inspired “Better Babies” contests that became popular in Colorado and the nation after 1911. These contests, which took place in Colorado in conjunction with the State Fair’s livestock show, sought to determine who was the “best” baby in Colorado. After Betty Chambers took first place in the 1914 contest among girls from thirty-six to forty-two months in age, Dr. Lazell “went over to the parents and made a careful study of their faces and the shape of each head.” Lazell explained that he “wanted to see whether the baby was merely the chance product of poor stock, or good stock coming from good stock, of intelligent and educated and physically well-built parents.” These comments suggest that Lazell practiced eugenics, and his advocacy of that “science” placed him comfortably along side his fellow National Guard officers who expressed a similar nativism and racism. See The Rocky Mountain News, 24 January 1914.
men they got,” these green and untested replacement troops were unknown to both Captain Van Cise and the men who remained on duty in Company K. Van Cise’s concerns about the dynamics within his company were heightened early in the strike when he found that five of his new men had broken into a saloon and robbed “$42 worth of liquor, cigars, and cigarettes.” Van Cise court-martialed all five of these men: two received jail sentences and the remaining three were fined.28

Although National Guardsmen committed many similar acts during the 1913-14 strike, Van Cise’s men were among the few court-martialed and convicted for crimes committed during the strike. Hence, his strictness with his troops--and the criticism from his men that almost inevitably came with it--was probably not evidence of insanity. It is more likely that both “conditions” grew out of Van Cise’s concern about the new recruits in his company and his very sane belief that his men should not engage in the violence and criminal behavior that many guardsmen perpetrated during the 1913-14 strike. With this stance, Van Cise insisted on opposing the Colorado National Guard’s established understanding of its purpose when called out on strike duty. Ironically, his rivals in the guard used his proclivity for discipline--a trait usually celebrated in military officers--to suggest that he was mentally unstable.

It is also worth noting that Philip Van Cise did not spiral into the depths of paranoid delusion after he left the guard. In the years after the 1913-14 strike, Van Cise served in World War I and returned to Colorado, where he enjoyed a successful tenure as Denver’s district attorney. He probably would have served longer in that office, but his opposition to the second Ku Klux Klan’s influence in Colorado’s Republican Party


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proved decisive in his 1924 primary election defeat. It seems hardly a coincidence that Van Cise took on another nativist fraternal organization that had a definite propensity for violence later in his life. Other Colorado National Guardsmen, moreover, were more comfortable with the Klan’s robes. After joining the Ku Klux Klan, Captain Rice Means was appointed Denver’s manager of safety and then city manager by fellow Klansman and Mayor Benjamin F. Stapleton. Means went on win election to the United States Senate as the Klan’s candidate in 1924. Captain Leo Kennedy, who, like Means, served during the 1913-14 coal strike, was also a prominent Klansman and a member of the anti-Catholic American Protective League. Because the Ku Klux Klan was very popular in Colorado in the late teens and 1920s and because the Klan drew many middle-class native-born men of Anglo-Saxon ancestry, it is likely that other Colorado National Guard officers who served in the 1913-14 strike also joined the Ku Klux Klan.29

Van Cise was unique within the National Guard because he was one of only a handful of officers who maintained a cordial working relationship with the miners who struck in 1913. He also had nothing but criticism for officers and enlisted men who robbed, threatened, assaulted, or otherwise abused miners and their families. Van Cise reserved the bulk of his criticism for Karl Linderfelt, a lieutenant who played a key role in so many of the guard’s actions during the 1913-14 strike. Linderfelt was a veteran of the war in the Philippines and was at the center of the strike’s largest controversies. His

actions on strike duty and the reaction of his fellow officers to those actions tell us a great deal about the National Guard.30

Affectionately nicknamed “Monte” by his friends in the Colorado National Guard, Linderfelt was the son of a Swedish immigrant who had studied medicine at the Sorbonne in Paris before coming to the United States. Born in Janesville, Wisconsin in 1877, Linderfelt attended college for a time, and then moved west where in 1898 he joined the Colorado National Guard. Like Sherman Bell, Linderfelt desperately wanted to serve in the war against Spain. When war broke out, he immediately enlisted in the Army, but the dysentery he contracted in Jacksonville, Florida kept him from the fight in Cuba. Refusing to give up on fighting overseas, Linderfelt eventually went to the Philippines as a United States cavalryman. After serving twenty-three months and participating in several battles, he was transferred to China along with 2,500 other American troops from the Philippines when the Boxer Rebellion broke out in 1900.31

Linderfelt’s father died while his son was in Asia, and the army granted Linderfelt a discharge so he could return home in 1901. Two years later, Linderfelt again enlisted in the Colorado National Guard and was soon called out to help Sherman Bell, Bulkeley Wells, and John Chase expel the WFM from Colorado. He stayed in the guard until the spring of 1907 and also worked as a quartz miner, mine contractor, and as a deputy

sheriff in Cripple Creek. Serving in the Philippines and China, however, had not satisfied his desire for a fight. In 1911, he went to Mexico and joined Francisco Madero’s army.32

His mercenary service in the Mexican Revolution was actually the first time Linderfelt fought, albeit indirectly, for the Rockefeller family’s interests. John D. Rockefeller and the Standard Oil Company supported Madero’s toppling of Porfirio Díaz in 1911 because they thought he would allow Standard Oil to take over the Mexican petroleum industry and otherwise protect their interests.33

Linderfelt was long gone by the time of Huerta’s coup. Back in Colorado, he was working as a contractor for the El Paso Mining Company in Cripple Creek when the miners in the southern coalfield went on strike in September 1913. As we saw in Chapter Three, General Chase sent Linderfelt south to gather information on the situation there. Jim Gresham made Linderfelt a deputy, and Linderfelt participated in Albert Felt’s plan for bringing the guard to southern Colorado. Linderfelt traded his deputy’s badge for a guard uniform, and by all accounts, was pure menace once on strike duty. Among other offenses, Linderfelt assaulted the Greek union organizer Louis Tikas just before other guardsmen killed him during the Battle at Ludlow, and he allegedly played a role in the

33 Madero, however, had his own ideas. After taking power he legalized labor unions and established wide-ranging rights to a free press and free speech. These actions helped unleashed a great wave of strikes in 1911 and 1912 and much anti-American sentiment in Mexican newspapers. Predictably, Rockefeller and other American businessmen with investments in Mexico quickly soured on Madero and soon, American ambassador to Mexico Henry Lane Wilson was encouraging one of Madero’s generals, Victoriano Huerta, to overthrow him. In 1913, Huerta shot Madero and took power. See Friedrich Katz, The Secret War in Mexico: Europe, the United States, and the Mexican Revolution (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 46, 159-62.
murders of two other strikers. For the miners, Karl Linderfelt represented all that was wrong with the Colorado National Guard.  

Captain Van Cise wholeheartedly agreed with the miners’ assessment of Lieutenant Linderfelt. The two officers were often at odds throughout the strike, and when asked before the Court Inquiry if “Monte Linderfelt should be pursued by the criminal arm of the law,” Van Cise called Linderfelt a “murderer, a robber, and a thief.” The bad feelings were mutual, but Linderfelt did not address the charges that Van Cise made against him at the 1915 Court of Inquiry. He simply dismissed Captain Van Cise “because he hadn’t seen any service,” and “was not a soldier, has no representations, or even rudiments of a soldier.” These remarks followed a line of reasoning similar to Rice Means’s criticisms of General Chase. Like Means, Linderfelt had served in the guard for more than a decade and both had strike duty and overseas experience. Unlike General Chase, however, whose lack of experience was more imagined than real, Van Cise was relatively new to the guard and had not served in either the 1903-04 strikes or overseas. Still, Captain Van Cise had managed to attain a higher rank than his antagonist. This fact no doubt grated on Linderfelt all the more because Van Cise was younger than the lieutenant. Like Rice Means and the perhaps fictitious Sergeant Campbell, Linderfelt worried that “tin soldiers” had infiltrated the National Guard. Instead of defending

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34 Testimony of Karl Linderfelt, CIR Testimony, vol. 7, 6870-71 6900-01. The evidence describing the striking miners’ fear and hatred of Linderfelt is voluminous. See, for instance, the testimony of Tony Jeffery, Louis Tikas, Bryan Orf, Susan Hollearin, W. E. Chamberlain, Frederick Huppert, V. S. Cooper, and Eddy Blinco in “Transcript of Statements of Witnesses Appearing Before the Investigating Committee Appointed by John McLennan, President, State Federation of Labor Hearings, Investigating the Conduct of the State Militia in the Southern Colorado Coalfields,” 333-368, Papers of Frederick Farrar, Box 1, Western History Collection, Denver Public Library, Denver, Colorado.

35 Testimony of Captain Philip Van Cise, “Minutes of the Court of Inquiry,” 1014.

36 Testimony of Lieutenant Karl Linderfelt, “Minutes of the Court of Inquiry,” 1084.
himself against the charges that Van Cise hurled at him, Linderfelt concerned himself with making the officers who sat on the Court of Inquiry understand that Van Cise did not share his, and the guard’s, understanding of a soldier’s duty.

The Court of Inquiry also brought out other details about Linderfelt’s actions that help decipher guardsmen’s beliefs about proper strike duty conduct. Van Cise alleged that Lieutenant Linderfelt used the “water cure” on several prisoners during the strike. This form of torture—used by American troops in the Philippines while interrogating prisoners—entailed forcing a large amount of salted water down a prisoner’s throat. The prisoner’s stomach would become distended to the point of bursting, and then an interrogator knelt or stomped on his stomach to force the water back up. Once a prisoner had purged, interrogators started the process over and continued until the prisoner talked or died.37 Linderfelt never acknowledged using the “water cure” on prisoners, but when describing how he and his troops searched striking miners’ homes, he said: “you went to a place where arms had been reported, you searched them, found none, just going through generally, and then when you would start to dig into things, you would find them . . . In the Islands, we done exactly the same thing.”38

Whether or not Linderfelt tortured striking miners with the “water cure,” he clearly believed that the United States military’s behavior in the Philippines was a model for strike duty. His commanding officer agreed. Despite Chase’s criticism of other

37 Testimony of Hildreth Frost, “Minutes of the Court of Inquiry,” 323. In this testimony, Frost stated that he thought Van Cise had evidence that Linderfelt had used the “water cure” on Jose Montez and other miners. On the water cure’s use in the Philippines, see Brand, Bound to Empire, 55-56 and Miller, “Benevolent Assimilation,” 250. Also see the testimony of Charles S. Riley, William Lewis Smith, Edward J. Davis, and Grover Flint, United States Senate, Affairs in the Philippine Islands: Hearings Before the Committee on the Philippines of the U. S. Senate, 57th Cong., 1st sess., 1902, S. Doc. 331, vol. 2, 1528-38, 1541-47, 1727-1736, 1768-83.

38 Italics are mine. Testimony of Lieutenant Karl Linderfelt, “Minutes of the Court of Inquiry,” 1097.
Spanish-American-Filipino War veterans, the Adjutant General and Lieutenant Linderfelt had a very cordial relationship. The much older Chase mentored Linderfelt in the skills of strikebreaking and depended on Linderfelt in ways that Sherman Bell had relied on Chase during the 1903-04 strikes. Linderfelt, in short, was in the clique that Rice Means saw surrounding the adjutant general. In his Court of Inquiry testimony, Chase spoke fondly of Linderfelt, saying he had known the lieutenant’s family for twenty years and noted that they “had come over from the old country and became American citizens of pure, clean home life.” He also thought that Linderfelt was honest, “an efficient officer” and “a good drill master,” whom “the strikers did not like because he was . . . good at patrolling their camps.” Chase also described Linderfelt as a respected officer who was popular among his men. In Chase’s mind, strike duty required “an experienced, thorough, and rough officer” and he thought Linderfelt was perfect for the job.39

Chase and Linderfelt were not alone in their views. Other officers shared both Linderfelt’s assessment of how a National Guard officer should conduct himself, and General Chase’s assessment of Linderfelt. Because women and children were burned and suffocated to death at Ludlow, the guard’s leaders felt pressure to convene a court martial against Linderfelt and a dozen others involved in the events at Ludlow. The court convicted none of them. Linderfelt was charged with murder, arson, larceny, and assault, but he was acquitted of the first three charges. The assault charge was more difficult to dismiss because Linderfelt had attacked Louis Tikas, who was alone and unarmed, smashing him over the head with a Springfield rifle in front of thirty or forty guardsmen.

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The military court’s solution was to find Linderfelt guilty, but attach no criminality to the assault. Essentially, the officers who sat in judgment ruled that Linderfelt was justified in hitting Tikas with the rifle. Indeed, no guardsmen were convicted on any serious charges growing out of Ludlow.40

The outcome of the Ludlow courts martial are revealing in their own right, but other military judicial proceedings initiated on charges stemming from the 1913-14 coal strike further illuminate the system of justice at work inside the Colorado National Guard. On its surface, the incident that led to the court martial of Lieutenant Henry Keeley may seem petty, but it exposes the understanding that prevailed within the guard about proper manly behavior and how an officer was supposed to carry out his duties.

Five months into the strike, Keeley was charged with “Conduct unbecoming an Officer and a Gentleman” and “Conduct prejudiced to good order and military discipline.” Keeley’s crime was making critical remarks about the National Guard in a letter to Sergeant Perl T. Barnhouse, who was a member of his company. Like many of Philip Van Cise’s men, Keeley had left southern Colorado having been relieved of his duty after three weeks so he could return to his jobs in Brush, Colorado as principal of Union High School and superintendent of schools. In this letter, Keeley declared that he intended to resign his officer’s commission because “I believe in the guard but not in the capacity of ‘scab herders.’ When again a sorely disillusioned country raises the guard to its former prestige I may again enter.”41

41 Military District of Colorado, Camp at Walsenburg, Colorado, “Charges and Specifications Preferred Against Lieutenant H. A. Keeley, 1st Lieutenant, 1st Infantry, National Guard of Colorado,” Papers of

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In a turn of bad luck for Keeley, Lieutenant E. A. Walker, who served in the same company as Keeley and Barnhouse, asked to see this letter after Sergeant Barnhouse told him that it contained Keeley's ideas for relocating the company's headquarters. Walker took umbrage at Keeley's remarks about "scab herding," and turned the letter over to Judge Advocate Captain Hildreth Frost, the guard's head of discipline. Walker's disapproval of Keeley's characterization of the National Guard's mission probably had two origins. First, Keeley used a term--scab herder--that union organizers and officials and striking miners employed to describe the National Guard. Hence, it appeared to Walker that Keeley was taking the enemy's side. Second, while some National Guard officers around the country embraced strike duty, others disliked it because they believed strike duty contradicted the role they desired for the National Guards. The 1903 Dick Act had made the National Guards a regular army reserve and had provided the guards with significant federal financial support. In the aftermath of the Spanish-American-Filipino War, many guard officers believed that their purpose was to prepare for overseas warfare, not to police the often explicitly political battles within the borders of the United States between workers and their employers. Many regular army officers, furthermore, looked down on the National Guards because they were not made up of professional soldiers and because they acted more like police than legitimate military organizations charged with protecting the nation's borders and fighting overseas wars. Keeley's use of the term "scab

Hildreth Frost, Box 00254, Colorado Historical Society, 8, 15, 16. Hereafter cited as "Keeley Court Martial."
herder" to describe the Colorado National Guard probably raised all of these issues in Walker’s mind and drove him toward Frost’s office with the letter.42

Walker’s antipathy did not stem only from Keeley’s disparaging characterization of the National Guard. Walker and Keeley were lieutenants in the same company and they inevitably had much contact and many opportunities to evaluate each other’s performance. An exchange of letters between the two men demonstrates that Walker’s familiarity with Keeley most definitely bred contempt.43 Furious that Walker had turned him in to the judge advocate, Keeley wrote a letter to his fellow lieutenant in which he challenged Walker’s manhood. In response, Walker unleashed a scathing critique of Keeley’s performance as an officer that went far beyond his comments about scab herding. Walker wrote:

I do not think that you should talk of manhood to me. Considering the fact that you have never kept any of the obligations you took when you were elected. You have never attended drill and only came into the field under compulsion and didn’t even keep the promise made to Capt. Dowling in order to get relieved from duty. You perhaps do not realize that Capt. Dowlings [sic] and my own future are fully as important to us as yours is to you and that they are even more apt to be impaired by our service than yours is. Your reference to manhood seems all the more out of place in view of the fact that you brought the men into the field and then not only left them to take care of your own interests but afterwards referred to them as ‘Scab herders.’44

42 Jerry M. Cooper, The Rise of the National Guard: The Evolution of the American Militia, 1865-1920 (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), 62, 64, 111, 152. Regular army officers’ negative view of the National Guards was also certainly rooted in their suspicion of the guard. Regular army officers did not like that the National Guards had grown by 1912 to 121,800 men, or almost five times the size of the regular army, and that Congress had consistently increased funding for the guards. Some worried that the guards would replace the regular army as the country’s main military organization. See Peter Karsten, “Armed Progressives: The Military Re-Organizes for the American Century” in The Military in America, Peter Karsten, ed. (New York: The Free Press, 1980), 246-260 and Millet and Maslowski, For the Common Defense, 262, 302.

43 “Keeley Court Martial,” 17.

44 Ibid., 18.
To Walker, Keeley had failed to carry out his responsibilities while an officer, and had confirmed his lack of fitness by bailing out of the guard during a time of crisis. That Keeley criticized his comrades by calling them “scab herders” after leaving the strike zone was a last straw of sorts, and it was this comment that compelled Walker to take action against his fellow officer. In his letter’s closing, Walker assured Keeley that “this is not a personal matter with me and that I am writing you just as I would write any one whom I felt was an enemy of the National Guard.” In Walker’s mind, the “scab herders” comment transformed Lieutenant Keeley from an unmanly sluggard who did not live up to his responsibilities into an unmanly menace to the National Guard.45

This conflict between Walker and Keeley might have ended with this exchange of angry letters about the meanings of manhood had Judge Advocate Frost not intervened. Frost decided to prosecute Keeley because, as the statement of the charges against him explained, his remarks “had a tendency to cast a slur upon the Military service in which said Lieutenant H. A. Keeley held his Commission as an Officer and was calculated and intended to imply that the National Guard of Colorado was engaged in a service of a discreditable character.”46 Frost’s reaction shows how seriously he took what seemed like an inconsequential confrontation between two officers.

Keeley’s trial followed the United States Army’s rules for courts martial.47 The army had appropriated that system from the British, and it had changed little since the American Revolution. Its courts martial procedures, moreover, differed significantly from

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45 Ibid.
46 Ibid., 8.
the civil courts' trial rules. Keeley criticized one of his employers, the National Guard, in his private letter to Barnhouse. The constitution's first amendment protection of free speech would certainly cover the contents of a private letter, and thus it was highly unlikely that a civil court would have considered charges brought against Keeley if he worked for a private company or for a state institution other than the National Guard.\(^{48}\)

Other crucial sections of the constitution's requirements for a trial did not exist in military law. Defendants were not guaranteed counsel, could not always confront their accusers, and were not protected from self-incrimination. Procedural shortcomings also made the court martial system inherently unfair to defendants. Courts martial did not require a pre-trial investigation aimed at preventing the filing of capricious charges and the commanding officer who convened the court martial and brought the charges also chose who would serve on it. Such a system meant the accusing commander picked the officers who would consider the charges. The commander could also intervene in trials whenever he saw fit. Such interventions were often a ploy to push the trial in the direction the commanding officer wished it to go. If intervening failed to produce the desired verdict, the commanding officer also had sole authority to review the court martial's proceedings, verdict, and sentence. Finally, the commander could unilaterally impose a stiffer sentence and could return verdicts with which he disagreed to the trial court for reconsideration. It is no wonder that Samuel T. Ansell, who was the army's

\(^{48}\) It was not impossible, however, for a turn-of-the-twentieth-century civil court to hear charges similar to those Keeley faced in his court martial. Labor conflicts often produced court decisions and injunctions that ignored the bill of rights. During the Pullman strike in 1894, for instance, a federal court issued an injunction that amounted to an illegal order, prohibited union officials from talking to each other or to union members about the strike. On Pullman, see Carl Smith, *Urban Disorder and the Shape of Belief: The Great Chicago Fire, the Haymarket Bomb, and the Model Town of Pullman* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1995), 177-231; Richard, Schneirov, ed., *The Pullman Strike and the Crisis of the 1890s: Essays on Labor and Politics* (Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1999).
acting Judge Advocate General before and during World War I and an advocate of reforming the court martial system after the war, called the system “lawless,” “witless,” and “un-American.” 49

Perhaps realizing that he had little ability to decide his fate, Keeley confessed at his court martial that he did not enjoy strike duty once the guard began escorting strikebreakers into the mines. Recognizing that such candor probably was not a winning strategy, Keeley quickly backtracked and insisted that he did not even know what the term “scab herders” meant. The lieutenant’s bumbling effort to save himself fell short, and he was quickly convicted on all charges and dismissed from the National Guard, which was the maximum sentence for his crimes. In his court martial statement, Judge Advocate Frost wrote that “The letter written by Lieut. Keeley to Sergt. Barnhouse deals with military matters and is distinctly of an indiscreet character,” but the decision to convict hinged on what “effect on the mind of Sergt. P. T. Barnhouse” Keeley’s letter produced. Therefore, it is not clear if the court martial officers who judged Keeley agreed with Walker’s assessment of his manliness, but the verdict certainly showed that they believed Keeley did not have what they required of an officer in the Colorado National Guard. 50

The disconnect between how their fellow officers treated Henry Keeley and Philip Van Cise on one hand, and Karl Linderfelt on the other, is striking. Van Cise and Keeley were by no means strike supporters, but they were uncomfortable with the position in

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50 Generous, Jr. Swords and Scales, 8, 16-17, 20, 23.
which strikebreaking placed them. That discomfort caused Van Cise to both defend the strikers and criticize them. After the strike was over, he decried the miners’ subjugation, noting “the strikers had a very just grievance in the un-American operation of the coal camps.”\textsuperscript{51} At the same time, he had warned his troops about Greek Balkan War veterans at Ludlow as they made their way to the strike zone and agreed with his fellow Ludlow investigation board members Boughton and Danks when he wrote after the strike that “what the Nation needs is radically amended immigration laws that will keep out anarchists and lawless inclined Italians, Greeks, and other south European people.”\textsuperscript{52} Van Cise believed that the miners were un-American, but his solution was to deport the miners rather than hold the mine operators accountable. For his part, Keeley had served for four-and-a-half years in the Illinois National Guard—an outfit that did its share of strikebreaking during the 1890s—and perhaps that experience led him to question using military force to break strikes.\textsuperscript{53} Still, Van Cise was the only officer who openly criticized the National Guard’s tactics during the 1913-14 coal strike. Van Cise was also the only officer who faced charges of insanity and Keeley was one of a very few officers court martialled and found guilty of charges related to the strike.\textsuperscript{54} At the same time, Karl Linderfelt, a man who assaulted one civilian and might have been involved in the killing

\textsuperscript{51} Testimony of Philip Van Cise, \textit{CIR Testimony}, vol. 7, 6822.
\textsuperscript{52} Van Cise Exhibit No. 2, “The Colorado Strike Situation,” ibid., vol. 8, 7324.
\textsuperscript{53} Henry Keeley attended the Mexico Military Academy at Mexico, Missouri in 1893 and 1894, served in the Illinois National Guard for four and a half years, and served in the Spanish-American War. He joined the Colorado National Guard in 1912. See “Keeley Court Martial,” 20-22.
\textsuperscript{54} Other courts martial growing out of the 1913-14 strike were those involving Philip Van Cise’s men, the Ludlow-related acquittals, several desertion cases, a case in which an enlisted man was acquitted of murder and other lesser charges stemming from an incident early in the strike, a case in which two enlisted men were convicted of stealing $46 and two pistols from a civilian’s home, and numerous other minor cases that involved theft from the National Guard and brawls between officers and enlisted men over gambling debts. See “Courts Martial,” Papers of Hildreth Frost, Colorado National Guard, Box 00254, Colorado Historical Society.
of two others, and who believed that intimidation and brutality were necessary in both the Philippines and in southern Colorado, was held up as an example of a model soldier by the guard's adjutant general. The officers who sat in judgment at his court martial also affirmed his actions when they bent over backward to acquit him. Clearly, it was Linderfelt's example of manly behavior that had become normative within the Colorado National Guard. When Van Cise and Keeley made gender trouble by straying from that norm and asserting their own understanding of how to act with manly honor, their fellow officers labeled one an insane deviant who needed psychiatric evaluation and threw the other out of the National Guard.

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The Colorado National Guard's motivations for violent action were never one-dimensional. The organization's multi-faceted understanding of its mission extended back to before Colorado became a state. As the Colorado territory's militias prepared for battle against the Cheyenne, Arapaho, and Sioux Indians after the Sand Creek Massacre in 1864, Frank Hall, the Secretary of the Colorado Territory who would later become the first Adjutant General of the Colorado National Guard, declared that the men who enlisted in these militias did so "for the single purpose of putting an end to a war which was blighting all the industries of the country, feeling that they could well afford to devote three months to the work if in the end the disturbances could be suppressed."\(^{55}\) The industries to which Hall referred were the railroads while the blight was Indian interference with railroad passage and construction through Indian lands. Hall's statement

as a political leader in the Colorado territory and future National Guard commander
forwarded a rationale for killing the Plains Indians that was tied to efforts to make way
for industrial capitalism’s main engines: the mighty railroads.

The Colorado militia and, subsequently, the National Guard, however, did not
fight, kill, and ultimately defeat the Plains Indians solely out of a desire to make the West
safe for capitalism. Many historians have established that other motivations drove
western conquest. A deeply felt sense of mission and the idea that it was the destiny of
Americans to control the country from Atlantic to Pacific were certainly important. The
conviction that Indians were racially inferior threats to American civilization, a belief
apparent in both John C. Bell’s account of his experience in the Colorado National Guard
and John Nankivell’s history of the guard, only bolstered faith in that destiny. Both Bell
and Nankivell also embraced the popular understanding that the West was where white
men proved themselves. The authors who portrayed Daniel Boone and Kit Carson as
manly heroes who used the West as their stomping grounds certainly helped establish the
idea that white American men were both more masculine and racially superior to their
Indian adversaries.56

Americans, likewise, justified conquest of the Philippines with dreams of
economic empire. The Philippines, after all, were a stepping-stone to the China market

56 See, for example, Berkhofer, Jr., *The White Man’s Indian*; Drinnon, *Facing West*; Horsman,
*Race and Manifest Destiny*, esp. 189-207 are all good on how race shaped Americans’
understanding of western conquest. Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, “Davey Crockett as Trickster:
Pornography, Liminality and Symbolic Inversion in Victorian America,” *Journal of
Contemporary History* 17 (April 1982): 325-350. Although he does not explicitly deal with
gender, Richard Slotkin’s examination of dime store novels and of Davy Crockett, Daniel Boone,
and Kit Carson in *The Fatal Environment*, 65-68, 164-72, 205-07 explores how the myths that
grew up around these frontiersmen/heroes focused on proving their racial superiority to “savage”
Indians. Doing so, I would add, also proved their superior manliness.
that fascinated American businessmen, and many historians have argued that the desire for overseas markets among business and government leaders was what caused the United States to go to war in 1898. Still, economic concerns alone do not explain American conquest of the Philippines. Kristin Hoganson, for instance, has shown that the crisis in middle- and upper-class, native-born masculinity that seemed to influence both John C. Bell and Major Boughton and Captain Danks's report on Ludlow also helped shape the arguments of many pro-war and pro-imperial advocates. Theodore Roosevelt was perhaps the most prominent supporter of war and empire to make such a case.

Roosevelt believed that the battle for western conquest had helped create the American "race," and that American men had proven both their racial and masculine superiority by defeating the formidable, but "savage" American Indians. Because western conquest was complete and no other conflict had arisen to keep them in fighting shape, American men had deteriorated into the sad condition that Roosevelt and many others fretted about during the 1890s. In 1895, Roosevelt neatly summed up his strategy for restoring the virility of American men. "What this country needs," he wrote, "is a good war."58

When war came, Roosevelt formed his Roughriders cavalry unit, went to Cuba, and along with Sherman Bell, rode up San Juan and Kettle Hills. The Roughriders served in Cuba just long enough to bring Colonel Roosevelt a great deal of attention and fame,


which he used to enter the contentious national debate about whether the United States should create an overseas empire by taking control of the Philippines, Cuba, and other former Spanish possessions. In “The Strenuous Life,” his famous 1899 address in favor of creating an overseas empire, Roosevelt argued that the American men who balked at empire suffered from the very problems that the war was supposed to cure. These anti-imperialists, Colonel Roosevelt declared, represented the “timid man, the lazy man, the man who distrusts his country, the over-civilized man, who has lost the great fighting, masterful virtues, the ignorant man, and the man of dull mind, whose soul is incapable of feeling the mighty lift that thrills stern men with empires in their brains— all these, of course shrink from seeing the nation undertake its new duties.”

For Roosevelt, allowing the nation to take the anti-imperialist path would also impede racial progress and compromise the global position of the United States. Giving the Filipinos and Cubans their independence, he claimed, would “make room for a savage anarchy” where “we drove out a medieval tyranny” and allow “Some stronger, manlier power . . . to step in and do the work, and we would have shown ourselves weaklings, unable to carry to successful completion the labors that great and high-spirited nations are eager to undertake.” Living a “life of slothful ease, a life of peace which springs merely from lack either of desire or of power to strive after great things” to become “sunk in a scrambling commercialism,” he warned, would teach American civilization “what China has already found, that in this world the nation that has trained itself to a career of

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unwarlike and isolated ease is bound, in the end, to go down before other nations which
have not lost the manly and adventurous qualities."\(^{60}\)

If the nation chose the imperial path, however, the future of American manhood,
and the country’s place in the world, looked much brighter. Fighting (and eventually
defeating) the racially inferior and “savage,” but still manly and dangerous Filipinos, had
helped the current generation of white native-born men again prove their racial and
masculine superiority, but managing an empire would help instill martial virtue in future
generations. Extolling the long-term attractions of empire, Roosevelt contended that
“England’s rule of India and Egypt has been of great benefit to England, for it has trained
up generations of men accustomed to look at the larger and loftier side of public life. It
has been of even greater benefit to India and Egypt. And finally, and most of all, it has
advanced the cause of civilization.”\(^{61}\)

Roosevelt was not alone in making these arguments to promote overseas imperial
expansion. Alfred Beveridge, Henry Cabot Lodge, and other imperialists also claimed
that war and empire would cure what ailed American men while helping maintain their
position at the top of the country’s--and the world’s--racial hierarchy.\(^{62}\) While these
concerns certainly do not completely explain why the United States went to war in 1898
and proceeded to build an overseas empire, it is difficult to ignore these arguments when
thinking about the Colorado National Guard and their role in constructing an empire in
Colorado.

\(^{60}\) Ibid., 1, 6, 9-10.
\(^{61}\) Ibid., 18-19.
\(^{62}\) Hoganson, Fighting for American Manhood, 133-55.
Roosevelt believed that American men would benefit from war against a racially inferior but fearsome enemy. The empire that, in his mind, was that war's rightful reward would require a cadre of state managers who would help ensure that American manhood did not again backslide into effeminate timidity and over-civilization. As we have seen, many Colorado National Guard officers heeded Roosevelt’s call to fight in Cuba and the Philippines. These men were also members of the native-born middle and upper class that had become “over-civilized,” and in TR’s mind, needed a good war to get their fighting juices flowing again and reestablish their position as the country’s undisputed leaders. It is hard to imagine that the Colorado National Guard officers we have encountered suffered from neurasthenia or were by any stretch of the imagination “over civilized.” Indeed, many of these men conformed to Roosevelt’s manly ideal because, he might have said, the Colorado National Guard had already followed a path strikingly similar to the one Roosevelt recommended. Early on in the organization’s history, guardsmen had proven their masculine and racial superiority in some of the last battles against the Plains Indians. Now they would prove themselves in the Philippines and Cuba.

Strike duty, however, made class differences and conflict a more explicit part of the Colorado National Guard’s experience. Issues of class are certainly as important as the ideas about masculinity and the inferior racial status that came with being a Greek or Italian or Slavic immigrant in Colorado at the turn of the twentieth century for explaining how the Colorado National Guard conceived of its enemy during the 1913-14 coal strike. As J. Anthony Lukas puts it, “If the United States has ever approached outright class war,
it was probably in Colorado during the first years of the century. That Sherman Bell and Bulkeley Wells, who had connections to Colorado’s mining industry, led the National Guard’s strikebreaking missions in 1903-04 with the approval of Governor James Peabody demonstrates that military strikebreaking was an integral part of the class war that historians see as characteristic of turn-of-the-twentieth-century Colorado.

The guard’s experience on the Plains and in the Spanish-American-Filipino War laid a foundation that shaped their understanding of service in the 1913-14 coal strike. As with strike duty, those previous missions also promoted capital’s interests. Indeed, it is worth asking when American military action has not bolstered capital’s interests. Western conquest benefited capital because defeating the Plains Indians and making way for white settlement also sped the process of industrialization. In the process, guardsmen helped secure the American continental empire. The guard then became state managers of that empire, responsible for keeping order. The new order in the new western empire was one increasingly dictated by capital, as mine operators across Colorado succeeded in forming alliances with state officials willing to work for them. These alliances are no doubt important in explaining why the Colorado National Guard became such an avid strikebreaker. It is just as clear, however, that the guard’s previous military experience—from the Plains to the Philippines—helped many guardsmen who served during the 1913-14 coal strike understand their duty not only as part of the contest between capital and labor, but also as a contest of masculinities and races. That the miners involved in this strike were primarily southern and eastern European immigrants whom many guardsmen viewed as racially inferior made such an understanding that much easier to grasp. The

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63 Lukas, *Big Trouble*, 226.
guard's previous military experience, finally, also had left behind definite instructions for what to do when faced with a racially inferior, but dangerous adversary.

Long-time Colorado National Guard officer Colonel Edward Verdeckberg demonstrated where such a view of strike duty could lead. As the 1913-14 coal strike came to an end, Verdeckberg wrote a report that concluded: "As [the] tour of duty . . . draws to a close there are mixed feelings. The bitterness of opposition and intimidation and ridicule have been softened in the thought of the real duty of a soldier; the joys of fellowship and service together remain a pleasant memory to all who share the fortunes of war." Verdeckberg, like Boughton and Danks, contended that striking immigrant workers were a formidable enemy able to mete out ridicule and intimidation. He also believed that strike duty was war. Although he was silent on what kind of war he thought strikebreaking was, the equation of the National Guard's efforts to quell domestic civil unrest with war suggests that Verdeckberg agreed with his fellow officers who insisted that striking immigrant workers were a foreign and racially inferior enemy who threatened the industrial order in the new west.

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64 "Report of the District Commander, Camp at Walsenburg, from October 28, 1913 to May 5, 1914," Papers of John Chase, WH 67, Box 1, Western History Collection, Denver Public Library, Denver, Colorado.
CHAPTER VI
THE ROAD TO LUDLOW

Martial law can exist without being declared in this State; and martial law can be declared in this State without existing. 1

--Major Edward Boughton, Judge Advocate of the Colorado National Guard when asked to explain if martial law had been declared in southern Colorado.

On November 27, 1913, Andrew Colnar, a Croatian immigrant and striking coal miner in the southern Colorado town of Pryor, was arrested by the Colorado National Guard. One of the guard’s duties during this strike was transporting and protecting the strikebreakers whom southern Colorado’s mine operators imported into the strike zone. These men were often unaware that there was a strike in southern Colorado’s coalmines when they agreed to take a job. Colnar’s arrest grew out of a letter he wrote to one such “scab,” a fellow Croat, who wanted to quit the mines and join the union. Colnar told the unwitting strikebreaker that the union would welcome him if he came out of the mines, but the letter ended up in the National Guard’s hands. 2

After arresting Colnar, guardsmen tied his hands behind his back, took him to jail, and kept him awake all night with a rifle pointed at him. Next morning, Captain Drake questioned Colnar to find out who wrote the Croatian miner encouraging him to quit and join the union. Colnar admitted that he was the author of this letter, which earned


2 Testimony of Andrew Colnar, “Transcript of Statements of Witnesses Appearing Before the Investigating Committee Appointed by John McLennan, President, State Federation of Labor Hearings, Investigating the Conduct of the State Militia in the Southern Colorado Coalfields,” 480, Papers of Frederick Farrar, Box 1, Western History Collection, Denver Public Library, Denver, Colorado. Hereafter cited as “Transcript of Statements of Witnesses Appearing Before the Investigating Committee.”
him two more days and nights in a cell that he described as “damp . . . dark, cold,” and
“awfully dirty.” Guardsmen then took Colnar from the jailhouse to one of their
encampments, gave him a pick and shovel, and ordered him to dig a ditch two-and-a-half
feet wide, six feet long, and eight feet deep. After awhile, a soldier came around and
Colnar raised the question of what the ditch was going to be. “Will it be a toilet?” he
asked. “Oh, no,” the guardsmen said, “we got a toilet over there.” After several more
guesses about the ditch’s purpose, another guardsman began to clarify Colnar’s situation
for him. He said: “Looks like someone is going to be buried there.” Colnar asked if this
guardsman was sure. “Oh, yes, yes,” he said emphatically. Scared, Colnar said, “By gosh,
I ain’t going to dig this hole for my own,” and he started to work much, much slower.3

After telling Colnar that he was digging his own grave, the guardsmen pulled
Colnar out of the hole and propped him against a wall, pretending they were going to use
him for shooting practice. Then it was back to digging the “grave.” Later, a doctor came
to inspect the hole, making sure it was the right size. He believed it was, and a long
discussion ensued about whether to bury Colnar in blankets or in a coffin.4

By this point, Colnar was “out of sense,” as he put it in his broken English, but
after making him dig for a few more hours, his captors simply let him go, telling him to
stay at home for at least the next five days, or they would arrest him again. Colnar told
Captain Drake that he was not “going to do anything at all. If you hear me I do
anything . . . against anybody around here, you get me and kill me, or I kill myself, I
gonna put head under the train.” “No,” Drake told Colnar, “I will kill you myself if you

3 Ibid., 482-83.
4 Ibid., 483-84.
do anything." Drake’s message was crystal clear: Colnar was not to write any more letters encouraging “scabs” to quit their jobs and join the union. If Colnar persisted in writing such letters, he might yet end up in the hole the guard had made him dig.

Colnar was one of 163 striking miners, relatives of miners, imported non-union workers, and other residents of southern Colorado who testified before a Colorado State Federation of Labor committee created to investigate the Colorado National Guard’s actions during its first two months on strike duty. While National Guard Adjutant General John Chase vehemently denied Colnar’s story, Colnar’s testimony only scratches the surface of the Colorado National Guard’s behavior while on strike duty.

Like Colnar’s account, some of the testimony taken by the State Federation of Labor, which takes up almost 800 legal-size pages, is darkly comedic. Take, for instance, Radi Mendencino’s experience on November 20, 1913. Mendencino, a striking miner and Montenegrin immigrant, came home to find guardsmen searching his house for weapons. The troops trashed the house, held his infant children upside down by their ankles, presumably to make sure they were not packing a gun, broke open four storage trunks with bayonets, and stole ten dollars. The guard was able to find only a rifle and two revolvers, but told the startled miner they believed he was hiding at least eighty rifles.

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5 Ibid., 485.
When Mendencino asked the guard officer in charge of the search if martial law had been declared, the officer responded, “No, but there is martial law at your house.”

Or take Filomena Bartlomuccio’s testimony. Late on Christmas Eve, 1913, she told the committee, an entire company of National Guardsmen knocked on her front door looking for a group of men who, earlier that evening, had ridden a freight train past her house firing rifles and shotguns in the air. Bartlomuccio knew exactly who the guard was looking for. She had seen the train pass her house and got a good look at the perpetrators, who, she said, looked much like the men standing at her front door. It was a common practice during this strike for the guard to commit violent acts and then go “looking” for the guilty party. Occasionally, they got caught. Bartlomuccio told her inquisitors as much, and they quickly went away.

A good deal of the testimony, however, is more disturbing. Consider Lucinda and John Medina, young Mexican-Americans and residents of Segundo. On the night of November 18, 1913, five guardsmen stopped the couple’s horse and buggy as they returned home from nearby Trinidad. They searched both Medinas for weapons, took the couple’s eleven month old baby from Lucinda’s arms, made her stand up, pulled off the blanket she had wrapped around her and “tried to raise her clothes, tried to get them.” After several heated exchanges with the couple, a guardsman put a gun to John Medina’s head and told Lucinda Medina that her husband better shut up or they were going to rape

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7 Testimony of Rudi Mendencino, in “Transcript of Statements of Witnesses Appearing Before the Investigating Committee,” 378-87
8 Testimony of Filomena Bartlomuccio, ibid., 181-85. Also see A. M. Sandoval’s testimony, ibid., 306-07.

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The guard eventually let the Medinas go, but only after a sixth guardsman, probably an officer, intervened.9

The volume of testimony before the State Federation of Labor makes clear that the Colorado National Guard used tactics—violence, intimidation, and torture—that paralleled the behavior of American troops in the Philippines to break the 1913-14 coal strike. However, the guard’s strike breaking strategy was not limited to these methods. This chapter will show that the guard used several strategies to defeat the strike. First, guard officers allowed Baldwin-Felts hired mine guards to also join the National Guard. Such arrangements satisfied the need for new recruits as some guardsmen returned to their civilian responsibilities when the strike dragged on into late 1913 and the winter of 1914. The influx of mine guards made the National Guard far more partisan in favor of the mine operators than it might otherwise have been.

Second, the guard satisfied the mine operators’ desire for strikebreakers. President of the Victor-American Fuel Company John Osgood claimed that the east coast labor agents he had once contacted were unable to convince southern and eastern European immigrants to come to Colorado. It is impossible to know if Osgood’s claim was true, but it is very clear that eastern labor agents had overcome whatever real or imagined obstacle existed to getting new immigrants west of the Mississippi. Newly arrived immigrants

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9 Testimony of John and Lucinda Medina, ibid., 308-313, 369-378. The coal operators tried to dismiss all of this testimony. James Fyler, the secretary of the United Mine Worker’s Ludlow local, testified that guardsmen had herded him and several other miners up a canyon and stood them against a wall to face a firing squad. As with Andrew Colnar, the guard was playing a cruel joke on Fyler and his friends. After hearing this story, Jesse Northcutt, the operators’ attorney during the strike, asked Fyler, who had just testified that he had mined coal since he was ten years old, if he had ever been hazed in college. See the testimony of James Fyler, House Committee on Mines and Mining, Conditions in the Coal Mines of Colorado, 63d Cong., 2d sess., 1914, part 5, 1506-10. Hereafter cited as Conditions in the Coal Mines of Colorado.
came by the hundreds, often without knowing that they were taking the jobs of striking
miners, and the guard made certain that these not always willing recruits made it from the
railroad stations in town up the canyons to the coal camps.

Third, while it was never clear that martial law had been officially declared in
southern Colorado, Adjutant General John Chase insisted that martial law was in effect.
Chase had good reason to insist that martial law was in place. Under martial law, Chase
was not obligated to defer to the governor or to civil law and the civil court system. As
head of the National Guard, Chase had sole authority over southern Colorado. With such
authority, Chase had free reign to break the strike as he wished.

Fourth, Governor Elias Ammons acquiesced to Chase’s insistence on breaking the
strike. Previous scholars of this strike have argued that the governor genuinely supported
labor, but the pressure the mine operators placed on Ammons, who was battling recurring
health problems and was not a man who dealt well with confrontation, explains why he
caved in to the operators’ demands for the National Guard and allowed Chase wide
latitude to use the National Guard as he wished. This argument is not without merit. The
operators’ constant harassment took a toll on the governor. Still, there is more to
Ammons’s acceptance of Chase’s strikebreaking plan. Although Ammons counted himself
an ally of labor, he articulated the nativism that was widespread in Colorado at the turn of
the twentieth century. This chapter will show that Ammons’s nativism pushed him away
from the striking miners and toward the overwhelmingly white and native-born National
Guardsmen he had called out on strike duty. He was their boss, but guardsmen were “his

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10 See George S. McGovern and Leonard F. Guttridge, The Great Coalfield War (Boston: Houghton
Mifflin, 1972), 92-134.
people” in a more important way: the guard’s officers and enlisted members were predominately white and native-born or of older immigrant stock. The “new” immigrants on strike in southern Colorado, on the other hand, were unskilled, alien “undesirables.”

The striking miners and their families welcomed the 931 guardsmen who arrived during the last days of October and first two weeks of November 1913. As the troops marched by the tent colonies, residents waved American flags and a brass band assembled at Ludlow played “March through Georgia” and “The Battle Cry of Freedom.”11 This outpouring of support was, no doubt, an expression of relief because the guard’s arrival lifted Albert Felt’s terror campaign against the miners. Trinidad Mayor W. P. Dunlavy approved Ammons’s troop call, declaring: “Under the circumstances the governor could do nothing else but order the militia into the strike district to preserve peace and order.”12 Dunlavy’s approval also sprung from Governor Ammons’s decision to prohibit the importation of non-union workers in southern Colorado. This prohibition annoyed the coal operators no end because they were counting on the guard to help them get strikebreakers to the mining camps and to guard the camps. By frustrating the operators’ plans to use guardsmen as bodyguards for strikebreakers, Ammons ensured that the guard and the striking miners had little reason to antagonize each other while he also demonstrated his solidarity with the strikers. As District Attorney of Las Animas County J. J. Hendricks put it, “I believe that the sending of the militia into the strike zone is a wise move provided the militia play no favorites. Its

11 *Rocky Mountain News*, 2 November 1913. Hereafter cited as *RMN*.
12 *RMN*, 28 October 1913.
success will depend in a large measure upon this feature of its operation.” 13 Philip Van Cise’s Company K set up its camps near the Ludlow tent colony and soon the residents of the two camps were playing baseball together and the Ludlow brass band began practicing for the first guard-sponsored dance. 14

Problems still cropped up between the miners and guardsmen. The miners were unwilling to give up their guns and the guard’s daily efforts to disarm them met with only partial success. Van Cise’s search of the Ludlow tent colony shortly after he arrived turned up around thirty weapons. Van Cise’s troops also found 1,000 rounds of ammunition under the floorboards of an Italian butcher’s shop and a Winchester rifle in his freezer. A search at a Greek bakery uncovered another larger stock of ammunition and several rifles and pistols. 15 The baker, a Greek immigrant named Monis who was thirty years old and had been in the United States for six years, supplied the Ludlow tent colony with bread. Monis later testified that the guardsmen who searched his shop took $359 in cash and left him with $351 in coal company scrip, damaged his baking oven, and took the guns without leaving him a receipt. 16

Having lived through the month-long, Baldwin-Felts-created siege, the miners were not inclined to give up the weapons. The Colorado National Guard’s well-known reputation as a strikebreaker did little to change their minds. Chase regularly met with mining company representatives at his Trinidad hotel, some guardsmen lived in company

13 Ibid.
14 RMN, 3 November 1913; Papanikolas, Buried Unsung: Louis Tikas and the Ludlow Massacre (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1982), 115.
16 Testimony of E. Monis, “Transcript of Statements of Witnesses Appearing Before the Investigating Committee,” 162-66. Guardsmen were required to leave a receipt for property they confiscated so that owners who re-claim their property in the future.
buildings, and the CF&I made loans to guardsmen while Roady Kenehan’s challenge to the certificates of indebtedness made its way through the courts. Thus, to the miners, the guardsmen’s true sympathies seemed clear—no matter how many baseball games they played with the militia.  

The National Guard’s recruitment of mine guards and Baldwin-Felts detectives to take the place of departing guardsmen only created more distrust of the guard among the miners. Prolonged strike duty and lack of pay brought many requests from guardsmen to return to their civilian lives. On November 8, for instance, Captain Hildreth Frost recommended the discharge of Private H.C. Wray, Company A, Second Infantry, because he was a college student and needed to get back to school and support his mother. Many of the guard’s student members faced similar difficulties. As the troops ventured south in late October, The Rocky Mountain News reported that businessmen were agitating for service exemptions and ran a story about nine University of Colorado students who would likely fail the academic year because they were called out on strike duty. “All the students are prominent at the university,” the News reported. Two weeks later, Governor Ammons wrote John Chase because he learned that “several employers in Denver intend to fire those on strike duty.” Perhaps driven by letters he received asking for permission to leave the guard, Ammons wanted to know if this rumor was true so he could convince these employers to allow their workers to continue serving in the National Guard. General Chase later testified that “because many of our men are the sole support of families and others occupied positions of great authority, it has always been the

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17 McGovern and Guttridge, The Great Coalfield War, 141.
18 RMN, 30 and 31 October 1913.
practice in this State to relieve those men as rapidly as possible and get other suitable men in their places.”  

As guard officers allowed these men to leave, some officers began recruiting replacements among the mine guards and Baldwin-Felts detectives. Realizing that this practice jeopardized his relationship with the miners and the UMW, Governor Ammons wrote General Chase in mid-November asking him to “be careful not to include . . . the imported guards whom the strikers know. There is such bitter feeling between the two that it would not only be a red flag, but I would be afraid to trust the guards to do just their plain duty where their animas [sic] against the strikers is so great.” A week later, Ammons wrote again to tell Chase that UMW officials complained to him that Baldwin-Felts detectives were joining the guard and that he did not believe “it advisable to employ any red flags no matter how great the necessity may appear.” Ammons clearly wanted Chase to do what he thought necessary to fill guard vacancies, but he also wished to mollify the UMW. Ammons told the press that he did not believe any Baldwin-Felts guards were enlisted in the guard and promised to dismiss such recruits if it were proven that they had enlisted. This double talk from Ammons was the first sign that his support for the striking miners was eroding.  

It is impossible to know the precise number of mine guards and detectives who joined the guard, but there were many. Montgomery Massingale testified before the congressional committee that investigated the strike in February 1914 that he had

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19 Elias Ammons to John Chase, 12 November 1913, Papers of Governor Elias Ammons, Box 26751, File Folder 7, Colorado State Archives, Denver Colorado. Also see the letters to Ammons from guardsmen in his papers, Box 26747, File Folder 1.  
21 Elias Ammons to John Chase, November 10 and 17, 1913, Papers of Governor Elias Ammons, Box 26751, File Folder 7, Colorado State Archives; RMN, 18 December 1913.
received $3 as a mine guard for a coal operator while serving in the National Guard for $1 a day. A mine guard who was involved in the October 17, 1913 “steel battleship” shoot up of the Forbes tent colony that killed one miner, crippled another, and put 147 bullet holes in John Ure’s tent also found his way into the National Guard. UMW district 15 president John McLennan knew of twenty mine guards who enlisted at one time. Captain Harold G. Garwood, who was a surgeon in civilian life, had between fifteen and twenty-five former mine guards in his cavalry troop. Garwood stated that his officer in charge of enlistment had signed up these men at the order of General Chase about a month after strike duty began. Captain Philip Van Cise got two mine guards, but he claimed he did not know they had worked for the mine operators when his company signed them up. Van Cise later said that one of these men deserted within a month while the other was nearly blind and was of little use as either a mine guard or soldier.22

Governor Ammons, on the other hand, maintained even after the strike that no detectives had joined the guard during the strike.23 Testifying after the Ludlow Massacre, Ammons attempted to distinguish mine guards hired by the coal operators and Baldwin-Felts from the men who worked directly for the detective agency. Mine superintendents and Baldwin-Felts detectives supervised mine guards, who were far more plentiful than detectives, and it was far more likely that a mine guard would end up in the National Guard.

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One thing is certain: the makeup of the National Guard showed significant changes during the months after the strike began. A comparison of National Guard enlistees between January 1, 1912 to September 1, 1913, and October 1913 and March 1914 illustrates this point. Unlike the Colorado National Guard’s officer class, the enlisted men who ventured to southern Colorado at the end of October 1913 represented more of a cross-section of Colorado’s population at the turn of the twentieth century.

Among the 445 men in my sample who enlisted in the National Guard during the year and nine months before the strike, “clerk” was the most common civilian occupation. Just over 16 percent of the men who joined the guard during this period before the strike identified themselves as clerical workers. Laborer was next at 13.4 percent, followed by college students (10.3 percent)—Company K under Captain Philip Van Cise’s command was made up entirely of college graduates—farmers (9.1 percent), and miners (5.4 percent). Bolstering Napoleon’s observation that an army marches on its stomach, 4.5 percent of guard enlistees were either cooks or bakers in civilian life. The rest were a collection of skilled tradesmen: mechanics, tailors, blacksmiths, electricians, plumbers, bricklayers, machinists, and carpenters made up a combined 7.5 percent of these enlistees. Professionals also had a substantial presence among the enlisted: doctors, engineers, bookkeepers, teachers, druggists, lawyers, bankers, small business owners, and journalists made up a combined 10 percent. Rounding out the enlisted corps was a smattering of cowboys, mine guards, bellboys, salesmen, chauffeurs, butchers, and barbers. Predictably, 92.6 percent were thirty-five years old or younger. Most enlistees
were also born outside of Colorado. The nearby states of Iowa, Nebraska, Missouri, Illinois, Texas, New Mexico, and Kansas were the birthplaces of 41.9% of enlistees while 27.4 percent of these men were born in the Centennial State.

Ethnicity, rather than class, most separated the guard from the people they faced on strike duty in 1913-14. Just under 53 percent of the men who joined the guard before the strike had Anglo surnames. German surnames made up just over 21 percent of enlistees followed by Irish (8.5 percent) and Scandinavian (8 percent). There were men with Greek, Italian, and Hispanic surnames, but together they made up 7 percent of guard enlistees and just one of these men, an Italian, was born overseas.

These statistics changed in significant ways during the first five months of the strike. The percentage of enlistees born in Colorado sank from 27.4 percent in the year and nine months before the strike to 11.8 percent after the strike began. This decline might reflect the fact that many mine guards and all the Baldwin-Felts's detectives were from out of state. It might also suggest that native Coloradans were uncomfortable about serving as strike breakers. Men who called themselves soldiers also jumped from .6 to 6.3 percent while the percentage of students declined from 10.3 to 4.3 percent. The jump in the percentage of men who described themselves as farmers rose from 9.1 percent before the strike to 26.6 percent during the strike, suggesting that the strike was not popular in

25 The 1910 census showed that sixty-five percent of Colorado's population was born outside the state.
26 "Rosters of the Colorado National Guard." Italians, Greeks, and Mexicans who were foreign born or who had parents who were born (one parent or both parents) outside of the United States totaled 29,790 or 3.73 percent of Colorado's total population in 1910. The total population of the state that year was 799,024.
27 Two hundred twenty-four men joined the guard from October 1913 to March 1914.
rural areas of Colorado. Finally, the percentage of enlistees with Hispanic, Italian, and Greek surnames declined from 7 percent to 2.4 percent.\(^{28}\)

To the miners, mine guard infiltration of the state militia reflected in these statistics was deeply offensive because many mine guards had participated in Baldwin-Felts’s campaign of violence aimed at forcing Governor Ammons to call out the guard. Ammons showed that his willingness to defend the strikers had diminishing even further when he suspended the prohibition on importing non-union workers from outside southern Colorado on November 26. Doing so only served to turn the miners against both Ammons and the guard.\(^{29}\) Ammons later explained that he had barred the importation of non-union workers when he called out the guard because he believed a strike settlement was close. Colorado law allowed the struck companies to bring in non-union workers from elsewhere as long as those workers were informed that they were taking a job at a struck company. State Attorney General Fred Farrar informed the governor that his order preventing the importation of non-union workers was therefore a violation of Colorado law. There is no evidence that the mine operators were pursuing a legal case aimed at forcing Ammons to allow the importation of non-union workers. Still, after Ammons and Secretary of Labor William Wilson’s mediation of a late-November 1913 conference between Jesse Welborn, David Brown, John Osgood and three striking mine workers—the coal operators refused to meet with union officials—failed to produce an agreement, Ammons voluntarily rescinded his prohibition on non-union workers. Ammons knew very well that allowing strikebreakers was a death blow to the union. Non-union workers

\(^{28}\) “Rosters of the Colorado National Guard.”  
\(^{29}\) *United Mine Workers Journal,* 20 November 1913. Hereafter cited as *UMWJ.*
would allow the mine operators to increase production, but those who decided not to “scab” often joined the strikers’ ranks with the UMW’s encouragement, and thus placed an additional financial burden on the union. Ammons later explained that he ended the prohibition on non-union workers because winter fuel prices in the state were rising due to the strike-produced scarcity of coal, but it is also clear that by late November, it no longer mattered to him if the miners lost the strike.\(^\text{30}\)

The CF&I seized immediately on the opportunity to bring in strikebreakers. A CF&I labor agent had left Colorado in early November to set up employment offices in Joplin, Missouri, Chicago, Cincinnati, Toledo, and Pittsburgh. Attracted by promises of $3.08 a day, free transportation to Colorado, and farmland for $1 a month per acre, hundreds of men signed up.\(^\text{31}\) On December 3, General Chase reported that seventy-three non-union workers had entered the mines. On the same day, the operators announced that they were bringing in labor from outside Colorado and would have all the workers they needed within thirty days. They also declared that they would take back strikers who had not committed violence up until January 1. If the striking miners did not come back by that date, they could never come back to work in the mines.\(^\text{32}\) Just before Christmas, Chairman of the CF&I Lamont Bowers informed John D. Rockefeller, Jr. that the company was getting miners from the south and the east and would “have all we can in a

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\(^{30}\) *The West Report*, 114. Ammons later testified that he felt “justified in even straining the law and I held things in abeyance for a time until I could make further efforts.” See the testimony of Elias Ammons, *CIR Testimony*, vol. 7, 6412-13.


\(^{32}\) *RMN*, 3 and 26 December 1913.
week or so." Around the same time, Jesse Welborn told the company's executive committee that "since we commenced to ship men from the East, our forces have increased rapidly, and unless some unforeseen interference develops, we should be able to take care of all demands for coal on us in late January." Welborn also asked the executive committee for between $17,500 and $20,000 to build housing for these new workers. In late January 1914, Welborn reported that the company had increased production from 121,000 tons in December to 165,000 in January.

While the CF&I was content with the numbers of imported non-union workers it was able to acquire and with the amount of coal these workers produced, their new workers were anything but content with the conditions they found in southern Colorado. Rafael Nuzzio's experience was typical. Nuzzio had worked in the United States for two years before returning to Italy. He then returned to this side of the Atlantic, landing in Pittsburgh in October 1913. After working for a month, he visited a CFI's labor agent on Pennsylvania Avenue who said work paying five to seven dollars a day was available in Colorado. Jumping at the promise of such attractive wages, Nuzzio quickly boarded a train heading across the continent with about 200 other men. Like many other imported workers who eventually left the coal camps, Nuzzio claimed that the labor recruiter did not inform him ahead of time that he was accepting work at a struck company. Once ensconced in a coal camp, he felt like he could leave, but believed he was in a better position than his fellow travelers who had brought their families and were therefore less

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34 "Minutes of Executive Committee Meeting," 22 December 1913 and 26 January 1914, Papers of Jesse Welborn, MSS 1218, File Folder 58, Colorado Historical Society, Denver, Colorado.

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mobile. Testifying through an interpreter, Nuzzio said that mine guards and National Guardsmen patrolled the camp constantly and that the “bayonets in their guns are enough to convince him that they would keep him there, though, and that he had to sneak away. . . . He never told them he was going to skip because he thinks that if he had told them anything like that they would use some bad methods.”

John Scorak, who was also from Pittsburgh, told a similar story. When he arrived at the Sorpris mine, the superintendent asked if he had any military experience. Scorak had served almost four years in the Polish army, which was good enough for the super to give him a rifle, a six-shooter, and a metal star “with some English writing on it” that he could not read. His job would be to watch the property for $3.50 a day. The superintendent also told Scorak that he could live for free and that coal for heating his place would be free as well. The presence of four National Guardsmen during this conversation only heightened Scorak’s feeling that something was wrong, but the superintendent still did not tell him there was a strike. Scorak turned the job down. The deal breaker, Scorak related through an interpreter, was when the superintendent laid out the job description: “as soon as someone came close to the mines, he must shoot him. Hold him up. If he would not stop, go ahead and shoot him.”

Juan Mares, Saturino Wyesa, Barbriana Bargas, and Genaro Sisneros were not as fortunate as Scorak. These men came from Mexico on a promise of $3.15 a day in wages. After receiving between $2 and $3 each for their first twenty days of work, they asked a National Guardsman for permission to leave. The soldier said they would have to walk to

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the superintendent's office a half mile away to get a pass, but would have to leave their shoes, which the company had provided, behind. This condition was clearly meant as a deterrent, since the ground was covered with snow, but Mares, Wyesa, Bargas, and Sisneros were undeterred. The superintendent did not stop them for leaving, but demanded that they also leave their socks behind.37

Behind this struggle over the importation of strikebreakers was the larger issue of whether martial law was in force when the National Guard came out on strike duty. A declaration of martial law meant that General Chase was not obligated to defer to civil law and the civil court system, and presumably, could decide independent of the governor whether the mine operators could import non-union workers. It seemed clear that martial law was in place when Ammons called out the guard in late October 1913. The Rocky Mountain News reported on October 28, 1913: “Martial law has been declared in the southern coal fields by Governor Ammons.”38 Ammons’s orders to Chase upon calling out the guard also strongly implied that martial law was in place: “... that you use such means as you may deem right and proper, acting in conjunction with, or independently of, the civil authorities of said districts, as your judgment and discretion are demanded, to restore peace and good order. . . .”39

Seemed clear cut, but nothing in this strike was simple. Ammons himself was confused about the issue months after he called troops to southern Colorado. In his testimony before the Industrial Relations Commission, Ammons said that martial law

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37 Testimony of Juan Mares, Saturino Wyesa, Barbriana Bargas, and Genaro Sisneros, ibid., 522-35.
38RMN, 28 October 1913.
39Ibid.
existed automatically with the call out of the National Guard. Ammon’s attorney
General, however, said that the governor had to make a separate declaration of martial
law and that martial law was never declared, at least in the way that he, as an attorney,
defined martial law: “... that condition of law or government which vests in the military
authorities full, complete, and absolute jurisdiction over the people of any district where
the law may prevail.”

General Chase, on the other hand, believed that martial law was in place and
Major Edward Boughton, who became the guard’s legal advisor during the strike, backed
him up. When called before the district court in southern Colorado to explain why the
guard was holding prisoners indefinitely without charging them with a crime, Boughton
defended Chase by declaring: “It is a matter of supreme indifference to General John
Chase whether the prisoners are guilty or innocent, a state of war exists. We are in a
conquered territory and from the soldiers’ point of view there is no other law other than
the supreme will of the commander-in-chief.”

It is certainly instructive that Boughton and Chase believed they had conquered
territory in an ongoing war. Boughton and Chase did not elaborate on whom they were
fighting this war against or who had controlled southern Colorado before the National
Guard arrived, but they based their argument for martial law on the 1906 in re Moyer
decision of the Colorado Supreme Court. During the 1903-04 Western Federation of

40 Testimony of Elias Ammons, CIR Testimony, vol. 8, 7171.
41 Testimony of Fred Farrar, ibid., 37.
42 Testimony of John Chase and Edward Boughton, ibid., vol 7, 6832, 6837. Boughton backed Chase in
a curious way. He stated: “Martial law can exist without being declared in this State; and martial law can be
declared in this State without existing.” Seems to suggest that Boughton was also confused about how
martial law was declared in the state. See Boughton’s testimony, CIR Testimony, vol. 7, 6848.
43 “Military Despotism in Colorado,” 6, Papers of Edward Doyle, Box 1, Envelope 13, Western History
Collection, Denver Public Library, Denver, Colorado.

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Miners’ strike in Colorado’s metal mines, Chase, who was then Adjutant General Sherman Bell’s field commander, routinely rounded up and jailed strikers and union officials for long periods of time without bringing formal charges against them. Chase was able to make these arrests under the authority granted the guard by Governor James H. Peabody’s suspension of the writ of habeas corpus. Habeas corpus protects citizens from such arbitrary imprisonment. After Chase locked up WFM president Charles H. Moyer, the union mounted a constitutional challenge to the suspension of habeas corpus.  

Mirroring the influence of the Colorado National Guard’s Philippine Islands experience, the Colorado Supreme Court used a case that had recently come before the Supreme Court of the Philippine Islands to rule in favor of Governor Peabody and the National Guard. In that case, the Philippines Supreme Court had determined that the American military government could suspend the writ of habeas corpus under certain circumstances. Chief Justice of the Colorado Supreme Court William H. Gabbert agreed with this decision, contending: “a state of insurrection, rebellion, or invasion may arise suddenly and may jeopardize the very existence of the state,” warranting the suspension of habeas corpus. In making this argument, Gabbert laid out a lengthy scenario in which a foreign power threatened American control of the Islands and proof was uncovered that native Filipinos were “in collusion with such an invasion.” In his majority decision, Gabbert asked: “Might not the Governor General and the Commission, take steps, even to the extent of suspending the privileges of the writ of habeas corpus, as might appear to

them to be necessary to repel such invasion? It seems that all men interested in the maintenance and stability of the government would answer this question in the affirmative.” Given this far-away precedent, Gabbert concluded: “the arrest and detention by the military of one taken into custody as an insurrectionist by the particular force which the Governor is authorized to employ to suppress an insurrection cannot be inquired into by the courts.”

By citing the precedent of the Philippines case, Chief Justice Gabbert suggested that the WFM posed a grave threat to constituted authority. Gabbert’s opinion also privileged state power over the United States Constitution’s guarantee of habeas corpus. These arguments certainly exaggerated conditions in Colorado during the 1903-04 WFM strikes. While the strike did produce violence, that characteristic did not make it unique in western labor history, and contending that the strike was an insurrection, rebellion, or invasion was hard to sustain. President Theodore Roosevelt consistently resisted calls from Colorado’s political and business leaders for federal troops during this strike. He clearly did not think that the state was suffering from an insurrection, rebellion, or invasion, and did not think that the existence of the state of Colorado was in jeopardy.

The 1913-14 coal strike mirrored conditions a decade earlier. The strike did not threaten Colorado’s existence, and Ammons also did not describe the situation in southern Colorado as an insurrection, rebellion or invasion when he called out the

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National Guard in late October 1913. Yet, the presence of an insurrection, rebellion, or invasion was crucial to Gabbert’s rationale for upholding the suspension of the writ of habeas corpus in the Moyer decision. Relying on the Moyer case to argue that an automatic declaration of martial law, and thus the authority to suspend habeas corpus, came with a guard call out placed General Chase and Major Boughton on questionable legal ground. Ammons, however, let his Adjutant General handle the strike as he saw fit. Indeed, Attorney General Farrar said that he rarely consulted with Chase about legal matters during the strike. When district attorney of Las Animas County J. J. Hendricks asked Ammons on several occasions to clarify whether martial law had been declared, Ammons told Hendricks to ask General Chase if martial law was in place.

Major Boughton had described southern Colorado as “conquered territory” when Colorado’s civil courts inquired into Chase’s suspension of habeas corpus. Chase embraced this description. He referred to Las Animas and Huerfano Counties as the “Military District of Colorado” and certainly acted as though he was the military governor of an occupied territory.

48 Ammons’s executive order calling out the National Guard stated: “It having been made to appear to me by the peace offices of the counties of Las Animas and Huerfano and other counties of the State of Colorado, by numerous civil officers and other good and reputable citizens of said counties, that there is a tumult threatened, and that there are bodies of men, acting together, by force and violence to break and resist the laws of this state, and that a number of persons are in possession of deadly weapons and are in active and open opposition to the execution of the laws of this state in said districts, and that the civil authorities are wholly unable to cope with the situation in the preservation and maintenance of order, and the laws of the state of Colorado.” It could be argued that this description of conditions in southern Colorado amounted to an insurrection or rebellion, but there seemed enough room to argue against the existence of an insurrection or rebellion, and therefore, of an automatic declaration of martial if Governor Ammons chose to do so. See the Papers of Governor Elias Ammons, Executive Records, 8849C, Vol. 21, Colorado State Archives and RMN, 28 October 1913.


50 See, for example, Boughton’s forward and Chase’s concluding comments in The Military Occupation of the Coal Strike Zone, 3, 66.
Governor Ammons did not attempt to challenge Chase's interpretation of Colorado law even though his attorney general seemed willing to do so. Why did Ammons fail to challenge Chase when it was clear that the Adjutant General was not a strong position to defend his interpretation of how martial law was declared? A closer look at Governor Ammons's actions during the strike, Colorado politics, and the governor's own social and cultural politics shows that although the governor counted himself an ally of labor, he articulated the nativism that was widespread in Colorado at the turn of the twentieth century. That nativism pushed him away from the striking miners and toward supporting the overwhelmingly white and native-born National Guardsmen he had called out on strike duty. In effect, this decision was not much different than if Ammons had willingly gone along with mine operators' strike breaking plan from the very beginning.

In August, 1914, when the coal strike was in its eleventh month and the Great War was just beginning, Governor Ammons told Colorado's Democratic United States Senator Charles Thomas that he had noticed how the European belligerent governments were asking their citizens in the United States to come home. This development made Ammons wonder if something could "be done to call these same subjects out of Colorado." He went on to say that "If we could get some one to two thousands of the men belonging to these same nationalities out of Colorado our strike situation would almost be settled . . . If press reports are correct the same class of men are being called for from other portions of the country and I see no reason why they should overlook Colorado."\(^{51}\) Senator Thomas agreed with

\(^{51}\) Ammons to Senator Charles S. Thomas, 3 August 1914, Papers of Governor Elias Ammons, Box 26749, File Folder 5, Colorado State Archives.
Ammons in his reply, but thought such a solution to what ailed Colorado could not happen immediately. Thomas wrote: “Unfortunately for our state, those you would like to see removed are largely the subjects of Southern European countries who are now at peace.” Still, Thomas was optimistic: “The possibilities are, however, that they will be involved sooner or later and then if we can get a move on the situation, so to speak, I shall be glad to cooperate to the best of my ability.” Ammons drew hope from Thomas’s letter and told the senator that he was watching how the war might “affect our undesirable population and if anything of the kind happens, I am very glad indeed to know that the matter will be looked after.”

Ammons’s desire to see thousands of foreign-born men leave his state’s relative safety bound for Europe’s trenches reflected Colorado’s widespread turn-of-the-twentieth-century nativism. As we saw in Chapter Two, many coal mine operators were not shy about expressing their disgust with immigrant workers. Other mine company officials had different complaints about their foreign-born employees. W. W. Curtis, president of the Rapson Mining Company, for example, operated coalmines in Colorado’s northern and southern coalfields. Unlike in southern Colorado, where most miners were southern and eastern European immigrants, coal diggers in the northern field were primarily native-born, English-speaking immigrants from the British Isles, foreign-born men from northwestern Europe, or the descendants of immigrants from these countries. These workers had also gained recognition for the United Mine Workers in

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52 Thomas to Ammons, August 11, 1914, Papers of Governor Elias Ammons, Box 26749, File Folder 5.
53 Ammons to Thomas, August 17, 1914, Papers of Governor Elias Ammons, Box 26749, File Folder 5.
54 See U.S. Senate, Reports of the Immigration Commission (Dillingham Commission), Immigrants in Industry: Japanese and other Immigrant Races in the Pacific Coast and Rocky Mountain States, Diversified
the aftermath of the 1903-04 mining strikes. In his testimony before the Industrial Relations Commission, Curtis said that the union worked fine in northern Colorado, where he had a “good class of men, a number of men who have been with us a great many years.” It was a different story in southern Colorado, where Curtis also operated one of a few unionized mines. “In the southern field,” Curtis stated, “we have a different and an inferior class of labor to contend with.” After relating two incidents in which miners left work to attend the funeral of a fellow worker killed in a mining accident and the union pit committee’s unilateral decision that they would have a mid-week vacation day, Curtis concluded: “I realize fully that we are dealing with an ignorant lot of men—an ignorant class of men. They have not any conception of what the rights of the public or the rights of the operator may be, and they haven’t had power in their own hands long enough to be sobered by it.”

Curtis was unclear on whether he thought southern and eastern European immigrant miners in the southern field could learn to wield union power as he wished, but in raising this critique, Curtis revealed that in his mind, working-class men who were native-born or old-stock immigrants were “higher class” than working-class men from southern and eastern Europe. Curtis’s evaluation of his southern coalfield workers also raised a common nativist

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 55 Testimony of W. W. Curtis, CIR Testimony, vol. 7, 6534-35. In his testimony, Edward J. Berwind, president and director of several large coal mining companies in Pennsylvania, expressed similar feelings about the southern and eastern European immigrants who worked in his mines. Berwind said: “Properly conducted [union] organization is an advantage. The trouble is that our experience has been with organization that it is not always carefully conducted or, as a rule, especially in those industries such as those I am engaged in, which in a rather ignorant class of the community, and is not very skilled labor. A great many of them are foreigners, and they are misled as to the situation . . . I do not think that I can answer anything better than to say that under certain conditions organized labor has had and improving tendency and in other conditions it has produced great harm.” See the testimony of Edward J. Berwind, CIR Testimony vol. 8, 7590-91.
complaint about immigrants from southern and eastern Europe supposedly, these immigrants’ ignorance meant they lacked the capacity for self-government, and therefore, would imperil American democracy. Unionization gave Curtis’s southern field workers a voice in determining the hours they would work. That voice gave them a degree of self-determination, and some ability to self-govern. To Curtis, however, these immigrant workers were incapable of responsibly handling even this limited autonomy.\textsuperscript{56}

At the conference Governor Elias Ammons arranged between striking miners and the coal mine companies two months into the 1913-14 coal strike showed that coalmine operators involved in the 1913-14 strike agreed with W. W. Curtis. This meeting also demonstrated that the native-born men who represented the striking miners found common ground with their employers on the worthiness of immigrant workers.

Because the mine operators involved in the 1913-14 strike worried that any meeting with the striking miners could be interpreted as recognition of the union, they were very hesitant to attend this meeting. Governor Ammons worked hard to convince representatives of the three largest coalmining companies in southern Colorado to come to the conference table in late November 1913. John C. Osgood, from the Victor-American Fuel Company, Jesse Welborn of the CF&I, and D. W. Brown, vice-president of the Rocky Mountain Fuel Company, made clear that, as Brown put it, the meeting was to discuss the complaints of the men “as men only, not as labor representatives in any way.” Still, the United Mine Workers, was, no doubt, involved in choosing the three men who represented the miners at this meeting. Although a decided majority of striking workers in southern Colorado were

\textsuperscript{56} See, for example, John R. Commons, \textit{Races and Immigrants in America} (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1911), 5.
southern and eastern European and Mexican immigrants, the union choose Archie Allison and T. X. Evans, who worked for the CF&I, and David Hammon, who mined coal for Victor-American. It is likely that these men were chosen because English was their native tongue, and the fact that they were native-born English speakers certainly shaped the course of conversation at this meeting.57

Early in the session, Evans asserted: “the union will bring a better class of people into the mines.” John Osgood understood this to mean that Evans believed the union would help bring more native-born and English speaking immigrant workers into the mines. In response, Osgood asked: “are not these Greek, Italians, and Slavs in the camp members of the union?” Evans agreed with Osgood when he pointed out that these same “races and nationalities” are “in every unionized northeastern state.” How, then, Osgood asked, “can your union get a better class of men; they do not educate them, they take these men just as they are . . . they have the same class of men everywhere.”58 Although T. X. Evans and Osgood sat in opposition to each other in a contentious strike that many of their contemporaries and historians saw as evidence of deep class divisions in early twentieth-century Colorado, they could agree, along with W. W. Curtis, that Greeks, Italians, and Slavs were not among ‘the better class of people’ in the United States.

Later in the meeting, this exchange occurred:

Osgood: The men who help us to get men are men working in the mines. They write back to their friends or relatives, perhaps Italy or Austria, telling what the conditions are.

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58 Ibid., 21.
Archie Allison (miner): or else to Greece?

(laughter)

Osgood: Yes, to Greece. I wish they did not write there (laughter). The best employment agency we have is the men working in our mines.

David Hammon (miner): You are speaking about the Greeks. We are getting in worse men than the Greeks ever were.

Brown (Rocky Mountain Fuel Company): Who are they?

Hammon: They are those Old Mexico Mexicans. They are not to be trusted.

Osgood: They won’t stay longer than four or five days in a place, will they?

Hammon: They came with these big, high hats; they came to Trinidad with their dinner pails and blankets and had never seen a coal mine.

Osgood: Who is supporting them?

Governor Ammons: Why, the relief fund.⁵⁹

The mine operators were clearly following the divide-and-conquer strategy that so many employers used at the turn of the twentieth century to drive a wedge between native-born and immigrant workers when they stuck in the same workplace or industry. Evans, Allison, and Hammon, though, were more than willing to not only follow their employers’ lead, but to also initiate a discussion of how some of their fellow strikers—Greeks and Mexicans, in particular—were not desirable workers. Finally, Governor Ammons’s contention that many Mexican immigrants were receiving relief showed that his support for labor had definite ethnic and racial boundaries. During a strike in which Ammons and the coal mine operators had agreed on very little, they could agree on how undesirable immigrant workers were.

The antagonism that Evans, Allison, and Hammon expressed toward immigrant workers was not atypical among native-born workers and within the American labor movement. The American Federation of Labor (AFL), the largest labor organization in the United States at the turn of the century, supported the exclusion of Chinese immigrants and sought legislation to restrict immigration from southern and eastern Europe. The far more radical Western Federation of Miners (WFM), which was the most powerful union in Colorado for a decade, took similar positions on immigration. Many trade unionists backed this position and the AFL’s policy of not organizing unskilled new immigrant workers. Employers used these immigrants as strikebreakers in the years after the Civil War, and union defeats in these conflicts pushed the AFL to view new immigrants as part of the larger employer arsenal that included spies, court injunctions, private detectives, police, and National Guard troops. Because many AFL union members were themselves immigrants or the descendants of immigrants from the British Isles and northwestern Europe, however, unions could not oppose all immigration.60 Still, as Gwendolyn Mink has observed, “new immigrants were visibly different; they moved into industry at lower levels and for lower wages, spoke unfamiliar languages, and carried different cultural baggage.” These differences left the AFL room to encourage their members and supporters to see old-stock immigrants as racially different from and superior to immigrants from southern and eastern Europe.61

Colorado Secretary of State James B. Pearce expressed this position well when he declared his support for the union early in the strike. He pointed out that when he was a

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60 Mink, Old Labor and New Immigrants in American Political Development, 45-68.
61 Ibid., 52.
boy in Ohio, the miners there “were made up of the best class of skilled laborers who were all American-born or Scotch, Irish, Welsh, and English.” The miners in southern Colorado, however, were “a conglomerate mass of Italians, natives of the Slavonic [sic] countries, and Greeks.” After revealing that a mine operator had told him that if the strike continued, he would bring in strikebreakers from Mexico, Pearce observed that “Such a class of labor would simply be one shade lower than that which is now . . . in the field.” Pearce went on to say that the “best conditions of workers in countries where the miners came from are not as good as the worst conditions in the U.S.” and that the miners in southern Colorado “might be hoarding their savings to send them back to their home countries. If that was true, the workmen were of no benefit to America.”62

Nativism bled into the political considerations Governor Ammons faced when the miners went on strike. Realizing that only the guard could re-establish order in southern Colorado, Ammons made sure that his soldiers could carry out that mission. As we saw in Chapter Three, that decision meant he had to overcome State Auditor Kenehan’s opposition to the mine operators’ financing plan, but the governor also felt he had to be mindful of the men who served in the guard. The Colorado National Guard’s middle- and upper-middle class officer corps certainly had political influence. Several had business relationships with the struck mining companies and more than half the guard’s office class hailed from Denver. Thus many of these officers were part of the political and social establishment in Colorado’s capital city. A Democratic governor was not likely to find much support at the polls among these officers, but the guard’s enlisted ranks consisted of middle- and working-class native-born men whose votes Ammons certainly coveted. That fact no doubt propelled the

62 RMN, 9 October 1913.
governor toward putting himself behind his National Guard rather than risking his political career to champion the cause of a group of immigrant miners.

Once the guard was in the field, Ammons paid little attention to General Chase’s efforts to break the strike and expressed little support for the striking miners, but made sure to publicly support his guardsmen. Soon after calling out the guard, the governor declared: “Those boys down there are endangering their lives and are undergoing many hardships in behalf of the state.” Referring to State Auditor Kenehan’s efforts to hold up the funds necessary to pay the guard, Ammons vowed: “I intend that they shall have their pay and all of it. They get little enough as it is.”6 The governor frequently expressed similar sentiments once the guard was on strike duty and also went out of his way to intercede with employers in Denver who threatened to fire employees absent from their jobs due to their service in the guard. These words and actions indicated that the governor was indeed labor’s defender, but his concern was primarily for the state workers who made up the Colorado National Guard.

Guardsmen, no doubt, played a role in helping their governor express solidarity with them. During the month it took to defeat Kenehan and implement the mine operators’ plan for financing the guard, Ammons received more than a few letters from soldiers and their families describing the hardship strike duty caused them. Many asked for leaves of absence while others mounted a petition campaign that collected hundreds of signatures. This petition demanded that Ammons pay his troops for strike duty, but also pulled at the governor’s heartstrings by pointing out that many guardsmen had

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families to support. “Unless the men receive the pay which is due them for their services to the State of Colorado,” one letter writer claimed, “Their families will actually suffer from poverty, if not suffering at the present time.” By rounding up the money to pay and supply the guard and by letting the guard’s officers do as they pleased to break the strike—a strategy that would end the strike sooner rather than later—Ammons acted in the interests of the mine operators, but he also acted as a boss seeking to protect a constituency that worked for the state of Colorado. Coal company domination of political life in Huerfano and Las Animas Counties, on the other hand, produced huge Republican majorities on Election Day. The coal operators’ creation of a one-party state in southern Colorado worked to push Ammons away from the striking miners and toward his National Guardsmen. Why would the governor go out of the way to help people who, if they voted, would cast their ballots for his party’s opponents?

Still, Ammons might have seen a successful strike as an opportunity to break the coal operators’—and the Republican Party’s—hold on Huerfano and Las Animas Counties. Indeed, it was the UMW’s intention to bring political as well as industrial democracy to southern Colorado. Ammons’s nativist view of striking miners, however, prevented him from seeing the strike as a chance to strengthen the Colorado Democratic Party’s position in the southern part of the state.

As the strike wore on, Ammons took to saying that the strike and all the conflict that came with it resulted from powerful forces that had invaded his state. The New York-based

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64 The files of correspondence in the Papers of Governor Elias Ammons contain many such letters. See the Papers of Elias Ammons, Box 26747, File Folder 1, Colorado State Archives. More specifically, see Ammons to Adjutant General John Chase, 12 November 1913, Box 26751, File Folder 6 for Ammons’ attempts to intervene on behalf of guardsmen losing their jobs because of strike duty. The petition appears in Box 26751, File Folder 7.

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Rockefeller family, he pointed out, owned the CF&I, and the UMW was based in Indianapolis. Ammons claimed he was powerless to stop these two behemoths from wreaking havoc in Las Animas and Huerfano Counties. Ammons failed to mention that the Rockefellers were far more powerful than the UMW, and he also forgot that the Baldwin-Felts Detective Agency, which the operators hired, and his own National Guard were responsible for a great deal of the havoc that plagued southern Colorado.65

The governor also took to portraying himself publicly and in letters to constituents who supported his actions during the strike as a man who was not on the operators’ side or the miners’ side but on the side of law and order. After William P. Daniels wrote Ammons nine virulently anti-union letters, Ammons responded: “The strike leaders certainly occupy untenable ground when they attempt to hold me responsible for every little indiscretion of the militia men... The only duty I know in this matter or shall know will be the restoration of order and the reinstatement and enforcement of law.”66

Ammons might have seen a shift away from the labor movement as a necessary political strategy because he was up for re-election in less than a year. He had won in 1912 largely because of the split between the Republicans and the Progressives that was embodied nationally by Theodore Roosevelt’s run for the White House as a Progressive. As the strike turned violent, Ammons could not see getting re-elected as the man who had

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65 See, for example, Ammons to Senator Charles Thomas, 28 April 1914, Ammons to President Woodrow Wilson, 5 May 1914, and Ammons to Robert W. Bonygne, Esq., 9 June 1914 in the Papers of Elias Ammons, Box 26749, File Folder 5, Box 26750, File Folder 1, and Box 26744, File Folder 3.
66 Ammons to William P. Daniels, 26 December 1913, Papers of Elias Ammons, Box 26745, File Folder 3. Ammons echoed this theme in a letter responding to U.S. Congressmen George Kindel, who had written to tell Ammons that he should take it as “an honor to be criticized and condemned by this bunch of parasites and irresponsibles” when strike leaders took Ammons to task for not keeping the National Guard on a tighter leash. Ammons wrote: “I intend, of course, to follow a policy of enforcement of law and order regardless of consequences but sincerely hope that the people of Colorado... will stand by me in that policy.” See Representative George Kindel to Ammons, 19 December 1913 and Ammons to Kindel, 27 December 1913, Papers of Elias Ammons, Box 26747, File Folder 1.
championed the cause of a group of impoverished immigrants in a remote corner of the state. It did not help that the State Federation of Labor launched a recall of Ammons in mid-December 1913 after he ignored their demands to remove General Chase and several other officers from the National Guard. For his part, Ammons refused to acknowledge that the guard was physically abusing and otherwise mistreating striking miners. He even offered $100 for proof that the guard had robbed any miner. He eventually got 800 pages of testimony on the guard's abuses from miners, their families, and residents of southern Colorado.67

Without Ammons standing in his way, General Chase felt free to break the strike as quickly as possible. Toward that end, Chase established a military commission on November 20, 1913 to decide who among the striking miners and union officials guardsmen had arrested should be held indefinitely. These arrests were for weapons possession and participation in the sporadic violence that continue after the guard arrived, but also for no reason other than Chase and other officers thought that getting a striker or union official off the street would help break the strike. In violation of the writ of habeas corpus, those prisoners deemed worth holding were not charged with a crime. Citing the in re Moyer

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67 RMN, 18 December 1913. W. M. Morris wrote Ammons just after the recall was announced to say that enforcing the law would bring Ammons the support of "all good patriotic, law abiding citizens . . . regardless of politics." Morris went on to say: "about half the miners in this state are foreigners and are not citizens of this country and if war should break out with their mother country and this country, every mother son of theirs would leave and fight against this country." In his reply, Ammons thanked Morris "for the kind sentiments in his letter" and told him: "No one regrets more than I [the] little indiscretions that may happen among the militia. I am assured, however, by those of much experience that there have been less of these during this strike trouble than has been witnessed before . . ." W. M. Morris to Ammons, December 20, 1913 and Ammons to Morris, December 24, 1913, Papers of Elias Ammons, Box 26747, File Folder 6, Colorado State Archives.

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decision, Chase claimed that he had the right to suspend habeas corpus because martial law was in place.68

The military commission was important because it took union organizers and officials out of circulation for long periods during the strike and forced the union to spend money on legal efforts to free them and to challenge the legitimacy of the military commission. Forcing the union to spend money was a potent strike breaking strategy. All told, the UMW spent $2,655,100 in Colorado between September 20, 1913 and June 1, 1915. During the height of the strike, the UMW spent between $27,500 and $38,600 a week on strike support. Many strike expenses were fixed: single striking miners received three dollars a week in strike support, a married miner received four dollars per week, and an extra fifty cents for each child in his family. The union’s payment of strike benefits to new recruits who refused to scab and joined the strikers’ tent colony and to other men who never worked in the mines only inflated this bill.69 The union also spent $30,541 on coal to fuel the strikers’ stoves and heat their tents during the long Colorado winter and another $13,155.61 on rent, utilities, and office expenses. Other costs grew out of necessity. The union, for example, spent $9,495 on shoes for miners and their families as they struggled to

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68 Papers of John Chase, WH 67, Box 1, Western History Collection, Denver Public Library, Denver, Colorado; The Military Occupation of the Coal Strike Zone, 42-44.
69 See the union’s financial records in the Papers of Edward L. Doyle, Box 1, Envelope 7, Western History Collection, Denver Public Library. Also see Edward Doyle to William Green, 30 September 1913 and Doyle to Green, 11 March 1914, Papers of Edward L. Doyle, Box 1, Envelope 1. Throughout the strike, the mine operators contended that the UMW was bringing in men from out-of-state whose sole purpose was to fight Baldwin-Felts and then the National Guard. They charged that the UMW, in effect, had its own army. The truth was far more benign. Once the strike began, more than a few miners invited their friends and relatives from elsewhere in Colorado and the Mountain West to join the tent colonies. Getting on the union payroll through a paymaster who was willing to add relatives, friends, etc. to the list of strike support recipients meant these newcomers could quit working in dangerous mines elsewhere or for low pay as railroad builders. Such an arrangement also provided a paycheck for relatives and friends who were unemployed. UMW officials probably knew what the miners were doing, but ignored it because they believed the tent colonies were safer with more people in them.
keep warm and another $7,572 on funerals for miners and members of their families killed during the strike. While the $8,327 the union spent on legal bills during the strike’s first five months was relatively small, they would spend much more on legal representation after the Ludlow Massacre. By that time, union officials at the UMW’s offices in Indianapolis and in Colorado were citing mounting total costs when they called for ending the strike.  

The military commission had seven slots, and eleven officers served at different times. In civilian life, these officers were a banker, two physicians, one of whom was the Colorado Surgeon General, an industrialist, a real estate salesman, the secretary of the Sons of the American Revolution, the clerk of the District Court of Fort Morgan, Colorado, a merchant, and several attorneys. Chase appointed Major Edward Boughton, who was also an attorney and had once represented the Cripple Creek Mine Owners’ Association, Judge Advocate of the commission. These men were clearly part of the political, economic, and social establishment in their hometowns and cities, and choosing such a distinguished group brought the military commission respectability.

Between late November 1913 and late March 1914, Chase brought 172 cases before the military commission. Of these, 141 detainees were foreigners: fourteen Greeks, forty-six Italians, forty-three Mexicans, twenty-four Slavs, and fourteen were citizens of various other foreign nations. The guard held these prisoners for as long as two months without bringing charges against them.

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70 Edward Doyle to William Green, 11 March 1914, Box 1, Envelope 3, and “UMW District 15 Financial Reports,” Papers of Edward Doyle, Box 1, Envelope 7, Denver Public Library.
71 Papers of John Chase, WH 67, Box 1, Denver Public Library; The Military Occupation of the Coal Strike Zone, 42-44.
72 The Military Occupation of the Coal Strike Zone, 45.
The experience of Mario Zeni, an Italian immigrant and striking miner, shows how the guard used the military commission’s powers. Zeni roomed with Louis Zancanelli, whom the guard sought as a suspect in the killing of Baldwin Felts detective George Belcher on the streets of Trinidad. Belcher was gunned down on November 20, 1913 in retribution for Belcher’s shooting of UMW organizer Gerald Lippiatti two months earlier. The guard arrested Zeni at 2 am and hustled him in front of the military commission on the second floor of the Columbian Hotel in Trinidad. The commission ordered him held at the county jail, where the guard tried to extract information from him about Zancanelli, who had disappeared, but never charged him with a crime. Zeni received two meals a day during his captivity. His dinner consisted of three slices of bread so thin, he said later, that he could see the Ludlow tent colony out his jail cell window through the bread. His cell contained an iron bed frame that lacked a mattress, but it hardly mattered because his guards rarely allowed him to sleep. Guards stuck him with their bayonets to keep him awake, and if that did not work, they threw a bucket of cold water on him. Before taking him to the Columbian for a second hearing, his guards beat his feet so hard that he could not walk to the hotel without assistance. After holding Zeni for forty-three days, the guard simply let him go.

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73 RMN, 21 November 1913.
74 George McGovern and Leonard Guttridge state that two local UMW organizers had hired Zancanelli and Zeni to kill Belcher in exchange for $1,025. Zeni, however, had backed out of doing the murder. See The Great Coalfield War, 148-49.
75 After the strike, Louis Zancanelli’s case was turned over to the civil courts where his first trial ended in a hung jury. The re-trial quickly produced a conviction with a jury recruited by the Las Animas County sheriff and Jesse Northcutt acting as a “special prosecutor” in the case and Zancanelli was sentenced to life in prison at hard labor. The Colorado Supreme Court unanimously threw out the conviction two years later and no further attempt to prosecute Zancanelli was made. See McGovern and Guttridge, The Great Coalfield War, 322-23, 340. Testimony of Mario Zeni, “Transcript of Statements of Witnesses Appearing Before the Investigating Committee,” 500-21.
The military commission’s most difficult prisoner, however, was Mother Jones. General Chase characterized Jones as an “eccentric and peculiar figure” who nonetheless was adept at “inciting the more ignorant and criminally disposed to deeds of violence and crime.” Contending that her speeches in southern Colorado before the strike began were “couched in course, vulgar, and profane language, and addressing themselves to the lowest passions of mankind,” he sought to keep Jones from appearing in Las Animas and Huerfano counties.\footnote{The Military Occupation of the Coal Strike Zone, 46.} Chase had removed Jones from southern Colorado, and when she returned to Trinidad on January 12, 1914, guardsmen arrested and held her at a hospital outside town. Incarcerating Jones at the hospital was apparently an attempt to avoid making the Trinidad jailhouse a protest site and to steer clear of criticism for holding the seventy-six year old woman in a cold and damp jail cell.

The protests came anyway. On January 22, 1914, Trinidad witnessed a gathering that the \textit{Pueblo Chieftain} called “the most remarkable demonstration of the kind ever witnessed in Colorado.” “Lead [sic] by women, arranged by women, carried out by women,” these protestors marched in support of Jones.\footnote{The Pueblo Chieftain, 23 January 1914.} Five hundred wives, daughters, sisters, and friends of the striking miners who turned out for this protest objected strongly to Chase’s characterization of Jones and to the brutal treatment that the Colorado National meted out while on strike duty. Most of all, they wanted the guard to release Jones from custody. The march began peacefully, but took a violent turn when the marchers reached downtown Trinidad and turned out of town toward the hospital where Jones was held. Chase would later contend that only the cool and professional behavior
of his National Guardsmen prevented the women’s march from turning into a full-fledged riot. In defense of his troops, Chase stated that they “disregarded the blows received, and bore themselves well and manfully, intent alone upon clearing the streets and dispersing the mob.”

Other accounts challenged Chase’s view of the guard’s behavior. The Rocky Mountain News reported that the hospital where the guard held Jones was still miles away when saber-wielding soldiers slashed four women, one man, and one ten-year old boy and used a rifle butt to smash the instep of a young girl. Protest organizer Mary Thomas claimed that a Guardsman grabbed her by the collar, pushed her down a set of stairs, and punched her, “as if he was a pugilist.” When Thomas tried to resist, the soldier hit her several more times and then arrested her. Sixteen-year old Sarah Slator testified that General Chase was himself involved in brutalizing the women protestors. She stated that Chase rushed up on his horse, told her to get back, and kicked her in the breast. All of southern Colorado was scandalized. For his part, Chase pointed out that young Sarah was “playing truant from school” on the day of the protest.

In an era when rigid assumptions about male and female gender identity made the image of a uniformed man on horse back kicking a young girl particularly troublesome, Chase had to explain this behavior to a dubious audience. Chase and his charges, however, believed that there was no reason to modify the violent tactics they regularly

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78 Several Colorado newspapers made the same argument in their coverage of the protest. See, for example, The Pueblo Chieftain, 23 January 1914, and The Trinidad Chronicle-News, 23 January 1914.
79 The Military Occupation of the Coal Strike Zone, 29.
80 RMN, 23 January 1914; See the testimony of Minnie Hoghart and Mary Thomas, Conditions in the Coal Mines of Colorado, part 3, 794-802; McGovern and Guttridge, The Great Coalfield War, 174.
81 Testimony of Sarah Slator, Conditions in the Coal Mines of Colorado, part 6, 988.
82 The Military Occupation of the Coal Strike Zone, 59.
used against male workers when dealing with adversaries who wore dresses rather than trousers. They rationalized this behavior by denying that the women they faced in Trinidad were, in fact, women. Chase asserted, for instance, that Mary Thomas was a “belligerent and abusive leader of the mob” who “forcibly resisted orders to move on, responded only with highly abusive and, to say the least, unwomanly language. She attacked the troops with fists, feet, and umbrella . . . [and] made much of the awfulness of treating a riotous woman in the same way as a riotous man.”³³ In Chase’s telling, Thomas and the other protestors acted like the working-class men who were on strike—fighting, swearing, challenging authority, and taking over public space. If, as Chase believed, the strikers promoted the women’s protest as an effort to “[hide] behind their women’s skirts, believing it would be more embarrassing for the military to deal with women than with men,” the guard turned the tables by refusing to modify their brutal tactics. That Chase believed such tactics were necessary is clear in his description of the crowd that assembled to hear Jones’s petitions for a writ of habeas corpus before the district court in Las Animas County: “The crowd was very unusual and could not have been attracted by any desire to hear the proceedings, which it could not understand. Without any doubt in the world, these men--Greeks, Montenegrins, Italians, Servians, and other recent arrivals from the southern countries of Europe--were present for the one purpose of participating in any riot that might be started.”³⁴ Like Chief Justice Gabbert and many of his officers in

³³ Ibid., 58.
³⁴ Ibid., 28, 31.
the guard, Chase saw the striking workers as a foreign threat to the established economic and social order in southern Colorado.  

This view of the striking miners certainly helps explain the guard's behavior on strike duty. The testimony from striking miners and their families and other residents of southern Colorado that opened this chapter offers only a sample of the violence guardsmen employed to make clear to the miners that the military of their state was not on their side. Guardsmen occasionally found guns when they searched miners' homes. More often, they found valuable property and cash that they promptly stole. Lack of pay certainly helps explain this behavior. Guardsmen remained unpaid while Roady Kenehan's battle against Governor Ammons's plan to fund the guard wound its way through the courts, and once the $250,000 from the bank clearing houses that Ammons raised ran out, guardsmen were paid with certificates of indebtness rather than cash. It is also clear, however, that guardsmen felt they could easily get away with these robberies. They routinely beat miners up while telling them to get back to work and arrested men who they then forced to dig latrines and perform other manual labor guardsmen did not want to do themselves. While none of the testimony collected by the State Federation of Labor accused guardsmen of rape, several young women echoed Lucinda Medina's complains of harassment and unwanted sexual attention from guardsmen. 

85 The union's efforts to enforce the writ of habeas corpus also failed. On 4 February 1914, the Colorado courts ruled that the guard had the authority to hold prisoners indefinitely without charging them. In early March, the Trinidad District Court refused a writ of habeas corpus for Mother Jones. See RMN, 5 February and 7 March 1914. 

86 See the testimony of Louis Ecle, James Cocolis, Josie Manino, Rosirio Deverza, Phillippi Fettitto, Carmelo Brugato, Sam Inbroquolio, Tony Mussello, Nick Ringo, Lamros Bacdis, Mike Mavlikis, Aranah Hansa, Mary Gargaroo, Tony Slack, Tony Jeffery, Guiseppe Micalone, C. E. Davis, James Iioga, Anastatio Duran, Vigilio Marttivi, John DiGregorio, D. J. Jefferys, George Thiros, Gust Zagini, Mike Kopusin, Matt Loukovich, Gust Markas, Albert Pisarezyk, John Miskail, Anna Pisarezyk, Frank Gonzales, Bernard
This lawless behavior was, at times, similar to how American soldiers acted in the Philippines. There, American soldiers referred to their widespread looting as "souvenir hunting." They looted Filipino homes for jewelry and clothing and often used the booty to decorate their quarters. Officers as well as enlisted men participated. Colonel Fredric Funston, who received much acclaim for his role in establishing U.S. control of the Philippines, was accused of participating in looting a Catholic church and of desecration after he allegedly donned ecclesiastic robes and conducted a mass.87

Such looting in the Philippines and the general lawlessness it reflected grew out of the racial hatred that many American soldiers harbored. The guard's regular looting in southern Colorado had similar origins. Colorado National Guardsmen clearly held the striking miners in contempt as a racially inferior enemy, but also saw them as threatening. Military looting and pillaging, of course, were certainly not unique to the Philippines or Colorado. Invading and occupying armies have engaged in such behavior for quite some time. The 1913-14 southern Colorado coal strike, however, was not a war and the Colorado National Guard was not an invading or occupying force. This strike was a domestic civil disturbance within the borders of the United States, but the Colorado National Guard acted very much like an invading and occupying army.

The guard's strikebreaking methods were certainly effective, and by January 1914, the UMW was certain it would lose this strike. Union officials at UMW headquarters in Indianapolis were well aware that the coal operators were getting all the

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non-union workers they needed to run their mines. At the same time, the guard was becoming more belligerent and the costs of the strike continue to mount. Indeed, the operators’ ability to bring in the guard at the state’s expense was crucial to their success. The guard’s participation in transporting strikebreakers along with the treatment guardsmen meted out to striking miners and their families created a great deal of resentment among tent colony residents. An ugly confrontation between Lieutenant Karl Linderfelt and Louis Tikas in the Ludlow train station at the end of December 1913 only heightened the miners’ animus. Tikas walked into the railroad depot just as Linderfelt began interrogating Tony Jeffery, a young Greek immigrant, whom he believed had stretched barbed wire across a nearby road causing a corporal in his company to fall off his horse. Jeffery did not speak much English, which seemed to enrage Linderfelt further. He pushed Jeffery outside, called him a “dago” and a “round-faced son-of-a-bitch,” while another soldier hit Jeffery in the head with his rifle. Linderfelt then stalked back into the depot looking for Tikas. Linderfelt tried to pick a fight with the union organizer, but Tikas realized the lieutenant was in a dangerous mood and refused to take the bait. Linderfelt pushed Tikas outside and placed his pistol against Tikas’s head, but Lieutenant Doll, from Captain Van Cise’s company K, intervened and forced the pistol away from Tikas. Linderfelt then told Tikas that he “was running this part of the woods, not some dagoes from the tent colonies.” Later that day, Linderfelt and his troops stopped Bryan Orf and his cousin Helen Rnay as they walked to the post office from the Ludlow tent colony. They were told in no uncertain terms that they had to go.

88 McGovern and Guttridge, The Great Coalfield War, 159.
89 “Transcript of Statements of Witnesses Appearing Before the Investigating Committee,” passim.
back to the tent colony. Orf asked the guardsmen not to use profane language in front of a lady, to which Linderfelt replied that he would not blame a soldier for hitting him in the head because “that is the only way you could teach these ignorant people anything.” Linderfelt then told Orf: “I am Jesus Christ here and all these men on horses are Jesus Christ and you want to obey them.”

Linderfelt’s advice that the striking miners should think of himself and his fellow guardsmen as Jesus Christ was said in a moment of anger, but his choice of Christ as a model is still revealing. Linderfelt believed that the immigrants he faced on strike duty were inferior in every way, but Christianity helped bridged the cultural divide between himself and the miners. Although turn-of-the-century Americans did not always see Catholics as Christians, Linderfelt knew from his time among the mostly Catholic miners in the tent colonies that Christ was a central figure in their spiritual lives. Linderfelt’s advice, therefore, fit squarely within the civilizing mission that had characterized Colorado National Guard service since its creation. If the miners would not learn the lessons of deference to higher authorities that the CF&I sought to teach through its Sociological Department, then the guard would teach these same lessons with force. These incidents brought a request from the State Federation of Labor to Governor Ammons that he remove Linderfelt from the field. Several guard officers, including

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Captain Van Cise, privately asked General Chase to take the same action. Neither Chase nor Ammons followed up on these requests.\footnote{Telegram from the State Federation of Labor to Governor Ammons, 31 December 1913, “Transcript of Statements of Witnesses Appearing Before the Investigating Committee,” 368; “Minutes of the Court of Inquiry Established by an Executive Order of his Excellency, George A. Carlson, Governor of the State of Colorado, August 28, 1915,” 676-77, Papers of Hildreth Frost, Colorado Historical Society, Denver, Colorado.}

Hostilities between the guard and the miners only stopped in early February, 1914 when the U.S. House of Representative’s Committee on Mines and Mining came to southern Colorado to investigate the strike. Colorado Congressman Edward Keating had worked hard to get this investigation underway, and the committee spent a month taking testimony from hundreds of witnesses. The committee’s majority report strongly condemned the mine operators and the Colorado National Guard, but the committee did not have the authority to implement a strike settlement.\footnote{Report on the Colorado Strike Investigation; McGovern and Guttridge, The Great Coalfield War, 155-56, 175-77.} Ongoing discussions between President Woodrow Wilson, Secretary of Labor William Wilson and CF&I executives Lamont Bowers and Jesse Welborn were also nowhere near producing a settlement. Welborn and Bowers continued to distrust the labor secretary because of his previous association with the UMW, and President Wilson could not persuade the CF&I’s officers to soften that position.\footnote{The correspondence between the two Wilsons and Bowers and Welborn, and between Bowers, Welborn, and John D. Rockefeller, Jr. about the CF&I’s negotiations with President Wilson and Secretary Wilson is fascinating. Bowers’s letters to President Wilson, in particular, show the CF&I chairman did not believe he should moderate his position on the strike because the president of the United States was asking him to do so. Instead, Bowers’s tone with the president suggested that he was writing to an employee who had done something drastically wrong and needed a stern lecture to put him back in line. Bowers’s letters to President Wilson and Secretary Wilson also received enthusiastic support from John D. Rockefeller’s office in New York. George McGovern’s dissertation provides a good flavor of this correspondence. See McGovern, “The Colorado Coal Strike, 1913-14,” PhD diss., Northwestern University, 1953, 221-38.}
Sensing that they could put an end to the strike once the congressional committee was gone, the guard tore down the miners’ tent colony at Forbes two days after the congressmen left southern Colorado. The guard used the death of a bi-racial man named Neil Smith as a pretense for this rehearsal for Ludlow. Smith had applied for a job at the Forbes mine and then traveled to Bowen, which was three miles away. He was found dead the next morning on the Colorado and Southern’s railroad tracks. Members of a locomotive crew said that Smith had stumbled onto the tracks, but Las Animas County Sheriff Jim Grisham’s coroner’s jury ruled that Smith died from the “effects of wounds by clubs and stones in the hands of parties unknown.” Grisham had also rustled up two bloodhounds that led him from the railroad tracks where Smith was found to the nearby Forbes tent colony.94

It is not clear how Neil Smith died. Residents of the Forbes tent colony may have killed him, but it is impossible to trust the validity of the investigation Sheriff Grisham conducted. It was also quite unique for law officers at the turn-of-the-twentieth-century to expend so much effort getting justice in the death of a “mulatto” man. Grisham and the National Guard arrested sixteen residents of the Forbes tent colony before they tore it down. Their rampage left homeless dozens of men, women, and children, including a woman who had just given birth to twins. While guardsmen dressed to attend their annual ball on March 10, 1914, held at the Cardenas Hotel in Trinidad for the convenience of all

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94 RMN, 12 March 1914.
the officers on duty in southern Colorado, the union scrambled to find shelter for their newly homeless.95

The sixteen men arrested in connection with Neil Smith’s death were quickly released. By March, it was of little use to hold these men indefinitely because it was clear the strike would end soon. The mine operators had acquired all the non-union labor they needed, and thus the union had lost its ability to pressure the operators into a settlement. All that remained was for the union’s organizers to convince themselves and the striking miners that the strike was no longer worth pursuing. Still, the destruction of Forbes and the subsequent evictions put southern Colorado on edge. Miners tried to re-raise the tents only to see the guard tear them down again. Guardsmen then established a camp of their own at the Forbes site to prevent further reconstruction attempts. Attorney General Fred Farrar advised Governor Ammons that the union had legally leased the land upon which Forbes stood, and thus the guard lacked the authority to eliminate the tent colony.

Farrar’s advice fell on deaf ears. Guardsmen had also threatened miners with deportation from Colorado if they resisted Forbes’s destruction. This threat raised memories of the 1903-04 strikes when the guard had deported dozens of striking miners, union officials, and union sympathizers. Rumors also spread in the Ludlow tent colony that the militia had acquired two train cars for a Baldwin-Felts-style assault on the colony. Such rumors persisted until April 20, when the battle that led to the Ludlow Massacre began.96

95 RMN, 12 March 1914; UMWJ, 19 March 1914; McGovern and Guttridge, The Great Coalfield War, 188-89; Long, Where the Sun Never Shines, 289.
96 RMN, 12 March 1914; UMWJ, 19 March 1914; McGovern and Guttridge, The Great Coalfield War, 190; Papanikolas, Buried Unsung, 189.
With the strike, for all intents and purposes, over, Governor Ammons began pulling National Guard troops out of southern Colorado. The money the Denver Clearing House Association had loaned the state was running out, and Ammons saw no point in plunging the state further into debt to keep the guard in the field. Ammons also ordered General Chase to turn all his prisoners over to the civilian authorities in Las Animas and Huerfano Counties. Chase was not happy with Ammons’s decision. He wanted to arrest and jail John Lawson, Edward Doyle, John McLennan, and UMW attorney Horace Hawkins before leaving southern Colorado. His rationale was that the union was “financially exhausted” and ready to use violence in a last ditch effort to force a settlement. Chase also told the governor he was confident his soldiers would “welcome the opportunity to demonstrate their efficiency” if the striking miners turned violent. Ammons rebuffed his adjutant general, but decided to leave Karl Linderfelt’s Company B camping near the Ludlow tent colony. Chase and Ammons decided on this company because it was the one that the miners most feared. Edwin Curry, a doctor who worked for the Victor-American Fuel Company, organized Troop A, made up of mine guards, sheriff’s deputies, ranchers, farmers, and non-union miners, to supplement Company B. Captain Edwin Carson, who had been in southern Colorado since October 1913 and who served for sixteen years in South Africa and the Sudan as a member of the British military, was placed in command of this new guard unit. In less than a month, these two guard companies along with reinforcements General Chase sent would destroy the tent colony.

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97 John Chase to Elias Ammons, 18 March 1914, The Papers of Elias Ammons, Box 26751, File Folder 7, Colorado State Archives.
colony at Ludlow. In that act, all the ethnic, racial, and class hatred that had been simmering in Colorado for decades came to the surface.

In the end, Governor Ammons could not get his party's nomination and did not run for re-election in 1914. Instead, Republican George Carlson, who favored prohibition and who claimed he was even more in favor of law and order than the sitting governor, won in a landslide. The state's business community including the mine operators wholeheartedly backed Carlson's candidancy. Even when it no longer mattered, though, Ammons stuck behind his National Guard. In his biennial message delivered just before he left office in January 1915, Ammons defended the guardsmen who served in southern Colorado. He declared that he did not like the prejudice he saw in the press against the National Guard after the strike, and went on to say that he thought Colorado needed the National Guard because "destructive insurrections not only in our own state, but in many parts of the county" would continue to be a problem. He encouraged all young men to join the guard and implored employers to support employees who signed up because "whether turbulence comes from rioting or lockouts or strikes, the young men of the country who must endanger their lives in restoring and enforcing order are entitled to the loyal support of all those in favor of the maintenance of organized society."98

Left unsaid in Ammons's speech was the widespread belief in Colorado that maintaining an 'organized society' meant subjugating the state's foreign-born population. There is no doubt that Colorado nativism was, in part, a reaction to the immense upheaval that Colorado experienced in a very short period of time. The state industrialized quickly,
and while its capitalist class certainly wielded a great deal of power, it had not achieved hegemony in the Gramscian sense. Colorado’s violent labor history before 1913 makes that point very clear. The reality, furthermore, was that many of the people involved in the 1913-14 strike other than the striking miners were immigrants to Colorado. Lamont Bowers was from New York, Jesse Welborn was from Nebraska, Elias Ammons was from North Carolina, and John Osgood was from Brooklyn via Providence, Rhode Island. Sixty-five percent of the state’s population in the 1910 census was born outside the state, and Colorado had been part of the United States for a relatively short period of time. In this context, it is not surprising that so many were quick not only to distinguish themselves from “others” but also to use “otherness” to justify their subjugation.99

Colorado’s nativism, however, was not exclusively the creation of the state’s industrialists and politicians. As we have seen, Colorado’s labor movement promoted nativism and thus did not ask Democrats like Ammons to champion the cause of all workers in the United States. Taking the WFM’s nativist position on immigration gained votes for Democratic, Socialist, and, for a time during the 1890s, Populists candidates in the metal mining districts of Colorado where most miners were native-born or old-stock immigrants from the British Isles and northwestern Europe. Nativism was not the only reason these miners voted for the Democratic, Socialists, and Populist Parties. They correctly viewed the Republican Party, which also generally resisted immigration restriction in Colorado and elsewhere, as the party of capital. But in Cripple Creek, for instance, where the WFM barred

99 Carl Smith makes a similar point in Urban Disorder and the Shape of Belief: The Great Chicago Fire, the Haymarket Bomb and the Model Town of Pullman (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1995), when assessing why Chicago’s business community and city officials were so eager to make example’s out of the Haymarket seven. See pages 148-55.
southern and eastern European, Mexican, and Asian immigrants from living and working
and showed little interest in organizing these workers when they entered Colorado's mining
industry, class consciousness and nativism worked hand-in-hand to build support for the
Democratic, Socialist, and Populist tickets.100

By trying hard to organize southern and eastern European immigrants, the United
Mine Workers of America challenged the labor movement's and the Democratic Party's
nativist stance and attempted to erase the line dividing "new" immigrants from the native-
born and old-stock immigrants that Democrats along with the AFL and the WFM had drawn
through the working class. Ammons, however, was not interested in that project. While he
was not a strident nativist who wielded prejudice against immigrants as a prominent strategy
for gaining election, he clearly did not hold the striking immigrants in southern Colorado in
very high regard. In effect, Ammons's support for labor only went as far as the labor
movement had asked Democratic politicians to go. For the reasons explored in Chapters
Four and Five, the Colorado National Guard was amenable to breaking the strike for the
mine operators. The UMW and the striking miners' pinned their hopes on Ammons to either
keep the guard out of southern Colorado or ensure that the guard would not break the strike
once in the field. The governor disappointed his labor constituents, but Ammons's decision
to back the guard and allow General Chase and his men to break the 1913-14 coal strike also
demonstrates that labor was not a helpless victim of an unholy alliance between the state and
capital. Nativism was a deeply rooted part of Colorado's political culture, and Ammons
might have formed his nativist views independent of the labor movement. Labor, however,

100 Mink, Old Labor and New Immigrants in American Political Development, 113-157; Elizabeth
Jameson, All That Glitters: Class, Conflict, and Community in Cripple Creek (Chicago: University of Illinois
Press, 1997), 140-196.
fit neatly into Colorado’s nativist culture. There is no guarantee that a labor movement that looked more like the UMW would have been able to counter Colorado’s nativism. Without such a labor movement, however, only the striking miners stood in the way of the Colorado National Guard’s efforts to break the strike. Never in a functioning democracy should a group of people engaged in legally sanctioned protest have to marshal the wherewithal to resist a military force constituted within the borders of that democracy. The reality, however, was that the UMW, the striking miners, and their families were not strong enough to resist the National Guard’s efforts to break the strike.
Torrential rainstorms accompanied the United States Army’s arrival in southern Colorado on April 30, 1914. The deluge helped end the battle between miners and the guard. The coming of the army also brought a change in military policy concerning non-union workers. The army would not allow the importation of any out-of-state workers to southern Colorado. As commander of the troops in Colorado Colonel James Lockett mulled whether to keep this policy in place during the fall of 1914, Secretary of War Lindley M. Garrison wrote Lockett:

At the time of federal intervention, a state insurrection existed in the so-called strike districts, and the President determined that the gathering together of men from places outside the strike districts and shipping them into the mines within the strike districts would precipitate civil conflict, would continue turbulent conditions therein, and delay the restoration of peaceful conditions. With a view to carrying out this determination the orders above mentioned were issued. They should be interpreted in light of the circumstances.¹

The mine operators were not happy with this policy, and a long debate ensued over how a person established state residency. The United Mine Workers had finally found a military that agreed with their position on the importation of non-union workers. The tide also seemed to turn the union’s way when the United States Senate’s Commission on Industrial Relations decided to hold hearings on the strike. These hearings took place in Washington, D. C., New York, and Colorado from the summer of 1914 to the early winter of 1915, and Mother Jones’ and John D. Rockefeller’s testimony,

¹ Garrison to Colonel James Lockett, 9 October 1914, RG 94, Adjutant General’s Office Collection, Box 7495, File 2160283, National Archives, Washington, D. C.
in particular, created intense interest. At the same time, the Ludlow Massacre bolstered
the union’s flagging support for the strike and only increased many miners’ commitment
to it.²

President Wilson also re-started negotiations aimed at settling the strike. His
mediators devised a plan that eliminated the UMW’s call for recognition, but required the
re-hiring of all miners not guilty of violence during the strike, strict enforcement of
Colorado’s mining law, a three-person grievance committee selected by the miners at
each mine, and another committee appointed by the president to settle disputes. Wilson
sent the plan to the UMW and the mine operators in early September 1914. In this
accompanying letter, Wilson asked the union and the operators to see the strike “as a
national problem” and expressed his hope that both sides would consider the proposal for
settlement “as if are acting for the whole country.” Wilson closed his letter with the
following: “I beg that you will regard it [the proposal] as urged upon your acceptance by
myself with very deep earnest.”³

A special convention of UMW members convened in Denver approved the deal
almost unanimously, but after some consideration, the mine operators rejected the
proposal. There was simply no reason for the operators to voluntarily accept a deal
because they had acquired enough non-union workers while the National Guard was in
the field to run their mines effectively. By late April 1914, the mine operators claimed
they had 10,000 men working their mines. That number equaled the pre-strike coalmining

² U.S. Senate, Commission on Industrial Relations, The Colorado Coal Miners’ Strike, 64th Cong., 1st
³ George S. McGovern and Leonard F. Guttridge, The Great Coal Field War (Boston: Houghton Mifflin
workforce. The operators did not need the striking miners to come back to work. Both the UMW’s officials in Colorado and President Wilson were livid. Wilson was so angry at the operators that he considered shutting down southern Colorado’s coal mining industry altogether. Governor Ammons pleaded with Wilson not to take this step, and the president eventually restrained himself.\(^4\)

The union desperately wanted to end the strike once the operators rejected Wilson’s plan. The UMW could no longer afford the $30,000 in monthly strike pay that District 15 was still paying. In late November, the UMW’s national leadership convinced President Wilson to appoint the three-person mediation committee called for in the rejected settlement proposal. Wilson did so, and UMW officials felt like they had saved enough face to call off the strike. On December 7, 1914, union delegates in Colorado voted unanimously to accept the strike call-off. Strike benefits were no longer available to hundreds of miners, many of whom continued to live in tents. Their plight was made worse by another cold winter and an economic decline that left demand for coal soft. Slowly, the tents came down and the miners drifted back to work or out-of-state to other mines or other work.\(^5\)

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Even before the strike ended, the state of Colorado had to deal with its outstanding strike debt. Over the course of the strike, Governor Ammons raised $250,000 in cash from the bank clearing houses in Denver, Colorado Springs, and Pueblo. This total left around $425,000 in unpaid bills and payroll. After the $250,000 ran out,


\(^5\) Ibid., 309-310.
guardsmen had been issued certificates of indebtedness for pay. Ammons now had to find a way to raise the additional $425,000 and pay back the banks that put up the initial $250,000.\(^6\)

To raise this money, the governor called a special legislative session in May 1914 and asked for a $1 million bond issue. The state would sell these bonds to raise the money necessary to pay strike expenses. The outset of the special legislative session that authorized the bond in May 1914 saw quite a bit of jockeying over control of the session's legislative committees between Progressives, who opposed the bond issue, and Democrats. The Democrats won these battles, which The Rocky Mountain News reported as a victory for Ammons. With this procedural debate resolved, the legislature went on to authorize the bond issue.\(^7\)

The state immediately released these bonds for sale. The Colorado state treasurer's biannual report for 1913-14 showed 125 buyers of these Insurrectionary Bonds—which is what the state chose to call them--totaling $672,359. The bond buyers were Colorado banks that had well-established ties to Colorado's mining industry and had issued the initial certificates of indebtedness. Other buyers included National Guard officers, private citizens, brokerage houses, and businesses. The CF&I and Sunnyside Coal Mining—both of whom were involved in the strike--bought these bonds, as did the Colorado Supply Company, which was the CF&I's company store. The Denver & Rio Grande Railroad, which established the mining outfit that eventually became CF&I, purchased bonds, and so did the Denver stores that had given the guard $2,000 in

\(^6\) Rocky Mountain News 5 May 1914. Hereafter cited as RMN.
\(^7\) See the reporting on the special legislative session in RMN, 5 May 1914 to 16 May 1914.
supplies at Governor Ammons’s request while he fought Roady Kenehan about issuing the certificates of indebtedness. Even the Smith-Brooks Printing Company, which published the official documents for the state of Colorado and the Colorado National Guard, pitched in and bought $1,500 in bonds.8

The vast majority of these bond buyers lived and worked in Denver. They lived down the street and around the block from each other in the same two city neighborhoods, and worked, once again, down the street and around the corner from each other in the city’s business district. Hence, it is not much of a stretch to say that Insurrectionary Bond buyers knew each other and were fairly representative of Denver’s middle and upper classes.9

Banks often buy state bonds whatever their purpose and the business owners, National Guard officers, and private citizens undoubtedly bought their bonds as a safe investment for themselves and their businesses. Most, however, also had an obvious interest in supporting the guard’s efforts to break the coal strike. They did not purchase their bonds during a time of industrial peace in Colorado; they bought them after the guard had been on strike duty for months and had committed many acts of brutality against the striking miners, including the Ludlow Massacre.10 Moreover, the strike had not yet ended when the state offered these bonds for sale in May, 1914. Given the National Guard’s obvious bias in favor of the mine operators during the strike, buying bonds earmarked to pay the guard’s expenses has to be seen as an expression of support

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9 Ibid. I took the names of bond buyers listed in the Biennial Report of the Treasurer of the State of Colorado, 1913-1914 and found their home and business addresses in the 1914 Denver city directory. I then consulted a 1911 Denver street map to figure out where the bond buyers lived and worked.
10 Ibid.
for the guard's actions. These bond buyers clearly acted as a class. That is, they sought to protect the interests of men like themselves against an adversary—the UMW and the striking miners—that they undoubtedly also saw as a threat to the established political, social, and cultural order in Colorado.

Acting as a class also meant that the bond buyers had abandoned the deep suspicion of military intervention in domestic affairs that many Americans still held at the turn of the twentieth century. This suspicion of military power had its roots more than a century earlier in the American colonists' deep resentment of the British Army. The British quartered soldiers in private homes, placed military authority above civilian authority, and protected soldiers from charges for crimes they were accused of committing in the colonies. To address the threat to liberty that many new Americans thought a standing army presented, the new nation's leaders placed the military under civilian control and refused to create a standing army. This anti-militarist tradition was still strong after the Civil War when the Union Army's presence in the South during Reconstruction brought heavy criticism. In the decade after the bloodiest domestic use of troops in American history, white Americans nationwide had come by 1877 to reject the use of federal troops to enforce Reconstruction policy.11

Clearly, some Americans' conception of the state's—and the military's—role in society changed between 1877 and 1914. First, many had supported the Progressive Era workplace regulation that state legislatures had made law, but one cause of turn-of-the-

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twentieth-century labor turmoil was the state governments’ lack of will, resources, or both to enforce these laws. Indeed, four of the seven requests the UMW made in the 1913-14 strike were already on the books in Colorado. The problem for the miners was that their employers often ignored those laws and got away with it. By organizing in southern Colorado, the UMW promised to enforce the law through a union contract; the union, in effect, would be a more effective and more responsive state for southern Colorado’s miners. Creating an alternative state was necessary in the UMW’s estimation because the state of Colorado, such as it was thirty-seven years after its founding, had become adept at performing the financial gymnastics necessary to oppress its least powerful and most marginalized residents through military force and completely inept when it came to protecting them.

Second, state officials, along with a large swath of Colorado’s middle- and upper-class native-born white residents, apparently did not have the anti-militarist outlook that had been so prevalent just a generation earlier. The state had become intimately involved in creating and maintaining a military institution that spent a significant amount of its active duty time breaking strikes. Defeating the 1913-14 southern Colorado coal strike also became a collective effort, as the mine operators succeeded in organizing the state’s governor and the National Guard, with help from Colorado banks, other business people, and sympathetic members of the state’s middle and upper classes. The United Mine Workers, on the other hand, only succeeded in organizing marginalized immigrant workers and their families. Seen this way, it is not surprising that this strike ended in defeat for the miners.

Race, class, and gender, though, have always shaped American attitudes about the military presence in the country and how and when to using military force. The patriots
of 1776 objected to the quartering of British soldiers in their homes, but they were often pleased when the same soldiers killed American Indians and helped clear the way West. Protecting freedmen and freedwomen in the South and enforcing the Reconstruction amendments to the Constitution a century later seemed to many a dangerous misuse of federal power. Reconstruction ended in 1877, but federal troops were soon on the streets of Chicago, Pittsburgh, and other industrial cites breaking the 1877 railroad strike. Ulysses S. Grant saw the irony in ending the army’s role in protecting freedmen and women in the South while using the same troops against working-class men and women in the north, mid-west and west. Just after the 1877 strike, the former president remembered that:

During my two terms of office the whole Democratic press, and the morbidly honest and ‘reformatory’ portion of the Republican press, thought it horrible to keep U. S. troops stationed in the Southern states, and when they were called upon to protect the lives of Negroes—as much citizens under the Constitution as if their skins were white—the country was scarcely large enough to hold the sound of indignation belched forth by them for some years. Now, however, there is no hesitation about exhausting the whole power of the government to suppress a strike on the slightest intimation that danger threatens.12

The importance of race and class in determining Americans’ commitment to anti-militarism was not lost on everybody.

The war in the Philippines also divided Americans on the use of military force and the creation of an overseas empire that would require military oversight. Many Americans condemned killing thousands of Filipinos, burning their villages, and mutilating their bodies, but many others thought that the advantages of building an overseas empire were worth the military expansion needed to create and maintain that

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empire. Four decades later, the military internment of Japanese-Americans and Japanese immigrants who had committed no crimes produced little contemporary criticism. More recently, the Department of Homeland Security, the Justice Department, and the military’s insistence on holding prisoners captured in Afghanistan, Muslim immigrants and citizens, and Iraqi prisoners without bringing charges have been criticized from some quarters, but have also found widespread support or at least acceptance. Only the revelations about the military’s torture of prisoners at Abu Ghraib prison in Baghdad, Iraq and elsewhere have brought widespread condemnation.

Some of the most marginalized Americans, furthermore, have also often articulated anti-militarism most forcefully. Women were some of the most vocal opponents of the war in the Philippines and the two World Wars. African-American and Latino “zoot suiters” used their dress and evaded the draft to protest what they considered a white man’s war during the 1940s. The 1943 Los Angeles “zoot suit” riots, in which

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14 The United States Supreme Court did decide recently that those the military is holding as “enemy combatants” must have access to courts in the United States to mount challenges to their captivity. See the New York Times, 29 June 2004.

15 Some, however, sought to deflect criticism or defend the actions of American troops at Abu Ghraib. As Susan Sontag and several others pointed out, President George W. Bush apologized for the photographs of Americans torturing Iraqi prisoners without apologizing for what the photographs actually showed. Such an apology seems more concerned with the fact that the photographs became public rather than that American soldiers were torturing prisoners. See, for example, Susan Sontag, “Regarding the Torture of Others,” The New York Times Magazine, 23 May 2004. In his defense of the American soldiers who tortured prisoners at Abu Ghraib, radio talk show host Rush Limbaugh echoed Jesse Northcutt, the coal operators’ attorney during the strike, when he asked UMW Ludlow local secretary James Fyler, who had just testified that he had mined coal since he was ten years old, if he had ever been hazed in college after Fyler testified that guardsmen had herded him and several other miners up a canyon and stood them against a wall to face a “firing squad” before letting them go. Limbaugh said: “This [the torture of prisoners at Abu Ghraib] is no different than what happens at the Skull and Bones initiation, and we’re going to ruin people’s lives over it, and we’re going to hamper our military effort, and then we are going to really hammer them because they had a good time. These were just boys and girls blowing off steam during a stressful situation. Let’s not make an international incident out of it, for crying out loud.” See the testimony of James Fyler, House Committee on Mines and Mining, Conditions in the Coal Mines of Colorado, 63d Cong., 2d sess., 1914, part 2, 1506-10. Limbaugh quoted in Dick Meyer’s 6 May 2004 commentary on the CBS News website. The column is at http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2004/05/06/opinion/meyer/main616021.shtml

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white Navy sailors attacked zoot suiters, demonstrated that the zoot suiters' anti-war message was getting across. The anti-war stances these groups took often helped created a more radical activism among them but also served in the short-term to further their oppression.\footnote{\textcopyright Robin Kelly, "The Riddle of the Zoot: Malcom Little and Black Cultural Politics During World War II" in \textit{Race Rebels: Culture, Politics, and the Black Working Class} (New York: Free Press, 1994), 161-81.}

American anti-militarism and resistance to military efforts to wield power inside the country’s borders, therefore, have been selective. Historians’ explanation of the many Gilded Age and Progressive Era strikes that saw business owners wield state military power against labor neglects this selectivity. That historical literature often tells a compelling story about white hat-wearing workers who did not have the means, but certainly had the will, to battle their black-hatted employers and the state officials and National Guardsmen who lined up behind them. Industrialists, state officials, and guardsmen wear the black hats in this narrative, but the explanation given for their behavior during the strike in question does not go much beyond the color of the hat that historians have placed on their heads. Simply portraying these people as “bad guys” ignores how they justified their actions and how Americans interpreted the military’s role in strikebreaking. Understanding the Colorado National Guard’s view of itself is crucial to unraveling the web of class, ethnic, and racial tensions that spread across the turn-of-the-twentieth-century United States. Guardsmen serving in 1913 and 1914 had wholeheartedly accepted the civilization narrative that was so central to the National Guard’s origins and evolution. In the end, these men saw themselves wearing the white hats that their stories of westward expansion and imperial conquest had placed on the white,
Anglo-Saxon men who brought “civilization” to the “Wild West,” the Philippines, and Cuba. By doing so, they appealed to a widely sanctioned and deeply rooted militarism that celebrated defending American democracy against racially inferior aliens identified as threats to the country’s future.
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