

ABSTRACT

Name: Timothy Dean Draper

Department: History

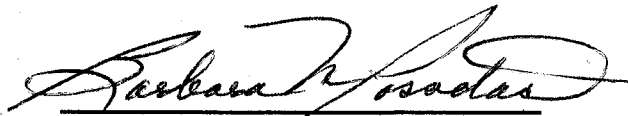
**Title: "A Little Kingdom of Mixed Nationalities": Race, Ethnicity, and Class
in a Western Urban Community--Rock Springs, Wyoming, 1869-1929**

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NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

ABSTRACT

In 1885, the mining settlement of Rock Springs, Wyoming, witnessed one of the worst episodes of ethnocentric violence in the urban West as Euroamerican miners massacred Chinese laborers and burned Chinatown to the ground. Less than four decades later, in 1926, inhabitants of Rock Springs, including immigrants and natives, Asian Americans and Euroamericans, came together at a time of heightened national ethnic tensions to celebrate the diversity of their municipal community in the first of four annual "International Night" festivals. This study explores the apparently dichotomous reality of Rock Springs from its establishment as a mining camp during the building of the Union Pacific Railroad in the late 1860s to the conclusion of the International Night movement in the mid- to late 1920s

The focus of this dissertation centers upon the role of immigrants and their descendents in constructing diverse community networks and how they syncretized those varied networks into a unifying ethos of "municipal community," an identity expressed through their sense of ethno-racial boundaries, western heritage, inter-class cooperation, and negotiation with monopoly capitalism. By focusing on ethnicity, race, class, and region, I address how the inhabitants of Rock Springs negotiated the cultural and material challenges to construction of a community identity posed by a hegemonically inclined

corporation, the Union Pacific Railway and its coal operations, and organized themselves into a community of publicly articulated common interests despite their culturally diverse group identities.

NORTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY

“A LITTLE KINGDOM OF MIXED NATIONALITIES”:

RACE, ETHNICITY, AND CLASS IN A WESTERN URBAN COMMUNITY--

ROCK SPRINGS, WYOMING, 1869-1929

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS

FOR THE DEGREE

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

BY

TIMOTHY DEAN DRAPER

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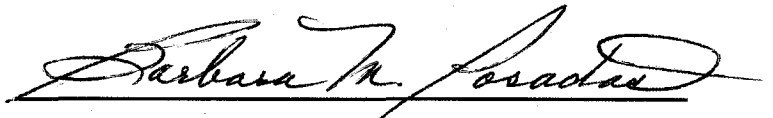
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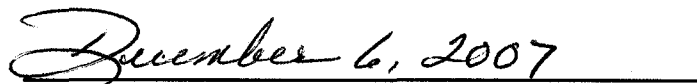
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The author also wishes to acknowledge the assistance of the staffs of various libraries and institutions in the research for this study. In Wyoming, staffs at the American Heritage Center in Laramie, University of Wyoming Libraries, Rock Springs Public Library, Hay Library at Western Wyoming Community College, Rock Springs Historical Museum, and the State Archives in Cheyenne proved quite helpful. In particular, Ruth Lauritzen, director of the Sweetwater County Historical Museum in Green River, and her staff provided expert advice and assistance over several days of research. A. Dudley Gardner of Western Wyoming Community College was especially unstinting in his time and effort in assisting research in Rock Springs and generously offered the assistance of the Archaeological Services of Rock Springs, Wyoming, in perusing the voluminous oral history collection and UPCC Archives located at the

college. In addition, archive personnel at the Nebraska State Historical Society aided in research into the Union Pacific Railway Archives.

Closer to home, librarians at Northern Illinois University and Waubonsee Community College provided a myriad of services. I would like to acknowledge, in particular, the assistance of Wendell Johnson, Adam Burke, Kendall Burke, and Marilee Stach. Several colleagues at Waubonsee also offered intellectual insight, procedural advice, and moral support over the years, especially Heather LaCost, Amy Godfrey, Kathleen Westman, Paul Olson, and Angela Schmidt.

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DEDICATION

**To my in-laws, who housed me during research in Rock Springs,
and my parents, who taught me to love learning;**

**To my children, who teach me daily
humility, honesty, and the value of
a sense of humor;**

and

**To Bess, who always reminds
me of the passion
found in the history
of Rock Springs**

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PART 1

CHALLENGES TO COMMUNITY, 1869-1885

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION--ROCK SPRINGS, WYOMING: A PERSPECTIVE INTO CONFLICT, COMMUNITY, AND THE AMERICAN WEST

In 1885, the mining settlement of Rock Springs, Wyoming, witnessed one of the worst episodes of ethnocentric violence in the urban West as Euroamerican miners massacred Chinese laborers and burned the local Chinatown to the ground. Less than four decades later, inhabitants of Rock Springs, including immigrants and natives, whites and non-whites, came together at a time of heightened national ethnic tensions to celebrate the diversity of their community in the first of four annual "International Night" festivals. This study seeks to resolve the apparently dichotomous historical reality of Rock Springs from the establishment of a mining camp during the building of the Union Pacific Railroad to the abandonment of the International Night movement in the late 1920s by focusing on the role of immigrants and their descendants in constructing diverse community networks and syncretizing those varied networks into a unifying sense of "municipal community," an identity consciously expressed through material locality and cultural commonality. By focusing on ethnicity, race, and class, I will describe how the inhabitants of Rock Springs negotiated the cultural and material challenges to community identity posed by ascendant industrial capitalism and organized themselves into a community of perceived common interests despite diverse backgrounds.

* * *

A landscape, harsh and desolate to both natives and newcomers made southwestern Wyoming, where Rock Springs came to be located, largely inhospitable to human settlement, and only the discovery of rich coal deposits and their utility to the Union Pacific Railroad (UP) made permanent settlement in the region desirable. Extractive industry, therefore, remained fundamental to the urban development of Rock Springs. Yet urbanization comprises both material and cultural processes. While the centrality of coal extraction and subsidiary economic activities allowed the Union Pacific Coal Company (UPCC) to exercise considerable influence over Rock Springs' evolution from mining camp to western city, culture as expressed through ethnicity, race, and class relationships empowered individuals and their social networks, precluding UPCC from exercising hegemony over urban development. Community in Rock Springs, therefore, developed from the interstices of material development and cultural expression as evolved from the early confrontations among discrete nationality groups with the mythopoeic constructions of a post-World War One faith in "Progress."

The earliest known inhabitants of the area later to become Rock Springs were Shoshone and Ute hunters, but the lack of potable water and other resources inhibited sustained settlement. Nevertheless, between 1850 when a military expedition commanded by Captain Howard Stansbury discovered coal deposits in the area and the 1860s when transportation enterprises such as the Overland Stageline and UP came through, contacts between Amerindians, chiefly the Cheyenne, and Euroamericans increased. Territorial

conquest by the latter followed, as did capitalist exploitation of natural resources, first to expedite transportation needs and then to provide commodities for the transportation network and the growing community of Rock Springs.

Between 1869 and 1885, Rock Springs evolved from a transient “hell-on-wheels” along the UP route to an urbanizing settlement of around 1,000 residents largely because of the production demands of UPCC and the efforts of managers, entrepreneurs, and working people to create a viable community, including schools, a constabulary, churches, a medical practice, and business enterprise. Miners themselves developed a strong sense of community through labor organizations, especially in the local Knights of Labor. Growing class solidarity led British and Scandinavian miners in late 1875 to strike against UPCC, thereby convincing the coal company to import Chinese laborers, who then settled in what became known as Chinatown. In 1885, Euroamerican resentment and ethnocentrism unleashed a violent rampage that resulted in the burning of the Chinese settlement, the death of nearly three dozen Chinese, and federal troop intervention. Nevertheless, until just before the First World War, the Chinese presence in Rock Springs remained significant, especially because of their parade of the dragon during the celebration of their New Year, an annual town event, and the rebuilding of a central Chinese community. Despite their continued presence, however, the brutal treatment of the Chinese miners in 1885, along with structural racism, restricted larger institutional and social control of the municipality to Euroamericans.

Because of the legacy of the Anti-Chinese Massacre, inhabitants of Rock Springs might have had to grapple with ethnocentric hostilities for years to come, but various

factors gradually forged a tolerant pluralism during the subsequent development of Rock Springs. In hopes of acquiring a compliant and heterogeneous labor force, UPCC agents actively recruited throughout the globe, particularly in central and eastern Europe, attracting large numbers of Austrian, Slavic, Italian, and Greek immigrants, who were soon joined by increasing numbers of individuals from Mexico, Japan, Korea, and elsewhere. Swelling the population of Rock Springs to over 4,000 by 1900, these immigrants forced both UPCC and local government to address urban problems involving transportation, education, sanitation, and healthcare. While UPCC officials exercised significant influence over local economic and political life, many of Rock Springs' political leaders during this period were immigrants or their children who had labored in the mines and/or pursued entrepreneurial endeavors in the town and county. In many ways, therefore, the urban evolution of Rock Springs represented a creative dialectic between UPCC's economic exigencies and inhabitants' cultural autonomy as mediated through intersecting personal and group relationships.

Rock Springs weathered tensions caused by resurgent nativism during and after the First World War largely because of the disproportionately large number of immigrants and their significant contributions to creating a unifying municipal community acknowledging the dynamics of diversity. Ethnocentrism appeared in the community during and after the First World War in several guises, including a One Hundred Percent Club, but the social cohesion formed before the war, such as the numerous intergroup gatherings at the Slovenian social hall, appear to have constrained more dangerous ethnocentric behaviors. In fact, by 1925, at a time when nativist

pressures had pushed highly restrictive immigration legislation through Congress, Baptist minister Stephen Pyle convinced the local Lions Club to stage the first International Night celebration in Rock Springs. The festivities highlighted the diverse ethnic peoples of the city by featuring ethnic music, dances, dress, and foods. From 1925 through 1928, when the event moved from the local Elks Club to the larger Rialto Theater, which hosted two shows in the final year, Rock Springs celebrated its community life by spotlighting the complex ethnic networks of that community.

The history of immigration and ethnic relations in the development of community in Rock Springs appears especially fecund during the period between 1869 and 1929. In particular, the twin events—the Anti-Chinese Massacre and the International Night celebrations—provide convenient metaphorical bookends for the narrative, emphasizing dialectics between exclusion and inclusion, ethnocentrism and acculturation, tolerance and intolerance. The key to framing the history of the complex human community largely created between these two “bookends” must lie with both the successful integration of analytical categories such as ethnicity, race, and class and the adroit utilization of distinct historiographical traditions.

This history helps explicate community development in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when the historical forces of industrial capitalism, including urbanization and immigration, destabilized traditional community and necessitated new socio-cultural arrangements. A study of the ways in which ethnic peoples created community in Rock Springs sheds new light on the dynamics of human interaction and

relationships under the potentially most corrosive social influences of industrial capitalism.

Quite consciously, this study treats community development as distinct and separate from urban development. Urbanization is foremost a material process with attendant social consequences, whereas community remains primarily a social process responding to and creating material conditions. Operating from such an assumption, this study may contribute a new perspective on the cultural phenomena of community development, which may be evidenced in the history of Rock Springs in three distinct ways. First, immigrants to Rock Springs discovered ways both to preserve culture and translate that culture into a pluralistic municipal community after 1885. Second, entrepreneurial opportunities and labor organization facilitated community formation by helping to siphon off incipient ethnocentric and class conflict. Third, UPCC's important role in stimulating urban development in Rock Springs posed potential obstacles to individual and group autonomy. Community formation whether in economic activity, political organization, or cultural expression allowed residents individually and in respective groups to claim Rock Springs as their own and create a municipal community apart from the material urban setting paid for by UPCC. These findings contribute to the historical understanding of community formation and evolution, especially when considered in the highly intensive and intrusive form of capitalist development in the American West during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

This study also suggests a new way in which to view the structural construction of an urban center, an ethno-urban perspective that links a plundered West to metropolitan

points both east and west. From mining camps to railroad construction, capitalist development in the American West depended upon wedding eastern consumption to western production, and western production, in turn, required cheap, mobile labor provided by migratory people both native- and foreign-born. From the inception of transportation and extractive enterprise in the West, urbanization was evident, and the urban populace in Rock Springs and elsewhere was ethnically diverse. I propose that urbanization and ethnicity of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, therefore, must not be treated as discrete phenomena but rather through an integrative methodological approach that recognizes the metropolitan nature of urbanization, the colonial nature of regional relationships, and the ethno-racial dynamics of labor practices. In short, this study seeks to show the active role of outgroups in both building a modern capitalist West as well as structuring urban communities to meet their own needs and resist attempts at corporate hegemony.

Finally, by analyzing both the cultural identity of the community and the material structures of urbanization, this study offers a fresh conceptualization of potential community harmony called "municipal community." By a municipal community, I mean a social construct expressing an idealized notion of an all-encompassing community identity that is nevertheless tempered by material conditions. In the case of Rock Springs, the all-encompassing identity expressed itself as a cosmopolitan center pre-empting ethnic and class tensions by popularizing diversity as benevolent, yet, from the Anti-Chinese Massacre through the hegemonic tendencies of UPCC, real material conditions conspired against the ideal. What resulted was accommodation among discrete

communities through ethnic and economic associations and activities to influence the ideal of cosmopolitan tolerance while maintaining the integrity of group autonomy. In Rock Springs, festive culture, particularly nationalist celebrations, capital and labor festivals, and civic pageants, especially evinced such a process often in mythopoeic terms that public culture (e.g., corporations, municipal government, associations, and newspapers) in particular sought to disseminate to discrete communities. The resulting municipal community represented an ideal, therefore, that was not chimerical but a means for reining in forces inimical to greater social stability.

* * *

Several fundamental assumptions based upon close readings in a variety of historiographical traditions underlie the nature and development of this proposed study. As a firm believer in socially inclusive history, I have sought to design a working framework analyzing not only the various segments of human activity that comprise everyday life but also the largest possible human aggregates, wherein diverse cultural groups interact in varied social collectives. The following statement on tentative hypotheses acknowledges the aforementioned methodological approaches and outlines the intellectual foundations of this study.

The ascendancy of American industrial capitalism following the Civil War upset traditional community ties, reconfigured class relationships, and restructured the material conditions of life; Americans then transformed their social relationships to account for

such drastic change and, in the process, created anew community networks compatible with a new socioeconomic order. Depending upon the region of the nation, Americans responded differently in recreating community, yet certain basic conditions prevailed throughout the nation that increasingly promoted the transition to wage labor, hegemonic status of the metropolis, quasi-colonial relationships between regions, corporate consolidation, and ethno-racially defined labor arrangements. Hyper-individualism, competition, ethnocentrism, imperialism, and other manifestations of the new order threatened community development and often undermined social stability. In no other part of the country were the obstacles to community formation greater than in the trans-Mississippi West, for no other region witnessed coterminous imperial conquest, resource exploitation, urbanization, industrialization, and ethno-racial interaction at such heightened intensity and at so rapid a pace. And few western places so intensively experienced firsthand such phenomena as Rock Springs, Wyoming.

How, then, did community develop in the face of such formidable odds? Several explanations suggest themselves for the case of Rock Springs. First, due to local economics, immigrants could utilize class solidarity and/or entrepreneurial opportunities to restrict the power and influence of UPCC. Second, the disproportionately high level of immigrants and their children—especially after the 1885 Massacre—dissipated nativist threats and equalized opportunities. Third, accelerated urbanization—particularly by 1890—proffered increased opportunities for upward socioeconomic opportunity that mitigated class and ethnic tensions. Fourth, civic boosterism partly influenced by UPCC and partly by residents themselves consciously sought to create a municipal identity of

harmony and tolerance based on Rock Springs' past history. Fifth, political unity due to the allegiance of large numbers of natives and newcomers to the Democratic Party created a municipal coalition of interests working to mediate between inhabitants' needs and UPCC desires. Sixth, rapid urbanization with its corresponding problems of improved transportation, education, sanitation, and healthcare focused popular attention on commonality rather than divisions. Seventh, the geography of Rock Springs in terms of its relationship to the surrounding coal camps and ranches, the county seat in nearby Green River, and metropolitan centers in Salt Lake City and Denver, as well as the frontier ideology of the era, defined life in the city as highly independent, which in turn emphasized commonality of interests. These factors help explain why Rock Springs after the Anti-Chinese Massacre was able to create a greater sense of community despite the myriad obstacles apparently facing its inhabitants.

In proposing such hypotheses, this study seeks to advance the present understanding of community development during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. On one level, the study of Rock Springs operates as a regional index of urban development and ethnic relations, for certain material conditions in Rock Springs were indeed peculiar to that locale. Yet, in a larger sense, the history of community formation in Rock Springs expresses a greater commonality with the national experience since post-Civil War development was so highly dependent upon an integration of capital and labor, metropolis and hinterland, native and newcomer, East and West, and nation and empire.

* * *

While a variety of informative works -- some profound, others more prosaic -- contributed to the historiographical foundations of this study, a few deserve especial attention. The standard I adopted was that suggested by historian Peggy Pascoe, who described the West inherited by contemporary historians as a "cultural crossroads."¹ In other words, as one trained as a New Left historian at Ball State University in the early 1980s, a social historian at the University of Iowa in the late 1980s, and a cultural historian at Northern Illinois University in the 1990s, I approached historiography with an eclectic eagerness that sought to ameliorate a leftist sensibility with a pragmatic awareness of the complexity of human interrelationships. Thus, the literature I utilized in this study suggests less a coherent ideological emphasis than an inclusive use of the diverse traditions of the major historical studies that represent contemporary western historiography.

Rock Springs itself represents a discrete--albeit narrow--historiographical tradition. As the discerning reader will notice, this study relies heavily upon the work of A. Dudley Gardner and his associates. Professor Gardner in his examinations of demographics, race, ethnicity, class, anthropology, and mining in southwestern Wyoming has provided invaluable material for the historian, and I have benefited greatly from his personal assistance as well as that of the Archaeological Department he heads. Throughout this study, I have utilized and cited the various works of Professor Gardner.

¹ Elizabeth Jameson and Susan Armitage, eds., *Writing the Range: Race, Class, and Culture in the Women's West* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997), 9.

He has yet -- although he is well capable of doing so --to offer a comprehensive interpretation of socio-cultural life in Rock Springs, focusing instead on an instructive and in-depth study of the Chinese experience in the Mountain West. Nevertheless, Professor Gardner's selfless sharing of demographic, archival, and oral history data relating to UPCC and its miners has proved invaluable.

The history of Rock Springs is an interesting collection of myth and interpretation. Those reading this narrative will encounter sources produced by local citizens. Undoubtedly, such sources betray individual prejudices, misjudgments, and factual errors, yet they represent a part of the community memory as well as illuminating anecdotes and personalized reflections central to the articulation of the characteristics of municipal community. In addition, this study benefits from important sources produced by the Union Pacific Coal Company. The use of *UP Employes' Magazine* and other UPCC materials offer insight not only into UPCC corporate thought but also the public discourse to which miners were exposed, especially in contrast to union polemics.

When examining local history in Rock Springs, several books provide keen insights, especially in constructing the chronological past. Rhode's *Booms and Busts*, Gardner and Flores's *Forgotten Frontier*, Gardner and Binkerhoff's *Historical Images*, Cullen's *Rock Springs: Growing Up in a Wyoming Coal Town, 1915-1938*, and Craig Storti's *Incident at Bitter Creek*² offer effective narratives about the southwestern

² Robert Rhode, *Booms and Busts on Bitter Creek: A History of Rock Springs, Wyoming* (Boulder: Pruett Publishing Company, 1987); A. Dudley Gardner and Verla Flores, *Forgotten Frontier: A History of Wyoming Coal Mining* (Boulder: Perseus, 1989); A. Dudley Gardner and Val Binkerhoff, *Historical Images of Sweetwater County*

Wyoming experience. Certainly, the works by Gardner provide a more analytical approach to Rock Springs history, especially in terms of the coal mining experience. Storti's examination of the Massacre is especially useful in terms of a chronological narrative, yet it fails to offer a broad-based ethnographic review of the 1880s, concentrating instead on a defense of the Knights of Labor, its anti-Chinese ideology, and its subsequent violent application. Storti never suggests that violence against the Chinese was the answer, yet he does posit that it was perhaps the inevitable result of circumstances in Rock Springs.

Storti's interpretation begins to break down in the broader, more analytical perspective of Dee Garceau. In *The Important Things of Life*,³ Garceau comprehends Sweetwater County as greater than Euroamerican versus Chinese. Instead, Garceau seeks to see the southwest corner of Wyoming as a fecund area of family, commercial, gender, entrepreneurial, and ethnic negotiation and translation. While Garceau finds no ethno-racial panacea in the region, she does demonstrate how local women managed socioeconomic affairs to make themselves and their families a potent force in county life. Dee Garceau's view of Sweetwater County expands beyond Patricia

(Virginia Beach: Donning Company, 1993); Thomas P. Cullen, ed., *Rock Springs: Growing Up in a Wyoming Coal Town, 1915-1938* (Portland: Thomas P. Cullen [photocopied], 1985); Craig Storti, *Incident at Bitter Creek: The Story of the Rock Springs Chinese Massacre* (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1991).

³ Dee Garceau. *"The Important Things of Life": Women, Work, and Family in Sweetwater County, Wyoming, 1880-1929* (Omaha and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1997).

Nelson Limerick's⁴ view of economic conquest to conceptualize the roles of family and gender in determining the urban and rural methods of local economic control. While local economic affluence necessitated UP rail transport and fuel supply, innumerable immigrant families found various ways to create alternative sources of economic improvement. Women, especially, both in ranches and coal camps, sought to provide support to local workers, and some, especially talented, were able to escape the mines.

In addition to the aforementioned sources, two works in particular provide key insights into the Rock Springs experience: UPCC's *History of the Union Pacific Coal Mines*⁵ and Gardner and Flores' *Forgotten Frontier: A History of Wyoming Coal Mining*. The former focuses on organizational and economic history, yet it offers, in addition, a managerial assessment of the peripheral products of coal production, which were not always of secondary estimation to coal company management. The latter is a useful aid in comprehending the larger narrative of Wyoming coal production. While the authors understand the importance of Rock Springs' mine production, they offer a wider lens in relation to commodity production, corporate operations, and regional development.

While a variety of studies of western life and labor aided this study, a few notable ones deserve mention. Richard White's *A New History of the American West*⁶ made me a

⁴ Patricia Nelson Limerick, *Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West* (New York: Norton, 1987).

⁵ Union Pacific Coal Company. *History of the Union Pacific Coal Mines, 1868 to 1940* (Omaha: Colonial Press, 1940).

⁶ Richard White, *"It's Your Misfortune and None of My Own": A New History of the American West* (Norman and London: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991).

western historian; before that time I regarded western history marginal and superfluous, yet White's engaging synthesis helped me comprehend the region's political, economic, and social significance. From this introduction to western historiography, I turned to Robert V. Hine's *Community on the American Frontier*⁷, where, based on my earlier introduction by Thomas Bender⁸, I grappled with the former's argument that Toennies's cooperative community largely remained illusory as the Americans on the frontier devised pragmatic solutions to a myriad of socio-cultural environments. Hine tends to view western community within the parameters of an older social history, yet his suggestion that the "shape of community ultimately depends on how we define the term"⁹ offers an insightful approach to community formation that provides agency to those who sought to interpret community according to local conditions.

From social and community histories of the West, I turned next to more materially inclined scholarship. Particularly compelling was Patricia Nelson Limerick's pathbreaking *Legacy of Conquest*, where the author interprets the stories and the characters in a new way: the trappers, traders, Indians, farmers, oilmen, cowboys, and sheriffs of the Old West "meant business" in more ways than one, and their descendents utilized power, money, status, and myth to continue the extraction of privilege where

⁷ Robert V. Hine, *Community on the American Frontier: Separate but Not Alone* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1980).

⁸ Thomas Bender, *Community and Social Change* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1978).

⁹ Hine, *Community*, 14.

possible from the region. Following Limerick's study, William Robbins develops the economic discussion even more elaborately in *Colony and Empire: The Capitalist Transformation of the American West*.¹⁰ Written in the euphoria of Clintonian celebration of global capital, Robbins posits that the twentieth-century West largely functions "in a broad global theater of market-exchange relations, industrial strategies, and investment decision making."¹¹ And so did early twentieth-century Rock Springs. In movement of people, capital, and culture, Rock Springs, Wyoming, represented a social globalization that helped transform the American West.

Richard Slotkin's¹² interpretation of the American West certainly reflects some of the key economic themes studied by Limerick and Robbins but also seeks to comprehend the larger socio-cultural mythology. He argues that the centennial celebration of American Independence "carried [the] themes of growth and reconciliation into the realm of civic ritual."¹³ The author goes on to describe the precarious nature of American society in the 1870s, especially with the economic challenges of the time. As seen in the narrative to follow, certain individuals and groups benefit from the opportunities afforded

¹⁰ Limerick's perspective translates westward movement and colonization with economic exegesis. William G. Robbins, *Colony and Empire: The Capitalist Transformation of the American West* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1997), incorporates the broader socioeconomic process in terms of the drive of globalizing capital.

¹¹ Robbins, *Colony and Empire*, 197.

¹² Richard Slotkin, *The Fatal Environment: The Myth of the Frontier in the Age of Industrialization, 1800-1890* (Norman: University of Oklahoma, 1994).

¹³ Slotkin, *Fatal Environment*, 5.

by the resource-rich American West--either through the rewards offered to enterprising initiative or because of government largesse. Slotkin's West anticipates the constructed ideology of Rock Springs, particularly as he posits that the nineteenth century witnessed the "successful adaptation of the Myth of the Frontier to the ideology of the new industrial and corporate order."¹⁴

These theoretical studies provide keen insight into the history of the American West, yet, as broadly constructed studies of place and process, their utility is limited. Therefore, the student of community history in the West needs to utilize more specific studies. A few trenchant western community studies deserve mention here as contributors to the direction of this study. Hine, citing Josiah Royce, found mining communities "morally and socially tired,"¹⁵ thus, essentially sterile and unable to produce an indigenous culture, such as Rock Springs' municipal community; in addition, Hine's focus on ethnic communities neglects an observation on multiethnic habitations such as Rock Springs. More recent community studies are better attuned to issues of diversity and creative socio-cultural adaptation, and are, therefore, more useful in helping comprehend the Rock Springs experience. Ronald James's *The Roar and the Silence: A History of Virginia City and the Comstock Lode*¹⁶ provides an exceptional look at mining history, particularly in examining the nature of municipal development and the construction of

¹⁴ Ibid., xvii.

¹⁵ Hine, *Community*, 92.

¹⁶ Ronald M. James, *The Roar and the Silence: A History of Virginia City and the Comstock Lode* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1998).

concomitant myth. Where hardrock mining, such as that in Virginia City, engendered more mythical constructions of western experiences, the exigencies of community construction in Nevada echoed some similar themes in coal-mining Rock Springs, especially in relation to class, race, ethnicity, and urban development. Bonnie Christensen's *Red Lodge and the Mythic West: Coal Miners to Cowboys*¹⁷ offers a particularly intriguing community study that reflects issues of ethnicity, migration, labor, capital, commerce, and festive culture found also in Rock Springs. A coal mining center, Red Lodge housed diverse ethnic groups and sought to translate that diversity into a commodified annual celebration in the 1930s. Another study of community in Montana, Laurie Mercier's *Anaconda: Labor, Community, and Culture in Montana's Smelter City*, suggests how working people's efforts mitigated corporate control. Mercier argues:

A creation of the powerful minerals industry, Anaconda became Montana's most consciously working-class city. From 1884 to 1934, immigrant women and men and their children shaped their culture amid the vagaries of industrial booms and shutdowns. Anacondans formed unions, mounted strikes, and created working-class political movements, only to be checked by the company and its supporters. Workers and residents turned to their cultural world--their neighborhoods, families, churches, associations, and celebrations--to construct some autonomy and alternative social spaces. These associations provided opportunities for negotiating across differences, which later coalesced into labor and political coalitions to resist the Anaconda Company.¹⁸

¹⁷ Bonnie Christensen, *Red Lodge and the Mythic West* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2002).

¹⁸ Laurie Mercier, *Anaconda: Labor, Community, and Culture in Montana's Smelter City* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2001), 3-4.

So, too, in Rock Springs, did residents negotiate the tricky shoals of labor and capital, race and ethnicity, and class and community, although in southwestern Wyoming special considerations of race, enterprise, and region defined the uniqueness of municipal evolution. Nevertheless, these community and even regional studies offer informative perspectives, which the present study utilizes in examining community and municipal development in Rock Springs.

* * *

This study examines the ethno-racial development of municipal community in Rock Springs from the invasion of Euroamericans through the conclusion of the International Night celebrations in the 1920s. As with any historical periodization, the narrative is a somewhat arbitrary construction by the author based on the vicissitudes of historical data and narrative predilections. Thus, while regional, national, and even international events and trends intrude upon the story of Rock Springs' evolution from coal camp to "first-class" Wyoming city, the essential analysis reflects localized conditions and experiences. Fundamentally, the following narrative is chronological save for the second chapter that presents the Anti-Chinese Massacre as the *leitmotif* of the Rock Springs experience. The following chapters outline the evolution of Rock Springs as a municipal environment from the late 1860s through the 1920s with a special emphasis on festive culture, particularly the series of International Night celebrations that sought to define the municipality as a place both progressive and unique. Part One

focuses on the formative period of Rock Springs history through the aftermath of the Anti-Chinese Massacre. The next section examines the material and cultural transformation of the coal camp into an urban setting during the period up to the Great War. Finally, Part Three analyzes life and community in Rock Springs from the First World War through the final International Night celebration of 1928, highlighting particularly municipal development and festive culture during the New Era. A short epilogue offers personal comments on the history of community in Rock Springs and the characteristics of the municipality in recent years.

Whether Rock Springs today is progressive and unique is a question for the occasional traveler. As a sometime resident researcher and the husband of a Rock Springs High School alumna, I certainly have my own opinions. Of course as a product of Muncie, Indiana--the Lynds' famous setting for the *Middletown* study--I am perhaps preternaturally inclined to comprehending an urban environment as a natural setting for historical study. I may appreciate Rock Springs' attempts at reinvigorating the International Night ethos while deploring the Babbity misconstruing the fundamental racial and class dynamics of that constructed history. Yet, as a community college history professor, I have learned that the study of history among the public is never so pure nor uncomplicated as an uncritical public may want it to be whether for patriotic, commercial, pedagogical, or other reasons. Thus, this study, as one of many interesting tales I relate in the classroom, is largely instructive of my own temperament, prejudices, and aspirations. I hope, at the very least, that it proves entertaining, for with the complexity of the modern world, we all deserve, at the least, a compelling story.

CHAPTER TWO

"THE MEN WHO COMMITTED THE MURDERS ARE ALIENS; THEIR MURDERED VICTIMS ARE ALSO ALIENS. . . ."

Introduction

The permanent Euroamerican habitation of southwestern Wyoming, particularly the area that became Rock Springs, began in the late 1860s with the coming of the transcontinental railroad. However, any significant work on this region, especially one focused on race, ethnicity, and class, must commence with the Rock Springs Anti-Chinese Massacre of 1885. As this chapter details, the riot in Rock Springs resulted from a confluence of factors--cultural, economic, and social--and had profound implications not only for the municipal development of the city but also for corporate operations, politico-military policies, and international relations. Yet the scope of this study is largely local and seeks to understand how community in various forms developed in Rock Springs. Thus, the massacre provides an effective starting point for comprehending how race and ethnicity, labor and capital, conditioned and complicated municipal community. The Chinese in Rock Springs were not passive victims of violence, yet, as Arlif Dirlik suggests, this decade marked the heyday of the frontier Chinatown, especially in Rock

Springs, which declined largely due to racial persecution.¹ The depiction of the massacre reveals an unfortunate side of human values and behaviors in the Gilded Age West, yet the violence and its aftermath established the unique cultural and material conditions in which Rock Springs and its residents modernized and urbanized. Therefore, it is best to begin with the disturbing events of autumn 1885.

The Anti-Chinese Massacre

Although the massacre in Rock Springs, Wyoming, had its beginnings on September 2, 1885, with a fistfight in Mine No. 6, conflict between Euroamerican and Chinese coal miners had been brewing the previous ten years. In November 1875, when local leaders of the Knights of Labor refused company demands to increase production by twenty-five percent, UP Coal Superintendent H. H. Clark threatened, "I herewith give you notice that in a very short time I will have a body of men here who will dig for us all the coal we want."² Miners, whose work slowdown had been in response to wage cuts ordered by UP President Jay Gould, understood the threat to imply the importation of Chinese workers. On November 8, the miners walked out of the mines. When the UP fired the striking miners, the latter shut down the mines and threatened to destroy

¹ Arlif Dirlik, ed., *Chinese on the American Frontier* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001), xxvii, xxi.

² UPCC, *History of the Union Pacific Coal Mines*, 76. For background on the Knights of Labor and UP, see Robert E. Weir, *Knights Unhorsed: Internal Conflict in a Gilded Age Social Movement* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2000); H. Shelton Stromquist, *A Generation of Boomers: The Pattern of Railroad Labor Conflict in Nineteenth-Century America* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987).

company property. A shot fired in the direction of a mine superintendent portended increasing violence, which led the territorial governor to intervene. To the great displeasure of the strikers, Governor John Thayer called on federal troops to police the mines at Rock Springs and nearby Carbon. During the evening of November 21, two trainloads of Chinese workers accompanied by additional federal troops arrived at the coal camp. UP gave fired miners two days to accept free rail passes out of town or to remain unemployed and impoverished. H. H. Clark's threat had proved true. In the space of a few days, a coal camp that had earlier employed nearly 600 miners, principally from Wales and Cornwall, became home to a Chinese population that would grow from 150 to nearly 400 by 1878, with Euroamericans becoming a minority presence in the mines. Such was the prelude to the fistfight in a coal room on a fall morning in 1885 that would lead to the Rock Springs Anti-Chinese Massacre, a notorious episode in American history.³

³ For background on the 1875 strike from the UP's perspective, see UPCC, *History of the Union Pacific Coal Mines*, 75-58; an account sympathetic to labor may be found in Storti, *Incident at Bitter Creek*, 59-70. See also Rhode, *Booms & Busts*, 45-48; T.A. Larson, *Wyoming: A Bicentennial History* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1977), 142, 146-147.

John Jackson Clarke, "Reminiscences of Wyoming in the Seventies and Eighties," *Annals of Wyoming* 6 (July-October 1929), who was alongside mining superintendent Tisdale and railway agent Tim Kinney when the pistol shot from the miners' quarters barely missed Tisdale, condemned the strikers' actions as "high-handed" and without warning (228). David G. Thomas, a former miner turned attorney and Rock Springs' early poet laureate, however, viewed the strikers more charitably, explaining how not only working conditions but hiring practices were heavily influenced by the union, which suggests how important it was for the miners to resist UP policies. See "Talk on Old Rock Springs by Judge Thomas," n.d., Union Pacific Coal Company Archives, Archaeological Services of Western Wyoming College, Rock Springs, Wyoming, "History—UP Coal Company, Railroad, Wyoming Coal Mining," Box 23 Folder 1, 1.

Throughout the Gilded Age West, Euroamerican miners had lodged various complaints against UP and its hiring practices, especially involving Chinese workers. In Rock Springs, with the inchoate nature of community and municipal development, the large Chinese population appeared to threaten not only economic prospects but social cohesion. In a report on the massacre filed by a UP agent, miners cited five specific grievances against the company and its Chinese laborers. These included use of false weights, the threat posed by Chinese to women alone in public, favorable assignment of coal rooms to Chinese, the selling of privileges to Chinese by mine bosses, and UP coercion of miners to trade at Beckwith-Quinn's store, the UP's franchisee for imported labor.⁴ John L. Lewis, of the United Mine Workers of America, had sent letters of complaint to Beckwith-Quinn and UP as late as four days before the massacre. To Beckwith-Quinn, Lewis complained, "There is [sic] nearly seventy-five of our men lying idle at Rock Springs." He blamed the increasing importation of Chinese for the unemployment and then accused UP of giving the Chinese "all the work they can do, whilst our men at Rock Springs are left out in the cold."⁵ The Knights of Labor, which

⁴ Isaac Bromly, *Chinese Massacre at Rock Springs, Wyoming Territory*. (Boston: Franklin Press. Rand, Avery, & Company, 1886), 34. As might be expected, Bromly dismissed each grievance as untrue or greatly exaggerated in his published report. Storti provides an additional list of grievances against UP: Chinese and even Mormon miners had also been used as "strikebreakers"; use of the "ironclad" contract to preclude participation in union; discrimination in the assignment of most productive coal rooms; biased use of a permit system regulating work in coal rooms; prejudiced practices at Beckwith-Quinn stores; and various Chinese bullying, including the stealing of pit cars, destruction of tracks, insults, and theft of coke (83-84).

⁵ John L. Lewis to Beckwith, Quinn and Company, Denver, Colorado, 28 August 1885, and John L. Lewis to D. O. Clark, Denver, Colorado, 28 August, 1885, in *History of the Union Pacific Coal Mines*, 79-80.

had considerable success in organizing in Rock Springs, along with the UMWA, claimed in the aftermath of the massacre that the "importation of an element of [an alien] character for the purpose of cheapening or underbidding our native muscle is an outrage on civilization, Christianity, and political economy."⁶ Such sentiments reflected the economic and cultural resentment felt by Euroamerican miners in Rock Springs toward the Chinese. UP added to this volatile local mix by dominating much of the retail and service sectors in town, including the importation of potable water. Thus, when violence broke out in Mine No. 6, it was not surprising that it was directed against both the Chinese and their principal employer.⁷

⁶ W. W. Stone, "The Knights of Labor on the Chinese Labor Situation," *Overland Monthly* 7 (March 1886), 227.

⁷ A perusal of contemporary publications reveals the tenor of late nineteenth-century America regarding the Chinese. See, for example, Adam S. Eterovich, ed., *Memorial: Six Chinese Companies. An Address to the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States--Testimony of California's Leading Citizens before the Joint Special Congressional Committee* (San Francisco, 1877; Saratoga, California: R and E Research Associates, 1970); George F. Seward, *Chinese Immigration in Its Social and Economical Aspects* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1881); Frank Shay, *Chinese Immigration: The Social, Moral, and Political Effect of Chinese Immigration. Testimony Taken before a Committee of the Senate of the State of California, Appointed April 30, 1876* (Sacramento: State Printing Office, 1876); M. E. Starr, *The Coming Struggle: What the People on the Pacific Coast Think of the "Coolie Invasion"* (San Francisco: Bacon & Company, 1873).

For scholarly treatment of anti-Chinese feeling and Chinese cultural identity, see Sucheng Chan, ed., *Entry Denied: Exclusion and the Chinese Community in America, 1882-1943* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1991); Roger Daniels, ed., *Anti-Chinese Violence in North America* (New York: Arno Press, 1978); Dirlik, *Chinese on the American Frontier*; Andrew Gyory, *Closing the Gate: Race, Politics, and the Chinese Exclusion Act* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 1998); Liping Zhu, *A Chinaman's Chance: The Chinese on the Rocky Mountain Mining Frontier* (Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 1997); David M. Reimers, *Unwelcome Strangers: American Identity and the Turn Against Immigration* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998); Shih-shan Henry Tsai, *China and the Overseas Chinese in the United States, 1868-1911* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas, 1983); K. Scott Wong

The fight itself erupted over a work misunderstanding among Euroamerican and Chinese workers. Mine Superintendent James Evans had closed Mine No. 6 and stopped all entries at the end of August. Having marked off new rooms, he told the eight Chinese miners then working in entry No. 5 that they would have to move to new rooms the next day and showed one of the workers the specific coal rooms.⁸ Evans also offered Isaiah Whitehouse and his partner William Jenkins a chance to move from their room in entry No. 13 to the more productive No. 5 entry but warned them to move beyond the rooms assigned the Chinese.⁹ When only four of the eight Chinese showed up for work on Tuesday, September 1, pit boss Dave Brookman told Whitehouse and Jenkins to begin work in the first rooms marked off, assuming that the Chinese had already begun working their area and that the two Euroamerican miners would work in the next rooms.

Whitehouse and Jenkins began preparing their rooms with the former leaving for town in

and Sucheng Chan, eds., *Claiming America: Constructing Chinese American Identities During the Exclusion Era* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1998).

⁸ Carrying a collection of tools, including but not limited to a twenty-pound drill, several three-pound picks, a shovel, steel wedge, and keg of gunpowder, miners would go into the mines through a ten feet by six feet entry way that was lined by tracks. They would then ride a pit car deep into the shaft and then walk half a mile or more to a coal room that was typically twenty-four feet wide, several feet deep, but not high enough to stand upright. There he and his partner would work blasting rock, digging coal, and loading the coal wagon. Since miners were paid by tonnage, they were quite zealous in protecting their individual rooms, especially if these had productive coal streams. See Storti, *Incident at Bitter Creek*, 75-6.

⁹ David Thomas, a mine boss at No. 5 at the time of the massacre, blamed Superintendent Evans for the misunderstanding leading to the fight, citing the latter's tactlessness and the fact that his confused explanation of room assignments "was the only thing needed to [fan] the flames of revolt and race hatred to red hot and start the riot..." which he believed was spontaneous in nature. In "David G. Thomas' Memories of the Chinese Riot [as Told to His Daughter Mrs. J. H. Goodnough]," *Annals of Wyoming* 19 (July 1947): 106-107.

the afternoon. At that point, two Chinese entered Whitehouse's coal room and, despite Jenkins's warnings, commenced work, believing that this was one of rooms assigned to them by Evans. That evening local Knights of Labor met in their Rock Springs hall. While no record exists as to the proceedings, the recurring topics of UP biases and Chinese presumptuousness certainly must have been discussed in regards to the argument in No. 5 entry of Mine No. 6.¹⁰

The fistfight began on the morning of Wednesday, September 2, after Isaiah Whitehouse returned from town and discovered that Chinese workers had occupied the room in which he had begun and fired the charges he had set. Because the preparation of a coal room for mining involved intensive labor that was not directly related to a worker's pay, miners tended to be very territorial in regards to their work areas. Whitehouse then "ordered them out," according to a special edition of the *Rock Springs Independent*, but the Chinese would not leave what they thought was their room. High words followed, then blows. The Chinese from the other rooms came rushing in, as did the whites, and a fight ensued, with picks, shovels, drills, and needles for weapons.¹¹ The altercation continued for half an hour. Ah Lip and Ah Khoon valiantly traversed hostile grounds to notify UP officials. When informed of the ongoing conflict, mine foreman James Evans went below ground, but by then the fighting had ceased. A number of the Euroamerican miners had suffered cuts and severe bruising. Despite supervisors'

¹⁰ *Rock Springs Independent*, "Extra Edition," September 11, 1885 [photocopied], Wyoming State Archives, Cheyenne, Wyoming, 1-2. For testimony of those involved in the episode in entry No. 5, see Bromly, *Chinese Massacre*, 26-29, 32-33.

¹¹ *Rock Springs Independent*, Wyoming State Archives, September 11, 1885, 2.

attempts to settle the dispute on the spot, the injured and angry men withdrew. The Chinese carried their wounded out of the mine to presumed safe haven. The Euroamerican miners also left the mine, some picking up firearms "to protect themselves from the Chinese," to walk to town.¹²

No one may know the exact point when anger turns to homicidal rage, but the quickness of Euroamericans in Rock Springs to march upon Chinatown suggests that such a point in Euroamerican-UP-Chinese relations had nearly been reached previously and only needed a spark to enflame it.¹³ As miners at No. 6 began leaving the mine--the

¹² *Rock Springs Independent*, Wyoming State Archives, September 11, 1885, 1-2; Storti, *Incident at Bitter Creek*, 109-111.

¹³ There are still those who suggest that the massacre was less a spontaneous riot than nefarious plot. Dell Isham states, "Wyoming historians have accepted the assumption that the Rock Springs Massacre was spontaneous and unplanned, brought on by years of frustration among white miners. To the Chinese who were being attacked, the white mob appeared to be well organized. Dick Keenan knew there was going to be 'something doing' in Rock Springs a week before the riot. He became one of the leaders of the mob action. Company officials received warnings that the white miners were indignant about their treatment by the company and would retaliate." (See Dell Isham, *Rock Springs Massacre 1885*, Centennial Edition [Lincoln City: Dell Isham & Associates, 1969], 45.

J. T. Treasure, a longtime resident, also suggested an organized effort to eradicate the Chinese presence, stating, "Did you know that at 3:00 p.m., September 5, 1885 [note the incorrect time and date] the signal was fired at the west end of Chinatown that caused the Rock Springs scandal, and in which 18 Chinamen were shot in their backs. . . ?" (See J. T. Treasure, "Early Day Resident Recalls Rock Springs of Fifty Years Ago," n.d., Wyoming State Archives, Cheyenne, Wyoming, 3.) T. A. Larson, *History of Wyoming* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 1969), acknowledges the leadership of the Knights of Labor in relation to the question of Chinese workers but refutes the idea that the union advocated violence against the Chinese (142).

Crane and Larson reaffirm the Chinese claim that the attack was entirely unexpected. (see Paul Crane and T. A. Larson, "The Chinese Massacre, Pt. 1," *Annals of Wyoming* 12 [January 1940], 47-55; "The Chinese Massacre, Pt. 2," *Annals of Wyoming* 12 (April 1940): 153-162). Lewis L. Gould, *A Political History, 1868-1896* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), attributes the anti-Chinese violence to "agitation by the Knights of Labor, who were strongly entrenched in Rock Springs" (86).

Chinese to their quarters in Chinatown and the Euroamericans to their cabins and then Rock Springs proper - they began to attract notice from other miners. The ringing of the bell atop the Knights of Labor hall called all the Euroamerican miners from the various camps to an impromptu meeting, certainly representing an attempt by miners opposed to Chinese labor to deal with the situation from a more organized than piecemeal fashion. After that meeting and the passing of the dinner hour, local saloonkeepers quickly shut up their establishments. With increasing numbers of Euroamerican residents (not all miners) milling in the streets, shouting anti-Chinese slogans, and throwing debris at passing Chinese workers, a rumor passed through the crowd that UP had wired for federal troops as it had ten years previously when UP feared reprisals aimed against the introduction of Chinese workers. Armed with firearms, knives, hatchets, and clubs, a "small army" of over 140 men, women, and children marched on Chinatown. Some residents, such as David G. Thomas, sped to Chinatown to warn their friends of the coming danger, but the majority of the crowd wanted "the Chinamen to leave in an hour."¹⁴

Chinatown lay north of the principal Euroamerican settlement at the base of Pilot Butte to the south of Mine No. 3 and east of Mine No. 5 (see Figure 1). Craig Storti states that half of the "houses were sturdy wooden structures built by the company and rented to the Chinese, and half were makeshift shacks thrown together with packing crates and

¹⁴ Quoted in *Rock Springs Independent*, September 11, 1885, Wyoming State Archives, 2. D. M. Thayer was another Euroamerican helping the Chinese. A clerk for Beckwith-Quinn, he hid one Chinese laborer for four days until order had been restored in town. See "D.M. Thayer," *Union Pacific Employes' Magazine* 2 (February 1925), 18.

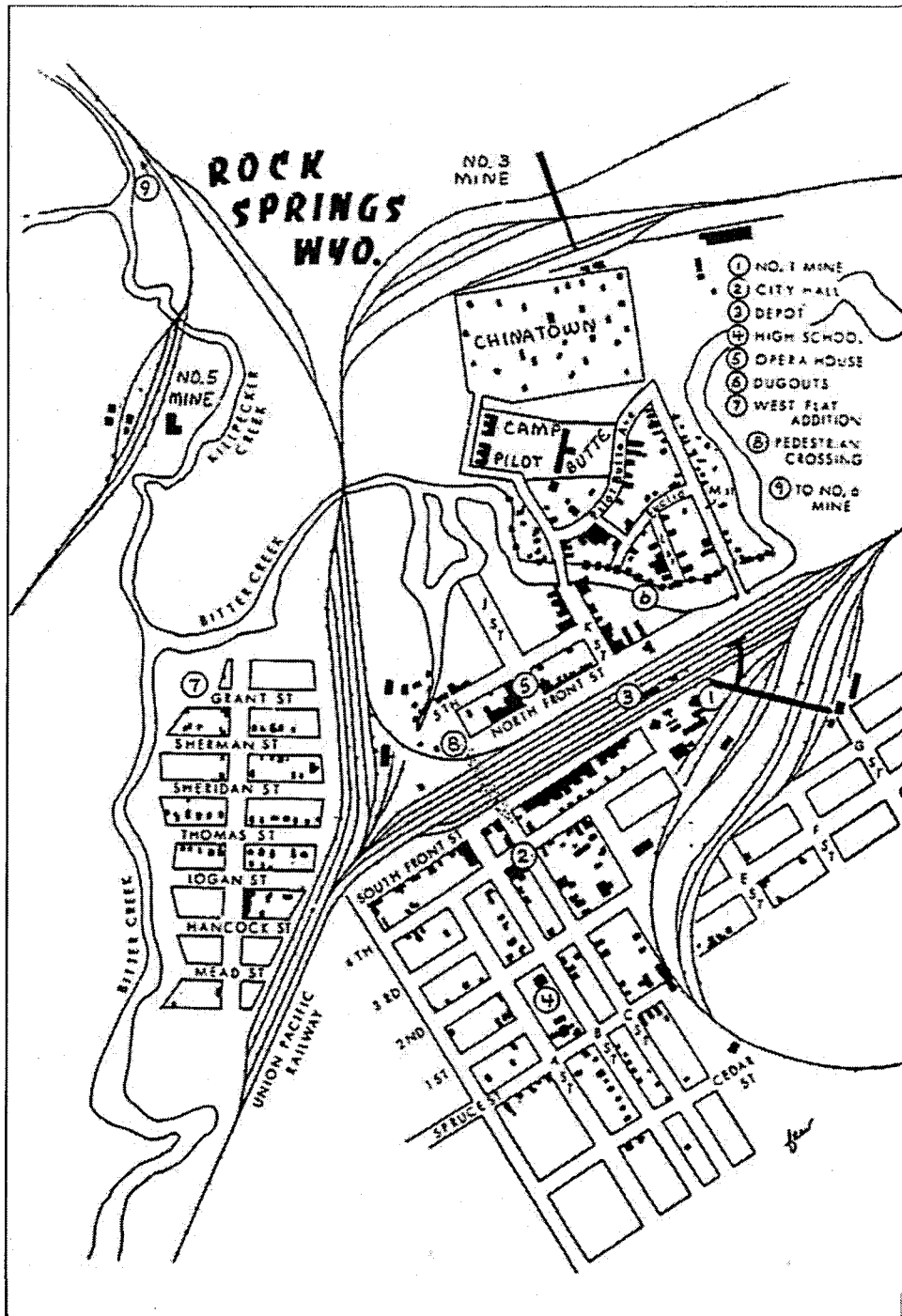


Figure 1. Rock Springs in the 1890s.¹⁵

¹⁵ Rhode, *Booms and Busts*, 68.

building paper, their roofs made from flattened tin cans."¹⁶ Both geographically and culturally, it was a world apart from the rest of Rock Springs, partly for the physical security of its inhabitants and partly for the social and economic empowerment of the community by its own members. Without access to the railroad, residents of Chinatown had no sanctuary in case of danger save the inhospitable Red Desert to the north.¹⁷

Surviving Chinese recalled seeing a mob in two gangs approach Chinatown at about two o'clock in the afternoon. One gang came by a plank bridge while the other used the railroad bridge. Some of the mob held back in various positions, and others marched closer to the Chinese dwellings. According to the *Rock Springs Independent*, the "small army" had intended for a delegation of three to give the Chinese an hour to leave, but "the men grew impatient . . . , [thinking China] John was too slow in getting out, and might be preparing to defend his position."¹⁸ Chinese recalled that a squad of men behind the pump house began shooting, followed immediately by one stationed at a nearby coal shed. After Lor Sun Kit was shot and fell to the ground, the Chinese began comprehending the murderous intent of the mob but, while alarmed, did not yet flee. With squads of Euroamerican miners surrounding Chinatown and reports of the shooting deaths of Leo Dye Bah and Yip Ah Marn on opposite sides of the settlement, panic set in

¹⁶ Storti, *Incident at Bitter Creek*, 86-7.

¹⁷ See *Ibid.*, 85-9; Rhode, *Booms and Busts*, 48-50.

¹⁸ *Rock Springs Independent*, September 11, 1885, Wyoming State Archives, 2.

and the Chinese began seeking some means of egress with the mob having blocked the two central pathways into and out of Chinatown.¹⁹

The slowness of the Chinese reaction to the threatened violence of the mob's first appearance may be understandable for several reasons. First, Chinatown was located on UP land and the dwellings themselves belonged to the company. It surely must have been inconceivable to the Chinese that their Euroamerican coworkers would endanger their own positions as workers by destroying company property and killing fellow workers. Second, many of the Chinese had been living in the United States for decades, scrupulously saving dollar after dollar, which many hid in their dwellings, and did not want to abandon the hundreds of dollars they had earned just on the threat of frontier vigilantism. Finally, in the words of the Chinese themselves, unlike the Euroamericans, they had not perceived the degree of racially based hostility in the camps. True, the Chinese acknowledged, they had on several occasions rebuffed offers to cooperate in demands for higher wages and knew that in "Whitemen's Town" an organization (presumably the Knights) aimed at expelling the Chinese, but the Chinese contended that until the fight in No. 6, they "had worked along with the white men, and had not had the least ill feeling against them."²⁰ In fact, according to the Chinese, UP diligently treated both races the same with kindness and equal treatment and pay.²¹

¹⁹ "Memorial of Chinese Laborers Resident at Rock Springs, Wyoming Territory, to the Chinese Consul at New York" (1885), in Cheng-Tsu Wu, *"Chink!": A Documentary History of Anti-Chinese Prejudice in America* (New York: World Publishers, 1972), 152-153.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 152.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 152-153.

The massacre evidenced both human tragedy and irony. The apparently violent intentions of the crowd alerted many Chinese to seek sanctuary in the cellars of their dwellings. Several of these men suffocated or burned to death once the rioters set the buildings afire. Many of the Chinese miners had accumulated substantial amounts of capital and were fearful--and rightly so--that the mob included individuals desirous of using ethno-racial conflict as a pretext for looting.²² Ah Koon, one of the most influential men in Chinatown, for example, left behind \$1,600 in cash and an expensive fur coat when he fled the camp, and several other Chinese laborers who escaped with their lives were stopped by members of the mob and stripped of watches, jewelry, and other valuables before being sent running into the desert. One of the more notorious rioters, Edward Murray, a flamboyant physician who had had several run-ins with UP, rode atop a rearing horse, shouting to the marauding crowd, "No quarter! Shoot them down!"²³ Several women joined in the massacre, including two assigned by mob leaders to guard a railroad bridge, who shot at least three Chinese, fatally wounding two of them. Observers

²² "Judge Thomas," Union Pacific Coal Company Archives, Archaeological Services of Western Wyoming College, 3. Thomas recalled that a party of Euroamericans searched the basements of the "houses where the Chinese were concealed; usually the Chinese had from three to five hundred dollars; they took the money from them. Then they were afraid the Chinese might inform the government about the deed, so they shot and killed every one of them; they killed five in one house"(3).

²³ Storti, *Incident at Bitter Creek*, 116. UP officials saw Dr. Murray as a particularly adept troublemaker siding with the Euroamerican miners against the Chinese. See Bromly, *Chinese Massacre*, for Murray's indictment against UP managers for favoring the Chinese and the company's response to Murray's veracity (35).

credited Mrs. Osborn, proprietress of a local laundry, with shooting two Chinese to death and then proceeding to loot the corpses.²⁴

By dusk, the violence began to subside in Rock Springs. In the smoldering Chinatown, Euroamericans searched among the ruins for buried gold while others looted valuables that had survived the fires. Children ran after poultry left behind to take home for their mothers' stewpots. Mine boss Thomas, a friend of many of the dead and fleeing Chinese, remembered "flames from forty burning houses lighting our faces" as he and friends walked through the ruins.²⁵ The streets were littered with the minutiae of everyday life--furnishings, utensils, opium pots, and clothing. Animals roamed freely,

²⁴ Chinese survivors recalled a "gang of women" cheering on the rioters at the plank bridge and that two of these women "fired successive shots at the Chinese" (see "Memorial of Chinese Laborers," in Cheng-Tsu, *Chink!*, 155). See also Storti, *Incident at Bitter Creek*, 115-118.

Mrs. Dan Potter, then six years old at the time of the massacre, later recalled a neighbor woman recklessly discharging a revolver, stating, "I'm sure . . . she could not have hit anything as she shut her eyes and turned her head every time she fired a shot, but she was making plenty of noise" (Mary A. Clark, "Incidents of Pioneer Days in Rock Springs, 1881-1898," March 12, 1936, Wyoming State Archives, Cheyenne, Wyoming, 2-3).

David T. Courtwright, *Violent Land: Single Men and Social Disorder from the Frontier to the Inner City* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1996), suggests that the "frontier was the principal arena of single male brutality in American history" (3). Without refuting this thesis, the Chinese massacre, which involved married men and women as participants and single women and children as observers represents a deviation from the socio-cultural dynamic suggested by Courtwright. Instead, the communal investment in violence in early September 1885 in Rock Springs suggests less vigilantism than communitarian cleansing, albeit of a most hideous form. The fact that federal intervention returned the Chinese served to mandate that community in Rock Springs in the decades after 1885 would be defined by not only economic relationships but ethno-racial ones as well. For a more theoretical discussion, see Donald L. Horowitz, *The Deadly Ethnic Riot* (Berkeley and Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 2001).

²⁵ Quoted in Storti, *Incident at Bitter Creek*, 120; see also "David G. Thomas' Memories," 108.

feeding on food dumped in the streets. As night fell, men returned to finish their ghastly work, making sure that UP could not so easily use the remaining structures as dwellings for a new contingent of Chinese workers. A crowd of about fifty set the remaining four dozen houses on fire. In the desert, two hundred or more Chinese made their way westward away from Rock Springs and toward presumed safety, watching the conflagration and wondering what next was in store for them.²⁶

The ugliness of the Rock Springs Massacre is, retrospectively, compounded when considering Yen Tzu-kuei's assertion that "what the local people did not realize was that the Chinese laborers had not threatened their survival as they had imagined."²⁷ After demonstrating that Mormons and Scandinavian immigrants frequently participated in strikebreaking activities, Tzu-kuei shows that Chinese laborers remained a small portion of the rapidly expanding laboring class of 1870s and 1880s Wyoming. In fact, he attributes the discriminatory preferential labor practices of the period to UP policy rather than to the Chinese. Tzu-kuei concludes, "[I]t was the railroad company, which refused to hire some of the white miners that it considered unsuitable, that precipitated the violence. The Chinese miners should not have been blamed."²⁸ Despite UP practices that exacerbated ethno-racial tensions in Rock Springs, the actions of Euroamericans in attacking Chinatown resulted in the evacuation of the district by hundreds of Chinese, who, bewilderedly, sought safety outside of their destroyed community.

²⁶Storti, *Incident at Bitter Creek*, 119-121.

²⁷Yen Tzu-kuei, "Rock Springs Incident," in Dirlik, *Chinese on the American Frontier*, 359.

²⁸Ibid.

Some of the Chinese hiding in the hills planned on returning to Chinatown following the riot, hoping to recover their possessions, tend the injured, and dispose of the dead. However, witnessing the return of part of the mob and the burning of the remaining structures, the Chinese felt they had little recourse but to follow the UP tracks toward Green River. The authors of the "Memorial of Chinese Laborers" recall that some refugees reached their destination "in the morning, others at noon, and others not until dark. There were some who did not reach it until the fourth of September."²⁹ UP railroad supervisors facilitated the movement of Chinese from the hills outside Rock Springs to the large Chinatown in Evanston (see Figure 2), where eventually over 450 refugees settled, awaiting assistance from corporate and government officials. UP manager Isaac Bromly noted that some of the survivors of the massacre settled in Evanston, "went to a gun-store[,] and purchased all the revolvers the establishment had in stock" to protect themselves from the growing anti-Chinese settlement in that town as well.³⁰

²⁹ "Memorial of Chinese Laborers," in Cheng-Tsu, "*Chink!*", 155-156.

³⁰ Bromly, *Chinese Massacre*, 52. Governor Warren himself was very concerned, in addition to the still unsettled conditions in Rock Springs, with the incendiary potential in Evanston, where he described in his official report: "During the 5th, 6th, and 7th great excitement prevailed at Evanston, and very grave fears were entertained by the most conservative citizens. Armed men had been coming into town, and it is fully believed that violence could not have been avoided the night of September 5 but for [military intervention]. . . . Anonymous threatening letters were continually received by prominent citizens; the Chinese were repeatedly warned to leave town, under pain of death. . ." (see Francis E. Warren, *Special Report of the Governor of Wyoming to the Secretary of the Interior concerning Chinese Labor Troubles*, 1885, Sweetwater County Historical Museum, Green River, Wyoming, 114).

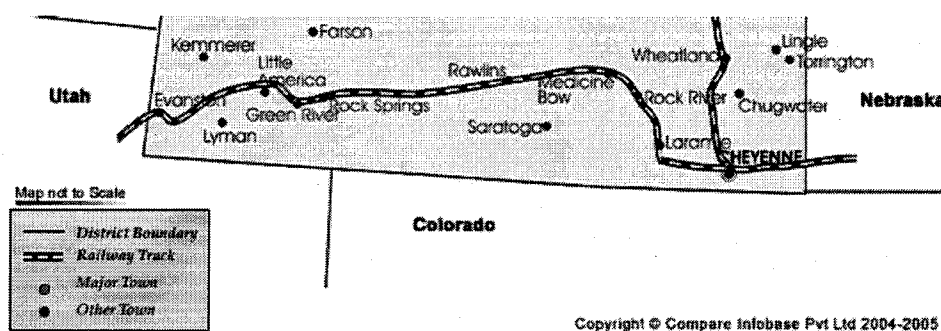


Figure 2. Railway Map of Southwestern Wyoming.³¹

Following the rout of the Chinese, the mob decided that it had as yet unfinished business and decided to move directly against UP management and property. This decision proved pivotal in helping UP convince government officials to introduce and then expand military force in the days following the massacre. The unpopular mine boss Jim Evans asked the rioters to allow him an extra day to collect his belongings before departing but was denied. Soo Qui, boss of the Chinese workforce, enjoyed the material benefits of his position in Rock Springs, but, when the crowd arrived at his company-owned house, the labor boss had already fled, leaving behind his Chinese wife, who soon left once the disappointed mob departed. The next target evinced some disagreement within the ranks of the rioters, causing at least a quarter of the group to quit and return home. W. H. O'Donnell, a local butcher, had recently assumed duties as Chinese labor agent for Beckwith-Quinn but, despite some hesitancy to confront the butcher, the majority of the crowd prevailed, agreeing to send O'Donnell's teamster a note advising the butcher to leave town quickly. The dissension in the crowd over O'Donnell witnessed

³¹ Note the distance from Evanston to Rock Springs is a little over 100 miles. "Wyoming Rail Network USA," <<http://www.mapsofworld.com/usa/states/wyoming/wyoming-maps/wyoming-railway-map.gif>>, 2004-5, accessed June 7, 2006.

the ambivalence of Euroamericans over accommodation with UP. Unlike Soo Qui, O'Donnell was white and, unlike Jim Evans, the unpopular mine superintendent whose departure from Rock Springs occasioned no debate among the rioters, was independent of the company for at least part of his livelihood.³²

While UP wielded tremendous clout in responding to the crisis, the massacre did reveal the limits of corporate control in Rock Springs that was developing around the coal operations. The actions of Sheriff Joe Young attest to both the significance of UP economics to the area as well as its basic impotence during the rioting. Arriving in Rock Springs late on the evening of September 2, Young could not find enough local men for a posse, so, fearing for his own safety, retreated to protect key UP buildings and did not contest the mob's late-night actions against Chinatown.³³ Essentially, while able to undermine organized labor efforts in the 1870s by racialized hiring practices, UP could not completely replace Euroamerican labor with Asian labor; instead, the company needed to obtain a *modus vivendi* between diverse laboring groups to operate its interests. The massacre revealed that such an accommodation could only work if the Euroamerican

³² *Rock Springs Independent*, September 11, 1885, Wyoming State Archives, 4; Storti, *Incident at Bitter Creek*, 118-119. The *Independent* reported that the mob assured the tearful wife of Soo Qui that she could stay in their home without fear of harm, but she, not trusting the rioters, packed "a small armful of household treasures" and fled to a neighbor's house. And the local paper emphasizes the hesitancy of a significant part of the mob to confront O'Donnell.

³³ Governor Warren sharply criticized Sheriff Young's actions, stating that if the lawman had possessed "a particle of courage, the matter of burning of buildings, loss of life, etc., would have been prevented or greatly lessened" (see Francis E. Warren to B. A. Dowmen, February 28, 1890, Francis E. Warren Papers, American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming, Laramie, Wyoming, Letter book 4-7-90 to 11-15-94. See also Storti, *Incident at Bitter Creek*, 123-124.

labor pool were significantly invested in the interests of UP operation to abide an "alien" presence in the mines. In 1885, obviously, it was not. To re-impose order, UP needed to seek, therefore, external support, chiefly from the United States government, especially its military arm, which was increasingly willing to advance the aims of corporate interests at the expense of working-class objectives.³⁴ Thus, the Rock Springs Anti-Chinese Massacre offered a splendid opportunity for big business and the federal government to cooperate in intervening in a local labor disturbance to protect not only corporate property but also corporate labor policy. Such an intersection of mutual interests in the case of Rock Springs resulted partly from heavy lobbying by UP and its key ally in the territorial government, Governor Francis E. Warren.³⁵

While both the territorial and federal governments debated an appropriate response to desperate UP cries for assistance, politicians' post-massacre piecemeal

³⁴ See Murray L. Carroll, "Governor Francis E. Warren, the United States Army and the Chinese Massacre at Rock Springs," *Annals of Wyoming* 59 (Fall 1987): 16-27; Clayton D. Laurie, "Civil Disorder and the Military in Rock Springs, Wyoming: The Army's Role in the 1885 Chinese Massacre," *Montana: The Magazine of Western History* 40 (Summer 1990): 44-59.

³⁵ UPCC, *History of the Union Pacific Coal Mines*, 84; Rhode, *Booms and Busts*, 53-54. In a letter of September 29, 1885, Governor Warren openly revealed his pro-corporate views to UP President Charles Adams, stating, "Labor *must* be subordinate to the employing power to increase *law and order* in our Territory as well as discipline in the ranks where employed" (see Francis E. Warren to Charles F. Adams, September 29, 1885, Union Pacific Railway Archives, Lincoln, Nebraska, Box 21).

After the massacre, labor increasingly attacked Warren for his corporate-friendly policies, arguing that no Euroamerican miner could afford to "vote for Warren and his Chinese record" (see ["No white miner"], Vertical Files, Sweetwater County Historical Museum, Green River, Wyoming, Folder: "Chinese I." However, Carroll argues that Warren's handling of the massacre made the governor "politically powerful allies" and allowed him to gain "favorable publicity on a national level," which helped launch Warren on a "major political career" lasting until the mid-1920s ("Governor Francis E. Warren," 25).

intervention in Rock Springs' affairs did not completely resolve local tensions in the favor of the railroad or its coal operations. Governor Warren himself responded swiftly to UP concerns by traveling from the territorial capital in Cheyenne westward to Rock Springs. He then quickly sped to Evanston, where anger over the presence of displaced Chinese laborers threatened to spill over into an even greater tragedy than Rock Springs, and began frantically wiring Army and Executive Branch officials. On the day of the massacre itself, Warren telegraphed the Secretary of War: "An armed mob of white men have attacked the Chinese miners working for Union Pacific RR at Rock Springs, Wyoming, driving Chinamen into hills and burning their houses & property belonging to Railroad company. Sheriff of that county powerless to suppress riot & applied to me for military aid. Union Pacific officials call for protection of life and property at Rock Springs."³⁶

The governor's concerns were heightened by the fact that Wyoming had no territorial militia and was completely dependent upon either local law enforcement, which was less than satisfactory from Warren's perspective, or federal intervention that both Warren and UP lobbied for constantly throughout the crisis. When the governor arrived in Rock Springs, the mines were still closed, an armed mob patrolled the streets,

³⁶ Francis E. Warren, Governor of Wyoming Territory, to Secretary of War, September 2, 1885. Copy of the Instructions and Orders of the President and Secretary of War, Communicated by the Adjutant General of the Army to the Commanding General, Division of the Missouri, together with other correspondence relating thereto on the subject of the recent Massacre of Chinese Miners in Wyoming Territory by Rioters, Papers relating to an Attack on Chinese Workers of the Union Pacific Railroad on Sept. 2, 1885, at Rock Springs, and to other violations of the rights of Chinese in the Western United States. Letters Received by the Office of the Adjutant General (Main Series) 1881-1889, Roll 386, 1885, 5820 (pt.).

and a local delegation warned him, as he later recalled, "that no Chinese should ever again live in Rock Springs, that no one should be arrested for the acts committed, and that danger and destruction would attend all those who might choose to differ with them."³⁷ Undoubtedly, the Chinese, some of whom witnessed their comrades die from wounds and exposure in the desert outside of town,³⁸ showed little desire to return to the coal mines unless their safety was guaranteed, although they would find scant welcome elsewhere, especially at nearby Evanston. Lamenting the devastation he had surveyed in Rock Springs, Warren became even more greatly alarmed when he arrived in Evanston and learned of trouble there, as well as in Rock Springs, Green River, and all along the UP line.³⁹ Fearing a general outbreak throughout the territory, Warren repeatedly begged authorities in Washington, D. C., for assistance.⁴⁰

³⁷ F. E. Warren to President Cleveland, September 3, 1885, in Francis E. Warren, *Special Report of the Governor of Wyoming to the Secretary of the Interior concerning Chinese Labor Troubles*, 1885, Sweetwater County Historical Museum. Green River, Wyoming. See also Storti, *Incident at Bitter Creek*, 125.

³⁸ See Storti, *Incident at Bitter Creek*, 125-126, for the more sensationalistic reports of sojourner tribulations in the Red Desert.

³⁹ The apparently systematic anti-Chinese demonstrations along the UP railway suggested to some complicity and conspiracy by the Knights of Labor, which the labor organization steadfastly denied. See Storti, *Incident at Bitter Creek*, 130-131; Stone, "The Knights of Labor on the Chinese Labor Situation," 227.

⁴⁰ On the day following the Rock Springs Massacre, Governor Warren received the following telegraph from the sheriff of Unita County (Almy coal mines), which reflected, for the governor, the status of anti-Chinese sentiment among coal-mining districts in the state: "In the opinion of the prominent citizens of Evanston and myself the outrages of Rock Springs are liable to be repeated here and the property and lives of some of our citizens in great danger, as well as the property of the Union Pacific Railway Company. I would respectfully request the aid of a company of troops immediately. Over 500 Chinese refugees from Rock Springs are here now" (see Francis E. Warren Papers,

Warren's pleas, along with heavy lobbying by the powerful UP,⁴¹ secured federal troops for both Rock Springs and Evanston. While Sweetwater County Sheriff Joe Young and his minions could not force the gun-toting mob to quit the streets of Rock Springs nor force open the UP mines, the presence of the 7th Infantry effectively normalized economic activity in Rock Springs. Yet such military intervention followed a political debate regarding the legality of using federal troops to quell a civil disturbance without a request from the territorial legislature. The narrow assignment of federal troops to protect United States mail represented a moderate response to the crisis. Governor Warren and UP President Adams pressured the federal government to expand the mission of troops both to protect UP interests and to assist local law enforcement's efforts to preserve order. In addition, pressure from the War Department (regarding coal production) and the Chinese Consulate (regarding the safety of foreign nationals) influenced President Cleveland's decision to enlarge the military's role to ensure local law and order.

Still, over the next few days, the people of Sweetwater County proved obstreperous to corporate and governmental demands for law and order. A frustrated Sheriff Young arrested sixteen residents⁴² of Rock Springs for their part in the massacre,

American Heritage Center, University of Wyoming, Laramie, Wyoming, Series V, Box 30, Folder 1).

⁴¹ Thomas Kimball to Francis Warren, September 10, 1885, *Warren Report*, 1225; Samuel Breck to Francis Warren, September 11, 1885, *Warren Report*; Storti, *Incident at Bitter Creek*, 124.

⁴² The Sweetwater Sheriff's Jail Record for September 5, 1885, lists the following arrests for "riot": Wm. Jenkins, Isaiah Whitehouse, John Sharp, John Burke, G. R. Beal, John Irwin, Ed. Brown, Ed. Kelly, Ric. Keenan, Rob. Gibson, Jas Quinlan, John Mathews, John E. Davis, Thos. Purdy, and Chas. Fouch (the latter charged with "shooting

but without the bringing of criminal charges none could be held accountable by a grand jury sympathetic to the Euroamerican miners. While federal troops established a camp on Pilot Butte, the UP fired known "troublemakers," and local law enforcement vainly tried to punish malefactors, Euroamericans in Sweetwater County maintained that the massacre had been justified and emblematic of local desires to protect the emerging community from nefarious forces whether corporate or cultural. Ironically, over the course of the years to come, the presence of federal forces in Rock Springs would redound to the Euroamerican definition of community in town. Officers would court local women. Enlisted personnel would patronize local saloons and brothels. And a select few soldiers would contribute to the founding of an Episcopal church, which would initiate a local Sunday School movement and contribute to community-building efforts by local Protestants.⁴³

While the federal decision to intervene in Rock Springs proved to have lasting consequences, Washington's response was not an immediate commitment of federal troops to maintain law and order in Rock Springs. Rather the federal response evolved after heavy lobbying by corporate and territorial officials. While Governor Warren's original call for military assistance focused on maintenance of law and order, UP concerns emphasized preservation of its property and the resumption of coal production. The actions of Governor Warren, a Republican holdover and a significant territorial

with intent to kill" rather than "riot" as the others were charged). See Sweetwater Sheriff's Jail Record, 1885, Sweetwater County Historical Museum, Green River, Wyoming.

⁴³ UPCC, *History of the Union Pacific Coal Mines*, 83-91; Rhode, *Booms and Busts*, 53-59; Storti, *Incident at Bitter Creek*, 129-138.

property owner, belied a firm commitment to property interests in the crisis. Both Warren's and UP's lobbying of federal politicians and military leaders indicate that all parties recognized the potentially expansive nature of anti-Chinese sentiment throughout the region and the desirability of returning Chinese laborers to the mines. However, Warren and UP were much more inclined toward federal intervention to obtain those goals than were officials in Washington, who hesitated to set a precedent of troop commitment in such cases. The federal government's eventual decision to intervene on the behalf of UP reflected Gilded Age concern for capital over labor interests. Previously, in the 1870s, due largely to UP monopoly of Wyoming transportation facilities and the dependency of United States mails on UP rail transport, federal troops had been ordered to protect the corporation's interests, as the 1875 incident in Rock Springs attests. So only this time, in the case of the massacre, were the troops dispatched not only to protect corporate property but also to protect what Euroamerican miners perceived as "coolie labor" that threatened their white man's privilege.⁴⁴

⁴⁴ For military correspondence in regards to the massacre and anticipated federal response and intervention, see United States Department of War, "Copy of the Instructions and Orders of the President and Secretary of War, Communicated by the Adjutant General of the Army to the Commanding General, Division of the Missouri," where one may see the different perspectives of events among territorial and federal, civilian and military leaders. For example, while General John Schofield telegraphed the Adjutant General on September 6 that there was "no report of further trouble" after the dispatching of troops, Governor Warren, on the same day, communicated to President Cleveland that he was powerless to use emergency measures without the legislature in session and could not prevent the continued agitation against Chinese." The next day, Warren notified the President that he feared "worse scenes" than those at Rock Springs would occur without an enlarged role for the military. On that same day UP President Adams concurred with Warren's assessment in a telegram to War Secretary Endicott. On September 7, citing treaty obligations as well as Governor Warren's concerns, President Cleveland finally agreed to an expansion of the military role not only to protect life and property but also to act as a local policing agency. (See Gen. J. M. Schofield to Adjutant

With order more or less restored in Rock Springs, UP officials quickly sought to resume coal production. Executives assumed that, with the support of the territorial government and the presence of federal troops, the company could resolve the labor situation from a position of strength.⁴⁵ Therefore, UP rejected an early demand to meet with a miners' grievance committee and determined to return the Chinese to the mines as soon as possible despite Euroamerican threats of strikes in Rock Springs and in the

General, U.S. Army, September 6, 1885; Francis E. Warren, Governor of Wyoming Territory to President Grover Cleveland, September 6, 1885; Francis E. Warren, Governor of Wyoming Territory, to President Grover Cleveland, September 7, 1885; Charles Francis Adams, President of the Union Pacific Rail Road, to Secretary of War William C. Endicott, September 7, 1885; Gen. R. C. Drum, Adjutant General, to Gen. J. M. Schofield, Headquarters of the Missouri, September 7, 1885, all in "Copy of the Instructions and Orders of the President and Secretary of War, Communicated by the Adjutant General of the Army to the Commanding General, Division of the Missouri").

Laurie notes that while domestic military intervention in labor disputes had previously occurred, such interventions to protect minorities or immigrants were unique and that federal civilian and military officials were "unsure how to respond" in the case of Rock Springs. He states, "Outside of military intervention in the South during Reconstruction, the anti-Chinese riots of 1885-1886 in Wyoming represented the army's first experience with a labor-related racial disorder" ("Civil Disorder and the Military in Rock Springs," 44).

For additional information on federal troops involved in Rock Springs, see Robert A. Murray, "Fort Fred Steele: Desert Outpost on the Union Pacific," *Annals of Wyoming* 44 (Fall 1972): 140-206.

⁴⁵ Superintendent Callaway informed Adams that he had "been unable as yet to get men in Rock Springs to get to work," laying blame directly with the Denver leadership of the Knights of Labor. See R. Callaway to C. F. Adams, September 14, 1885, Union Pacific Railway Archives, Lincoln, Nebraska, SG2 Box 21, Folder: Labor Disputes--Coal Strikes, Sept. 1885, including Rock Springs Massacre.

See also R. Callaway to C.F. Adams, September 12, 1885, Union Pacific Railway Archives, Lincoln, Nebraska, Box: President's Office, where Callaway reveals contents of a missive from Denver protesting the UP's attempts at driving away white miners from Rock Springs. See also Isaac H. Bromly, [Report on Rock Springs Situation to UP President Adams], September 26-28, 1885, Union Pacific Railway Archives, Lincoln, Nebraska, Box: President's Office, for fullest preliminary report for internal company consumption.

outlying coal camps. On the evening of September 9, a UP train delivered over 600 Chinese laborers escorted by Governor Warren, UP officials, and 250 soldiers to Rock Springs. The next day, company carpenters began erecting barracks for the returning workers. Nearby, on Pilot Butte, troopers settled into permanent quarters to ensure the safety of UP property and Chinese workers,⁴⁶ while UP coal superintendent D. O. Clark, prior to announcing the opening of the mines, fired forty-five Euroamerican miners suspected of participating in the riots. Despite the presence of troops and UP's hard line, the opening of the mines on September 12 witnessed less than one-fourth of the returned

⁴⁶ The Army named the encampment Camp Pilot Butte, and it remained in operation until the Spanish-American War. For camp history, including manpower levels, see Vertical Files, Sweetwater County Historical Museum, Green River, Wyoming, Record Group 393, Part V, Folder "Camp Pilot Butte," 1; Walter D. McGraw, Captain and Assistant Surgeon, "Record of Medical History of Camp Pilot Butte at Rock Springs, Wyoming, from Sept. 1885-Nov. 12, 1894," Special Report on Camp Pilot Butte, Post Surgeon, Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Record Administration Microfilm Collection 4, Camp Pilot Butte--Post Medical History. Sweetwater County Historical Museum, Green River, Wyoming; [Camp Pilot Butte Manpower Figures], Vertical Files, Sweetwater County Historical Museum, Green River, Wyoming, Folder "Camp Pilot Butte"; "Returns from U.S. Military Posts, 1800-1916, Roll 926, Camp Pilot Butte, Wyo.," September 1885--February 1899, Camp Pilot Butte--Post Military Returns, 1885-1889, National Archives and Record Administration Microfilm Collection 3, Sweetwater County Historical Museum, Green River, Wyoming.

Immediately following the massacre, eleven officers and 165 enlisted men of the 7th Infantry, 9th Infantry, and 21st Infantry units were in Rock Springs. By the end of the year, those figures had been reduced to six officers and ninety-six enlisted men; one year after the massacre, in September 1886, Camp Pilot Butte still reported five officers and seventy-five troops on hand. The last official report from Camp Pilot Butte showed one officer and sixty-one enlisted men as of February 1899 (see "Returns from U.S. Military Posts," National Archives).

Of course, many of the soldiers themselves were not happy to be assigned to this duty. Storti notes that mine superintendent Clark "was troubled by the rumors that the soldiers had no stomach for their mission," with the UP manager stating, "I fear the military are inclined to go the way of all Wyomingites in this matter" (*Incident at Bitter Creek*, 148).

Chinese willing to work. Three days later, angry, fearful, and assailed by threats from other miners, the Chinese took matters into their own hands and demanded rail passes to California. UP refused, and Beckwith-Quinn, UP's partner, also refused to pay back-wages so the Chinese could purchase rail passes on their own. Desperate, the Chinese even approached the local Knights of Labor for assistance to leave Rock Springs but were told to cooperate with the strike effort instead. Spurned at every turn in their attempt to leave town, Chinese laborers boycotted the mines, remaining in their dwellings. Fast approaching a depletion of coal reserves, UP began recruiting Mormon strikebreakers by negotiating with church officials in Salt Lake City and cut off supplies to the Chinese in an attempt to starve them back to work. The company's actions successfully forced the Chinese back to work, and the mines soon resumed full production despite the continuing strikes. UP used its control over rail transport and local housing to force fired workers to leave Rock Springs, undermining strikes at outlying camps when strikers there took newly opened positions in town. By end of autumn, efforts by Euroamerican miners to exclude the Chinese from the coalfields had failed.⁴⁷

⁴⁷ For UP efforts to resume coal production, punish recalcitrant Euroamerican miners, and coerce Chinese to return to the mines, as well as labor organization responses to these policies, see Bromly, *Chinese Massacre*, 71-75; R. Callaway to Charles F. Adams, September 30, 1885; R. Callaway to Thomas Neasham, September 30, 1885; Thomas Neasham to R. Callaway, September 26, 1885, all in Union Pacific Railway Archives, Lincoln, Nebraska, Box: President's Office. Also in Storti, *Incident at Bitter Creek*, 143-150.

Governor Warren fully supported UP firmness in regards to organized labor, noting in a telegram to UP executives, "I believe the Knights of Labor as a body will surrender right now because of the firm front you show them. If they do strike you will of course carry it to the bitter end and win fully without compromise. In this case you will have no further trouble. . ." (see Francis E. Warren to S. R. Callaway, Cheyenne, September 21, 1885, Union Pacific Railway Archives, Lincoln, Nebraska, Box: President's Office, 1).

Resumption of coal production, however, did not mean that normality had returned to Rock Springs and the coal districts, for there were the lingering questions of Chinese safety in the coal communities and legal proceedings regarding the murders. The Chinese government, in particular, was keenly interested in whether both justice could be served and personal security guaranteed in Rock Springs. The twenty-eight Chinese shot or burned to death in Rock Springs on September 2 were only the most easily recognizable victims; more than two dozen more were reported to have succumbed to starvation, exposure, or other tragic circumstances in the desert surrounding Rock Springs. Even the survivors picked up by UP trains and transported to Evanston for safe keeping reported a heavy price paid for simply being Chinese. Chinese testimony soon after the riot revealed:

By this time most of the Chinese have abandoned the desire to resuming [sic] their mining work, but inasmuch as the riot has left them each with only the one or two torn articles of clothing they have on their persons, and as they have not a single cent in their pockets, it is a difficult matter for them to make any change in their location. Fortunately, the company promised to lend them clothing and provisions, and a number of wagons to sleep in. Although protected by government troops, their sleep is disturbed by frightful dreams, and they cannot obtain peaceful rest.⁴⁸

Pressure from the Chinese government to protect its citizens provided the final ingredient in convincing Washington authorities to acquiesce to UP and territorial demands to enlarge the Army's role in actively policing the coal communities to protect Chinese laborers.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ "Memorial of Chinese Laborers," in Cheng-Tsu, *"Chink!"*, 155-157.

⁴⁹ On September 7, Adjutant General R. C. Drum, in Washington, instructed Commanding General, Headquarters of the Missouri, John M. Schofield that President

While an uneasy peace returned to Rock Springs in late 1885 and the Chinese returned to the coal mines, the question of justice remained a perplexing one. Assisted by General A. D. McCook, Chinese diplomats Colonel F. A. Bee and Wong Sic Chin engaged in lengthy investigations of the massacre. They interviewed numerous survivors in Rock Springs. Reporting to Army officials in Omaha, McCook, in a strongly worded missive, doubted the possibility of convicting any Euroamericans for the killings. He wrote:

Am fully convinced that any attempted trial and punishment by the civil authority, United States or Territorial, of the men who murdered the Chinese on the 2d of September, will prove a burlesque and farce in the name of law and justice. The men who committed the murders are aliens; their murdered victims are also aliens. . . . Martial law should be declared in Sweetwater County, Wyoming, the murderers arrested and tried by military commission. The savage brutality displayed by the fiends who did the killing, the most serious conditions, present and future, surrounding the whole business, make it my duty to forward this recommendation....⁵⁰

Cleveland had invoked the third article of the 1881 Treaty of China to respond to international and territorial demands for an enlargement of military police powers in Wyoming. The 1881 treaty read, in part, "If Chinese laborers, or Chinese of any other class, now either permanently or temporarily residing in the territory of the United States, meet with ill treatment at the hands of any other persons, the Government of the United States will exert its power to devise measures for the protection. . . ." (see President Chester Arthur, "A Proclamation Immigration In Regards to the Treaty between the United States and China, Concluded November 17, 1880, Ratified by the President, May 9, 1881, Ratification Exchanged July 19, 1881," Washington, D.C., October 5, 1881, in Drum to Schofield, September 7, Union Pacific Railway Archives, Lincoln, Nebraska, Box: President's Office, 12-14.

McCook's general ambivalence toward immigrants belied a nativist misconception of the nature of populating arid western territories with heterogeneous populations. See Lawrence A. Cardoso, "Nativism in Wyoming, 1868-1930," *Annals of Wyoming* 58 (Summer 1986): 20-35.

⁵⁰ Gen. A. D. McCook to the Adjutant General, Department of the Platte, September 20, 1885, in Bromly, *Chinese Massacre*, 77.

While Sheriff Young had rounded up suspects, the local coroner's jury found that the deceased Chinese had died "at the hands of parties unknown."⁵¹ Thirty-three individuals, none of whom were Chinese, who stayed away due to fears over new violent attacks testified before the Green River grand jury. Three of the witnesses providing testimony appeared to blame the Chinese for at least a part of the violence and property destruction. Timothy Thirloway stated, "I am quite convinced that [Chinese dwellings] were fired by the Chinamen, inasmuch as there were no white men [nearby]."⁵² Unsurprising to nearly all observers, the grand jury found that the evidence presented was not sufficient to indict any alleged rioters and then fired a parting shot at UP, suggesting that corporate abuses principally contributed to the affair. Governor Warren, commenting on the grand jury's findings in his official report, wrote, "[I]t did not surprise those who knew the situation when the grand jury. . . , which met a few days after the occurrence, and when the excitement was great, ignored all bills for indictment against those arrested for complicity in the rioting, murder, arson, and robbery."⁵³

⁵¹ Bromly, *Chinese Massacre*, 78.

⁵² Timothy Thirloway, Grand Jury Testimony, Rock Springs Massacre, Sweetwater County Superior Court, Green River, Wyoming, September 1885, in Bromly, *Chinese Massacre*, 78.

⁵³ Francis E. Warren, *Special Report of the Governor of Wyoming to the Secretary of the Interior concerning Chinese Labor Troubles*, 1885, Sweetwater County Historical Museum. Green River, Wyoming 117. Storti describes cheering in the courtroom after the reading of the grand jury's findings and the holding of a "victory feast" in Green River among the defendants and their supporters before a triumphal return to Rock Springs (*Incident at Bitter Creek*, 155-156). David Thomas believed no indictments were returned chiefly because no Euroamerican witnesses cared to testify.

The principal justice meted out for the massacre was the flight of several Euroamerican miners out of Rock Springs and a dozen years of military occupation of the town. While the official UP coal company history attested that the "only trouble that ever arose between the races after the massacre was in the form of trivial skirmishes between Chinese men and small white boys who liked to tease them,"⁵⁴ sources indicate that there continued to be antagonism between Chinese and Euroamericans, necessitating rigidly observed social boundaries save for festive occasions such as Chinese New Year and economic relations, especially in the retail and service industries in a growing Rock Springs. Despite instances of limited cultural *rapprochement*, racial conflict continued, such as that between Chinese and the very soldiers sent to protect them.⁵⁵ Such harassment represented the acceptance of racialized boundaries as part of local community identity. This negotiation of cultural identity in the era of the Anti-Chinese Massacre was pivotal to the developing sense of place and belonging in such a seemingly inhospitable environment as southwestern Wyoming. The introduction of Chinese workers--a workforce deemed "alien" by a largely immigrant community itself--in the

⁵⁴ UPCC, *History of the Union Pacific Coal Mines*, 91.

⁵⁵ An interesting incident in this regard occurred in 1896, involving two civilian males and a soldier who assaulted a group of Chinese early one morning after a night of carousing, cutting the queue from one of them. A soldier on guard duty noted the incident and reported it to authorities, leading to the incarceration of the three ruffians. Newspaper coverage noted ironically that while Camp Pilot Butte had been established to protect the Chinese, "some of the blue coats forget that fact" ("Stories of Pioneer Life," excerpted from "The Chinese Affair," *Rock Springs Independent*, January 25, 1896, n.p., Wyoming State Archives, Cheyenne, Wyoming, Folder: Albany County--Misc. Articles, WPA Subject 1183). In addition, various sources recount Euroamerican desecration of Chinese graves in the years after the massacre (see, for example, Brig. Gen. Robert Ousten, "The Rock Springs Massacre," Wyoming State Archives, Cheyenne, Wyoming, MSS 466, 13-14).

mid-1870s exacerbated the already existing insecurities of settlers attempting to create something from out of their own experiences in a forbidding land controlled by a rapacious corporation.⁵⁶

Conclusion

The theme of reclamation through violence is one, unfortunately, all too evident in western history. Richard Slotkin's *The Fatal Environment* suggests how the intersection of race, class, and expansionism concocted a brew of cultural genocide in the development of western land and its resources.⁵⁷ At the time of the Rock Springs Anti-Chinese Massacre and shortly afterward, many western newspapers agreed wholeheartedly with the anticorporation, anti-Chinese stance of Rock Springs residents. The *Omaha Bee* denounced the UP contractors who "systematically tyrannized over white miners," and the *Cheyenne Sun* argued that a "law higher than written statutes" had been violated by UP policies in Rock Springs.⁵⁸ Undoubtedly, the massacre symbolized

⁵⁶ For localized perspectives of the Rock Springs Massacre, see A. A. Sargent, "The Wyoming Anti-Chinese Riot," *Overland Monthly* 6 (November 1885): 507-512. For more local historical analysis of the massacre and its ultimate meaning, see, for example, Arlen Ray Wilson, "The Rock Springs Wyoming, Chinese Massacre, 1885," M. A. Thesis, University of Wyoming, Laramie, Cheyenne, 1967, who argues that the real culprit behind the massacre was UP labor policies that left the miners feeling "virtually powerless" (138). Dell Isham notes that the Rock Springs memorial to the massacre dedicated in 1985 reads, in part, that the massacre was emblematic of "the tragic consequences that can be attendant on poor working conditions, racial animosity, and purposeful attempts to break unions" (*Rock Springs Massacre 1885*, Appendix III).

⁵⁷ Slotkin, *Fatal Environment*.

⁵⁸ Bromly, *Chinese Massacre*, 7-9.

the cultural conflict between capital interests and community ideals in an inchoate western settlement. Forty years later, a citizen of Rock Springs looked back on the massacre and proclaimed, "When the pitiful handful of white miners decided to take a stand against cheap Chinese labor, they decided not only for themselves and their posterity, but for their town, their state, their America."⁵⁹ The lessons had been learned: ethno-racial accommodation was fundamental for western urban development, yet the construction of cultural boundaries in Rock Springs could prove to have challenges as unforgiving as the surrounding landscape.

⁵⁹ "Narrative of Chinese Riot Is Given at Meeting of Historical Society," typewritten manuscript, n.d., Address Given to Rock Springs Women's Club, c. 1920s, Wyoming State Archives, Cheyenne, Wyoming, WPA Subject 51, 1-2.

CHAPTER THREE

LANDSCAPES AND PEOPLES

Introduction

The 1885 Anti-Chinese Massacre represented a conflation of western myth, capitalist enterprise, and urban development in the evolving community life of Rock Springs, Wyoming, during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Euroamerican settlement along Bitter Creek involved exploration of a "wilderness," conflict with Native Americans, and the negotiation of "frontier" conditions. Yet modernizing forces remained prevalent. Certainly, Butch Cassidy and other infamous western characters paraded through the local scene, but the larger history of the Union Pacific mining camps involved the more universal realities of labor, capital, and exchange that reflected the American experience from 1869-1929. The origins of the settlement that became Rock Springs evidence how central to that evolving municipality the diverse threads of western experience served in defining the historical processes of urban industrial development.¹

¹ For the traditional construction of the frontier, see, of course, Frederick Jackson Turner, *The Frontier in American History* [1893] (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1962). Henry Nash Smith, *Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1950), explores the metaphorical nature of

While industrialization and urbanization represent forces of modernity, the early Rock Springs historical experience occurred in a region that the hegemonic culture constructed largely as "wasteland." Local historians note that the uniqueness of Rock Springs stems from the "desert and distances from water."² Southwestern Wyoming's arid land and its lack of nonmineral resources proved a particularly challenging setting for various settlers, including Amerindians, Euroamericans, and Asians. For much of the period before the Civil War, the area that became Rock Springs proved largely a place to move through rather than settle upon, as Shoshoni and Ute tribes, fur traders, and gold prospectors hurried quickly through the desert lands on their way to more promising destinations. Two important economic endeavors transformed this area from a land of transit to one of potential community development. First, the burgeoning transportation industry, at the beginning with stagelines and then with the transcontinental railroad, brought a sense of permanence to early settlement. Second, the rich coal deposits near Bitter Creek juxtaposed opportunity for growth and diverse demographic and business

the American West and interpretations of the frontier. Several western historians used the Turner perspective to discover a myriad of different types of frontiers; see, for example, Duane Smith, *Rocky Mountain Mining Camps: The Urban Frontier* (Bloomington: Indiana University, 1967); Oscar Osburn Winther, *The Transportation Frontier: Trans-Mississippi West, 1865-1890* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1964). The "New West" construction of the American frontier may best be exemplified by Limerick, *Legacy of Conquest*, and White, *"It's Your Misfortune."* In his controversial *The Fatal Environment*, Richard Slotkin views the mythology of the frontier in relation to the ideology of industrial capitalism.

² Val Binkerhoff and A. Dudley Gardner, et al., *An American Place: A Centennial Portrait of Rock Springs, Wyoming, Then & Now, 1889-1989* (Rock Springs: Pioneer Press/Western Wyoming Community College, 1990), 10.

development with "a rapid and dislocating process of urbanizations and industrialization in a region that was isolated and raw. . . ."³ The challenge for miners and other immigrant settlers in Rock Springs was to surmount these obstacles, as well as UP hegemonic tendencies and ethno-racially diverse settlement patterns, so as to create a sense of community along the banks of Bitter Creek.

In his synthesis of New West history, Richard White writes, "Westerners had been far more concerned with re-creation than creation."⁴ The municipal community of Rock Springs that evolved from the earliest Euroamerican explorers to the boosters of the New Era suggests the truth to that axiom. While experimenting with diverse economic, social, and cultural relationships, the inhabitants of what became Rock Springs nevertheless sought to impose on their environment a preconceived notion of order, productivity, and society. A study of the formative years of Rock Springs illustrates the complicated nature of community formation in a "hell-on-wheels" locality that longed to make a larger mark on territorial life.

Indigenous Peoples and Euroamerican Explorers and Traders

The geographical processes that deposited abundant coal resources in southwestern Wyoming left behind an environment that many travelers found forbidding

³ Anne F. Hyde, "Round Pegs in Square Holes: The Rock Mountains and Extractive Industry," in David M. Wrobel and Michael C. Steiner, eds., *Many Wests: Place, Culture, and Regional Identity* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1997), 96.

⁴ White, "*It's Your Misfortune*," 181.

when first encountering the region.⁵ Prehistoric southwest Wyoming lay beneath an expanding and shrinking sea, producing a climate conducive to tropical forests. The dense forest undergrowth served as the organic material from which millions of years of geological compression eventually left extensive coal resources. The retreating inland sea and forces of wind and water erosion sculpted a rugged topography of hills, cliffs, and rock outcroppings, the latter described by an Army physician stationed in Rock Springs as "worn into fantastic shapes . . . variously formed."⁶ Sagebrush dotted the arid landscape, and waterways, such as Bitter Creek, were rendered nonpotable due to heavy alkalinity. Southwestern Wyoming's climate was dry and experienced widely varying temperatures. While snowfalls ranged from one to twelve inches, rainfall averaged only three inches per year. Such a region could easily be constructed as inhospitable to the type of settlement that characterized much of the rest of antebellum America.⁷

Scholars estimate that the earliest human inhabitants in southwestern Wyoming appeared between the tenth and eighth centuries BCE, subsisting on grasses, shrubs, and foraging mammals until the aridity of the region drove them to higher elevations, where they remained until about 4,500 BCE. The Shoshoni were not a monolithic people, yet some generalizations may be made concerning their culture. Despite meager historical

⁵ Originally, the first territorial legislature named this region Carter County; see Marjorie C. Trevor, "History of Carter-Sweetwater County, Wyoming to 1875" (Master's Thesis, University of Wyoming, 1954); Ronald Vern Jackson, ed., *Wyoming 1860 Census Index* (North Salt Lake: Accelerated Indexing Systems International, 1983).

⁶ McGraw, "Record of Medical History of Camp Pilot Butte."

⁷ Rhode, *Booms and Busts*, 4; McGraw, 1-3; T. A. Larson, *Wyoming: A Bicentennial History* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1977), 6-7.

evidence, Ake Hultkrantz attests that the eastern Shoshoni emerged as “masters of the western plains,” especially adept at bison hunting. Pre-Columbian evidence suggests that they were quite efficient at ceramics. Obtaining horses in the mid-eighteenth century C.E., the Shoshonis further established their presence in the northern plains. Until 1850, Shoshoni and Ute tribes wintered in the Green River basin along with the bison, but recurring aridity forced the herds to seek better forage, and the tribes followed. Sweetwater County historians Val Binkerhoff and A. Dudley Gardner, examining the period when Euroamerican fur traders first appeared, describe the region to become Sweetwater County "as belong[ing] to three tribes.”⁸

The Western Wyoming Range divided Bannock from Shoshoni lands, yet Bannocks commonly traveled to the Green River to hunt and trade with the first trappers and later with western-bound emigrants. The Uinta Mountains served as the boundary between the Shoshonis and Utes, but Utes commonly crossed the mountains to trade at Fort Bridger. "Southwestern Wyoming was an international borderland with Shoshonis, Bannocks, and Utes claiming portions of the future state. It was the Shoshonis, however, who lived in future Sweetwater County. . . ."⁹ Wyoming historian T.A. Larson notes that the period of European exploration evidenced that Euroamericans "found roving bands of Indians: Shoshonis in the west, Crows in the north, and Cheyenne and Arapahos in the southeast. Sometimes, also, Blackfeet entered from the north and Utes from the south. The Oglala and Brulé Sioux moved to eastern Wyoming from South Dakota to complete

⁸ Binkerhoff and Gardner, *An American Place*, 17.

⁹ *Ibid.*

the pattern of Indian settlement."¹⁰ The ethno-racial history of Rock Springs largely marginalizes the Native American presence, not because of the insignificance of the people and their heritage but largely because of the significance of coal and related commodities to later historical developments in the region.¹¹

These tribes represented the indigenous peoples Euroamericans first met, and their interactions tended to be cooperative. In 1825, fur traders held the first rendezvous in what became Sweetwater County, which was followed by a second in 1834. The rendezvous witnessed not only regional economic activity but also social intercourse among diverse western peoples, which would remain a constant factor in translating western commercial activity into cultural interactions. By the 1840s, fur traders came to outnumber indigenous peoples, thus undermining the tenuous peace negotiated at Fort Laramie in 1851 that the Chivington Massacre at Sand Creek had already disrupted.¹² Yet, while Amerindian resistance to Euroamerican invasion significantly defined transcontinental expansion, Native Americans remained largely peripheral to both the

¹⁰ Larson, *History*, 12.

¹¹ Ake Hultkrantz, "The Shoshones in the Rocky Mountain Area." *Annals of Wyoming* 33 (April 1961): 19-41; White, "It's Your Misfortune," 25, 120.

¹² George C. Frison, *Prehistoric Hunters of the High Plains* (New York: Academic Press, 1978), 8, 23; Binkerhoff and Gardner, *An American Place*, 17-30; Larson, *History*, 9-20.

For additional sources on Amerindian peoples of southwestern Wyoming, see Virginia Cole Trenholm and Maurine Carley, *The Shoshonis: Sentinels of the Rockies* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1964); Virginia Cole Trenholm, *The Arapahoes, Our People* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1970); Thomas F. Dawson and F. J. V. Skiff, *The Ute War: A History of the White River Massacre* (Boulder: Johnson Publishing Company, 1980); Trevor, "History of Carter-Sweetwater County," 1-12.

ethno-racial dynamics and the frontier legacy of Rock Springs. Nevertheless, city father Duncan Blair had married a widowed Native American woman, and their mixed-race son attended Rock Springs schools. In addition, a Native American family lived in town for some time, and the wife reportedly rebelled against her abusive husband and began a laundry business after associating with "white women."¹³ Such flexible ethno-racial dynamics helped framed the early years of the 1860s and 1870s.

While the first Euroamericans in the region of southwestern Wyoming were principally fur traders, those who would make the most significant impact on future permanent settlement were explorers either indirectly or directly involved in early commercial and/or transportation enterprises. John Colter claimed to have explored Wyoming in 1807, although many disputed this claim; fur trader William Ashley's 1825 journey was well chronicled. In 1843, the "Pathfinder" John C. Frémont trekked though southwestern Wyoming to much publicity, helping to lead the ambitious explorer to garner the 1856 Republican nomination for president of the United States. The most

¹³ See, for example, "The Indian Trouble," *Rock Springs Miner*, July 25, 1895; "The Indian Outbreak at Jackson's Hole," *Rock Springs Miner*, August 7, 1895, 1; "Indian Disturbances in 'Jackson Hole' County, Wyoming, 1895," *Annals of Wyoming* 16 (January 1944): 5-33; "The Indian Outbreak," *Rock Springs Miner*, November 5, 1903, 2; "Ute Indians War Dancing," *Rock Springs Miner*, June 16, 1906, 3.

The 1895 rumors of planned Bannock brutalities against Euroamericans were later attributed to attempts to restrict native hunting rights in the region. Newspaper articles from 1906 on Shoshoni reservation cessations effectively neglected Amerindian rights in favor of Euroamerican commercial plans (see "Shoshone Reservation: Ceded Portions Contain 8000 Square Miles Vast Tracts Susceptible to Reclamation By Irrigation," March 9, 1906, 1).

"Interview with Mr. James Crookston," Union Pacific Coal Company Archives, Archaeological Services of Western Wyoming College, Box 23, Folder 1, 1; "Very Old Times," *Employes' Magazine* II (February 1925): 19.

famous of the early explorers was Jim Bridger, fur trapper, trader, and scout, who, along with partner Henry Fraeb, built a substantial trading post in 1841 along the banks of the Green River. Within two years, however, frontier conditions gave way to increasing permanent settlement. During this period, the Shoshoni profited from trading with the westward emigrants, although clashes between Amerindians and Euroamericans continued. One legendary fracas involving a Pony Express rider chased by native riders is included among the many legends of the discovery of the rock spring from which Rock Springs derived its name.¹⁴ Captain Howard Stansbury's expedition to the Salt Lake Valley, assisted by Jim Bridger, came across the rock spring in 1850. However, of much greater importance to Stansbury and to the future of southwestern Wyoming was his discovery of "a bed of bituminous coal cropping out of the north bluff of the valley, with every indication of its being quite abundant."¹⁵ This discovery of a rich coal resource

¹⁴ For Pony Express account, see Rhode, *Booms and Busts*, 12; Trevor, "History of Carter-Sweetwater County, 98.

Other accounts attribute the discovery of the spring to "early fur trappers searching for beaver," who were surprised to find the water to be potable in this alkaline region. See Maurine Carley, et al., "Overland Stage Trail-Trek No. 3: Trek No. 13 of Emigrant Treks," *Annals of Wyoming* 34 (October 1962): 240; for Pony Express story, see also Storti, *Incident at Bitter Creek*, 12, 32. Carley, among others, however, demonstrates that the Rock Springs' Pony Express connection was apocryphal, yet the legend resonated well with the future construction of the community as a frontier-in-progress.

¹⁵ Captain Howard Stansbury, *An Expedition to the Valley of the Great Salt Lake of Ohio* (London: Sampson Low, Son, and Company; Philadelphia: Lippincott, Grambo, and Company, 1852), 234.

strongly influenced the eventual route of the Union Pacific and the subsequent coal mining industry in Sweetwater County.¹⁶

The Transportation Boom

While UP's operations proved most important to the future settlement of Rock Springs, the first significant transportation business in the region was Ben Holladay's Overland Stage.¹⁷ Kentucky-born Holladay worked alongside his father leading wagon trains through the Cumberland Gap before migrating to California, where he diversified his interests in various transportation and mining concerns. By 1861, the 37-year-old entrepreneur acquired the Central Overland California & Pike's Peak Express Company, which he then merged with his interest in the freight company Russell, Majors, and

¹⁶ Larson, *Wyoming*, 15; Rhode, *Booms and Busts*, 4-5; Storti, *Incident at Bitter Creek*, 2-33; Binkerhoff and Gardner, *An American Place*, 23-28; Carley, "Overland Stage Trail-Trek No. 3," 240. Glenn Chesney Quiett, *They Built the West: An Epic of Rails and Cities* (New York and London: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1934), notes the significance of discoveries of natural resources to the planned route of the transcontinental railway (5).

¹⁷ In regards to western dependency upon transportation networks, William Robbins contends that "[t]he West has been in the forefront in pioneering new forms of development and redevelopment, in remaking town and countryside, and in reconfiguring geographic space into new physical and social patterns" (see "In Pursuit of Historical Explanation: Capitalism as a Conceptual Tool for Knowing the American West," *Western Historical Quarterly* XXX [Autumn 1999]:286).

The essential character of what became the Overland Trail was certainly realized by the 1850s, which recognized pre-Stansbury expeditions as establishing the utility of the region for transportation purposes (see Rock Springs District, BAM, Environmental Assessment [EA] and Decision Record [DA]: 'WY-044-EA85-21, April 1, 1985, Vertical File, Sweetwater County Historical Museum, Green River, Wyoming, Folder "Overland Trail").

Waddell to become the Holladay Overland Mail and Express Company. Holladay successfully negotiated the challenges posed by highwaymen, severe snowstorms, and cut-rate competitors, investing in improved coaches, renovated stations, and experienced employees; however, Plains warfare in the 1860s forced the transportation magnate to shift from the northerly South Pass-Sweetwater route to the Cherokee Trail to the south, which carried the Overland through the Bitter Creek region.¹⁸

Holladay retained control of the Overland until 1866. In that year, he sold to Wells-Fargo, which only operated the enterprise until 1869, when the completion of the transcontinental railway made it obsolete. Despite its brief existence, the Overland did attract the first permanent Euroamerican settlers to what became Rock Springs. The Overland utilized a series of home and relay stations. One along Bitter Creek, reputedly one of the stage drivers' least favorite stretches because of the dreariness of the landscape and threat of outlaws who preyed on passersby, was a "crude rock structure" first established along a freshwater spring, a rarity in such climes. Western historian Robert B.

¹⁸ See J. V. Frederick, *Ben Holladay, The Stagecoach King: A Chapter in the Development of Transcontinental Transportation* (Glendale: Arthur H. Clarke, 1940); Ellis Lucia, *The Saga of Ben Holladay: Giant of the Old West* (New York: Hastings House, 1959), 8-12, 150-152; Winther, *The Transportation Frontier*, 54; Rhode, *Booms and Busts*, 5-8; Rock Springs District, B. A. M., Environmental Assessment (EA) and Decision Record (DA), WY-044-DA85-21, April 1, 1985, Vertical Files, Sweetwater County Historical Museum, Green River, Wyoming, Folder: Overland Trail, 1-6; Maurie Carley et al. "Overland Stage Trail--Trek No. 2: Trek No. 12 of Emigrant Treks," *Annals of Wyoming* 33 (October 1961): 195-214.

South Pass in the late 1860s had proved to be a particularly attractive locale due to the discovery of gold deposits (see Lola M. Homsher, ed., *South Pass 1868: James Chisholm's Journal of the Wyoming Gold Rush* [Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1960]).

Rhode described the Overland's swing station at the rock spring as about " sixty feet long and twenty-five feet wide. It included housing for both the stock tender and the teams, the latter about as comfortably housed as the former. There were portholes in the walls about every twelve feet for rifle barrels. Stations were commonly constructed of logs, often plastered with mud, and had sod roofs. But rock was plentiful along Bitter Creek, and no farther away than the bluff at the station's rear, while logs were unavailable, unless hauled from great distances. The tamped earth formed the floor."¹⁹ This small station served not only to begin permanent settlement in the region that would become Rock Springs but also introduced a fledgling service economy, the type of enterprise that offered future entrepreneurs an economic niche independent of UP operations.

Two of these early enterprising individuals were Archibald and Duncan Blair, Scottish immigrant brothers who mined for gold in California and South Pass City before gambling their futures on the stage station at the rock spring. At the time, according to the UP company history, the rock spring and its environs were "a mere sage brush, greasewood, and alkali flat, over which roamed herds of antelope and flocks of sage chickens," with scattered Amerindian camps nearby. Realizing that the coming of a transcontinental railway greatly enhanced the value of nearby coal deposits, Archie Blair decided that mining offered another attractive business opportunity and established the first coal mine in the district by 1868. Along with the mine, which was located near a three-room building, including living quarters, office, store, and restaurant, the Blair

¹⁹ Rhode, *Booms and Busts*, 12; UPCC, *History of the Union Pacific Coal Mines*, 46.

brothers founded Blairtown, a mining camp that within a year attracted various laborers and their families and featured a slaughterhouse and stock house that serviced the burgeoning ranch industry. This stock-raising industry, so popular and profitable throughout the territory, offered opportunities for settlers possessing a bit of capital to establish business interests separate from the railway and the mines. Several ranches operated in early Sweetwater County, including the Blairs' BB Ranch, Tim Kinney's Circle K, the Scrivener brothers' YL Ranch, and Orie Haley's Two Bar. These early cattle concerns dominated Sweetwater County ranching until sheep herding became a much more profitable endeavor. Rock Springs served as a central service and retail center for rural ranching interests, although enduring independent service and retail enterprises would not fully emerge until the 1870s and 1880s.²⁰

While numerous entrepreneurs in southwestern Wyoming, such as the Blairs, profited from the proximity of UP, the railway itself garnered the greatest economic rewards and wielded the strongest political influence among the various business interests in early Rock Springs over the next four decades. Initially, like much national legislation, the idea of a transcontinental railroad was sidetracked by the heightening sectional crisis of the mid-nineteenth century. After the Civil War began, the Republican-controlled

²⁰ UPCC, *History of the Union Pacific Coal Mines*, 25-26, 46-47, 54; Rhode, *Booms and Busts*, 2-9, 11-12, 14. Larson, *Wyoming*, notes that stock raisers, despite their "country" image, conceived of territorial and regional development "in a larger and more businesslike perspective" (127). Of course this expanded economic perspective by local entrepreneurs relied on both exploitation of UP communication and transportation facilities as well as retail and service demands afforded by a growing population in Rock Springs and the surrounding Sweetwater County coal camps.

For an insightful study of Sweetwater County ranching, especially in relation to gender analysis, see Garceau, "*The Important Things of Life*."

Congress enacted the Pacific Railroad Act on July 1, 1862, which afforded control of underground natural resources, such as coal, to the railways.²¹ The resulting construction of twin lines--the Central Pacific from California eastward and the Union Pacific from Omaha westward (see Figure 3)--represented a nearly complete symphony of western American historic topics: ethno-racial accommodation and conflict, public-private sector cooperation, land speculation and municipal development, and labor-capital negotiations. The history of the Union Pacific, in particular, incorporates a significant number of Gilded Age historical realities, including rapacious capitalists like Jay Gould, influence peddling in the Credit Mobilier scandal, self-aggrandizing exploits by national heroes such as Grenville Dodge, and ethno-racial accommodation like that involving the vanquished tribes of the Plains and the immigrant labor of China.²²

²¹ United States Congress, "The Pacific Railway Act," 1862, United States Library of Congress, Collections Guides and Bibliographies, Primary Documents in American History, <http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=llsl&fileName=012/llsl012.db&recNum=520>, accessed January 4, 2007.

²² For histories of the transcontinental railroad, especially the Union Pacific role, see, for example, Grenville M. Dodge, *How We Built the Union Pacific Railway* (Ann Arbor: University Microfilm; Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1910); Robert E. Reigel, *The Story of Western Railroads* (New York: MacMillan Company, 1926); Sarah Gordon, *Passage to Union: How the Railroads Transformed American Life, 1829-1929* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1996); David Haward Bain, *Empire Express: Building the First Transcontinental Railroad* (New York: Penguin/Viking, 1999); Stephen Ambrose, *Nothing Like It in the World: Building the Transcontinental Railroad* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000).

Morris H. Mills notes the ephemerality of settlement in relation to the railway work, describing how stageline employees readily shifted to the railroad enterprise ("With the Union Pacific Railroad in the Early Days, *Annals of Wyoming* 3 [April 1926]: 197).

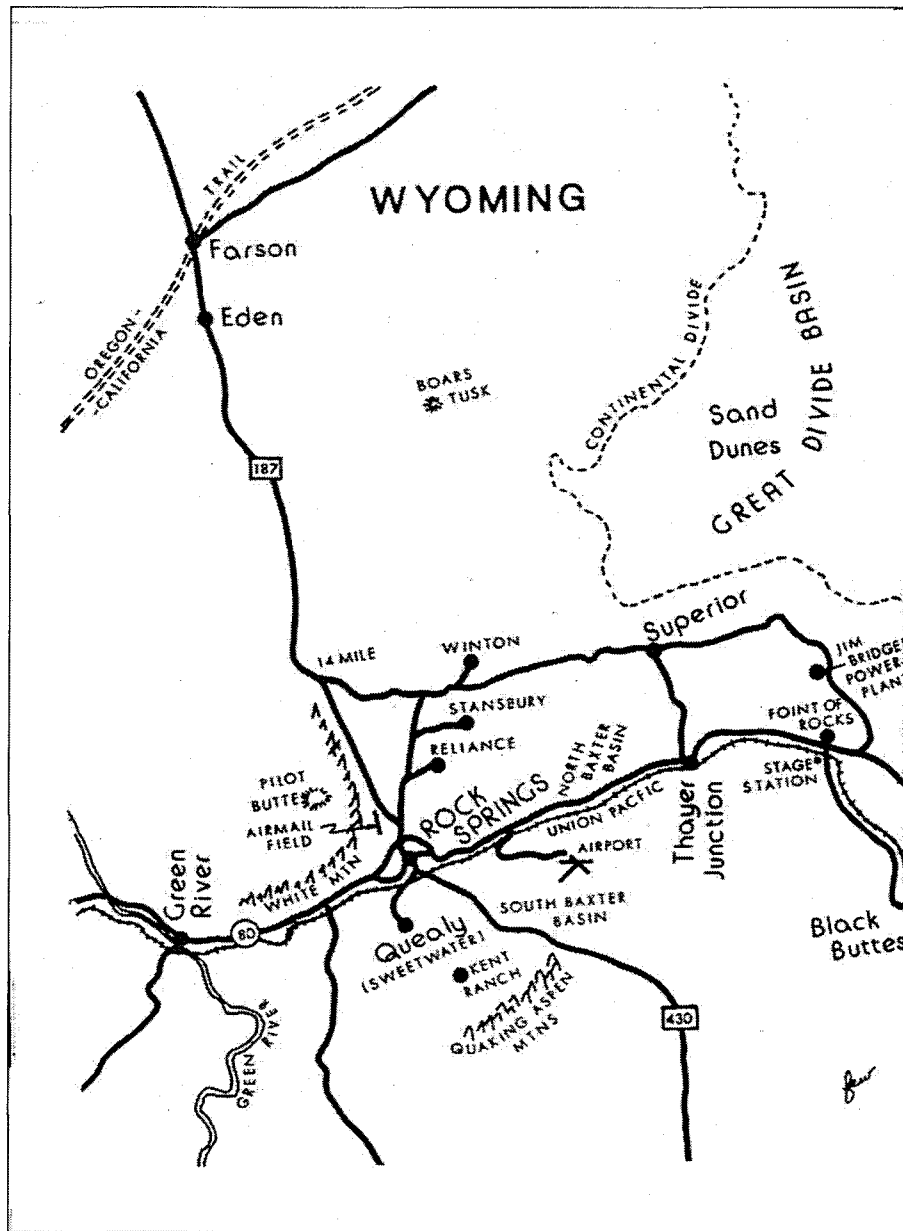


Figure 3. Map of Southwestern Wyoming Towns and Mining Camps.²³

²³ Rhode, *Booms and Busts*, 158.

Early Coal Operations

While the Blairs and other ambitious mine operators pioneered coal enterprises in southwestern Wyoming, they could not in the long run compete with UP's political and economic clout. The temptation of Bitter Creek coal deposits for UP corporate interests definitely augured ill for independent entrepreneurs. UP found the enterprising Wardell brothers, successful mine operators from Missouri, a reliable source of quality Wyoming coal and franchised company coal rights to the Missouriians. While the Blairs mined coal deposits along their part of Bitter Creek, Thomas Wardell had begun a profitable operation at Carbon before dispatching his brother Charles and colleague William Mellor to locate additional sites for coal operations, which included Black Buttes, Hallville, and Point of Rocks. The two eventually located the abundant outcroppings along Bitter Creek, which led Thomas Wardell to transfer his major operations from Missouri to the new camp named Rock Springs. Blairtown, although surviving (its proximity to Rock Springs prevented its translation into yet another western ghost town), became a peripheral area for mining once the Union Pacific decided to exploit for its own use the mineral resources in the area. By the end of the 1860s, UP, heavily pressured by government directors, realized the immense dividends to be accrued from the area's coal deposits and rewarded regional mining entrepreneurs—not the Blairs, who, denied a spur line, abandoned mining for their more profitable ranching ventures--with franchise rights

to mine the coal deposits. The new mining operations resulted in the booming of a new municipality, Rock Springs, that steadily lured population from Blairtown.²⁴

The mining operations required increasing numbers of laborers, including skilled and nonskilled workers, and the growing population attracted a heterogeneous group of individuals in the retail, service, and managerial fields to support the mining sector. Because of the heavy influx of immigrants, especially those with experience in coal mining, from the British Isles before the Civil War, it is not surprising that many of the

²⁴ Rhode, *Booms and Busts*, 35. Storti notes, "Rock Springs not only outperformed Carbon, it outperformed every other coal camp west of the Missouri. By 1875, Number One, had become the most productive--and most famous coal mine in the West; Rock Springs alone was now supplying half of all coal used or sold by the Union Pacific" (*Incident at Bitter Creek*, 47).

For more on early Wyoming coal mining, see "W. H. Mellor, Pioneer Mining Superintendent, and Charles H. Mellor, Oldest Old Timer in Rock Springs," *Employes' Magazine* 5 (September 1928): n.p.; Old Timer, "Early Wyoming Coal Mining Reminiscences," *Employes' Magazine* 2 (June 1925): 17; "The Stansbury Mine," *Employes' Magazine* 19 (December 1942): 506-507; C.E. Swann, Chief Engineer, UPCC, "Outline of Discovery and Development of Coal Seams in Sweetwater and Carbon Counties, Wyoming," Part Two, *Employes' Magazine* 17 (July 1940): 295-298.

Before Rock Springs' No. 1 mine became known throughout the west for its high productivity, the Union Pacific established its first mining town in Carbon, a settlement begun by Thomas Wardell (see UPCC, *History of the Union Pacific Coal Mines*, 46-47; Rhode, *Booms and Busts*, 29-31), a Missouri mining entrepreneur who obtained a lease from UP to mine in Wyoming. (See UPCC, *History of the Union Pacific Coal Mines*, 28-45; Rhode, *Booms and Busts*, 35, 42, 45-48; Trevor, "History of Carter-Sweetwater County," 99.)

For the proportion of Rock Springs coal output in relation to state production levels, see C. S. Dietz, Deputy State Geologist, *The Developed and Undeveloped Mineral Resources of Wyoming: A Statistical Compilation and Industrial Evaluation of Sundry Metallic and Non-Metallic Minerals, Chemicals, Salts, Fuels and Power Producers of Wyoming* (Cheyenne: Wyoming Geological Survey, 1929), 120-121.

For a succinct UP statement on the significance of Rock Springs coal and the expropriation of the Wardell interests, see J. V. McClelland, "History of the Union Pacific Coal Company," *Union Pacific Coal Company Employe's Magazine* 22 (March 1945): 115-116. On Wardell, see "Thomas Wardell," *Union Pacific Coal Company Employe's Magazine* 5 (May 1928): 186.

early settlers in the region were of British descent. The 1870 United States Census shows that 90 out of 144 residents in Rock Springs were from the British Isles or its dominions (a good half dozen or so had migrated from Canada), or about sixty-two percent of the total population. There were also immigrants from Austria, Denmark, and Germany among the population. In fact, among the 144 residents of Rock Springs by 1870, only 25, or a little more than seventeen percent, were native-born Americans.²⁵

Pioneer life in the mining camps along Bitter Creek was arduous. Many miners burrowed their dwellings into the banks of Bitter Creek, an alkaline rivulet whose fetid aroma certainly merited its name.²⁶ Along with the miners' hovels rose buildings more indicative of permanent settlement. The UPCC history records that in 1870 early mine official William Mellor moved a frame house twenty-five miles from the mining camp of Point of Rocks to Rock Springs. In that same year, entrepreneurs Joseph Young and John Jarvie constructed a store and saloon north of the Union Pacific tracks. The Young-Jarvie building served also as the first schoolhouse in Rock Springs, where Mrs. Osborne and later Miss Holliday conducted classes. Shortly thereafter the settlement claimed a real

²⁵ United States Government, *Ninth Census of the United States* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1870).

UPCC, *History of the Union Pacific Coal Mines*, notes that by 1869 the Blairs employed "many men who made homes for themselves and their families, first in tents or dugouts on the hillsides"(47). Along with these nascent coal operations came workers' efforts to secure fundamentally humane working conditions and acceptable wages. See Emma A. Fletcher, "A History of the Labor Movement in Wyoming, 1870-1940" (Master's Thesis, University of Wyoming), 1945, 24-25.

²⁶ See William Hutchins, "Travel through Wyoming--Sweetwater County" (1872) Vertical Files, Sweetwater County Historical Museum, Green River, Wyoming, Folder: "Overland Trail," SCHM, 3, for a traveler's account on Bitter Creek and the surrounding region.

school building--a one-room frame house where Mrs. James Tisdale, wife of an early miner, presided. Continued growth of the community necessitated both expansion of the building and the staff, including the hiring of a local librarian.²⁷ Mine owner Thomas Wardell soon constructed a stone edifice to serve as mine office, store, and post office situated on the south side of the UP tracks. The transfer of the railroad station from Blairtown to Rock Springs, along with the relocation of the post office, represented a significant shift in municipal development, especially after UP expropriated Wardell's coal interests.²⁸

As much of the nation's development after the Civil War depended upon economic expansion and urban growth, so, too, did the future identity of Rock Springs rely upon ever-increasing progress--a material expansion readily translated into mythopoeic consciousness. However, this growing municipality was governed by no central plan or development scheme. Rock Springs, as the UPCC History notes, grew as "Topsy grew--without direction . . . the streets followed . . . a crazy-quilt, zig-zag pattern instead of a definite plan . . ." ²⁹ Most vexing was the fetid Bitter Creek, which, since it offered no potable water, served chiefly as a sanitation canal. Every spring, the Creek flooded the coal camps, destroying the dugouts built into its banks to offer miners

²⁷ UPCC, *History of Union Pacific Coal Mines*, 48.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 47-49.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 49-50.

haven from the merciless Wyoming winters.³⁰ Such geographical challenges, therefore, partly offset early material gains in late-1860s, early-1870s Rock Springs. Yet, capital endeavors represented only a part of human enterprise in that region. As increasing numbers of people and dollars flocked to the coal beds in southwestern Wyoming so too did the challenges of the age: municipal governance, health and sanitation, capital-labor cooperation, and ethno-racial accommodation.

Conclusion

What would transpire over the next few decades was a fascinating epoch of competition between town and corporation over the characteristics of local identity. At no point did labor, entrepreneurial, or corporate interests declare specific objectives in defining the future of Rock Springs according to their own desires. Rather, development of Rock Springs over the next few years witnessed a series of accommodations among groups, institutions, and individuals that helped define the nature of life in the municipality. While UP provided capital and the significant lure of ready employment, independent enterprise offered the promise of upward mobility, individual initiative, and residential autonomy. Interacting with both corporate and entrepreneurial interests, laborers could negotiate economic and social space in the growing town. Rock Springs, then, in the 1860s and early 1870s afforded a constructive laboratory for community

³⁰ See A. Hannah Cutting's observations on Bitter Creek in Binkerhoff and Gardner, *An American Place*, 32-37; John S. Gallagher and Alan H. Patera, *Wyoming Post Offices, 1850-1980* (Burtonsville: The Depot, 1980), 114.

development; however, the perils of industrial growth, including the expansion of ethno-racial dynamics, intervened by the late 1870s. From the mid-1870s through the 1880s, the residents of Rock Springs would find the definition of their municipality and its diverse community networks disrupted by heightening labor-capital conflicts and the globalizing tendencies of industrial capitalism.³¹ Contending with frontier conditions, the early residents of Rock Springs experienced the necessity of balancing the pressures of corporate dominance represented by UPCC with the desirability of municipal development and ethno-racial accommodation. As the 1870s progressed, Rock Springs developed within the context of competing yet coterminous cultural processes related to capitalist extractive industry. The proliferation of Chinese workers in the crisis atmosphere of the 1870s transmogrified the already volatile social conditions of this frontier municipality and laid the preconditions for murder in the 1880s.

³¹ For an overview of key economic, social, and cultural trends of the Gilded Age, see, for example, Lewis L. Gould, *America in the Progressive Era, 1890-1914* (Harlow, England: Longman, 2001); Lawrence B. Glickman, *A Living Wage: American Workers and the Making of Consumer Society* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1997); Alan Trachtenberg, *The Incorporation of America: Culture and Society in the Gilded Age* (New York: Wang, 1982); Robert H. Wiebe, *Search for Order, 1877-1920* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1967); Robert Heilbroner and Aaron Singer, *The Economic Transformation of America* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1977); Lawrence Goodwyn, *Democratic Promise: The Populist Movement in America* (New York: American Philological Association, 1976); Thomas Cochran and William Miller, *The Age of Enterprise* (New York: Macmillan, 1942).

CHAPTER FOUR
HEGEMONIC CORPORATION AND INCIPIENT COMMUNITY,
1876-1885

Introduction

The development of Rock Springs during the Gilded Age, especially the events that led to the massacre, partly reflected Robert V. Hine's view that whenever a mining camp became a town, it came to reflect the segmentation of "the lives of its people into associative groups."¹ Certainly, the municipal trends of the 1870s and 1880s evidenced that local conditions reflected priorities for family stability, orderly class arrangements, and redistributive regional economies. However, the idiosyncratic nature of Rock Springs--specifically, the hegemonic designs of UP and its racialized labor policies--complicated community relations. In Rock Springs, boundaries between enterprising and working classes were less severely drawn than elsewhere, largely because of shared immigrant and ethnic status. Additionally, the presence of the Chinese ameliorated potential antagonism among diverse Euroamerican groups. Thus, the development of local municipal community defied the traditional boundaries that defined many other

¹ Hine, *Community on the American Frontier*, 92.

mining camps, allowing diverse groups to create their own unifying beliefs, behaviors, and traditions, albeit along racialized lines.

The Frontier Experience

From 1875 to 1885 Rock Springs witnessed a critical transformation from fledgling coal camp to nascent urban community toward company town status. At the heart of this transformation was the coming of the Chinese who, like their Euroamerican counterparts, sought to create a nurturing culture apart from UP dictates. The Rock Springs, then, that emerged between 1875 and 1885 divided into UP, Euroamerican, and Chinese sectors. Capital and labor, enterprise and culture, ethnicity and race, proved to be the means by which the diverse peoples of Rock Springs expressed their visions of community along Bitter Creek. During the mid-1870s, Rock Springs residents constructed a diversified community that had to negotiate the shoals of a "hell-on-wheels" railroad town and company mining camp. The fact that the municipality became neither devolved upon residents' abilities to create their own viable institutions and traditions in a forbidding environment. Although the conflict between Euroamerican and Chinese miners represented the absolute worst in ethno-racial conflict, the establishment of the Rock Springs coal camp offered opportunities for individuals to define their own experiences independent from UP hegemony. The 1885 Anti-Chinese Massacre

symbolized the nadir of Euroamerican nativist paranoia,² yet it also reflected the fact that corporate priorities imposed a continuing diversity among laborers. While Euroamericans continued working in Rock Springs' mines after the massacre, the growing population offered laborers various opportunities to construct their own independent commercial and cultural enterprises. This chapter explores the various ways in which capitalist and community interests constructed community in relation to municipal and cultural interests.

While the material reality of Rock Springs from the travails of the transcontinental railway of the late 1860s through the xenophobic violence of 1885 garnered little notice elsewhere, the municipality experienced, albeit ephemerally, the mythopoeic prowess of the West during its first few decades. One sensationalistic national television program that aired in 2000 referred to the Rock Springs of these days as a "bawdy, frontier boomtown."³ And, according to legend and lore, early Rock Springs residents encountered a variety of notorious characters. While publisher-politician Horace Greeley envisioned the transcontinental railway as emblematic of the

² For various perspectives on nineteenth-century nativism and xenophobia, see, for example, Dale T. Knobel, *"America for the Americans": The Nativist Movement in the United States* (New York: Twayne, 1996); John Higham, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860-1925* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1988); Ronald Takaki, *Strangers from a Different Shore* (Seattle: Back Bay Books, 1998); Philip Perlmuter, *Divided We Fall: A History of Ethnic and Religious Prejudice in America* (Ames: Iowa State University, 1992); Roger Daniels and Harry H. L. Kitano, *American Racism: Exploration of the Nature of Prejudice* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1970).

³ Stephen Land et al., *City Confidential: Rock Springs, WY*, VHS documentary, Jupiter Entertainment/A&E Television Network, 2000.

nation's future in Jeffersonian terms, the reality of Rock Springs and other "Hells-on-Wheels" revealed the complexities of an industrial age. Nevertheless, the realities of frontier life, the complicated nature of ranching enterprise, and the inchoate state of permanent settlement made this stop on the U.P. route a legendary part of the constructed "Wild West." Outlaws, such as Isom Dart and later Tom Horn, enjoyed exploiting the increasingly corporate nature of late-nineteenth- and early twentieth-century ranching.⁴ Despite the infamy of the aforementioned desperadoes, the most notorious figure in early Rock Springs appears to be Robert Parker. Coming to Rock Springs with the sobriquet Cassidy, Parker appeared, at first, the ordinary laborer seeking opportunity in a mining camp. Earning his keep in a butcher's shop, Parker allegedly garnered the name "Butch." Trade work, however, did not satisfy Parker, and as Butch Cassidy, he found preying upon the Union Pacific and its payroll more lucrative.⁵

⁴ See Cary Stiff, "Black Colorado-1: Isom Dart: The Rustler Who Tried to Go Straight," *Empire Magazine* July 13, 1969, Vertical Files, Sweetwater County Historical Museum, Green River, Wyoming, Folder "Outlaws—Tom Horn," 10-16; Jay Monaghan, *Tom Horn: Last of the Bad Men* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1946 [1997]).

⁵ For notorious outlaws in Sweetwater County, see Richard Patterson, *Butch Cassidy: A Biography* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), 56-57, 100; Kim Brasington, "Citizen Cassidy," *Palisades* 1 (July 1982) Vertical Files, Sweetwater County Historical Museum, Green River, Wyoming, Folder: "Outlaws—Butch Cassidy," 10-11; Land, *City Confidential: Rock Springs, WY*; George L. Erhard, "Calamity Jane," *Rock Springs Rocket*, January 18, 1929, n.p., Vertical Files, Sweetwater County Historical Museum, Green River, Wyoming, Folder "Calamity Jane"; Stiff, "Black Colorado"; Monaghan, *Tom Horn*; *Wyoming Telegraph Dispatch*, Special Edition (Summer 1994), Cheyenne, Wyoming; Kathy Gilbert, "Making History on the Outlaw Trail; Bandits Find Refuge in Southwest Wyoming Landscape," *Sweetwater County, Wyoming "The Guide,"* 40th issue, March 21, 2000.

Apparently, Butch fit in well with wide-open Rock Springs. While Cassidy's sister Lula Bentenson averred that her brother was a favorite of local housewives because of the generous portions he allotted, a local historian states that the outlaw "walked pretty much on the wild side of life" in gambling and drinking haunts in the town.⁶ While Calamity Jane flaunted convention more than violated local statutes, she was also a notorious figure locally. Legend has it that Jane worked in a variety show and beer garden in the downtown region, living in a dugout along Bitter Creek. Supporting herself by soliciting drinks and sex, as did other transient, single women in the coal camps, Calamity Jane set herself apart by discharging her pistols upon entering saloons and "shouting verbal oaths well tarnished."⁷ Such exploits reflected the turbulent nature of Rock Springs through its first few decades into the early twentieth century. They also represented the significance of the town's service economy to the region's railroad, mining, and ranching labor forces.⁸

Because men significantly outnumbered women throughout the first few decades of community building in Rock Springs,⁹ service establishments, including saloons, gambling dens, and dance halls, proliferated. Catering to railroad laborers, coal miners,

⁶ Patterson, *Butch Cassidy*, 57.

⁷ "Calamity Jane Raised Hell in Rock Springs," *Sweetwater County, Wyoming, "The Guide,"* A4.

⁸ Patterson, *Butch Cassidy*, 56-57; Erhard, "Calamity Jane," n.p.

⁹ According to the United States Government, *Tenth Census of the United States*. "Schedule No. 1.-Inhabitants, Sweetwater County, Rock Springs, Wyoming" (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1880), adult males outnumbered females by 546 to 76 with 141 children in town.

cowboys, gamblers, and unskilled transients, these businesses created an economic niche apart from UP control. This service sector allowed more permanent-minded residents opportunities to escape the toil and dangers of the mines to pursue independent enterprise. While the watering holes and gambling parlors allowed hard-working men a chance to escape momentarily the rigors of their trades, these places also harbored threats of violence endemic to frontier towns such as Rock Springs. Barroom brawls and gunfights happened frequently. Butch Cassidy is reported to have saved the life of noted attorney Douglas A. Preston in one saloon melee. In nearby Evanston, which many Rock Springs residents frequented, Charles Wardell, brother of mine entrepreneur Thomas Wardell, was knifed to death during a community dance but did not expire until he returned with a revolver to kill his assailant.¹⁰ Life in early Rock Springs, therefore, was hard and dangerous, and such a climate could turn particularly perilous when laborers found their livelihood threatened by corporate employment policies.

Wyoming historian T. A. Larson notes that while “Wyoming in its isolation and with its distant plains nurtured the cowboy,” such as those who frequented Rock Springs’ saloons, these romantic figures were merely the “hired hands”; the stockmen were the capitalists, following a “more typically bourgeois life.”¹¹ Ranchers operated in a symbiotic relation with UP, owning independent businesses but relying on the railway for

¹⁰ UPCC, *History*, 54-55; Storti, *Incident at Bitter Creek*, 53; Brasington, “Citizen Cassidy,” 10-11.

¹¹ Larson, *Wyoming*, 127.

transportation, much as did retailers and merchants in Rock Springs. Dee Garceau notes that while stock raising coincided with early Sweetwater County coal mining ventures in the 1870s, it was not until the 1880s that ranching became more established. She writes that "cattle and sheepmen began to establish ranches ... in the county during the 1880s, in response to overgrazing on public lands. Competition for control of range became intense, and ranchers turned to land ownership, fencing out their rivals. The open-range era faded..., [and] the country became more settled..."¹² Cattle raising dominated early Sweetwater County, but soon sheep raising proved more attractive because of the sparse forage in the area and the lack of start-up capital. The nascent stock industry attracted both foreign capital and native entrepreneurs. Among the earliest ranchers in the area of Rock Springs were Archibald and Duncan Blair, whose mining business had contributed to the rise of Blairtown west of Rock Springs. English émigrés Joseph Young and Samuel Mathews both operated business establishments in Rock Springs before buying ranches, as did Butch Cassidy's former employer, William Gottsche. Irish-born Tim Kinney, originally an agent for UP, ran one of the more successful ranches in the county. Aside from ranching, these and other men also invested in retail, service, and financial establishments in Rock Springs while also serving in various public offices.¹³

At times in the 1870s and 1880s, ranching appeared as perhaps the only independent business that would survive clashes between UP and its workers, but, despite

¹² Garceau, *"The Important Things of Life,"* 23.

¹³ Rhode, *Booms and Busts*, 42; UPCC, *History of the Union Pacific Coal Mines*, 54; Garceau, *"The Important Things of Life,"* 24; Hendrickson, *Peopling the High Plains*, 14.

mass firings of Euroamerican workers in 1875 and again in 1885, independent businesses and fledgling socio-cultural institutions survived. Up until 1875, Rock Springs developed as did other, similar coal-mining towns in the West (Figure 4). Working men followed the railroad

west and stayed when the Blairs, Wardells, and other mine owners began their operations. Following the miners were service and retail entrepreneurs, families, and immigrants from coal-producing countries. A strike in 1875 altered those early developmental trends, principally through the mass firings of Euroamerican miners afforded by UPCC importation of Chinese laborers.¹⁴ Because of these heightened tensions between capital and labor, Rock Springs in the decade from 1875 to 1885 witnessed significant threats to the viability of municipal development separate from UP control. Perversely, the Anti-Chinese Massacre of 1885 marked the beginning of the transition of Rock Springs from an incipient company town to a community with diverse opportunities for immigrants who sought to serve the ever-insatiable labor demands of UP.¹⁵ Ironically, the labor

¹⁴ Larson, *Wyoming*, 146.

¹⁵ The hegemonic aspirations of UPCC always threatened Rock Springs with the status of "company town." Undoubtedly, the earlier in the city's history, the greater UP and its coal company's influence. One scholarly tome argues, "As a direct result of the Union Pacific's increased involvement, the community (in the 1870s and 1880s) took on the aura of a company town. Company housing was eventually constructed, as were a company store and a coal mine office. . . . The company town atmosphere of Rock Springs was especially evident in the employment practices of the Union Pacific Coal Company" (A. Dudley Gardner and David E. Johnson, "Cultural Resource Inventory & Mitigation of Thirty-Seven Mine Reclamation Sites in Sweetwater County Wyoming," Vol. 1, Prepared for Land Quality Division, Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality, Cultural Resource Management Report No. 29, Archaeological Services,

problems of the 1870s and 1880s proved the bridge from an early ethno-racial dynamic dominated by immigrants from the British Isles and Scandinavia, particularly when the Chinese began arriving in the mid-1870s, to the hyper-diverse ethno-racial reality of the early twentieth-century. UP policies, especially those related to labor, largely constructed that bridge.

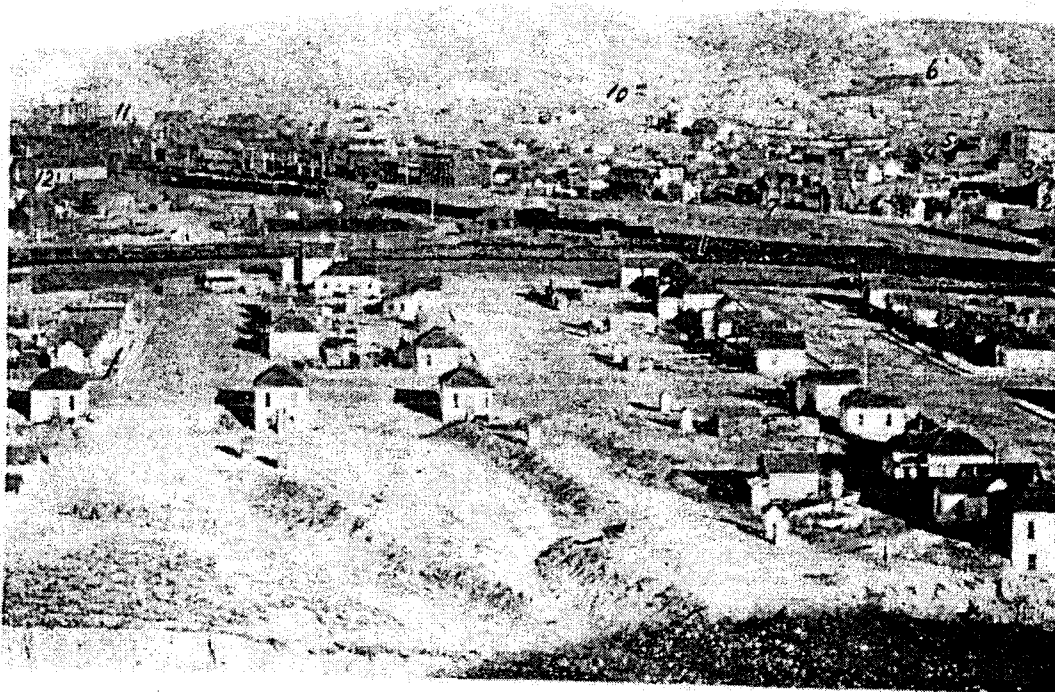


Figure 4. Rock Springs in 1893¹⁶

Western Wyoming College, Rock Springs, Wyoming, May 1986, 18). Yet, examination of social and cultural ties within the burgeoning Rock Springs community suggests that UP hegemony was circumscribed even at an early date, when smaller population numbers afforded it greater leverage, by associational ties, ethnic affiliations, municipal aspirations, and entrepreneurial designs.

¹⁶ Rock Springs in 1893, looking across West Flat toward the center of town. One may see the centrality of the railway through downtown. Toward the northeast is the center of UP operations, as well as the Catholic Church, public schools, leading

Railways, Mines, and UP

As early as 1870, according to Wyoming historian T. A. Larson, Wyoming pioneers “guessed correctly that coal and livestock offered the best opportunities for growth.”¹⁷ While both industries thrived, their success, like that of Rock Springs itself, depended upon the transcontinental railroad, which transformed constructed wilderness into contested settlement. Prior to the expansion of Union Pacific operations westward, the region to become Rock Springs functioned chiefly as a transit sector, where people on the move sought temporary respite from the harsh climes before resuming their treks. With UP came more orderly and stable relations between the locality and its inhabitants, mainly because of coal deposits. Although various entrepreneurs appeared early in the process, UP political connections, economic prowess, and hegemonic expectations translated into the company's growing dominance in the region.

While the Stansbury expedition's discovery of coal along Bitter Creek significantly influenced the eventual route of the transcontinental railroad, the consolidation of coal-mining operations by UP took a lengthy and somewhat torturous course. Chief Engineer C. E. Swann detailed the progression of mining ventures in nineteenth-century Sweetwater County from Blairtown and major production centers such as Rock Springs and Evanston to outlying camps including Quealy, Hopkinsville,

Protestant churches, and coal operations. To the northwest, lie such commercial enterprises as the opera house and tipple house (see Rhode, *Booms and Busts*, 60).

¹⁷ Larson, *Wyoming*, 144-145.

Hallville, and Black Butte. From 1869 through 1882, mining companies opened a total of seven mines in the Rock Springs area (see Figure 3). Some of these mines proved to be disappointing due to the poor quality of the coal or impediments to safe and efficient production. Number One Mine was thought to be one of these failures as a rock band obscured coal deposits, but further prospecting proved the mine to be one of the richest bituminous coal deposits in the West.¹⁸

The first year of mining in Rock Springs yielded 365 tons of coal, but the years that followed witnessed rapidly accelerating coal production, which contributed to and conditioned the development of the community. The UP company history credited the early growth of Rock Springs to the increasing output of Mine No. One, stating, "Number One Mine came in as a substantial producer in 1871, and on the output and quality of Number One the village rode into place, the output sufficing not only to protect the demands of the little eight-wheeled locomotives..., but likewise it served to keep warm the settlers who were then moving rapidly into the great plains."¹⁹ From 1871 to 1875 coal mining production increased fourfold along Bitter Creek, as miners hewed dugouts out of the creek bed to provide themselves with rude shelter from the elements and mining officials began constructing the first permanent dwellings. During this same four-

¹⁸ C. E. Swann, "Outline of Discovery and Development of Coal Seams in Sweetwater and Carbon Counties, Wyoming, Part One," *UPCC Employes' Magazine* 17 (June 1940), 231-236; C. E. Swann, "Outline of Discovery and Development of Coal Seams in Sweetwater and Carbon Counties, Wyoming, Part Two," *UPCC Employes' Magazine* 17 (July 1940), 295-298; "Old Timer, "Early Wyoming Coal Mining Reminiscences," *UPCC Employes' Magazine* 2 (June 1925), 17.

¹⁹ UPCC, *History of the Union Pacific Coal Mines*, 47.

year period, the population in Rock Springs nearly tripled, thereby shedding the “air of jaunty impermanence” suggested by one early critic of the coal camp.²⁰ Yet, as the town grew and coal operations multiplied, UP found itself facing the economic crises of the 1870s with profound troubles of its own. Out of these financial quandaries would come the fateful decision to convert the franchised coal properties into UP holdings with a radically different management philosophy.

During the late nineteenth century, UP remained in the hands of two very capable capitalists, neither of whom blanched in placing corporate profits well above the interests of workers. Charles Francis Adams, Jr., son of the noted diplomat and a decorated Civil War general in his own right, guided the UP ship of state through the turbulent days of the Rock Springs Massacre and afterward, but it was his predecessor, Jay Gould, who set UP on the course of labor relations in the 1870s that contributed to the massacre. Prior to coming to UP, Gould had been involved in the transportation sector with the Erie Railway and the Pacific Mail Steamship Company, among other enterprises. Gould enjoyed a reputation as a callous, coldhearted, calculating businessman, although such a reputation did not set him too apart from other “captains of industry” of the Gilded Age. His reputation certainly was reflected in his approach to UP after he assumed control in early spring 1874, when UP suffered from a variety of problems, including declining rail traffic, tax difficulties, and repercussions from the Panic of 1873. At the same time, the railway-franchised coalfields proved a boon to Wardell and others. Rock Springs historian Robert Rhode writes, "The estimated cost of producing coal at the UP mines

²⁰ Storti, *Incident at Bitter Creek*, 54.

was about \$2:00 a ton. Profits that the Union Pacific could realize from selling coal that it did not burn in its own locomotives were indicated by the fact that Wardell's company sold coal in Ogden, Utah, at \$6.50 a ton."²¹ Despite attempts to stem the tide of red ink in its railway operations, UP still faced financial ruin. That is, until Gould ordered a review of all major departments and learned to his astonishment that UP had franchised the Sweetwater County coalfields.²² After only two weeks in office, Gould ordered both the termination of the supposedly fifteen-year Wardell contract signed in 1868 and the creation of a UP Coal Department (later the UP Coal Company). Stunned by the rapidity of UP actions, Wardell capitulated control of the mines, resorting to a long, drawn-out, and ultimately futile suit in the federal courts over the next five years. In the meantime, UP retained its title to the coal and quickly exploited the profitable enterprise by seizing all mines, opening new coal seams, and pursuing a series of wage cuts. Charles Francis Adams later declared that these mines proved the "salvation of the Union Pacific,"²³ but

²¹ Rhode, *Booms and Busts*, 43.

²² UP and Wardell negotiated the original lease in July 1868, which allowed the former "to prospect for coal, own and operate mines" for fifteen years. In March 1874, arguing that "Wyoming, a new country, required cheap fuel in order that settlement might be effected and new industries," UP cancelled the contract and assumed control of the mines itself. See "Thomas Wardell," *UPCC Employes' Magazine*, 186; McClelland, "History of the Union Pacific Coal Company," 116.

²³ Larson, *Wyoming*, 114.

the last of these measures set into motion the strike of 1875, which brought the first Chinese miners to Rock Springs.²⁴

With the coal mines now under UP control, economic livelihood in Rock Springs largely devolved on the railway and its treatment of its workforce. As Jay Gould and UP managers sought to stem the flow of corporate red ink, they quickly addressed the issue of laborers' wages as a means of controlling corporate expenditures. While miners in the East faced severe wage cuts,²⁵ Wyoming laborers enjoyed fairly equitable wages throughout the early 1870s, which translated into greater worker control of the workplace. The UPCC History reports:

Up to the middle of the seventies, before the Chinese came to Rock Springs in any great numbers, the men made good wages and were somewhat independent One of these old timers pictures the situation in this manner.

"The miners were getting seven cents a bushel for coal and their work as steady. So they became pretty independent. One of our favorite stunts, when we wanted to go out of the mine and play around a little, was for one of the men to be chosen by the others to throw his cap in the air. If it stayed up, then we stayed on the job, the bosses couldn't do much about it."²⁶

²⁴ Edwin P. Hoyt, *The Goulds* (New York: Weybright and Talley, 1969), 57-58; Storti, *Incident at Bitter Creek*, 55-59; Rhode, *Booms and Busts*, 43. There was some internal disagreement within UP management as to the legality of voiding the Wardell contract, but the government directors strongly backed Gould's decision to do so, although they did not initially endorse the UP's own management of the resources (Klein, *Union Pacific*, 330).

²⁵ Klein argues that Gould's experience with the Blossburg, Pennsylvania, bituminous mines, where his operations produced coal at \$1.25 per ton (nearly \$0.90 under average UP costs) despite labor difficulties, convinced him that UP could drive costs down to \$1.30 if management proved to be able to master its labor (Klein, *Union Pacific*, 330-331).

²⁶ UPCC, *History of the Union Pacific Coal Mines*, 58.

Because UP enjoyed a near monopoly in Sweetwater County mining, Gould's decision to cut costs brought far-reaching consequences. In 1874, and again a year later, UP demanded that miners accept wage cuts. Rock Springs miners sought to hold the line at five cents a bushel, while UP officials sought to drive the wage scale lower.²⁷ If the contest had remained principally about wages, UP might have lost control of the labor dispute. However, three separate issues arose that complicated negotiations and resulted in a favorable situation for UP. The first of these issues was wages. UP refused to agree to the five cents per bushel wage that miners demanded, thus forcing miners to consider whether or not they could support themselves and their families at that wage rate. Second, Gould, pressuring his Omaha office minion Clark to take a hard line, insisted that miners agree to the usual winter production increase at the lower wage rate, although laborers stood fast against UP production demands in order to endorse wage demands. Finally, the implied threat of Chinese workers faced the recalcitrant Euroamerican miners. They later knew that labor conditions in the West favored recruitment of Asians for the mines, yet until they witnessed the event itself, Rock Springs miners appeared to embrace their own sense of invulnerability until too late. In 1875, two years before the great Railway Strike, conditioned by the 1873 Panic, weathering life in primitive conditions, and facing the

²⁷ White, *"It's Your Misfortune and None of My Own,"* notes that the incipient western miners' movement differed fundamentally from older craft unionism in that "they contained the seeds of industrial unionism. . . [cultivating] a vision of workers as a single group with a single set of interests" (291). This was certainly the case in Rock Springs except for the inclusion of Chinese, who were perceived at the outset as "different" from Euroamericans.

arduous life in a frontier coal camp, Rock Springs miners fought to protect their livelihood. Thus, 1875 served as a denouement between free and contract labor. UP, seeking to save the railway from debt and government condemnation, found the Rock Springs coal miners too independent and recalcitrant in relation to corporate needs.²⁸

By 1875, UP corporate power and the independent orientation of Rock Springs miners were at loggerheads. In that year, UP witnessed continuing declines in coal prices; thus company officials sought to staunch red ink by cutting production costs, especially workers' wages. Jay Gould pressured UP managers to drive down wages, promising price cuts at the company retail stores and further consideration of workers' demands.

However, as the labor dispute developed, UP evinced less and less sympathy with labor demands. As discussed previously, when Rock Springs miners balked at management demands to boost production twenty-five percent during the winter months, S. H. Clark flexed corporate muscle by threatening Euroamerican miners with the importation of Chinese strikebreakers.²⁹ When the miners walked out in early November, the Miners National Association asked regional chapters not to mine UP coal in a sympathy

²⁸ Storti, *Incident at Bitter Creek*, 55-58; A. Dudley Gardner and Verla Flores, *Forgotten Frontier: A History of Wyoming Coal Mining* (Boulder: Perseus, 1989), 51; UPCC, *History of the Union Pacific Coal Mines*, 58; Rhode, *Booms and Busts*, 42-43

²⁹ Clark knew of what he spoke since UP managers had been discussing the use of Chinese in the mines, especially since they had been employing Chinese on the railway at about nearly 60% less the rate paid Euroamericans (Klein, 331). For more on 1870s railway labor disputes, see, for example, David O. Stowell, *Streets, Railroads and the Great Strike of 1877* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1999); H. Shelton Stromquist, *A Generation of Boomers*; Erma A. Fletcher, "A History of the Labor Movement in Wyoming, 1870-1940," M.A. Thesis, University of Wyoming, Laramie, Wyoming, 1945, 24-25.

maneuver; however, with Wyoming Governor John M. Thayer and federal troops intervening on behalf of the corporation to protect the nascent transcontinental railway industry, Rock Springs' striking miners found themselves powerless as UP trains brought in the first carloads of Chinese. While Clark and Governor Thayer watched, "the trains pulled up near Mine Number Three, and the Chinese piled out. Some fell to work at once, making cooking fires, while others unloaded a string of boxcars laden with lumber and other building materials. The Chinese ate hurriedly and spent the night in boxcars. The next day, a Chinese camp rose out of the snow-covered ground near Mine Number Three, a quarter mile north of the center of town."³⁰ In the days that followed, Euroamerican miners, finding themselves systematically denied any opportunity to resume their jobs and facing the winter stranded in Rock Springs without any employment, took the UP's offer for free rail passes to Omaha. The Chinese stayed, and in fact more arrived to work the mines. A handful of Euroamerican miners remained as did whites involved in ranching, retail, and service enterprises. Eventually, the military also departed, leaving inhabitants new and old to negotiate the cultural and class boundaries of a transformed Rock Springs.³¹

The arrival of retail outlet Beckwith-Quinn solidified UP's investment in Chinese labor, thus contributing significantly to local ethno-racial dynamics. A. C. Beckwith, an

³⁰ Storti, *Incident at Bitter Creek*, 68. Klein refers to Nebraska Senator Thayer as "an old Union Pacific hand" (Klein, *Union Pacific*, 331).

³¹ Bromly, *Chinese Massacre*, 39-45; Storti, *Incident at Bitter Creek*, 68-69; UPCC, *History of the Union Pacific Coal Mines*, 75-77. The troops remained in Rock Springs from November 1875 through early March 1876 (Murray, "Fort Fred Steele," 166).

Evanston capitalist, quickly assented to UP's request to provide Chinese labor. On Christmas Eve, 1875, UP brokered an agreement for Beckwith-Quinn "to furnish ...all the Chinese laborers requisite for the complete working of [the] several coal-mines on the line of the Union Pacific Railroad...."³² Beckwith-Quinn quickly exploited its role as labor supplier to open a retail business in Rock Springs, which, although not specifically a company store, enjoyed the privilege of having a captive clientele, especially since the store handled wages for UP and used credit policies to compete with other municipal retail outlets. Its arrangements with UP certainly handed Beckwith-Quinn a definitely advantageous position in fledgling Rock Springs since the retailer not only monopolized the Chinese labor trade but also subsumed all existing UP retail enterprise, while UP itself covered the transportation costs for the Chinese. With labor policy set and arrangements for a constant supply of Chinese laborers assured, UP proceeded to extend its influence over Rock Springs, issuing scrip to its workers, utilizing fraudulent land claims to coal areas even further, and demanding workers reside in company housing.³³

UP control of production and transportation and Beckwith-Quinn influence in finance and retail, however, did not automatically make Rock Springs a captive company town. Resistance to UP derived partly from the nature of UP itself, for the railways in the postwar period, despite their golden promise of municipal boon, evinced a pernicious

³² "Agreement, 24 December 1875, Beckwith-Quinn & Co., of Evanston, and Union Pacific Railroad Company," in Bromly, *Chinese Massacre*, 41.

³³ Ibid., UPCC, *History of the Union Pacific Coal Mines*, 76; Storti, *Incident at Bitter Creek*, 66; Garceau, "The Important Things of Life," 20.

side: land fraud, political corruption, unfair trade practices, and coercive labor policies. In the coal enterprise of Rock Springs, UP appeared especially guilty of nefarious activities, and this appearance was compounded by the racialized nature of its labor policies.

Popular feeling in Wyoming was reflected by an editorial in the *Laramie Daily Sun* concerning the importation of Chinese into Rock Springs in late 1875. The editorial complained after UP ran out the Euroamericans: “[W]hat a change! In place of the ambitious and progressive coal miner—a thinking being with whom we could converse and who was proud of his American citizenship—what have we now? A rice eating Chinaman...! They work cheap; they don’t strike; they ain’t particular about their quarters....”³⁴ Resistance to the Chinese laborers in Rock Springs was not confined to newspaper editorials. Antagonism toward UP and its labor policies continued in the years after 1875, including anger toward Chinese and Mormon laborers, both of whom resisted joining labor organizations or participating in job actions. The rumored presence of Molly Maguires (who had escaped the violent crackdown in Pennsylvania in the 1870s) in the Rock Springs coalfields kept alive the spirit of labor insurrection. After the massacre, UP’s Isaac Bromly noted escalating local anti-Chinese sentiments, including threats of violence, which only the presence of soldiers curtailed. Meanwhile, the

³⁴ *Laramie Daily Sun*, November 26, 1875, in Storti, *Incident at Bitter Creek*, 71.

continuing demands of UP production quotas contributed to ever-increasing numbers of Euroamericans working in Rock Springs despite UP's own preferences.³⁵

While noted historian of western community life Robert V. Hine generally finds the conditions of the American West inimical to the ideals of community development, the material life of such urbanizing settlements as Rock Springs attests to the potentialities of social connection in western mining camps. Ronald M. James contests the idea that the nineteenth-century mining West lacked community. He posits that stability, order, organization, lawfulness, and permanence represented life on the Comstock.³⁶ An overview of the social and cultural contours of early Rock Springs suggests that James may be closer to the mark, for the first decade and one-half of municipal life witnessed increasing settlement, the coming of families, a diversity of independent businesses, and the construction of schools and churches. Yet the cultural animosity between Euroamericans and Chinese, largely fueled by labor competition but certainly abetted by racial stereotypes and prejudices, complicated the attempts to build community before 1885. To comprehend how the foundational social fabric of Rock

³⁵ Coy F. Cross II, "Go West Young Man!": *Horace Greeley's Vision for America* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1995), 111; Bromly, *Chinese Massacre*, 44-45; UPCC, *History of the Union Pacific Coal Mines*, 58.

³⁶ While Hine suggests that proto-community values could flourish in the West given the correct set of socioeconomic conditions, he decidedly perceives competitive values on the frontier as antithetical to cohesive community construction (*Community on the American Frontier*, 251). For an alternative view, see Ronald M. James, "Community on the Comstock: Cliché, Stereotype, and Reality in the Mining West," in Stephen Tchudi, *Community in the American West* (Reno and Las Vegas: Nevada Humanities Council/Halcyon, 1999), 93-105.

Springs responded to the coming of the Chinese, it is necessary to explore the social lineaments of that developing town.

The Social Contours of a Coal Camp

Between 1870 and 1880, population in Rock Springs increased rapidly. On May 10, 1869, the crews of the Union Pacific and Central Pacific railways connected the first transcontinental route at Promontory Summit, Utah, but coal operations had begun even earlier in southwestern Wyoming. The *Ninth Census of the United States* reported 144 residents in Rock Springs and the immediate coal-mining region. Ten years later the United States reported an increase of over 500% in population. In addition to this rapid population growth, which helped establish the mining camp as one of the more substantial population centers in the Wyoming Territory,³⁷ the 1880 census revealed a variety of key demographic factors that reflected the early settlement patterns of Rock Springs, the developing nature of capital and labor in the area, and the emerging ethno-racial trends, particularly in relation to UP hiring practices. The following discussion will

³⁷ In 1880, Rock Springs was the fourth largest population center in the state behind Cheyenne (3,456), Laramie (2,696), and Rawlins (1,451) (see "Historical Decennial Census Population for Wyoming Counties, Cities, and Towns," <http://eativ.state.wy.us/demog_data/entycity_hist.htm>, Division of Economic Analysis, Wyoming Department of Agriculture and Industry, Cheyenne, Wyoming, accessed January 9, 2007. These population figures represent the trend of population to follow UP westward, which meant that throughout its history, Wyoming has witnessed a disproportionately high population base in the southern part of the state. Cities such as those mentioned above, as well as Green River, the seat of Sweetwater County, all owed their early development to UP either as rail centers or mining camps.

examine population figures by sex, age, race, place of origin, ethnicity, and occupation. In addition, this section will survey the nature of settlement in relation to household types and boarding patterns.³⁸

Demographic data bears out that population in early Rock Springs reflected general patterns of settlement in western mining camps, although Chinese residents contributed to some unusual demographic findings. For example, the vast majority of western mining camps witnessed disproportionately high male pioneer populations. Over subsequent years, increasing female in-migration and birth ratios tended to equalize numbers between the sexes. In Rock Springs, however, a comparison of census data shows that the percentage of female inhabitants in Rock Springs declined from just over thirty percent in 1870 to just under twenty percent ten years later (see Figure 5). This phenomenon appears to belie the tendency toward an increasing female population in mining camps; however, when one considers the great influx of male Chinese laborers, the decreasing percentage of females in Rock Springs appears logical (see Figure 6). In fact, this impact of Chinese residents on sex ratios in Rock Springs contributed to the feeling that "sojourners" were imperiling community development. Examining population figures by sex in regards to Euroamerican settlers alone (see Figure 7) reveals that the percentage of female residents did increase from roughly thirty-two to thirty-six

³⁸ United States Government, *Ninth Census of the United States*, "Schedule No. 1.-Inhabitants, Sweetwater County, Rock Springs U. P. R. R., Wyoming" (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1870); United States Government, *Tenth Census of the United States*, "Schedule No. 1.-Inhabitants, Sweetwater County, Rock Springs, Wyoming" (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1880).

percent between 1870 and 1880 and would continue to increase incrementally from decade to decade.³⁹

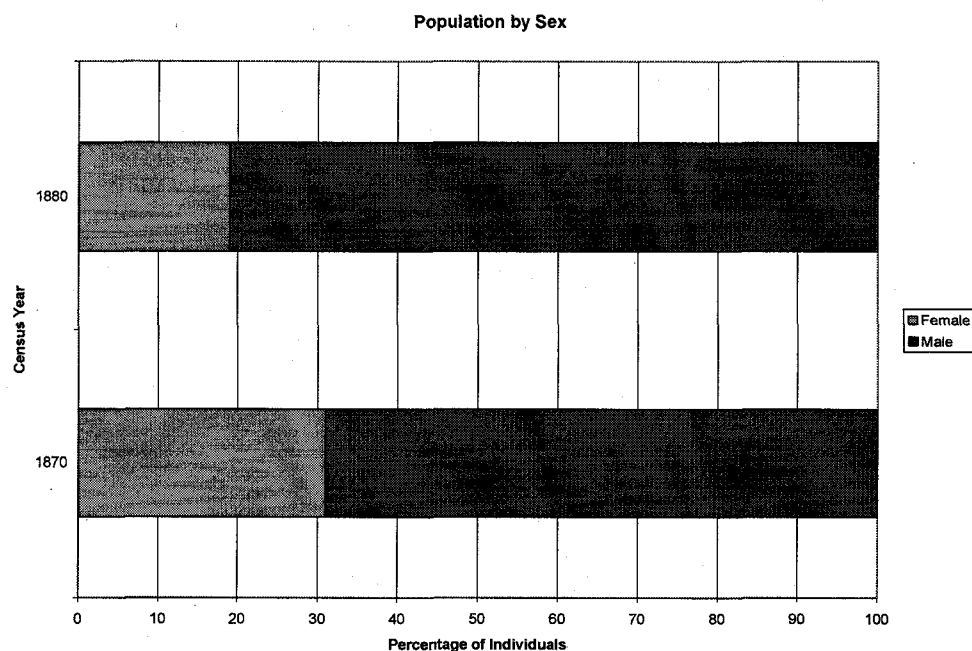


Figure 5. Rock Springs Population by Sex⁴⁰

³⁹ See Dee Brown, *The Gentle Tamers: Women of the Old Wild West* (New York: Bantam Books, 1958), 257-264; Joanna L. Stratton, *Pioneer Women: Voices from the Kansas Frontier* (New York and London: Touchstone, 1981), 129-186; Hine, *Community on the American Frontier* 74; Duane Smith, *Rocky Mountain Mining Camps*, 187-189. Sex ratios for Chinese men to women were generally 20:1 or higher throughout the late nineteenth century. Huping Ling notes that three factors significantly contributed to this phenomenon: lack of financial resources, social restrictions in China (although more recent research finding extensive female Chinese migration to areas of the globe without restrictive immigration policies contradicts this second factor), and restrictive immigration policies and their enforcement by the United States. See Huping Ling, *Surviving the Golden Mountain: A History of Chinese American Women and Their Lives* (Albany: State University of New York, 1998), 25-28.

⁴⁰ United States Government, *Ninth Census of the United States*, "Schedule No. 1.-Inhabitants, Sweetwater County, Rock Springs U. P. R. R., Wyoming" (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1870).

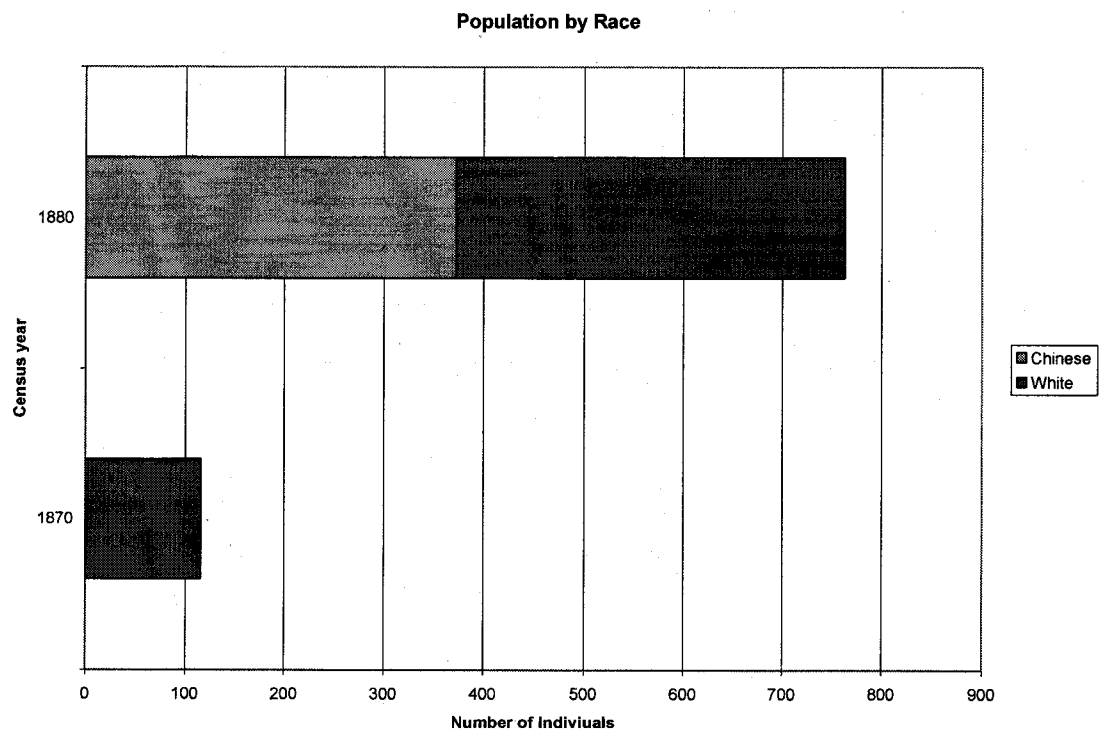


Figure 6. Rock Springs Population by Race⁴¹

⁴¹Ibid.

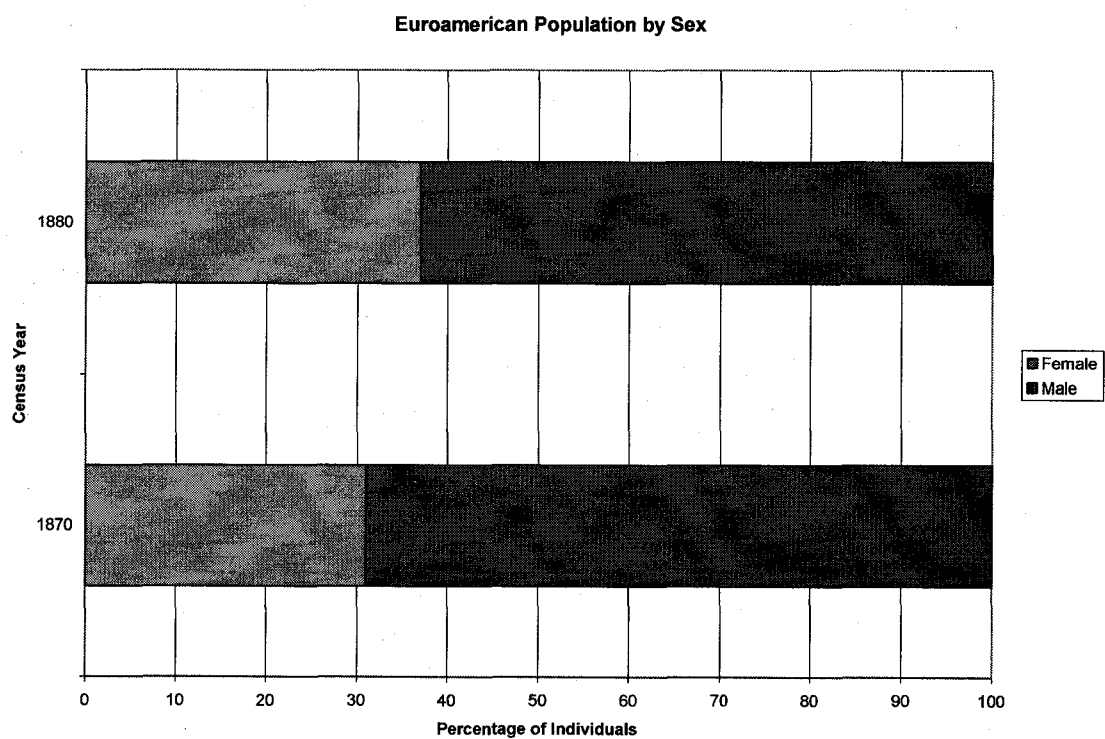


Figure 7. Rock Springs Euroamerican Population by Sex⁴²

⁴² Ibid.; United States Government, *Tenth Census of the United States*, "Schedule No. 1.-Inhabitants, Sweetwater County, Rock Springs, Wyoming" (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1880).

Along with the skewed population figures favoring males, mining camps also evinced generally young and single populations. While the average age of the population in Rock Springs did increase from 24.7 years in 1870 to 26.2 in 1880, the impact of Chinese residents contributed significantly since nearly all were adult males,⁴³ who pushed median age from 23 in 1870 to 30 ten years later. From a comparison of census data in 1870 and 1880, one sees only a small increase (see Figure 8) in the number of Rock Springs residents younger than twenty years of age. That trend suggests limited immigration of families with children. Again, the Chinese influx significantly shapes the demographic profile. The age of Chinese residents greatly reinforced the overall youth of the local population, contributing to the increasingly youthful local population (see Figure 9). Therefore, an examination of residents' age in Rock Springs bears out that this was a young population with substantial percentages of both Euroamericans and Chinese in their twenties. This age profile certainly fits trends in mining camps. Again, with marital status, a demographic profile of Rock Springs in 1880 (see Figure 10) indicates that the majority of residents were single, unmarried Euroamerican males. As was typical of Chinese migration to Gold Mountain in the nineteenth century, a significant number of Chinese (over forty percent) were married, although only two lived with their spouses in

⁴³While George Anthony Peffer, *"If They Don't Bring Their Women Here: Chinese Female Immigration before Exclusion"* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1999), offers convincing evidence as to the importance of Chinese female immigration between 1869 and 1874, Rock Springs, like many Rocky Mountain mining centers, possessed very few permanent female residents (xi).

Rock Springs. These marital patterns indicate that many Chinese in Rock Springs underwent long separations from wife and family.⁴⁴

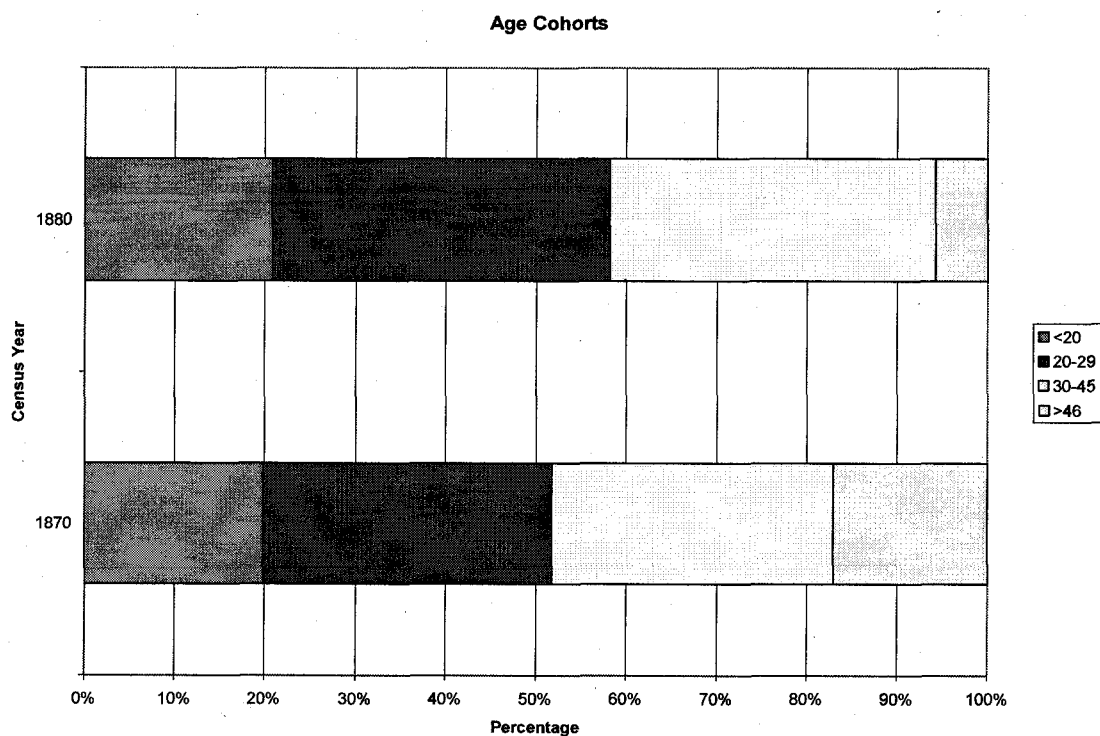


Figure 8. Rock Springs Population by Age Cohorts⁴⁵

⁴⁴ United States Government, *Ninth Census of the United States*, "Schedule No. 1.-Inhabitants, Sweetwater County, Rock Springs U. P. R. R., Wyoming" (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1870); United States Government, *Tenth Census of the United States*. "Schedule No. 1.-Inhabitants, Sweetwater County, Rock Springs, Wyoming" (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1880).

See also Peffer, *If They Don't Bring Their Women*; Madeline Y. Hsu, *Dreaming of Gold, Dreaming of Home: Transnationalism and Migration Between the United States and South China, 1882-1943* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000).

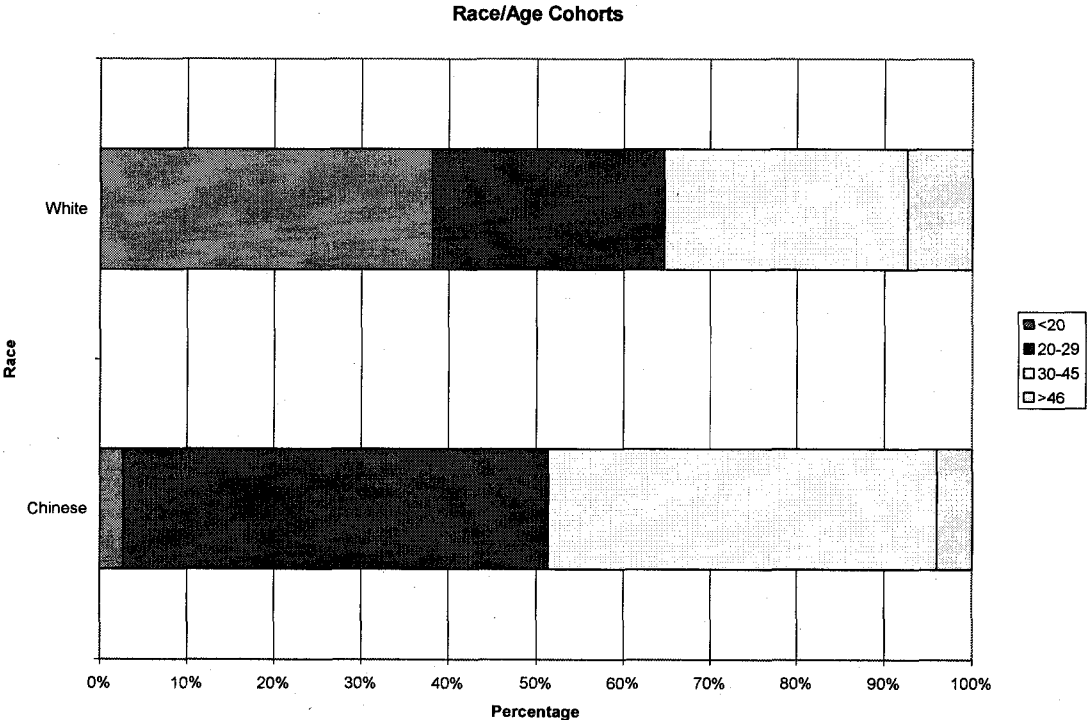


Figure 9. Rock Springs Population by Race and Age Cohorts⁴⁶

⁴⁵ United States Government, *Ninth Census of the United States*, "Schedule No. 1.-Inhabitants, Sweetwater County, Rock Springs U. P. R. R., Wyoming" (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1870).

⁴⁶ United States Government, *Tenth Census of the United States*, "Schedule No. 1.-Inhabitants, Sweetwater County, Rock Springs, Wyoming" (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1880).

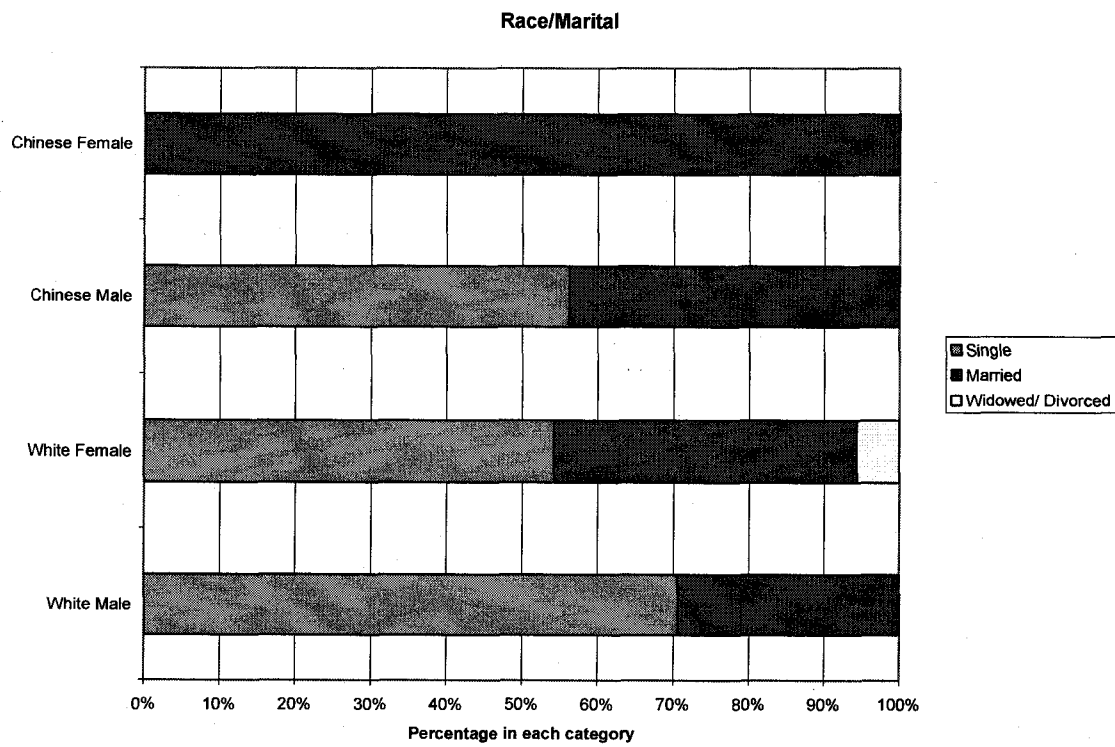


Figure 10. Rock Springs Population by Race and Marital Status⁴⁷

⁴⁷ Ibid.

Without families to accompany them, Chinese residents largely boarded in UP housing; Euroamerican residents, as might be expected, showed more variety in housing arrangements. In both 1870 and 1880, the majority of households in Rock Springs contained nuclear families (see Figure 11). The smaller percentage in 1880 may be accounted for by the influx of Chinese (see Figure 12). In both Chinese husband-wife households, lodgers were present. In 1880, the trend among Euroamericans favored the nuclear family, although extended and single-headed households increasingly took in boarders (see Figure 13). For households with children, the trend was significantly inclined toward the nuclear family, although about six percent of families with children took in boarders.

The arrival of Chinese workers in Rock Springs also significantly affected ethno-racial and occupational demographics. In 1870, there were no Chinese residents in Rock Springs, although several worked throughout Sweetwater County, especially for UP. That census year showed the camp settled largely by foreign-born, especially Europeans (see Figure 14). Ten years later, foreign-born even more disproportionately outnumbered the native-born, although this was largely due to the Chinese.

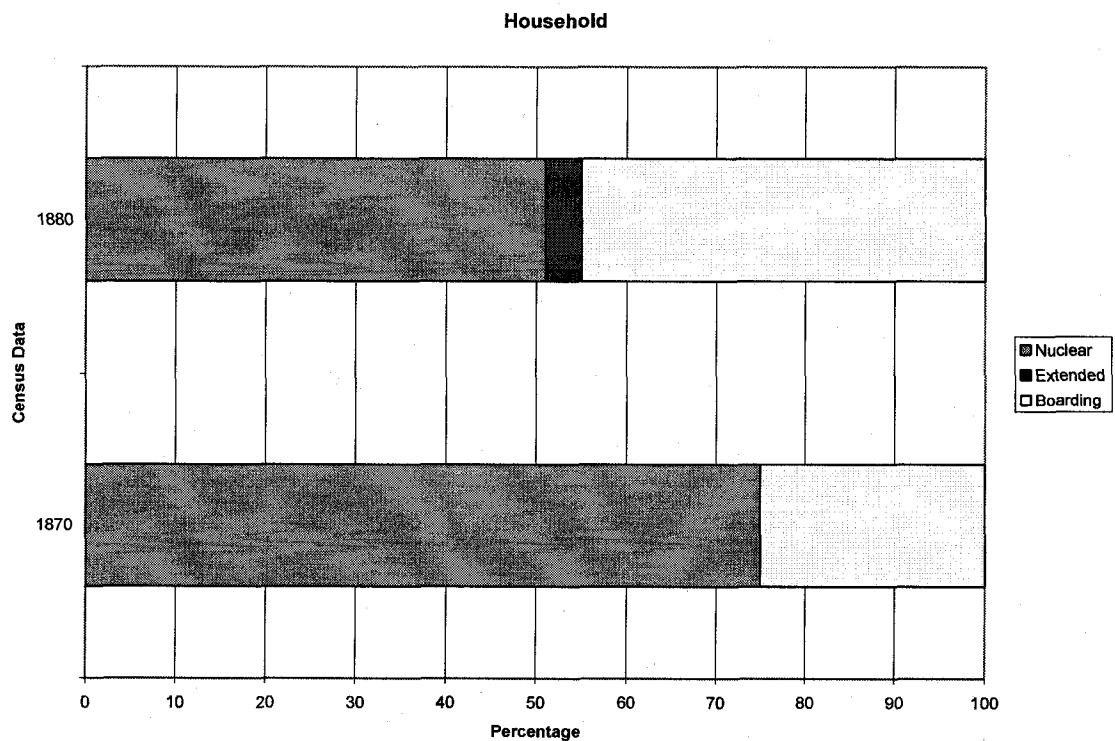


Figure 11. Rock Springs Household Types⁴⁸

⁴⁸ United States Government, *Ninth Census of the United States*, "Schedule No. 1.-Inhabitants, Sweetwater County, Rock Springs U. P. R. R., Wyoming" (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1870); United States Government, *Tenth Census of the United States*, "Schedule No. 1.-Inhabitants, Sweetwater County, Rock Springs, Wyoming" (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1880).

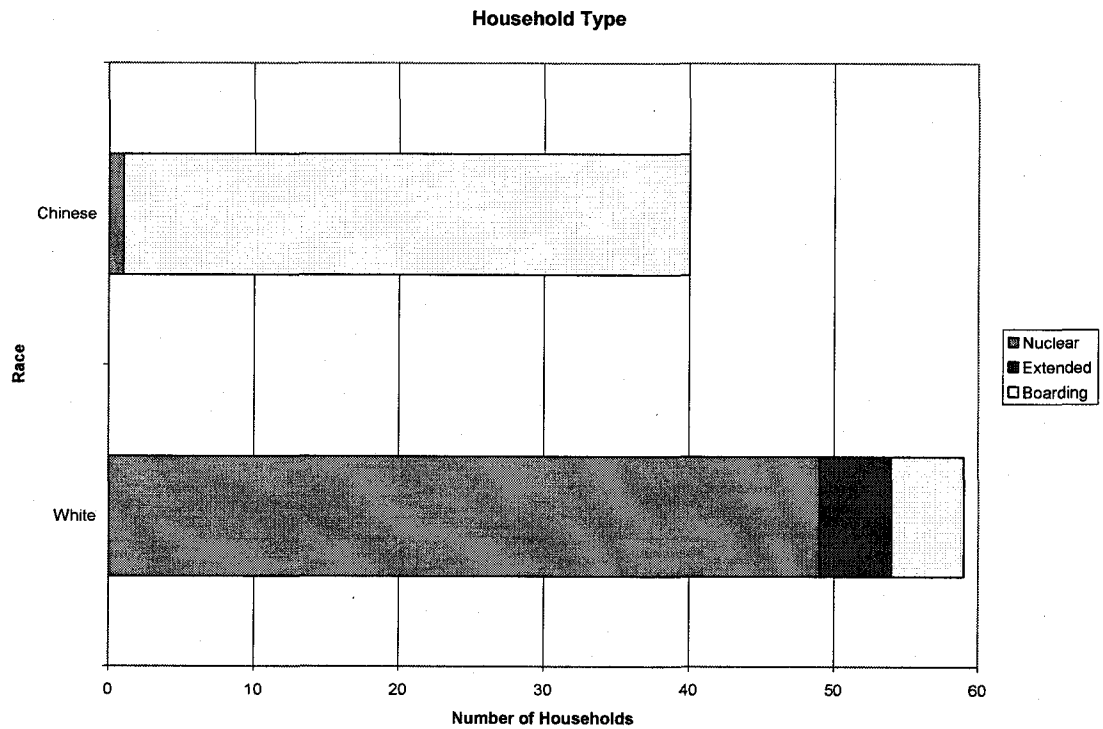


Figure 12. Rock Springs Household Types by Race⁴⁹

⁴⁹ United States Government, *Tenth Census of the United States*. "Schedule No. 1.-Inhabitants, Sweetwater County, Rock Springs, Wyoming" (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1880).

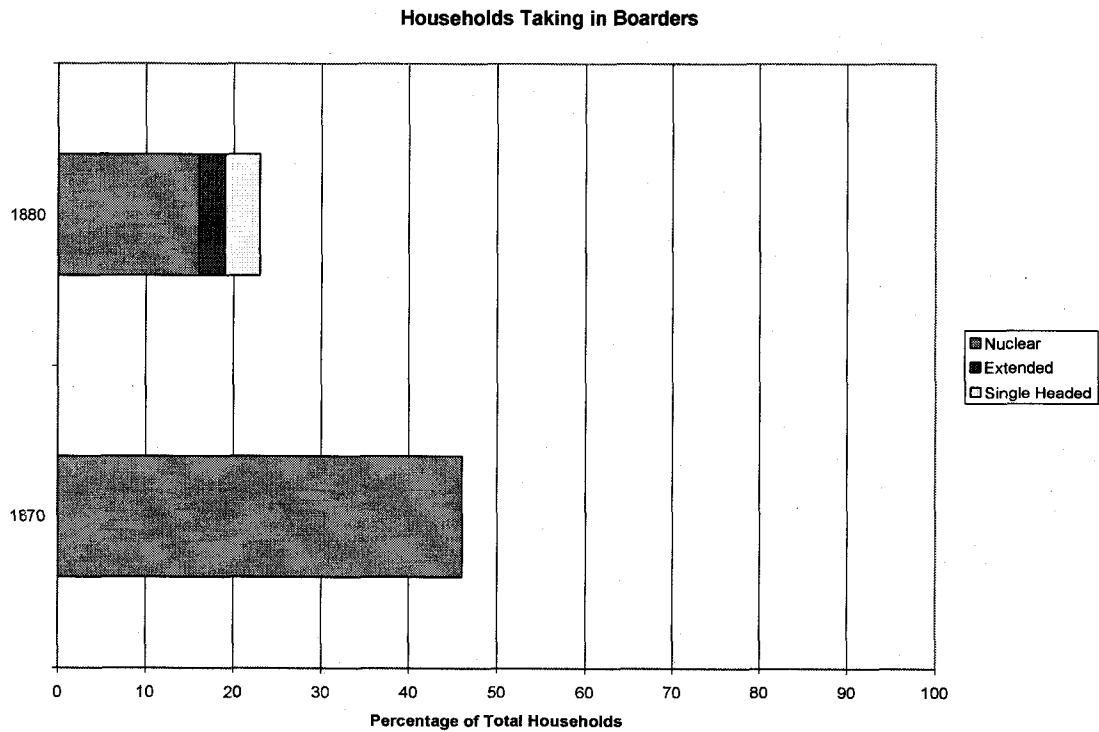


Figure 13. Rock Springs Households Taking in Boarders⁵⁰

⁵⁰ Ibid.; United States Government, *Ninth Census of the United States*, "Schedule No. 1.-Inhabitants, Sweetwater County, Rock Springs U. P. R. R., Wyoming" (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1870).

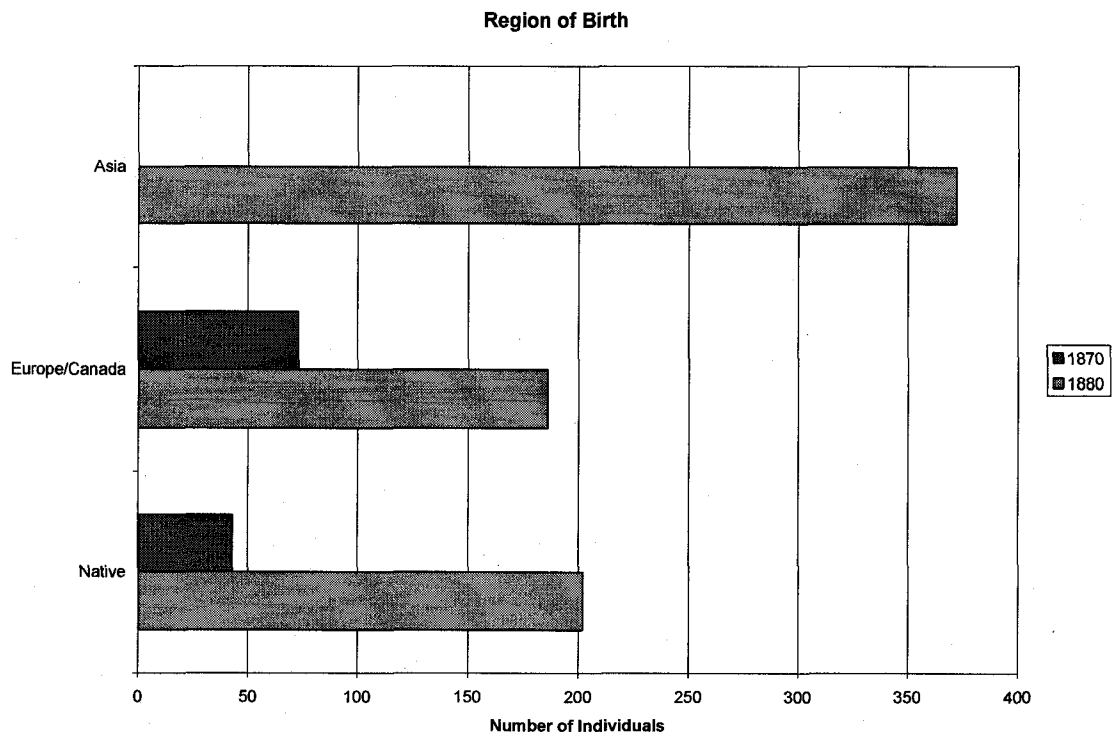


Figure 14. Rock Springs Population by Region of Origin⁵¹

⁵¹ Ibid; United States Government, *Tenth Census of the United States*, "Schedule No. 1.-Inhabitants, Sweetwater County, Rock Springs, Wyoming" (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1880).

In 1880, the native-born outnumbered foreign-born among Euroamericans, and a majority of the former were offspring of immigrant parents. In both 1870 and 1880, the British Isles provided the largest number of European immigrants.⁵² Those demographic findings also showed increased differentiation among immigrants with Scandinavian and central European countries providing increasing numbers of residents (see Figure 15). While the number of professionals, entrepreneurs, and ranchers proliferated in Rock Springs between 1870 and 1880, the majority of male residents worked as wage laborers (see Figures 16 and 17), chiefly in the mines or for the railroad. Despite some representation in the professional and service sectors, the great majority of Chinese reinforced this trend by 1880. In fact, the 1880 census shows an even larger percentage of workers involved in laboring than ten years previously. Undoubtedly, this trend reflects increasing UP coal production during the decade. In both 1870 and 1880, service enterprise represented the second most common occupation. While the percentage of skilled workers increased in that ten-year period, the percentage of retail entrepreneurs declined, perhaps reflecting Beckwith-Quinn's predominance in the town. However, saloons, barbershops, hotels, and boarding-houses allowed considerable opportunity for residents with investment capital.

⁵² According to the 1870 Census, 68 of the 73 local immigrants from Europe and Canada originated from the British Isles, and that number for 1880 was 136 out of 186. In contrast, the 1880 Census showed 372 immigrants from China in Rock Springs. United States Government, *Ninth Census of the United States*, "Schedule No. 1.-Inhabitants, Sweetwater County, Rock Springs U. P. R., Wyoming" (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1870); United States Government, *Tenth Census of the United States*, "Schedule No. 1.-Inhabitants, Sweetwater County, Rock Springs, Wyoming" (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1880).

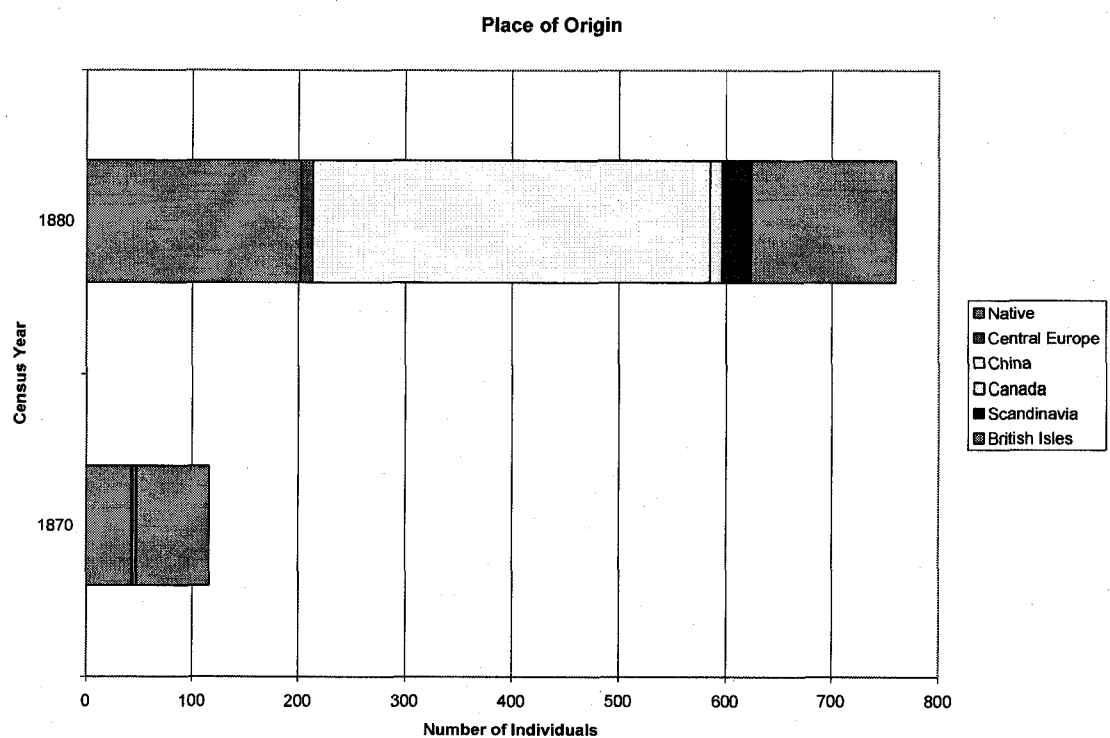


Figure 15. Rock Springs Euroamerican Population by Place of Origin⁵³

⁵³ Ibid.

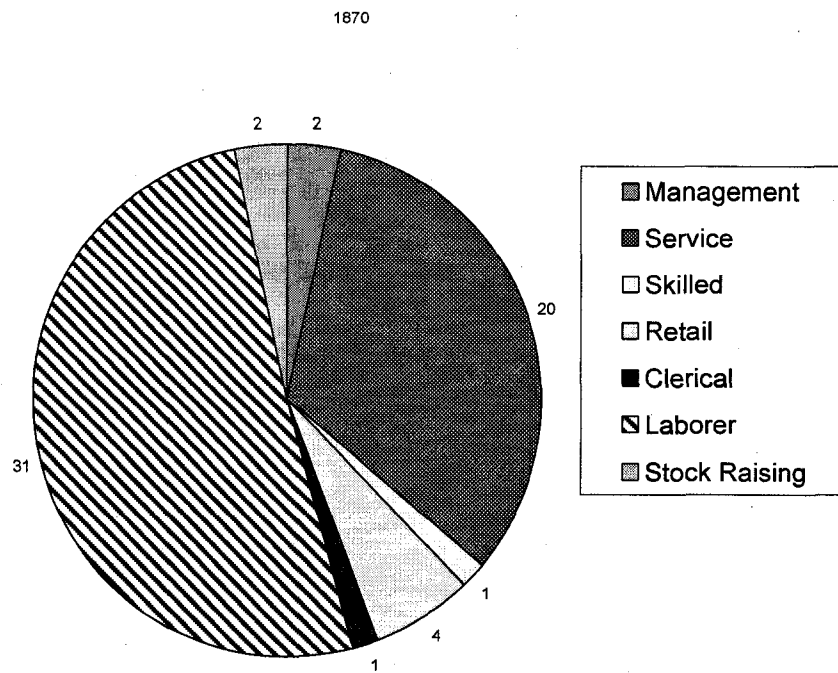


Figure 16. Rock Springs Occupations (1870)⁵⁴

⁵⁴ United States Government, *Ninth Census of the United States*, "Schedule No. 1.-Inhabitants, Sweetwater County, Rock Springs U. P. R. R., Wyoming" (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1870).

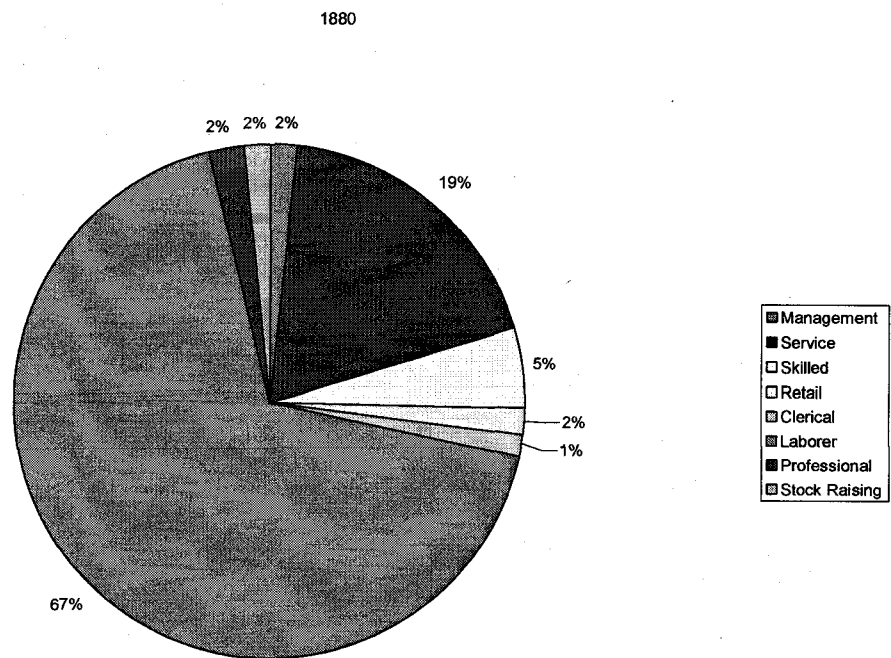


Figure 17. Rock Springs Occupations (1880) ⁵⁵

⁵⁵ United States Government, *Tenth Census of the United States*, "Schedule No. 1.-Inhabitants, Sweetwater County, Rock Springs, Wyoming" (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1880).

The data for 1880 evidences significant occupational stratification by race. Nearly eighty percent of laborers were Chinese, while only Euroamericans worked in ranching, retail, or the skilled trades (see Figure 18). While some Chinese worked in management or the professions, their biggest economic opportunity was in either retail or service sectors (such as employment in food preparation, laundering, food peddling, etc.), although they represented only about one-third of workers in each of those areas. From these sinews of municipal development, two distinct ethno-racial communities arose between 1875 and 1885. To understand the outbreak of violence against the Chinese, it is necessary to look at the institutions and culture of both communities.

The Euroamerican Community

The bedrock of cultural and material foundations in Rock Springs was mining culture. Rock Springs historian Robert Rhode notes that along with depending upon British miners, “American coal companies, for the most part, adopted the British mining system, which was a form of industrial feudalism....”⁵⁶ While managers and superintendents performed the necessary tasks of directing operations and allocating resources, the colliers themselves performed the fundamental tasks of commodity production. To comprehend the nature of community, enterprise, and municipal development in Rock

⁵⁶ Rhode, *Booms and Busts*, 31.

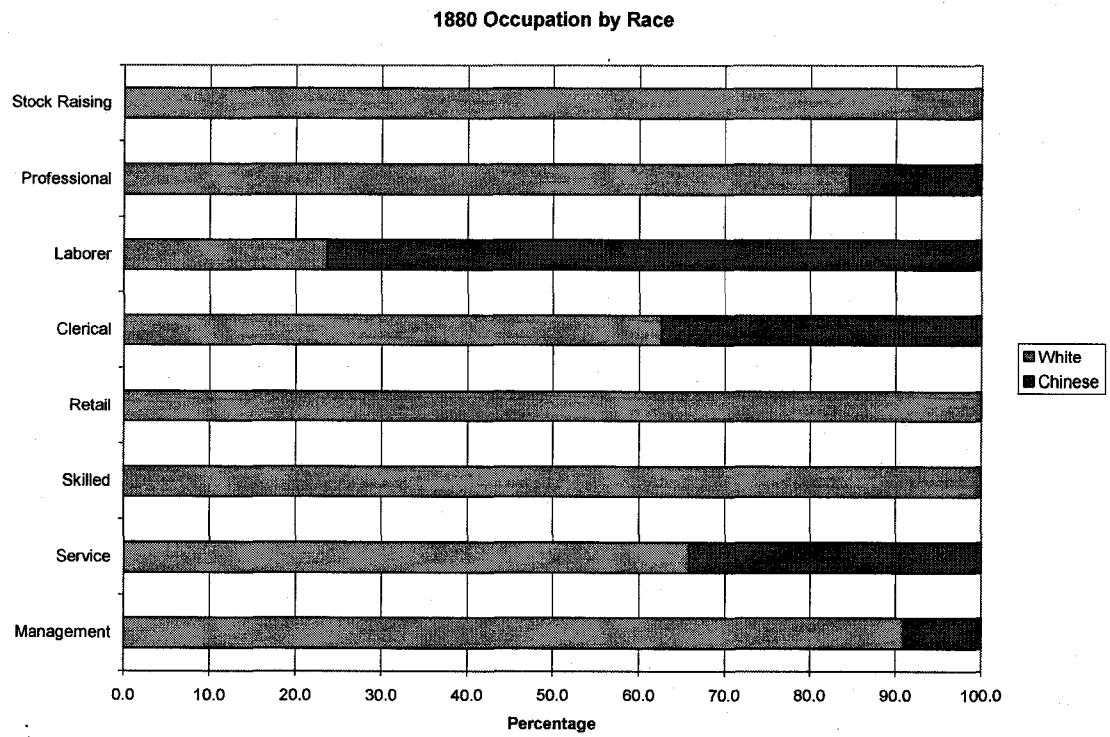


Figure 18. Rock Springs Occupation by Race (1880)⁵⁷

⁵⁷ Ibid.

Springs, therefore, the historian must examine the nature of coal mining. The following discussion will address the key facets of coal production prior to the twentieth century.⁵⁸

While the lifestyle of Rock Springs' coal miners changed substantially over the years, that of the early pioneers appears especially arduous. In his study of the Chinese massacre, Craig Storti describes the typical life of a miner:

On a typical day, the coal miner rose before dawn, pulled on his pit clothes, ate a hurried breakfast, and made for the mine while the rest of Rock Springs slept. He lived either in his own small frame house, usually rented from the company, or, if he was single, in a cramped boardinghouse where he shared a room with three or four other men and took his meals. With him he carried his tools and lunch bucket, and on his head wore an oil lamp. Each morning, the prairie east of town swarmed with the flickering lights of scores of miners picking their way, like so many fireflies, through the blackness to work.⁵⁹

The life of the typical miner was more prosaic than the firefly metaphor might suggest; however, Storti's description conveys the centrality of coal miners to early Rock Springs. Foremost, early Rock Springs was principally a coal camp, and the daily labors of its miners constituted the fundamental labor enterprise for the community. The comings and goings of workers to the mines may have lent a certain rhythm to the everyday life of

⁵⁸ For background on coal mining in the United States, see Duane Lockard, *Coal: A Memoir and Critique* (Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia, 1998). Mildred Beik, *The Miners of Windber: The Struggles of New Immigrants for Unionization, 1890s-1930s* (College Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996), offers an especially effective socio-culture interpretation of coal-mining experiences.

⁵⁹ Storti, *Incident at Bitter Creek*, 73, 75.

Rock Springs, but such were only the surface impressions of a dangerous and difficult occupation.⁶⁰

Various sources provide an intimate look at the lives of early coal miners in Rock Springs. Carrying a heavy drill, several picks, a sledgehammer, shovel, scooper, tramping needles, gunpowder, and assorted *accoutrements* of the trade, miners hopped aboard pit cars to travel to their rooms. Teams of miners shared coal rooms—fetid, cramped environs—barely high enough for men to stand upright. Clad lightly because of the heat below ground, miners methodically surveyed their chamber for the most propitious way to harvest coal and then attacked the various engineering problems with explosives, picks, and shovels. Central to the process were dependable partners, whose lives were inextricably bound up with the success of the team. While working the coal room, miners constantly had to be aware of the state of the timbers, tend their oil lamps, and watch out for the approach of pit cars, which were often the cause of debilitating accidents.

Teamwork among miners was key to efficient coal operations. The partnership of colliers in the rooms dominated the laboring process, but the related tasks of transportation,

⁶⁰ For a longitudinal study of Wyoming coal mining, see Gardner and Flores, *Forgotten Frontier*.

In terms of the dangers of the occupation, Storti states, “It was a brutal, hellish work by any standards...executed under appalling conditions half a mile beneath the surface of the earth. Often as not, the collier rose and went home in the dark.... Hour after hour he stood hunched over in his hot, stuffy room, breathing its poisoned air, a perilous mixture of oxygen and coal dust.... And it was astonishingly dangerous work, the most dangerous in the world. Mine accidents took a myriad forms: runaway pit cars, collapsing rooms or entries, falling rock, flooding, suffocation, cave-ins after explosions, and, most feared and lethal of all, underground gas leaks (35 Chinese killed in 1881 Almy explosion)...For years, the number of accidents per tons of coal mined climbed steadily” (Storti, *Incident at Bitter Creek*, 81).

service, processing, and supervision also involved a multitude of workers. All of these, including basic supervision, remained wage-labor positions, which bred within mining operations the potential for class solidarity.⁶¹

While subsidiary laborers and managers⁶² attended their duties, colliers worked underground, hewing wages from rock at the rate of tons per day. Craig Storti asserts that a good day's work afforded the miner one ton of coal produced per hour. Of course, once supervisors subtracted coal slack, the daily output might equal six tons, which, at the rate of \$0.70 per ton, netted \$4.20 per day. Such was a decent wage compared with other manual workers in Gilded Age America.⁶³ Nevertheless, the wage rate proves deceptive when other considerations are taken into account. For example, the collier provided his own tools of production, including pick, shovel, drill, and explosives, which might account for as much as twenty percent of his wages. In addition, coal mining, unlike many jobs in an increasingly industrializing American economy, remained seasonal. Like

⁶¹ See Storti, *Incident at Bitter Creek*, 73-82; UPCC, *History of the Union Pacific Coal Mines*, 52-53; Rhode, *Booms and Busts*, 30-41.

⁶² Storti outlines the following positions in the mines: woodcutters, mule drivers, water carriers, loaders, unloaders, wheelwrights, coopers, carpenters, blacksmiths, stable hands, and payroll clerks. Each of these grades, of course, necessitated supervisors. Mines also included pit bosses, their supervisors, superintendents, and a general manager. In addition, each mine served as an entity in itself, requiring colliers, support personnel, and supervisors. Finally, the mines also involved linkage to the wider rail network, connecting coal production to fuel distribution and transit throughout the Great Plains and wider UP system (Storti, *Incident at Bitter Creek*, 77).

⁶³ This rate contrasted to the wages of a cowboy or sheepherder at \$1.00 per day and a tailor or shoemaker at \$3.00 per day (Storti, *Incident at Bitter Creek*, 78-79).

the artisans of precapitalist America, the coal miner found employment varying according to monthly production demands, specifically high demand in the winter months and low demand in the summer months. While railroad use of fuel might remain fairly constant, usage of coal for heating purposes varied widely during the course of a year. Therefore, as Storti contends,

The miner who worked ten hours a day in January might work only three or four in July, and some days not at all. Many colliers left Rock Springs altogether during late spring and summer, causing an annual dip in the population. Others worked out a lucrative summer strategy whereby they spent the requisite hours each day digging what coal the company needed, and then, instead of going home when the whistle blew, they stayed on and dug coal for themselves. They stockpiled this excess coal in their rooms until winter came and demand was up, when they sold it in addition to their daily tonnages.⁶⁴

These hardy folk symbolized the lifeblood of early Rock Springs. Their work represented the principal economic activity in the town; their wages provided the principal methods of exchange in the town's retail and service sectors; and their efforts constituted the principal means of establishing churches, schools, and other cultural venues in the emerging municipality. In doing so, the miners were not alone, for they connected with railroad laborers, transient workers, and local entrepreneurs in making Rock Springs more than a mere mining camp. Yet, UP and its coal operations, which sought to maximize profitability even at the cost of social stability in the coal camp, exerted

⁶⁴ UPCC, *History of the Union Pacific Coal Mines*, 162.

considerable influence over the state of incipient class relations as well as municipal development.⁶⁵

Anecdotal accounts suggest that miners underwent diverse experiences in the coal camp. Early laborers often found opportunities in UP supervisory, retail, or service sectors. James Tisdell, brother-in-law to miner superintendent D.O. Clark, assumed operation of the company store and then later managed the Wyoming Coal & Mining Company. William H. Mellor, while a junior partner of entrepreneur Thomas Wardell, labored tirelessly among the inchoate coal streams of southwestern Wyoming, contributing through the years to the social development of Rock Springs, especially in education. Mellor himself employed the peripatetic John Treasure, who began as a muleskinner in the mines in 1881 before becoming an entrepreneur and backer of the town's first high school. Another exceptional worker, David G. Thomas, came to Rock Springs in spring 1878. A friend to Euroamerican as well as Chinese workers, Thomas rose to a supervisory position by the time of the massacre and then left the mines to become a local attorney, judge, and legislator. But not all Rock Springs miners found gold at the end of the proverbial rainbow. As demographics demonstrate, the average Rock Springs miner identified himself as a laborer and remained so. Joseph Dyett, for example, emigrated from Scotland in 1881 with his parents. Arriving in Rock Springs in 1883 Dyett recalled a "little burg with dug-outs on the Creek for dwellings." For forty years he toiled for UPCC, eventually marrying in Rock Springs a girl "who had lived

⁶⁵ Storti, *Incident at Bitter Creek*, 77-79; Rhode, *Booms and Busts*, 32-33; UPCC, *History of the Union Pacific Coal Mines*, 52.

only four miles from him in Scotland and who had known his parents and his brothers and sisters" back in the old country.⁶⁶ William Price, a Welshman, was another forty-year mining veteran, and, like Dyett, a faithful UPCC Old Timer. He settled in Rock Springs in 1883, and spent the bulk of his time as a wage laborer with UPCC, although one of his daughters married a mine superintendent.⁶⁷

While such immigrant miners settled into Rock Springs, UPCC implemented its Chinese labor policy, failing, however, to consider the broader socio-cultural ramifications of their policies. Chinese immigrant workers' right to work for a fair wage invariably involved not only the rights of free labor but also the culturally derived reality of a racially segmented society. Thinking of themselves as a unique cadre of workers, Euroamerican coal miners in Rock Springs proudly embraced the masculine virtues of their profession as well as the essential nature of teamwork in the coal rooms. Robert Rhode claims that such virtues help "explain their extraordinary support of unionism in later years.... [T]hese burly, usually bearded men lived in an isolated community, struggled against rock and coal under prolonged discomfort for about one-half of every

⁶⁶ "Joseph Dyett," *UPCC Employes' Magazine* 2 (October 1925), 22.

⁶⁷ Old Timer, "Early Wyoming Coal Mining Reminiscences"; "W. H. Mellor, Pioneer Mining Superintendent," n.p.; John T. Treasure, "Early Day Resident Recalls," 1, 3; Thomas, "Talk on Old Rock Springs," 1-10; Thomas P. Cullen, ed., "Early Day Resident Recalls Rock Springs of Fifty Years Ago," *Rock Springs—A Look Back* (Portland: Thomas P. Cullen, 1991 [Typewritten]), Rock Springs Public Library, 115-119; George B. Pryde, "William Price, Old Timer of Rock Springs, Gone," *UPCC Employes' Magazine* 2 (October 1925), 21; "Two Sturdy Old Timers," *UPCC Employes' Magazine* 2 (September 1925), 24. Pryde, an upper echelon UPCC manager, noted the hardships Price had encountered, including the sudden loss of his eldest son, the work-related death of his brother-in-law, and the tragic death of a grandchild in Rock Springs.

twenty-four hours, and then emerged from the pits only to plod into miserable shacks that were themselves partly buried in the land and lighted only by coal lamps or candles.”⁶⁸

While some might romanticize such hardworking men, others argue that coal mining represented an avocation inherited more by default than choice. Born in coal country and inheriting the family tradition, young men found mines the steadiest form of employment. And young women often found the collier the most eligible mate with whom to raise a new generation of miners. Hard work, danger, masculine identity, class interest, and communitarianism created among the mining families a world unto itself, one in which the outsider—whether corporation, manager, or replacement worker—became a peril to self-preservation.⁶⁹

The physical environment encountered by these early miners proved daunting. Early conditions in Blairtown were quite primitive, with many miners inhabiting tents, but the move to Rock Springs hardly promised better living conditions. Seeking shelter, these early miners often constructed dugout quarters along the banks of Bitter Creek. In

⁶⁸ Rhode, *Booms and Busts*, 32.

⁶⁹ Storti, *Incident at Bitter Creek*, 82; Rhode, *Booms and Busts*, 32-33. For intersections of race and class in nineteenth-century America, see Mathew Frye Jacobson, *Whiteness of a Different Color: European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998); Theodore W. Allen, *The Invention of the White Race: Racial Oppression and Social Control*, v. I (London and New York: Verso, 1994); David Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class*, rev. ed. (London and New York: Verso, 1999); Alexander Saxton, *The Rise and Fall of the White Republic: Class Politics and Mass Culture in Nineteenth-Century America* (London and New York: Verso, 1990). A particularly good look at the ideology of race in relation to Chinese may be found in Chapter Two of Gary Y. Okihiro, *Margins and Mainstreams: Asians in American History and Culture* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1994), 31-63.

Incident at Bitter Creek, Storti describes life in the dugouts. He states, "Earth-walled on three sides, these dugouts sported crude wooden doors slapped across the fourth side and breathed through a stovepipe poked into a dirt roof. . . . These Bitter Creek caves, as they were known, fine much of the year, were regularly flooded out every March or April. Most of their owners waited patiently for the waters to recede and then dug a new hole. Those who preferred the relative safety of higher ground shivered in makeshift tents."⁷⁰ Eventually, as more miners and their families arrived, sturdier and more permanent dwellings appeared. However, these new structures did not always protect one from the mercurial Bitter Creek. The Walters brothers from Derbyshire, England, immigrated to Rock Springs in 1881 and eventually moved from company housing to a rental property to their own home, which they had to vacate eventually due to flood waters. UPCC constructed the first houses for laborers, painting them red and arranging them in rows near No. 2 mine. These were located near the prairie with its sage and cactus, coyotes and wildcats. Reflecting on these early housing experiences, longtime miner James Crookston described the flexibility of early residents, recalling that the company moved the red houses when residential patterns shifted and that the dugouts not only provided shelter but also housed Andy Johnson's store, one of the first in the camp.⁷¹

⁷⁰ Storti, *Incident at Bitter Creek*, 50.

⁷¹[Mary Clark,] "Incidents of Pioneer Days in Rock Springs [1881-1898]," Sweetwater County, Wyoming, 1936, Wyoming State Archives, Cheyenne, Wyoming, 1; Mary A. Patterson, "Very Old Times," 19; "Interview with Mr. James Crookston," 9.

While Gunther Barth, *Instant Cities: Urbanization and the Rise of San Francisco and Denver* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1988), avers that western urbanization "demanded the destruction of wilderness" (125), the environs of Rock Springs remained relatively intact for decades, largely because of the isolated

Beyond the needs of laborers, UPCC and commercial interests erected more permanent buildings, creating a downtown for growing Rock Springs. As noted earlier, Charles Wardell provided frame houses for mine managers and built the first stone structure, which served as mine office, store, and post office. The *History of Union Pacific Coal Mines* describes how the business district followed the creek bed and so too did future residential construction, although much of the latter was built rather "promiscuously" since neither city nor company managers laid out subdivisions for new building projects. Along with the Wardell Building, which later became the Beckwith-Quinn store, a sandstone structure housing Tim Kinney and Company appeared in the 1870s. In addition, throughout the 1870s and 1880s, UP added to the original freight station, reflecting the increased traffic along the line. Not only did such construction provide employment for local labor but also a sense of growth and permanence to the settlement along Bitter Creek. However, the dangers of constructing a town atop miles of coal tunnels remained a constant reality, as one family in a rock home downtown discovered in 1878. A mine caved in directly under their home and only a "carpet securely tacked around the edges. . . supported them until friends reached through the doorway and helped them to safety."⁷²

nature of town development along the UP. However, by the 1920s, particularly with the rechanneling of Bitter Creek, even Rock Springs was losing its pristine wilderness, at least in the immediate vicinity of the city.

⁷² Quoted in Rock Springs Historical Board, "Rock Springs Historical Downtown Walking Tour, Rock Springs, Wyoming, n.d., 23; UPCC, *History of the Union Pacific Coal Mines*, 49-50.

Despite increasing physical growth and commercial development, Rock Springs depended, in part, upon external factors for its survival throughout its early period. The UP served as a central conduit of information and transit. The delivery of water to Rock Springs remained an essential part of life in this arid region. The UPCC History notes that for twenty-five cents a barrel, Ed Clegg transported water from a nearby sulphur spring to storage barrels near stores and houses.⁷³ Eventually, realizing the profitability of the water business, UPCC began transporting water in tank cars from Green River for distribution to dwellings and businesses. WPA interviews revealed that the arrival of the water train resulted in frenzied activity among residents along the tracks, who, seeking to save a few pennies, rushed forward with pails and tubs to fill from leaks in the tanks even before the train stopped and water could be pumped into a storage facility. In 1887, UP began constructing a water main from Green River, and its completion one year later ended the water train and ushered in an era of UP-controlled water companies in the region.⁷⁴

To miners, managers, and merchants, the haphazard development of Rock Springs might have reflected a certain economic utility; however, pioneer women, who had to construct households, raise children, and negotiate the cultural boundaries of community, brought a different perspective to life in southwestern Wyoming. Historian Dee Garceau

⁷³ UPCC, *History of the Union Pacific Coal Mines*, 52.

⁷⁴ "The Water Supply of Rock Springs," n.d., "Sweetwater County--Towns," Wyoming State Archives, WPA Subject 1285, Cheyenne, Wyoming, 1-2; UPCC, *History of the Union Pacific Coal Mines*, 52.

argues that on "the late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century Sweetwater County frontier, survival required adjustments that expanded women's work roles and increased their domestic authority."⁷⁵ In *Booms and Busts on Bitter Creek*, Robert Rhode describes the experiences of immigrant women who lamented the lack of trees and grass, the primitiveness of dug-out dwellings, and the inconvenience of water supply. One female immigrant recalled weeping "for days for the bonnie green lands of Scotland" when surveying the desolate landscape of Rock Springs. Jane Blair, wife of Archie, came to Rock Springs from Canada in 1870, thereafter raising her family and providing a paragon of moral authority for the early community. Mary Clark, born in Ohio and married in Illinois, accompanied her husband to Rock Springs in the same year that Jane Blair emigrated. She became County Superintendent of Schools and later City Librarian. In 1876, Sarah Sheddon came to Rock Springs and raised three children, as well as serving as a Sunday School teacher and superintendent for the Congregational Church. These and other early residents of Rock Springs often lamented the seemingly inhospitable landscape and primitive dwellings but made do with what they had to manage households and support developing social and cultural institutions.⁷⁶

⁷⁵ Garceau, *The Important Things of Life*, 1. The author further notes that in mining towns such as Rock Springs survival also depended on collective cooperation, which "placed women squarely within reciprocal kin and ethnic networks, which restricted as well as supported them in their expanding roles"(1).

⁷⁶ Rhode, *Booms and Busts*, 37; "Mrs. Jane Blair," *Union Pacific Coal Company Employee's Magazine* 1 (June 1924), 3; "Our Pioneer Mothers," *Union Pacific Coal Company Employee's Magazine* 1 (June 1924), 5.

While public education evidenced local commitment to make the mining camp a permanent settlement, religious organization proved an even stronger statement of popular desires for community stability. The trek of Latter Day Saints westward from Missouri, Iowa, Illinois, and elsewhere in the antebellum years laid a residual base of denominational influence throughout southwestern Wyoming. As early as the 1870s, Mormons appeared in Rock Springs, holding regular services by 1882, although their religious exceptionalism and resistance to labor organization made them somewhat suspect to the larger population in the municipality. They were quickly followed by other denominations. Solomon Rouff, Alice Kierle, and Mrs. James Tisdale organized an interdenominational Sunday School in 1876. Such Protestant interdenominational efforts were not unusual on the mining frontier. Out of these early ecumenical efforts came the Union Congregational Church, a reflection of the heavily Anglo settlement of early Rock Springs. Established in 1881, the congregation, as did many churches in sparsely populated regions, struggled to fill its pulpit. The Roman Catholic Church had ministered throughout Sweetwater County for several years before constructing its first church in 1884 on No. 2 hill. Episcopal and Lutheran congregations also evolved during the late nineteenth century. Ironically, the military mission to calm Rock Springs after the massacre also nurtured a significant religious presence in the Episcopal Church,⁷⁷ which

⁷⁷ Dwight J. Jones, "History of the Episcopal Church of the Holy Communion, Rock Springs, Wyoming," n.d., Rock Springs, Wyoming, Vertical Files, Sweetwater County Historical Museum, Green River, Wyoming, Folder: "Churches--Episcopal R.S. & G.R.," Vertical File 1-2. Early missionary efforts in Rock Springs involved both commissioned and non-commissioned officers. This history also boasts of an Amerindian child Sherman Coolidge, adopted by a captain and his wife at Camp Pilot Butte, who became a leading western cleric (1).

created a stable, enduring, mainstream orthodoxy for Anglo-American residents, who tended, in these early years, to dominate professional and managerial niches. Also, the Finns, quite prominent in the labor and socialist movements of the region, founded an Evangelical Lutheran church. Finally, the Methodists represented an early presence in Rock Springs. Holding meeting in members' homes initially, Methodists rented a hall for services until 1895, when they purchased commercial property, which they then converted into a church. On reflection, therefore, by the time of the Chinese Massacre in 1885, Rock Springs was no mere hell-on-wheels or lawless mining camp. By the mid-1880s educational and religious establishments attested to Rock Springs' status as a thriving municipality with cultural institutions separate from corporate control.⁷⁸

As the residents of Rock Springs developed institutions of learning and worship, so too did they commence organizations devoted to forging communal and civic ties. Among the earliest of these were fraternal organizations common among other nineteenth-century American cities and towns. In December 1884, the Knights of Pythias, a product of the Civil War dedicated to ritual, brotherhood, and charity, debuted in

⁷⁸ Reference material on Clark, "Incidents of Pioneer Days"; Rhode, *Booms and Busts*, 39-41; UPCC, *History of the Union Pacific Coal Mines*, 234-237. Daniel Y. Meschter, "History of the Presbyterian Church in Rawlins, Wyoming (Conclusion)," *Annals of Wyoming* 39 (April 1967), explains the somewhat haphazard location of specific denominations among Wyoming frontier towns. He states, "Most of the denominations active on the frontier in those days recognized that with small towns and widely scattered population, competition among the Protestant groups would be wasteful and could serve no useful purpose. For this reason, by mutual acceptance of the fact, the mission field was divided up and only one or two denominations would attempt to organize churches in any one town, [thus explaining], by Meschter's reasoning, the lack of a Presbyterian congregation in Rock Springs" (78).

Sweetwater County, with mine official David G. Thomas as Chancellor Commander. Five years later, the first Masons lodge appeared in Rock Springs, meeting in the W. H. Mellor Building until a temple was completed shortly before the First World War. Along with its own organizational activities, the local Masons lodge actively engaged in community development, including laying the cornerstone of the Wyoming General Hospital on December 2, 1893.⁷⁹

Various factors contributed to the complex nature of local socio-cultural life. Undoubtedly, UPCC, as chief arbiter of employment in town, played a central role in local demographics. Yet, the nature of a booming coal camp turned regional service center dictated that Rock Springs transcend UPCC control to offer enterprising individuals and community institutions a significant role in community development. An interesting case of community interest intersecting with frontier eccentricity involved Rock Springs' Doc Edward Woodruff. According to the UPCC History, Dr. Woodruff dictated terms of his employment to resident miners, who accepted, and the physician, traversing the region of UP mining areas, negotiated a lucrative practice based in Rock Springs.⁸⁰ Doc Woodruff's experiences bespoke both the primitive nature of frontier

⁷⁹ "Knights of Pythias," Vertical Files, Sweetwater County Historical Museum, Green River, Wyoming, Folder "Fraternal & Civic Organizations," 2; "Masons," Vertical Files, Sweetwater County Historical Museum, Green River, Wyoming, Folder "Fraternal & Civic Organizations," 1.

⁸⁰ UPCC, *History of the Union Pacific Coal Mines*, 55-57.

medicine as well as the combative complexity of western capital-labor conditions.⁸¹

Despite several encounters with victims of frontier melees, Doc Woodruff earned the reputation of a man too tough to tangle with. Even the local Molly Maguires concluded that the physician could not be bluffed "out of town." They resolved that "you can kill him, but you can't bluff him out, and besides it's kind of handy to have a 'doc' around."⁸²

During the 1870s and 1880s, there was a dearth of professional men like Woodruff in Rock Springs; most employed men were found in managerial, laboring, retail, and service trades. The latter two, in particular, are significant since they represent occupations at the same time dependent on UP operations and independent of its direct control. This *petit bourgeoisie* offered the potential for municipal development separate from corporate control. The 1870 census identifies only a handful of Rock Springs residents economically independent of the local coal operations. The Blair brothers engaged in stock raising. Also partnerships between Henry Smith and Patrick Flood, valued at \$300, and George Young and John Jarvis, valued at \$120, operated in the retail liquor trade.⁸³ Over the next decade, Rock Springs witnessed a proliferation of retail and service enterprises. In 1880, nearly five percent of Rock Springs residents worked in the retail, service, commercial, or stock-raising industries, and these occupations represented

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Ibid, 58.

⁸³ United States Government, *Ninth Census of the United States*, "Schedule No. 1.-Inhabitants, Sweetwater County, Rock Springs U. P. R. R., Wyoming" (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1870).

the endeavors of nearly fifteen percent of adult Euroamerican males. Most notably, the liquor trade involved the highest number of independent businessmen, but others were engaged in enterprises such as butcher shops, barbering, shoemaking, and hotel management.⁸⁴

Retail and service occupations involved diverse groups of individuals. In 1880, German-born Frank Myers operated a butcher shop that provided a living for himself, his native-born wife Jane and their infant daughter Lizzie. His neighbors William and Catherine Musgrove, English immigrants, ran a hotel that housed not only their three young children, Catherine's sister Jennie Jagan and her infant daughter, but also twenty-one adult males, a majority of whom had been born in the British Isles. The other major hotel operation in town belonged to Joseph and Jane Wise, from Scotland, which included rooms for their twelve-year-old son and Jane's widowed mother and bartender brother. The Wises' boarders worked principally for UPCC and were originally from England, Scotland, Sweden, Denmark, and the American Midwest and East Coast. English-born George Harris owned a saloon in town while his wife Ellen, daughter of French immigrants, boarded a dozen men, a majority of whom were from Ireland. Two men listed as merchants had quite different circumstances. Forty-one-year-old Charles Johnson was a Swedish bachelor operating a commercial establishment while Massachusetts-born Dwight Thayer and his wife Nellie boasted not only their mercantile

⁸⁴ United States Government, *Tenth Census of the United States*, "Schedule No. 1.-Inhabitants, Sweetwater County, Rock Springs, Wyoming" (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1880).

interests but a household that included two young children, two boarders and two serving girls. Irish immigrants Hugh and Jane Johnson owned a hostelry and took in a fellow Irishman as a boarder. Adam Cooper was the lone shoemaker in town. He and his wife Christine had emigrated from Scotland and all three of their young children were Wyoming-born. Among saloon-keepers were Scottish-born George Young, Alexander Cooper, and William McDonald, whose wife Marion was the only nurse in town, likely employed by UPCC. These individuals--most of them foreign-born heads of households and property owners--formed the foundation of an independent business class in Rock Springs, whose interests were closely intertwined with the economic interests of ranchers and laborers. The arrival of Chinese to work UPCC mines appeared to threaten the future growth of their city.⁸⁵

The Chinese Community

Following the labor difficulties of 1875, Chinese workers increasingly found employment in the Union Pacific coal mines in Rock Springs. In order to protect its investment in the imported labor and to maintain order among diverse groups of laborers, UP segregated the Chinese into a defined district in Rock Springs, which quickly became known as Chinatown, an area that local historian Rhode calls "an accretion of shacks the company had put up plus additions fashioned by the occupants from old boards, packing

⁸⁵ United States Government, *Tenth Census of the United States*, "Schedule No. 1.-Inhabitants, Sweetwater County, Rock Springs, Wyoming" (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1880).

boxes, and flattened tin cans, a new dimension to the local town's shabby ugliness."⁸⁶ As discussed previously, Beckwith-Quinn served as the principal conduit through which UPCC hired Chinese laborers, with the considerable assistance of Ah Say, who first immigrated to the gold fields of California before finding success as a labor padrone in Evanston and later Rock Springs. As Gunther Peck has demonstrated, the rise of padronism, as represented by the relationships among Ah Say, Beckwith-Quinn, and UPCC, "reflected the highly variable labor market needs of the region's and the continent's most modern corporations."⁸⁷ Historic cultural assumptions constructed by Euroamericans in regards to the Chinese certainly contributed to these labor market needs.⁸⁸

The history of national antipathy to non-whites may be traced to the foundations of the republic and evolved according to the increasing numbers of immigrants throughout the nineteenth century. As early as 1790, Congress restricted American citizenship to "free white persons," thus codifying racist thinking even before Chinese

⁸⁶ Rhode, *Booms and Busts*, 47.

⁸⁷ Gunther Peck, *Reinventing Free Labor: Padrones and Immigrant Workers in the North American West, 1880-1930* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 67.

⁸⁸ For various views on the Asian experience in the West, see, for example, Edwin P. Hoyt, *Asians in the West* (Nashville and New York: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 1974); Gail M. Nomura, "Significant Lives: Asia and Asian-Americans in the History of the U.S. West," *Western Historical Quarterly* 25 (Spring 1994): 69-88; Chris Friday, "Asian American Labor and Historical Interpretation," *Labor History* 35.4 (1994): 524-546.

began coming to the United States in significant numbers during the Gold Rush. With the development of business enterprise in California and the construction of the transcontinental railroad, greater numbers of Chinese immigrated, residing largely in California and then following the railroad eastward into mining areas like Rock Springs. Historian Shih-Shan Henry Tsai states that most immigrants were male peasants and workers from Kwangtung. Half were married and nearly all were voluntary émigrés (either paying their own way or working as credit contract laborers). The reasons these Chinese emigrated, according to Tsai, included "overcrowding, poverty, war, and other catastrophes in China," but, at least in the eyes of American scholars, labor demand in the United States was the principal factor.⁸⁹ Contemporary opinion quickly turned hostile toward Chinese. In 1873, M. B. Starr declared that a "powerful combination of capital" intended to introduce into an advanced civilization "vast hordes of debased, ignorant, and corrupt heathen races."⁹⁰ Euroamericans accused Chinese of coming from a culture that bribed public officials, kept slovenly dwellings, ran gambling and opium dens, engaged in hooliganism, enticed white women into prostitution, practiced infanticide, and believed in polygamy. Working-class Euroamericans opposed the Chinese because they viewed the latter as inherently subservient and, therefore, indisposed to cooperate in class-based organizations. Some scholars observe that part of the difficulty Chinese faced during the exclusion era was that Americans were then caught up in a debate over whether or not

⁸⁹ Shih-Shan Henry Tsai, "Chinese Immigration, 1848-1882," in Sucheng Chan et al, *Peoples of Color in the American West* (Lexington and Toronto: D. C. Heath, 1994), 111.

⁹⁰ Starr, *The Coming Struggle*, 7.

their nation should be one of free or restricted immigration. Others argue that animosity functioned primarily from racial bias, linking Chinese with other non-whites, especially African Americans, in the tradition of enslaved labor. Therefore, the Euroamerican loathing of Chinese in early Rock Springs was very much in the national tradition.⁹¹

Despite stereotypes of dissoluteness and subservience, the Chinese themselves were not willingly victimized by the immigration or wage-labor processes. As Gail M. Nomura points out, a strict economic appreciation of Asian immigration negates the totality of those immigrants' contributions to nation building, especially in the American West.⁹² Instead, the Chinese experience in the American West during the second half of the nineteenth century must be seen as a conscious and activist response to material and cultural realities. The very act of emigration marked a daring decision by Chinese laborers to seek a better life for themselves and their families, for leaving China represented not only separation from the civilized land of one's birth but entry into a strange, wild land whose citizens generally reviled peoples of darker skin color. Sucheng Chan argues that "Asian immigrant workers began their struggle for equality quite early

⁹¹ See Shay, *Chinese*; James A. Whitney, *The Chinese and the Chinese Question* (New York: Tibbals Book Company, 1888); Robert G. Lee, *Orientalism: Asian Americans in Popular Culture* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1999), 65; K. Scott Wong, "Cultural Defenders and Brokers: Chinese Responses to the Anti-Chinese Movement," in K. Scott Wong and Sucheng Chan, eds., *Claiming America: Constructing Chinese American Identities During the Exclusion Era* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1998), 31; Reimers, *Unwelcome Strangers*, 11-12; Sucheng, *Entry Denied*; Gyory, *Closing the Gate*; Knobel, "America for the Americans," 227-229.

⁹² Nomura, "Significant Lives," 79.

in their history. Despite the fact that the Chinese have been widely depicted as docile, there is considerable evidence to show that when their sense of justice was violated, they rose up in revolt."⁹³ Historians such as Roger Daniels, Charles J. McClain, Liping Zhu, and David Palumbo-Liu record how Chinese immigrants sought through political, social, and cultural means to mitigate the repressive nature of hegemonic Euroamerican society and establish means of empowerment on the American frontier. In Rock Springs, for example, Chinese coal miners used their numbers and industry to garner perquisites such as favorable coal rooms from supervisors and did not back down when confronted by Euroamerican miners with insults and physical intimidation. Perhaps the most important of the Chinese immigrants' attempts at self-definition in the New World was the creation of Chinatown, a setting simultaneously alien and native in construction.⁹⁴

The Chinese settlement in Rock Springs was both similar and dissimilar to other Chinatowns in the West. While K. Scott Wong recognizes that the history of Chinatown has been "layered with imagery,"⁹⁵ the residents themselves sought to create a sanctuary

⁹³ Sucheng Chan, *Asian Americans: An Interpretive History* (Boston: Twayne, 1991), 81.

⁹⁴ See Tsai, *China and the Overseas Chinese in the United States, 1868-1911*; Roger Daniels, *Asian America: Chinese and Japanese in the United States since 1850* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1988); Charles J. McClain, *In Search of Equality: The Chinese Struggle against Discrimination in Nineteenth-Century America* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 1994); Zhu, *A Chinaman's Chance*; David Palumbo-Liu, *Asian/American: Historical Crossings of a Racial Frontier* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999); Storti, *Incident at Bitter Creek*, 83-84.

⁹⁵ K. Scott Wong, "Chinatown: Conflicting Images, Contested Terrain," *MELUS: Society of the Study of Multi-Ethnic Literature of the United States* 20 (Spring 1995): 3.

from Euroamerican hostility and prejudice. While the largest and most vigorous of the Chinatown communities tended to be coastal, mining areas such as Rock Springs; American Canyon, Nevada; and Salt Lake City, Utah, evinced significant Chinese settlement. These interior Chinatowns shared similar challenges: lack of females, racialized economic competition, and other politico-social issues related to ethnically diverse mining communities. Chinatown in Rock Springs, however, faced the additional challenge of being perceived as an "enemy camp" protected by a powerful corporation with its ability to persuade federal and territorial authorities to use armed troops to protect UP interests, including its labor pool.⁹⁶

Chinatown, located east of Mine Number Three, was spatially segregated from Rock Springs. Craig Storti states, "Half the houses were sturdy wooden structures built by the company and rented to the Chinese, and half were makeshift shacks thrown together with packing crates and building paper, their roofs made from flattened tin cans."⁹⁷ Census records indicate that the vast majority of Chinese lodged in barracks-like structures housing from ten to fifteen individuals. Each dwelling included a cook with nearly all of the other lodgers working either as miners or laborers. Normally, miners

⁹⁶ Michel S. Laguerre, *The Global Ethnopolis: Chinatown, Japantown and Manilatown in American Society* (New York: St. Martin's press, 2000); A. Dudley Gardner, "Chinese Emigrants in Southwest Wyoming, 1868-1885, *Annals of Wyoming* 63 (Fall 1991): 139-144; David Valentine, "American Canyon: A Chinese Village," in Stephen Tchudi, ed., *Community in the American West* (Reno and Las Vegas: Nevada Humanities Committee, 1999), 107-130; Daniel Liestman, "Utah's Chinatowns: The Development and Decline of Extinct Ethnic Enclaves," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 64 (Winter 1996): 70-95; Storti, *Incident at Bitter Creek*, 85-86; Courtwright, *Violent Land*, 159-168.

⁹⁷ Storti, *Incident at Bitter Creek*, 86-87.

tended to reside together while laborers clustered together. Only four dwellings showed fewer than five residents: one housed two miners; another, a miner and a laborer; a third housed a cook, a barber, and two clerical workers; a fourth held a physician, his wife, and two boarders. Other structures included restaurants, stores, laundries, and boarding - houses. While the Chinese population in Rock Springs was at one time the largest in the Territory of Wyoming, Chinatown was still linked in numerous ways with other large Chinese communities, most notably nearby Evanston, which boasted an elaborate Joss House to serve spiritual needs as well as a brothel reputedly staffed only by Chinese women.⁹⁸

The Chinese community provided a myriad of services, approaching a degree of self-sufficiency, for its residents, which reinforced the social gulf between it and the Euroamerican community. With each boarding establishment headed by a cook, who would acquire supplies through Beckwith and Quinn, most Chinese experienced little interaction with Rock Springs' commercial sector. In fact, noodle shops and restaurants in Chinatown provided lunches for the Chinese miners, allowing them to stay near their workplaces. Beyond cooks and fledgling restaurateurs, Chinatown offered other service-sector amenities. Ah Bow operated the sole laundry in the community. Three different

⁹⁸ United States Government, *Tenth Census of the United States*, "Schedule No. 1.-Inhabitants, Sweetwater County, Rock Springs, Wyoming" (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1880); A. Dudley Gardner, "A Brief Look at Chinese Communities in Alberta, Wyoming and Montana," Paper Presented to the Annual Meeting of the Rocky Mountain Archivist, Denver Public Library, November 1998, in Gardner, *Papers and Presentations*, v. 1 (Rock Springs: Western Wyoming Community College, 2001), 3-4; Storti, *Incident at Bitter Creek*, 87.

boarding establishments housed barbers. Zin Sin was one of two gamblers in Chinatown, and Gardner surmises that Zin likely provided gaming beyond just his own community. Sin Jing, the lone Chinese priest in Wyoming Territory, probably served a wider circuit of Chinese communities.⁹⁹ The only physician in the Chinese camp, as previously mentioned, is listed in the census as the only man living with his wife, although one other dwelling lists male and female cooks, both married, suggesting that there may have been a second married couple in Chinatown. These two Chinese women are the only ones appearing in the 1880 Census, although anecdotal evidence suggests that, like male laborers, many transient Chinese women visited Rock Springs.¹⁰⁰

Most of the Chinese in Rock Springs before the massacre, however, were miners, although a large minority performed various tasks for the railroad. Craig Storti argues that the Chinese laborer's life generally resembled that of his Euroamerican counterpart save for the different cultural milieu from which each came. He writes:

[The Chinese worker's] day varied little from that of his white counterpart. He rose before dawn, drank tea with his cabin mates, ate a bowl of rice or noodles, and went off to the mines. If he was a pick-and-shovel man, he wore a miner's pit clothes, but if he worked above ground, he preferred his traditional Chinese clothes; a loose blue cotton blouse, matching broad trousers, wooden shoes, a jade bracelet, and a broad-brimmed hat made of split bamboo or black felt. Most still wore the queue.

On his way to work, he saw Hong Kong [another name for Rock Springs' Chinatown] waking up--restaurants and noodle shops serving

⁹⁹ Gardner, "Chinese Emigrants," 141.

¹⁰⁰ United States Government, *Tenth Census of the United States*, "Schedule No. 1.-Inhabitants, Sweetwater County, Rock Springs, Wyoming" (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1880); Storti, *Incident at Bitter Creek*, 90.

their morning clients; fruit and meat sellers laying out their wares; fish sellers dropping live fish into tiny artificial ponds; peddlers shouldering immense baskets of vegetables; the attendant sweeping out the temple; ducks, geese, and pigs feeding on the refuse in the gutters.¹⁰¹

From this peripatetic setting, the Chinese miner followed a stream of friends and neighbors winding along the paths through the sagebrush to the mines and their shops. It was here at the mines, as well as at the depot and along the UP tracks, that the Chinese workers came into most intimate contact with Euroamerican residents. In a few cases, such as that of David G. Thomas, a miner turned supervisor, who became known as "Davie Tom," the Chinese found a true friend who sought to accommodate their material needs and look after their economic interests. More commonly, they confronted outright hostility and antipathy. While no significant violence against Chinese workers occurred between their introduction as replacement workers in 1875 and the massacre in 1885, UP records indicate gradually increasing anti-Chinese sentiments as more and more Euroamericans flocked to Rock Springs.¹⁰²

Community and the Meaning of the Massacre

The coming of the Chinese miners marked a turning point in the history of Rock Springs. Over the next decade, behaviors, actions, and beliefs developed that shaped

¹⁰¹ Storti, *Incident at Bitter Creek*, 90.

¹⁰² UPCC, *History of the Union Pacific Coal Mines*, 72-73; Bromly, *Chinese Massacre*, 45. Bromly states that union opposition was directed not only at the Chinese but also Mormons, that is, essentially all workers antagonistic toward organized labor.

ethno-racial relations in the coal camp and resulted in ignominious violence. Craig Storti describes the impact of the Chinese settlement on Rock Springs as "devastating." He writes:

[T]he town that had boomed before the strike [of 1874-75] was struggling to survive less than a year later. Many merchants went out of business, and those that didn't fought mightily against Beckwith-Quinn's near stranglehold on the miners' trade. A representative of a Laramie bank was sent to Rock Springs during this period to look into the feasibility of opening a branch there, but he was not encouraged: "Its physical aspect was uninviting, its business houses few, and all outward inducements lacking." He agreed with an earlier assessment by one of his colleagues that "Chinamen are too numerous and white men too few."¹⁰³

Yet Euroamerican settlers remained. While the corporation originally planned to maintain a ratio of nearly 4:1 Chinese to Euroamerican miners, increasing coal demand and the Exclusion Act of 1882 narrowed that ratio. By the time of the massacre over 150 Euroamericans worked the mines, or roughly one-third of the total mining force. With the increasing population of non-Chinese miners, anti-Chinese sentiment codified by federal statute, and the increasing vigor of the Knights of Labor, Euroamerican miners in Rock Springs became more aggressively anti-Chinese by 1885. UP executive Isaac Bromly, in his report on the massacre, claims that at that time "there seems to have been a growing impression among white miners that they had, or ought to have, an exclusive right to work the mines, that the company was duty bound to give employment to all white men who applied; that the Chinamen were interlopers, and should be driven out to make room for white men."¹⁰⁴ Mine superintendent David G. Thomas adds that UP hiring practices

¹⁰³ Storti, *Incident at Bitter Creek*, 95.

¹⁰⁴ Bromly, *Chinese Massacre*, 45.

in 1885, particularly the laying off of Euroamerican rail workers and the continuing importation of Chinese workers, exacerbated such feelings. By September 2, 1885, the growing anti-Chinese sentiment in Rock Springs was such that a shoving match over a coal room between Euroamerican and Chinese miners enflamed the passions of the Euroamerican community. While wounded Chinese workers returned to the sanctuary of Chinatown to tend their medical needs, scores of Euroamerican miners and their friends gathered downtown and agreed to march on the Chinese enclave.¹⁰⁵

While the attack on Chinatown lasted only a few hours, the tension, fear, and hatred engendered by the massacre dominated the weeks and months that followed. Eastern newspapers such as the *Chicago News* and *New York Times* denounced the violence in Rock Springs, intimating that the episode was symptomatic of western society. Western newspapers responded differently. Wyoming's *Carbon County Journal* carried on a lengthy campaign following the massacre in which it denounced UP and Chinese labor in both news stories and editorials. A newspaper editor from Idaho joined in the chorus of post-massacre anti-Chinese sentiment by blaming the Chinese presence for inhibiting eastern women from migrating westward. An editor for the *Cheyenne Sun* blamed the federal government for "using bayonets and Gatling guns to establish a slave labor system" in Rock Springs.¹⁰⁶ Concurring with the *Sun*, the *Rock Springs*

¹⁰⁵ Storti, *Incident at Bitter Creek*, 85; J. H. Goodnough, "David G. Thomas' Memories of the Chinese Riot," in Arif Dirlik, *Chinese on the American Frontier* (Lanham and Boulder: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001), 350.

¹⁰⁶ *Cheyenne Sun*, September 10, 1885, 1.

Independent vehemently decried not the violence of the Euroamerican miners but the actions of UP and the government to restore the Chinese to the mines, stating, "Every man should unite in the demand that the Chinese must go."¹⁰⁷ Clearly, Euroamericans in Rock Springs, abetted by anti-Chinese sentiment throughout the West, sought to translate the massacre into a victory over UP and its Chinese workers. UP, Governor Warren, and the federal government collaborated to ensure that would not be the case. Whatever community developed along the banks of Bitter Creek was one that would include the Chinese, although, at least initially, it *would* require bayonets and Gatling guns to protect the returning Chinese.¹⁰⁸

The presence of the United States Army at Camp Rock Springs (later Camp Pilot Butte) brought multiple dividends. First, federal troops forestalled further vigilante actions by Rock Springs' Euroamerican miners. Second, the military protected UP property and guaranteed that the returning Chinese workers would enjoy some semblance of security while in the coal camps. Third, the soldiers visibly represented the relationships between federal and territorial, private and public interests that sought to stifle labor militancy against UP. Finally, the presence of a new authority—a martial

¹⁰⁷ "The Exodus!" *Rock Springs Independent*, Extra Edition, September 11, 1885 [mimeographed], Wyoming State Archives, 19.

¹⁰⁸ "The Exodus!" *Rock Springs Independent*, 12, 15-16; "The Problem of the Horror," *Carbon County Journal*, September 12, 1885, 2; "The Chinese Massacre," *Carbon County Journal*, September 16, 1885, 2; "The Chinese Must Go," *Carbon County Journal*, September 30, 1885, 2; "An Idaho Editor on the Chinese," *Carbon County Journal*, October 7, 1885, 2.

class not directly under UP control—offered new social and cultural dynamics for Rock Springs at a point when UP apparently had triumphed over white labor.¹⁰⁹

For troops used to duty in the West, Rock Springs did not prove a particularly uncomfortable existence. The community offered retail and service establishments as well as a civilian population with whom to fraternize. The duty itself was not particularly arduous. It consisted principally of keeping Euroamericans away from the rebuilt Chinatown and ensuring the safety of the Chinese miners as they moved back and forth from the mines. Nevertheless, the records of the Post Surgeon suggest that even hardened troopers found the physical environment less than desirable even as late as the mid-1890s. Noting that the climate of Rock Springs “is very dry, and temperatures vary between wide limits,” Captain McGraw, Assistant Surgeon, described Bitter Creek as normally a dry gorge “with the exception of stagnant pools of water [from] the several coal mines, or discharged from the ... sewers.”¹¹⁰ And, while noting the generally clean conditions of the streets, McGraw commented on the tendency of both Chinese and Euroamerican residents to accumulate large amounts of rubbish in front of living quarters and along the banks of Bitter Creek. Throughout the period of military occupation, Rock

¹⁰⁹ Special Order 86, Department of the Platte, September 5, 1885, directed Companies B and E, 7th U. S. Infantry to establish a post in Rock Springs. On October 20 of that year, Special Order 105 changed the name to Camp Pilot Butte. The camp itself was located on property belonging to the Union Pacific Railway (see Sweetwater County Historical Museum, Record Group 393, 1, and McGraw, “Record of Medical History of Camp Pilot Butte”).

¹¹⁰ McGraw, “Record of Medical History,” 3-4.

Springs continued to convey the image of a wild, dirty, frontier mining camp hostile to stable Euroamerican working-class settlement.¹¹¹

For the rest of the century, Camp Pilot Butte stood as both reminder of the social volatility attending the massacre and its aftermath as well as a point of interaction with Euroamerican residents who sought to make Rock Springs more than a rough-and-tumble coal camp. As previously mentioned, many of the officers and men were of the Episcopal faith and helped launch what later became the Church of the Holy Communion in the late 1880s. In a more prosaic vein, the camp's officers eventually opened a clubhouse, but not on the post. Instead, they found a location downtown and hired an African American couple to operate the facility, which served both the post's officers and the town's business and managerial classes. Enlisted personnel, according to historian Robert Rhode, did not necessarily enjoy the same hospitality afforded officers. While a handful of soldiers married townswomen, rarely were the troops invited into residents' homes. Over time, Camp Pilot Butte appeared to acquire permanence within the rhythms of life in Rock Springs, serving as a citadel of authority and order in this western community despite orders in 1894 that demoted it to a subpost and reduced troop levels. By early 1899, however, the War Department, with new manpower concerns in the Pacific and Caribbean, considered the detachment of troops at Rock Springs superfluous. Despite lobbying by various Wyoming interests, including the governor and the Union Pacific, who believed the troops were still needed, the Army abandoned Camp Pilot Butte in early

¹¹¹ Ibid., 4-5.

March 1899, removing perhaps the most constant reminder to townspeople of the massacre.¹¹²

Conclusion

The 1880s challenged the United States and, perhaps even more so, the residents of Rock Springs, Wyoming. Residing on the frontiers of industrialization, expansion, and cultural accommodation, inhabitants along Bitter Creek discovered that adjustment to emerging American traditions and institutions involved more than hard work and obeisance; sometimes they required conformity and obsequiousness. And the dominant culture frequently denied equal access to opportunity for all local residents. Thus, the Chinese in Rock Springs during the 1870s and 1880s were defined as outside the core American identity even though their hard work helped to create the American experience. The tradition of racial marginality continued with the evolution of municipal community in Rock Springs as non-whites found residence in peripheral areas known as "Chinatown," "Japtown," and "Niggertown."

¹¹² UPCC, *History of the Union Pacific Coal Mines*, 63, 237-238; Rhode, *Booms and Busts*, 60-63; Robert H. Gruber, Old Military Records Division, "Reference Service Report," Sweetwater County Historical Museum, Green River, Wyoming, n.p.; [Camp Pilot Butte Manpower Figures], Vertical Files, Sweetwater County Historical Museum, Green River, Wyoming, Folder: "Camp Pilot Butte," Record Group 393.

PART 2
A COMMUNITY IN TRANSITION,
1885-1913

CHAPTER FIVE

CAPITAL AND COMMUNITY: TRANSPORTATION, ENTERPRISE, AND LABOR IN FOUNDING A COAL MINING CAMP

Introduction

On September 18, 1885, Minister Cheng Tsao-ju, Consul Huang Sih-chuan, and two interpreters from the Chinese diplomatic mission arrived in Rock Springs and began a formal investigation of the massacre. Two months later, Cheng informed Secretary of State Thomas F. Bayard that the Chinese government expected an indemnity to be paid to the victims of the riot and that the perpetrators should be brought to justice. Huang, the Chinese consul in New York, explained: "With reference to the property destroyed by the mob, I find that every one of the surviving Chinese has been rendered penniless by the cruel attack. . . . Since the riot took place, it has been impossible for them to secure even a torn sheet or any article of clothing to protect them from the cold. . . . These poor creatures, numbering hundreds, are all hungry and clothed in rags. . . ."¹

As previously discussed, the Chinese in Rock Springs faced not only the hazards of coal mining but also cultural prejudice; now, in the fall of 1885, they faced those twin

¹ United States Congress, The House, *Providing Indemnity to Certain Chinese Subject*, H. R. 2044, 49th Congress, 1st Session, 1885-1886, 27. The actions of the Rock Springs Chinese to acquire redress of their grievances reflect the thesis of Chinese political activism found in McClain, *In Search of Equality*.

perils without homes or possessions that had been destroyed by fires set in Chinatown by their Euroamerican neighbors. The Rock Springs Chinese would rebuild their community with the help of UP and under the watchful eye of troops encamped on Pilot Butte. And this community would contribute significantly to the material development and cultural enrichment of Rock Springs, but it would also be a community steadily declining in numbers and influence as the stream of Chinese immigrants in the Exclusion era evaporated and an increasingly heterogeneous group of Euroamericans along with African Americans and, by the turn-of-the-century, Mexicans, Japanese, and Koreans would call Rock Springs home.²

The Post-Massacre Chinese Community

Chinese returning to Rock Springs after the massacre eschewed reprisal and focused on rebuilding what was lost. Certainly, the Chinese were not on their own, for federal troops guarded the new Chinatown. These actions, along with the steadfast assurances of UP President Charles Francis Adams, Jr., ensured the continuation of Chinese inhabitancy along Bitter Creek for years to come. Nevertheless, the Chinese themselves were concerned about their return to Rock Springs. The 1885 Memorial to the New York Consul states, "Although protected by government troops, [our] sleep is

² Gardner, "Chinese Emigrants," 143; UPCC, "Report of Operations for Year 1895," Union Pacific Coal Company Archives, Archaeological Services, Rock Springs, Wyoming, Box 20B, n.p.

disturbed by frightful dreams. . . ."³ The fact that barbed wire fences surrounded the Chinese barracks undoubtedly contributed to an armed camp atmosphere. Gradually, however, the vestiges of a community of their own began to ease Chinese anxieties. The Joss House was rebuilt. While UPCC rebuilt barracks-style dwellings, inhabitants did make small additions to personalize their abodes. Excavations of the post-massacre Chinatown have revealed some of the attributes of traditional material life, including Chinese coins, porcelain bowls, stoneware storage jars, and medicinal jars, along with types of American products, such as porcelain pipes and a bottle of Chamberlain's Pain Balm. To some degree, a certain normality returned to the lives of post-massacre Chinese, including commerce with the Euroamerican community.⁴

The resurrected Chinatown and its inhabitants reflected a combination of traditional Chinese and borrowed American cultural traits. Labor bosses continued to wield tremendous influence over the Chinese community, offering financial assistance to the needy as well as serving a patriarchal role among their countrymen. Lao Chee was another influential figure, whose skill as an unlicensed veterinarian for UP stables garnered notice from as far away as Peking. Besides such noteworthy persons, the

³ "Memorial of Chinese Laborers," in Cheng-Tsu Wu, *Chink*, 157.

⁴ Liestman, "Utah's Chinatowns," 84; Crane and Larson, "The Chinese Massacre, Part One," 55; Geoffrey O'Gara, *Main Street Wyoming: "Chinese Massacre,"* KCWC-TV/Wyoming Public Broadcasting, 1994; A. Dudley Gardner, "Chinese Courtyards and Structural Configurations in Southwestern Wyoming," Paper Presented to the Third Biennial Rocky Mountain Anthropological Conference, Bozeman, Montana, September 1997, in A. Dudley Gardner, *Papers and Presentations*, v. 1 (Rock Springs: Western Wyoming Community College, 2001), n.p.; [Description of Artifacts Recovered during Archaeological Excavations in the Old Rock Springs Chinese Community], Sweetwater County Historical Museum, Green River, Wyoming, n.d., n.p.

Chinese community interacted with their Euroamerican neighbors in two other significant ways. Longtime resident Grace Webb recalls turn-of-the-century Chinese peddlers roaming the streets "carrying a contrivance made of a pole which rested on their shoulders with a basket dangling from each end."⁵ More significantly, the parading of the 100-foot-long, green silk and paper dragon every February during the Chinese New Year's celebration provoked considerable excitement along the streets of Rock Springs. Dozens of men carried the dragon, purchased by Ah Say, accompanied by a band, and others holding large firecrackers, traditional battle axes, spears, and swords.⁶

The racial boundary in Rock Springs survived the massacre and was reinforced by the continued segregated position of Chinatown (and later Japanese and African American enclaves). In an 1896 editorial, for example, the *Miner's* editor noted the economic differences between the races. He wrote, "Rock Springs coal mines are working just enough to keep alive the Chinese, while the white people who have more costly habits are going in debt or using up savings."⁷ And, as noted previously, UPCC took careful note not only to segregate Chinese and Euroamerican residents of company

⁵ Grace H. Webb, "Rock Springs' China Town," [mimeographed], Rock Springs, 1939, Wyoming State Archives, Cheyenne, Wyoming, 1.

⁶ "Ah Say," *Rock Springs Miner*, February 2, 1899, 3; Grace H. Webb, "Rock Springs' China Town," 2-4, 6-7; "Dragon Makes Tremendous Impression," *Rock Springs Rocket-Miner*, December 25-26, 1984, 8B; Rhode, *Booms and Busts*, 81-83; UPCC, *History of Union Pacific Coal Mines*, 92-94. Ah Say received the "exclusive store privilege at Chinatown," which reflected his role as mediator between the Chinese and UP (see "Annual Report for Year 1891 of the Union Pacific Coal Company, for Wyoming and Utah, Union Pacific Coal Company Archives, Archaeological Services, Rock Springs, Wyoming, Box 20B, 14).

⁷ Editorial, *Rock Springs Miner*, June 4, 1896, 2.

tenements spatially but also kept separate ledger accounts for its racially based housing. Interestingly, the *Annual Report for Year 1898*, showed that despite a greater assessed value per property (\$241.15 for Euroamerican to \$75.00 for Chinese), UPCC generated a fivefold greater net return on rental property for the Chinese than Euroamericans while spending nearly eight times less the rate on property upkeep for the Chinese tenements. Thus, the racial boundaries in Rock Springs involved both residential and economic discrimination against the Chinese.⁸

Facing such obstacles, the Chinese devised various strategies to develop their own local community. For much of the decade, labor boss Ah Say remained a significant figure. He loaned money to indigent Chinese, helped with funeral arrangements, and even fixed bond for those incarcerated in local jails. The Panic of 1893, however, impoverished Ah Say, who died in 1898 in much reduced circumstances yet still recognized as a community leader. Another noted figure was Dr. Hung Wah, a pharmacist and druggist specializing in the treatment of chronic disease, whose office was located in the downtown area. Following Ah Say's demise, Leo Pack Jung, special railway agent, assumed a pivotal role in facilitating the local New Year's celebration. The *Miner* described him as "bright and thoroughly Americanized. . . , [believing] in Republicanism and American Institutions."⁹ These community leaders and others kept

⁸ "Annual Report for the Year 1898 of the Union Pacific Coal Company, for Wyoming and Utah," Union Pacific Coal Company Archives, Archaeological Services, Rock Springs, Wyoming, Box 20B, 43.

⁹ "China New Year," *Rock Springs Miner*, February 16, 1899, 1.

the New Year's festivity a colorful pageant lauded by the local newspapers and welcomed by the diverse cultural populations of Rock Springs.¹⁰

Local life for the Chinese reflected an assimilation of cultural traditions with economic exigency. Work in the mines remained hazardous. In 1893, for example, Ah Lung died from a car trip that slipped from the tracks. Five years later, Chan Park and Yep Yew died from a fall of large rocks in No. 8 mine. Many of the Chinese still working in the mines were past middle age, continuing to work underground despite lung disease, rheumatism, failing eyesight, and other debilities. The number of Chinese women in Rock Springs remained low. Only Mrs. Sou Qui, wife of Ah Say's secretary, who died in 1897 at the age of forty-seven, and Seo Huy Heopp, married to a grocer, were recorded in census records of 1900, although the transient and uncounted population must have been larger. What records do evidence, however, is an increasing number of American-born Chinese. The 1900 census shows two dozen Chinese-American residents, primarily from California and Oregon, who were generally younger and more mobile than earlier Rock Springs Chinese. Interestingly, several Chinese workers who lived through the massacre or came to Rock Springs immediately afterward made the town their long-term residence. Lao Chee, the only Chinese deputy sheriff in Wyoming, resided for half a century in Rock Springs. Pun Chung, Leo Wah, and Ah Coon, all miners, lived in Rock Springs for

¹⁰ Rhode, *Booms and Busts*, 82; "Two Chinamen Gave Bonds," *Rock Springs Miner*, January 14, 1892, 1; "Dr. Hung Wah," *Rock Springs Miner*, July 25, 1895, 1; "China New Year," *Rock Springs Miner*, February 16, 1899, 1; "Chinamen Celebrate," *Rock Springs Miner*, March 28, 1895, 1.

several decades. Leo and Ah both made numerous trips back to China, where they visited their wives and other family members and likely created slots for “paper sons” who would follow them to the United States. Ah Coon eventually returned permanently to China, where many of Rock Springs Chinese sought to retire, but an ill Leo Wah turned down a UPCC pension and financial assistance to return home, stating, “Me live in Rock Springs long time, me wants to die here.”¹¹ The 1890s undoubtedly witnessed a continuing bifurcation between Euroamerican and Chinese communities in Rock Springs; however, several factors contributed to an increased permeability between the cultures. Greater ethno-racial diversity in Rock Springs lessened the otherness of the Chinese. Dwindling numbers of Chinese reduced their threat to Euroamericans and mitigated the perceived threat of Chinese to native-born whites.¹²

Generally, the Chinese had intended their Rock Springs stay to be temporary. Although several Chinese miners, such as Ah Him and Ah Jin, returned to Rock Springs after the massacre and continued working through the 1920s, many miners left to be replaced by Euroamerican newcomers. Some Chinese miners might have stayed due to local economic opportunity. Others did not have the capital to move following the massacre. Still others, such as Lue Si Fat, whose wife had run off while he labored in

¹¹ “Burial of Aged Chinaman Sunday,” *Rock Springs Miner*, May 28, 1926, 2.

¹² See “Chinaman Killed,” *Rock Springs Miner*, Dec. 21, 1893, 1; “Two Chinamen Killed,” *Rock Springs Miner*, March 31, 1898, 1; “China Woman Dead,” *Rock Springs Miner*, February 25, 1897, 1; United States Government, *Twelfth Census of the United States*, “Schedule No. 1.-Population, Sweetwater County, Rock Springs, Wyoming” (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1900); Cullen, “Early Day Resident,” 207-212.

America, might not have had much to return to in the homeland. Nevertheless, even if the Chinese remained in Rock Springs until they died, nearly everyone wanted their remains returned home. The Chinese cemetery north of Rock Springs was only a temporary abode for the dead. Burying their comrade in a shallow grave for later exhumation and transit, the Chinese placed freshly prepared food, money, and ornaments about the grave. Local children, who often insulted and played pernicious tricks on the Chinese, raided the graves, robbing them of the decorations and devouring the morsels. The children most certainly did not understand the nature of the Chinese cultural traditions, but their actions reflected a continuing feeling among many Euroamericans that Chinese were alien from the core community.¹³

Chinatown (and later Japtown) in early twentieth-century Rock Springs reflected the cultural realities of what Michael Laguerre calls "diasporic globalization." As seen in the early history of Rock Springs, American capital actively recruited Asian workers for internal labor consumption, but cultural assumptions and traditions typically led to enclaved communities based on race.¹⁴ The Chinese community in Rock Springs had already undergone the stages of insertion, hostility, conflict, and resistance experienced by Asian immigrants, but, by the early 1900s, without a steady influx of new immigrants

¹³ Frank Tallmire and J. J. Harrington, "Homeward Bound," *UPCC Employes' Magazine*, 4 (December 1927), 423-4; "The Good Old Days," *UPCC Employes' Magazine* 4 (March 1927): 90; Webb, "Rock Springs' China Town," 5-6; Rhode, *Booms and Busts*, 81; UPCC, *History of Union Pacific Coal Mines*, 93.

¹⁴ Laguerre, *The Global Ethnopolis*, ix-x. See also Chan, *Asian Americans*, for a broad synthesis on patterns of Chinese and Japanese settlement and other historical experiences of Asian Americans.

and with Euroamerican workers taking over mining jobs, it was clear that Chinatown was experiencing a fundamental contraction rather than transition into a permanently viable community. Nevertheless, the population was large enough to offer continuing economic opportunities outside the mines, and Chinese entrepreneurs were much more in evidence than any other non-white group. Thirty-one Chinese residents were involved in retail trade and another forty-six in service occupations, two-thirds of whom were cooks in restaurants or company housing. Skilled workers and professionals, including nine in the health-related professions, represented over five percent of local Chinese workers (see Figure 19).¹⁵

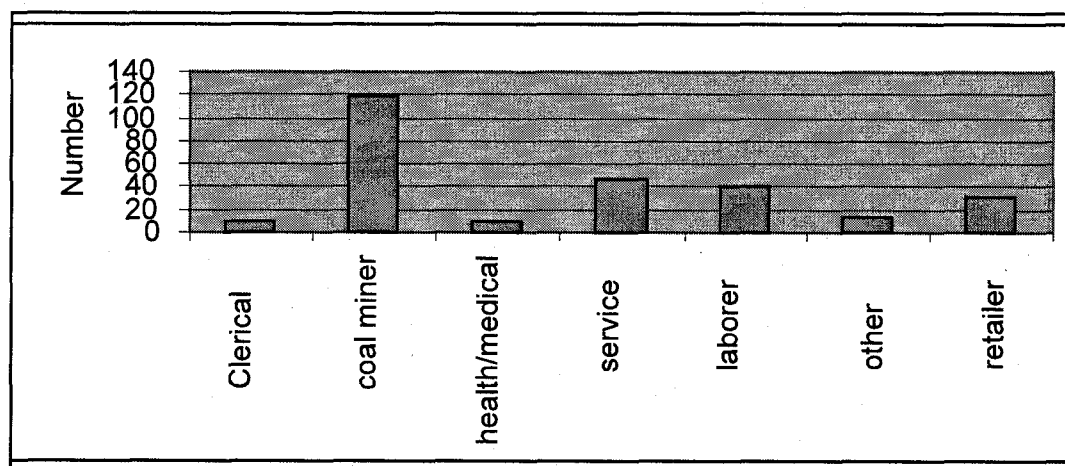


Figure 19. Rock Springs Chinese Population by Occupation (1900)¹⁶

¹⁵ United States Government, *Twelfth Census of the United States*, "Schedule No. 1.-Population, Sweetwater County, Rock Springs, Wyoming" Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1900.

¹⁶ Ibid.

Because of the longevity of their Rock Springs experience, the lives of local Chinese reflected a diversity of life experiences. Business directories showed several Chinese entrepreneurs active during the 1890s, including restaurateurs Leo Lick, Leo Shone, Poy Ah, and Leo Toy; retailers Lon Sing, Kee Shue, and Loy Yet; and launderer Wah Sue. Yee Litt arrived in Rock Springs in 1896 to work in the mines; his wife specialized in embroidered white silk that became a prized commodity among Euroamerican residents. Despite such cross-cultural interactions to which commerce lent itself, a veil of antagonism between Euroamericans and the Chinese remained. Kathy Zelenka, for example, looking back on Chinese residents in town, recalls not only how Euroamerican boys would sell rabbits and pigeons to the Chinese but also tales of clan feuds, opium dens, and a police raid on an underground gambling parlor that made the Chinese emerge "like rats out of holes."¹⁷ Some Chinese attained local notoriety, such as Ah Tong, whose claims to having been made superintendent of UPCC by Ah Say and a claim of \$6,000 against a local bank landed him in the Evanston asylum.¹⁸

By 1905, the decline of Chinese population was evident. In a letter to the county commissioner and county clerk, merchant Lun Sing Chong sought redress for what he viewed as an unfair assessment. Lun remarked, "Our Chinese people getting down very

¹⁷ Kathy Zelenka, "Wyoming History," n.d., Vertical Files, Sweetwater County Historical Museum, Green River, Wyoming, Folder "Chinese I," 1-2.

¹⁸ [Sweetwater County Chinese Entrepreneurs from Survey of Business Directories, 1901-1932], photocopied, Sweetwater County Historical Museum, Green River, Wyoming; "Chinatown--Rock Springs, Yee Litt Family," August 25, 1969, Vertical Files, Sweetwater County Historical Museum, Green River, Wyoming, Folder "Chinese I"; "Ah Tong," *Rock Springs Rocket*, November 27, 1902, 1.

little . . . at present time. Nothing like before. We cannot sell . . . half as much as used to [sic]."¹⁹ Two 1913 newspaper articles illuminate further the decline of Chinatown. In May, the *Rocket* printed a poignant story about the great Chinese dragon that had long been symbolic of the local Chinese presence. Remarking upon the lack of able-bodied men left to carry the hundred-foot dragon, the *Rocket* reflected that the destruction of the beast represented a progressive step for the Chinese, since under the new Chinese republic dragons would no longer be an object of adoration, "which speaks well for the nation that is waking up to modern ideas."²⁰ One month later, the same newspaper reported on the exhumation of bodies from the Chinese graveyard to be returned to China, a task made difficult because of the age of those involved in the digging. Noting that two bodies had been reported stolen, the *Rocket* stated dourly, "This is an unpleasant task and one that none of us can understand."²¹ Yet, as the Chinese community struggled to accommodate changing demographics, other Rock Springs communities faced challenges associated with growth.

¹⁹ Lun Sing Chong, letter to Sweetwater County Commissioner and County Clerk, Rock Springs, Wyoming, July 1, 1905, Vertical Files, Sweetwater County Historical Museum, Green River, Wyoming, Folder "Chinese I."

²⁰ "Chinese Dragon No More," *Rock Springs Rocket*, May 23, 1913, 1.

²¹ "Chinese Bodies Exhumed," *Rock Springs Rocket*, June 6, 1913, 1.

A Diversifying Social Milieu

As the new century approached, residents of Rock Springs could appreciate an ever-increasing sense of vigor in their municipality and its network of communities. UP production expanded yearly. Independent business boomed. Local politics attracted greater attention and participation. Associational culture thrived, especially with the increasing heterogeneity among those migrating into Rock Springs. UPCC officials noted over thirty different ethnic, racial, or language groups working in the mines by 1900. UPCC itself consciously contributed to this demographic change, but local residents also encouraged immigrants to make Rock Springs home. The same issue of the *Miner* that reported on the overseas travels by the Wyoming General Immigration Commission also described efforts by local politicians and businessmen to create a Sweetwater County Immigration Board. Such efforts reflected an ambitious boosterism seeking rapid population growth.²²

On the whole, attempts by Wyoming political and business leaders to lure immigrants concentrated on European whites. Nevertheless, Rock Springs continued to include a substantial non-white population, which in fact increasingly diversified throughout the decade. African Americans had had a historically transient presence in early Rock Springs. A man named Daffyne was alleged to have been not only the "first

²² UPCC, "Annual Report for 1900," Union Pacific Coal Company Archives, Archaeological Services, Rock Springs, Wyoming, Rock Springs, Wyoming, Box 20B, 83; "Wyoming's General Immigration Commissioner Returns from Over the Seas," *Rock Springs Miner*, March 21, 1895, 1; "County Immigration Board," *Rock Springs Miner*, March 21, 1895, 1.

Negro pioneer" in the region but also among the first to rob a UP train. Notorious Isom Dart was known to frequent Rock Springs cowboy haunts until gunned down by Tom Horn in Brown's Park. By 1900, the town witnessed more permanent settlement by African Americans. The first African American family in town was Mr. and Mrs. Simon Collins, who migrated from Peoria, Illinois, to Rock Springs in the late spring of 1891. They raised three children in Rock Springs, including two sons who served in the military during the First World War. Also from the Midwest were the Epps, who traveled from Missouri to southwestern Wyoming. The father was a musician who earned an income by playing in local bars. Making the longer trip from West Virginia, the Randolph family arrived in Rock Springs by the turn-of-the-century, and all the males in the family worked in the coal mines. The Simons also worked in the mines. Parents John and Kattie were originally from South Carolina, but their pattern of childbirth marked a consistent westward path. The African American community in Rock Springs remained small in 1900, but the next few decades witnessed a growing community development, particularly in religious organizations. African American settlers expanded local racial realities, although the decreasing Chinese population remained the most significant non-white group in the town.²³

African American employment in the mines remained steady in the early 1910s until after the war. However, unlike other non-Euroamerican groups, African Americans

²³ "First Negro Families in Rock Springs," n.d., Vertical Files, Sweetwater County Historical Museum, Green River, Wyoming, Folder "Blacks"; United States Government, *Twelfth Census of the United States*, "Schedule No. 1.-Population, Sweetwater County, Rock Springs, Wyoming" (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1900).

persistently brought families to town. In the 1890s, the Carters, free-born children to former slaves, migrated to Rock Springs, where the husband found work in the mines and the wife took care of two stepchildren and an African American boarder. Their next-door neighbors, John and Mary Randolph, raised a daughter and two sons while tending an adult cousin on miners' pay. Altogether in 1900, eleven African American families resided in No. 3 addition, two of whom were single-headed households, three of whom were extended families, and four of whom took in boarders. Not all African American families were residentially segregated, however, for John and Kathie Simmons, slave-born native South Carolinians, lived in a Euroamerican-dominated neighborhood on Bridger Avenue. The majority of African American heads of households in 1900 mined coal, although a minority worked as semiskilled workers or artisans.²⁴

Other non-Euroamerican peoples in Rock Springs remained less visible largely due to smaller numbers yet were still important to the local demographics of Wyoming's so-called "Melting Pot." Koreans began arriving early in the twentieth century with the peak of Korean mine labor occurring in 1906. Due to their small numbers and the abrupt end of their emigration in 1905, Koreans left little historical record locally. Mexicans arrived in Rock Springs throughout the decade, although their numbers in the mines were not as significant as in the postwar period. From 1901 to 1913, Mexicans appear largely

²⁴ General Superintendent Reports, UPCC, 1899-1929, Union Pacific Coal Company Archives, Archaeological Services, Rock Springs, Wyoming; United States Government, *Thirteenth Census of the United States*, "Schedule No. 1.-Population, Sweetwater County, Rock Springs, Wyoming" (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1910).

as a transient presence largely noted through reports of criminal activity in local newspapers.²⁵

Along with African Americans, Koreans, and Mexicans, Japanese further diversified the municipality. While the Exclusion Act of 1882 precipitated a steady decline in the Chinese population in Sweetwater County, the Japanese presence increased significantly in the late nineteenth century. A. Dudley Gardner and David E. Johnson, in their archeological inventory of Sweetwater County, stated, "Of interest is the increase in the number of Japanese in the county as the number of Chinese declined.... In 1890 there were no Japanese living in Sweetwater County. By 1900 there were 259, and in 1905 the number had climbed to 436.... The Japanese were replacing the Chinese in the mines. Both the Chinese and Japanese often had the most undesirable jobs in the mines.... Therefore, the Japanese were being actively recruited to fill a void left by departing Chinese."²⁶ Various factors contributed to Japanese immigration, including expanding rural population, high taxation, and economic dislocation. While the number of Japanese lagged behind newcomers from Europe, UP sought to attract global labor in its plan to

²⁵ General Superintendent Reports, UPCC, 1899-1929, Union Pacific Coal Company Archives, Archaeological Services, Rock Springs, Wyoming; United States Government, *Twelfth Census of the United States*, "Schedule No. 1.-Population, Sweetwater County, Rock Springs, Wyoming" (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1900); United States Government, *Thirteenth Census of the United States*, "Schedule No. 1.-Population, Sweetwater County, Rock Springs, Wyoming" (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1910); Lee Houchins and Chang-su Houchins, "The Korean Experience in America, 1903-1924," in Norris Hundley, Jr., *The Asian American: The Historical Experience* (Santa Barbara and Oxford: Clio Books, 1976), 130-137; "Mexicans in Cutting Affray," *Rock Springs Rocket*, July 25, 1913, 1; "Bluffed by a Greaser," *Rock Springs Rocket*, December 5, 1913, 1.

²⁶ Gardner and Johnson, "Cultural Resource Inventory," v. 1, 36.

diversify its mining camps. While initially concentrated in the mining and railway industries, the Japanese quickly sought to exploit gaps in the service and retail sectors, finding opportunities in commerce, restaurants, gardening, and other enterprises.²⁷

Euroamericans had difficulties understanding the Japanese, as they had other Asians. Historian A. Dudley Gardner notes that in 1899 UP dispatched a flyer recruiting on the mainland of Japan. The flyer suggested that the coal company could not get enough workers, when in fact there was a large Euroamerican labor supply.²⁸ However, UPCC had had great success with its Chinese workers and continued to access the Asian labor market, particularly for the most undesirable jobs in the mines. Because of job competition and racial bias, the Japanese faced some public hostility. In 1901, for instance, the *Laramie Boomerang* editorialized that the "Jap is as much to be feared as the Chinese."²⁹ However, in Rock Springs, ethno-racial tensions between Euroamericans

²⁷ A. Dudley Gardner, Masrkia A. Matthews, and David E. Johnson, "Historic Japanese Sites of Southwestern Wyoming," *The Wyoming Archaeologist* 31 (1988): 67-81; A. Dudley Gardner and David E. Johnson, "Historic Japanese Sites in Southwestern Wyoming," Paper presented at the 44th Annual Plains Anthropological Conference, Denver, Colorado, 1986, in A. Dudley Gardner, *Papers and Presentations*, v. 1, Rock Springs, Wyoming: Western Wyoming College, 2001, 2-3.

²⁸ A. Dudley Gardner and David E. Johnson, "Cultural Resource Inventory & Mitigation of Thirty-Seven Mine Reclamation Sites in Sweetwater County, Wyoming," v. 2, Cultural Resource Management Report No. 29 (Land Quality Division, Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality: Archaeological Services, Western Wyoming College, 1986), Appendix H, 28.

²⁹ "The Menace of the Orientals," *Laramie Boomerang*, December 1901, 1. For contemporary commentary on Japanese immigration from the first quarter of the century, see, for example, V. S. McClathy, "Japanese Immigration and Colonization: Brief Prepared for Consideration of the State Department (Japanese Exclusion League of California, 1921; San Francisco: R and E Research Associates, 1970); Julia E. Johnsen,

and Japanese remained largely submerged and led to no violent incidents similar to the 1885 massacre.³⁰

Some of these Japanese immigrants were more apt to bring their families and settle permanently than had earlier Chinese immigrants, in large measure because U.S. immigration policy did not restrict Japanese female immigration in these years. Tom Nakamura, for example, emigrated from Japan in May 1904 directly to the Rock Springs mines, where he worked for three decades. He was married with a child and volunteered in summers to teach Japanese children their native tongue.³¹ This attempt at preserving cultural integrity was reinforced by residential segregation, for the Japanese community, known as "Japtown" or "Jap Camp," was located near No. 7 mine, where most Japanese miners worked. Later the Onos and Okanos would become prominent families among the Japanese, but, during much of the first decade of the century, most local Japanese were transient males working in the mines.³²

ed., *Japanese Exclusion* (New York: H. W. Wilson Company, 1925); Daniels, *Asian Americans*.

³⁰ Gardner and Johnson, "Cultural Resource Inventory," v. 1, 36.

³¹ "Old Timer, T. Nakamura, Rock Springs," *UPCC Employes' Magazine* 8 (March 1931), 112-113. For a brief overview on Japanese immigration, see, for example, Roger Daniels, *Coming to America: A History of Immigration and Ethnicity in American Life* (New York: HarperCollins, 1990), 250-258. Yuji Ichioka, "The Japanese Immigrant Family, 1900s-1920s," in Sucheng Chan et al. *Peoples of Color in the American West* (Lexington and Toronto: D. C. Heath and Company, 1994), provides background on the family life of Japanese immigrants (198-207).

³² Gardner and Johnson, "Cultural Resource Inventory," v. 2, H, 55; United States Government, *Twelfth Census of the United States*, "Schedule No. 1.-Population, Sweetwater County, Rock Springs, Wyoming" (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1900); United States Government, *Thirteenth Census of the United States*,

Despite residential segregation, the Japanese were a notable presence throughout Rock Springs. Upon hearing of the news of the fall of Port Arthur to imperial forces, local Japanese residents celebrated with a lantern parade, including a saxophone band, a squad dressed in cavalry uniforms, and floats. Later the Japanese hosted a dance at the opera house, where three Euroamerican women won prizes for "best dancer." A few years later, Y. Numano, Japanese Labor Counsel from Portland, Oregon, was feted by city political and business leaders when he arrived to visit Japanese miners. However, the news coverage of Japanese life did not always feature the good news. The same issue of the *Rocket* that reported Numano's tour of Rock Springs also reported store clerk Ko Otaki's fatal shooting of an unknown Japanese robber, reportedly an out-of-town gambler. Otaki and two other Japanese were arrested following the killing before being freed due to their claim of self-defense regarding the shooting. In 1911, the *Rocket* covered the suicide of the Euroamerican wife of a Japanese dentist, who had quaffed a fatal potion of whiskey and morphine; the couple had married a year earlier in New Mexico after having met in Trinidad. Another suicide story appeared a year later when I. Tanaka, Rock Springs' oldest resident, hanged himself to death, presumably because of marital difficulties.³³

"Schedule No. 1.-Population, Sweetwater County, Rock Springs, Wyoming" (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1910). See also Gardner and Johnson, "Historic Japanese Sites," for a discussion of residential segregation of Japanese in Rock Springs and other coal towns and camps (70), as well as the subtler forms of racism encountered by the Japanese than the Chinese (73).

³³ "Japanese Jollification," *Rock Springs Rocket*, January 12, 1905, 3; "Japanese Consul a Visitor," *Rock Springs Miner*, August 6, 1909, 1; "Japanese Meets Death in Attempted Holdup," August 6, 1909, 1; "Young Woman Takes Poison," *Rock Springs*

The appearance of these various non-Euroamerican laborers radically changed the ethno-racial landscape of Rock Springs in the 1890s, but so too did the arrival of other groups who challenged British and Scandinavian predominance. Dee Garceau notes the arrivals of “immigrants from agricultural regions in Yugoslavia, Finland, Germany, and Italy” who were new to coal mining and its domestic culture. UPCC hiring and housing policies precluded traditional ethnic clustering. Certain neighborhoods evinced single-ethnic residence, and boarding patterns reflected same-ethnicity preferences. In addition, racially based settlement patterns predominated locally. However, as Dee Garceau concludes, permanent “ethnic neighborhoods rarely developed in twentieth-century Sweetwater County coal towns,” and analysis of late-nineteenth-century demographic records bears out this finding.³⁴

The Dynamics of Post-Massacre Euroamerican Settlement

While Chinese, African Americans, Japanese, and Korean residents might be viewed as culturally peripheral to the majority of Euroamericans in Rock Springs, the latter were essential to booming UPCC operations, which ravenously sought new laborers. Remarkably, within less than two months after the massacre, UPCC was producing eleven percent more coal than before (see Table 1) while at the same time

Rocket, November 3, 1911, 1; "Disheartened, Takes Own Life," *Rock Springs Miner*, October 4, 1912, 1.

³⁴ Garceau, *"The Important Things of Life,"* 28-29, 40.

Table 1
UPCC Production and Hiring Patterns Pre- and Post-Massacre,
September 2, 1885³⁵

	UPCC report ending 8/30/1885	UPCC report ending 11/30/1885	Percent Increase or Decrease
Euroamerican Miners working	150	85	-56.7%
Chinese Miners working	331	532	160.7%
Coal Production (in tons)	1450	1610	111.0%

³⁵ Storti, *Incident at Bitter Creek*, 170.

reducing the Euroamerican mining force and augmenting the Chinese. Production levels continued to be high; however, the stated commitment of UP to Chinese workers flagged over time due to both the heterogeneous nature of cheap immigrant labor and improved technology and the impact of exclusion. UP President Adams wrote to one of his subordinates, "I take it for granted that we look to the use of improved machinery for our escape from the existing dilemma," referring to the racialized nature of Rock Springs' labor conflict.³⁶ Machinery indeed proved invaluable to UPCC operations in the years ahead, but manpower was also needed to operate the machinery, and that manpower was increasingly provided by Euroamerican rather than Chinese miners (see Figure 20).³⁷

In the 1890s, state residents increasingly referred to Rock Springs as the "Melting Pot of Wyoming." The 1890 Census showed a population of 3,046 in Rock Springs (an increase of nearly 300% in ten years) with over 60% of the inhabitants foreign-born compared to roughly a quarter of Wyoming residents as a whole born outside of the United States. Throughout much of the 1870s and 1880s, the Euroamerican immigrant population in Rock Springs was principally from the British Isles, including many converts to the Church of Latter-Day Saints. Because of the prevalence of coal mining in nineteenth-century Britain, these immigrants were especially well trained in the trade of the collier. John Paige notes that Britons predominated among early prospectors

³⁶ Charles Francis Adams, Jr., to S. H. Callaway, October 6, 1885, Union Pacific Railway Archives, State Historical Society of Nebraska, Lincoln, Nebraska.

³⁷ Storti, *Incident at Bitter Creek*, 171-173.

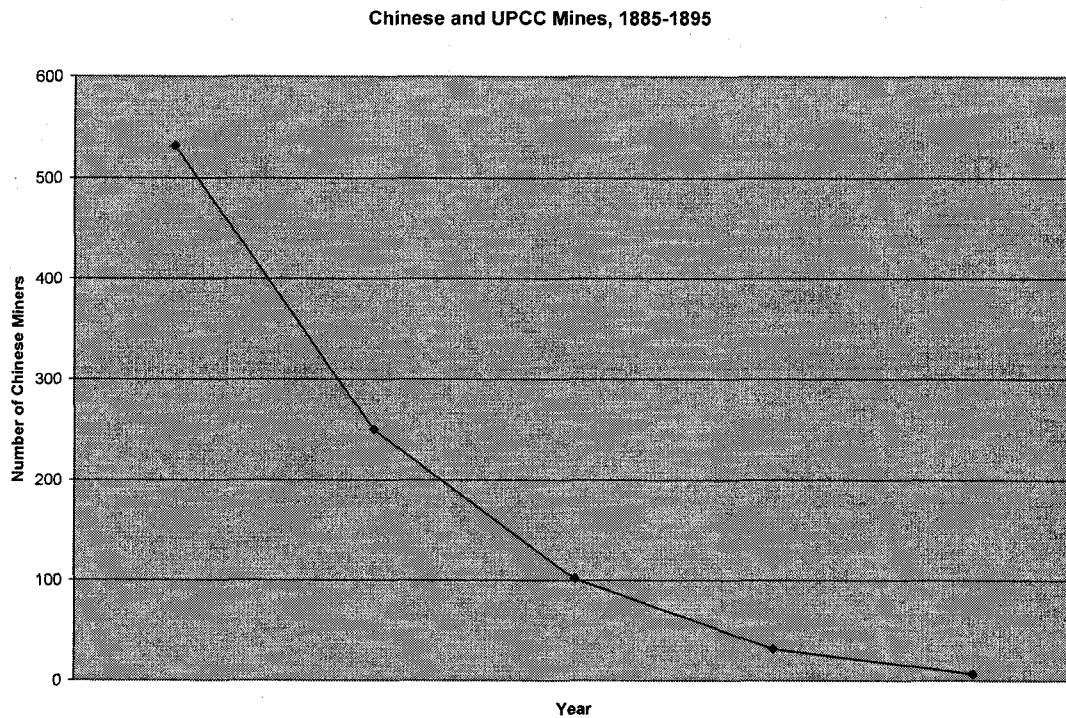


Figure 20. Decreasing Number of Chinese Workers in UPCC Mines, 1885-1925³⁸

³⁸ "Operations 1895," Union Pacific Coal Company Archives; "Annual Report for 1905," Union Pacific Coal Company Archives, Archaeological Services, Rock Springs, Wyoming, Box 20B, 102; UPCC, "Annual Report of the Assistant General Manger, for the year ending June 30, 1915," Union Pacific Coal Company Archives, Archaeological Services, Rock Springs, Wyoming, Rock Springs, Wyoming, Box 20A, 59; UPCC, "Annual Report of the General Superintendent, for the year ending December 31, 1925," Union Pacific Coal Company Archives, Archaeological Services, Rock Springs, Wyoming, Rock Springs, Wyoming, Box 20A, 200.

in the South Pass gold craze, although he emphasizes Rock Springs coal mines. He states, "The mining profession attracted numerous Britons to the future state of Wyoming. . . . The discovery of coal in southern Wyoming influenced the decision of the Union Pacific to follow the southern route. As this resource was developed, numerous Britons entered the mines as laborers."³⁹ This early experience in the UPCC mines not only led the British miners to play a key role in the violent opposition to Chinese laborers but also allowed them to acquire supervisory positions that several parlayed into key management jobs. With such economic and cultural clout, it is little wonder that Anglo-Americans exerted considerable influence in early municipal affairs.⁴⁰

Despite their numbers and influence, Anglo-Americans in Rock Springs by no means dominated municipal life in the years following the massacre. The rapidly diversifying demographics of Rock Springs evinced the heterogeneity defining community life. A glance at the UPCC 1895 annual report reveals that miners represented a variety of nationalities with the preponderance coming from Europe, and that fact does not reflect the subsumation of ethnic groups, such as Czechs, Slovenians, and Serbs, under superaggregate categories assigned to Austro-Hungary. Fully one-quarter of UPCC employees were of Scandinavian origin, thanks largely to the great influx of Finnish immigrants in the late nineteenth century, while the British comprised just under twenty-three percent. The number of employees from Central Europe nearly equaled the number

³⁹ John C. Paige, "Country Squires and Laborers: British Immigrants in Wyoming," in Hendrickson, *Peopling the High Plains*, 8.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 1-33.

from China. This proliferation of nationality groups reinforced white cultural hegemony in Rock Springs, necessitated ethnic *rapprochement* among the diverse groups to build community and mitigate UPCC domination, and offered various opportunities for residents to define the material and cultural realities of a developing Rock Springs.⁴¹

By 1900, the population of Rock Springs reflected both significant ethno-racial heterogeneity and increased numbers of native-born Americans. Nearly half the population at the turn-of-the-century was native-born (see Figure 21), reflecting both migration from the coasts as well as local fecundity. Yet this native-born population still retained much of its ethnic heritage as eighty-six percent had foreign-born parents. Of immigrants, over forty percent came from Europe and just under ten percent from outside either North America or Europe, principally from China and Japan. Western Europeans predominated among immigrants, with the United Kingdom and Scandinavian countries representing nearly one-fourth of the total population. Increasingly, however, central and southern Europeans, especially from Austria, Hungary, and Italy, came to Rock Springs, joining earlier kinfolk and neighboring villagers. Racial demographics showed that just

⁴¹ United States Government, *Twelfth Census of the United States*, "Schedule No. 1.-Population, Sweetwater County, Rock Springs, Wyoming" (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1900); "Operations 1895, UPCC Archives"; Petitions, Oaths, Declarations [in Regard to Immigration and Naturalization], Wyoming State Archives, Cheyenne, Wyoming, Sweetwater County Clerk, 11 folder, Sweetwater Clerk of Court, Naturalization Records, Box 1; Rhode, *Booms and Busts*, 66, 105.

Chris Friday's discussion of the "West as the site of national racial formations" is helpful in examining the confluence of ethnic identities into an ideology of white hegemony while at the same time explaining the increasingly visible role of non-white racial formation in defining western, as well as national, social relations (see "In Due Time: Narratives of Race and Place in the Western United States," in Paul Wong, ed., *Race, Ethnicity, and Nationality in the United States: Toward the Twenty-First Century* [Boulder: Westview Press, 1999], 102-140).

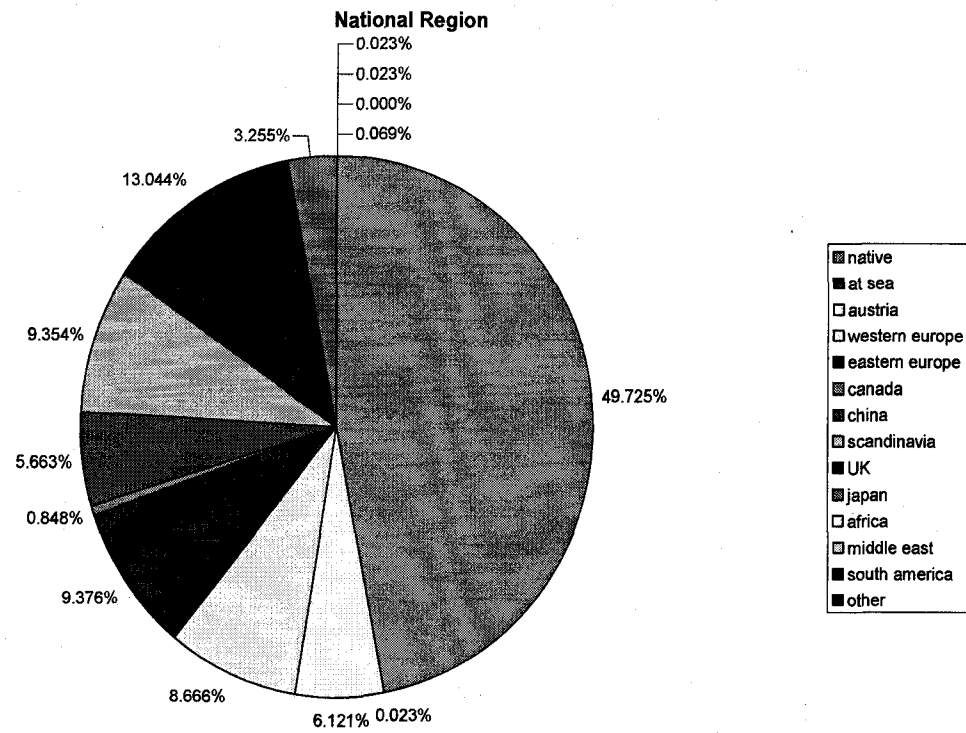


Figure 21. 1900 Rock Springs Population by Regional Origin⁴²

⁴² United States Government, *Twelfth Census of the United States*, "Schedule No. 1.-Population, Sweetwater County, Rock Springs, Wyoming" (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1900).

less than ninety percent of the population was Euroamerican with over four hundred Asians and nearly a hundred African Americans present locally (see Figure 22).

As the population of Rock Springs grew during the first decade of the twentieth century, so too did it continue diversifying. Increasingly, the old Anglo-Scandinavian hegemony among Euroamericans gave way to new groups, especially central European immigrants. Also, as they aged, the number of Chinese workers steadily dwindled, and the coming decade witnessed significant Japanese and Korean immigration, although neither of the latter two would remain in Rock Springs long enough or in great enough a proportion to have the socio-cultural impact that the Chinese had during the nineteenth century. By 1900, 247 Chinese and Chinese-Americans made Rock Springs their home, which was less than half the number that comprised the peak years of the mid-1880s. In less than five years, the Japanese population had increased from none to over 140. While at one time in the 1880s the Chinese had represented over half the population in Rock Springs, by the 1900 Census, they were less than six percent, and, as significant as the arrival of the Japanese certainly may have been, they only represented a little more than three percent of the population. Thus, Euroamerican residents perceived the Japanese immigrants of the 1890s and early 1900s as less of a threat to municipal development than the Chinese had been twenty years earlier. The Japanese, therefore, were one among many new ethno-racial groups allowed to negotiate local cultural boundaries with little overt antipathy, although as non-white within prescribed racial residential parameters.⁴³

⁴³ Ibid.

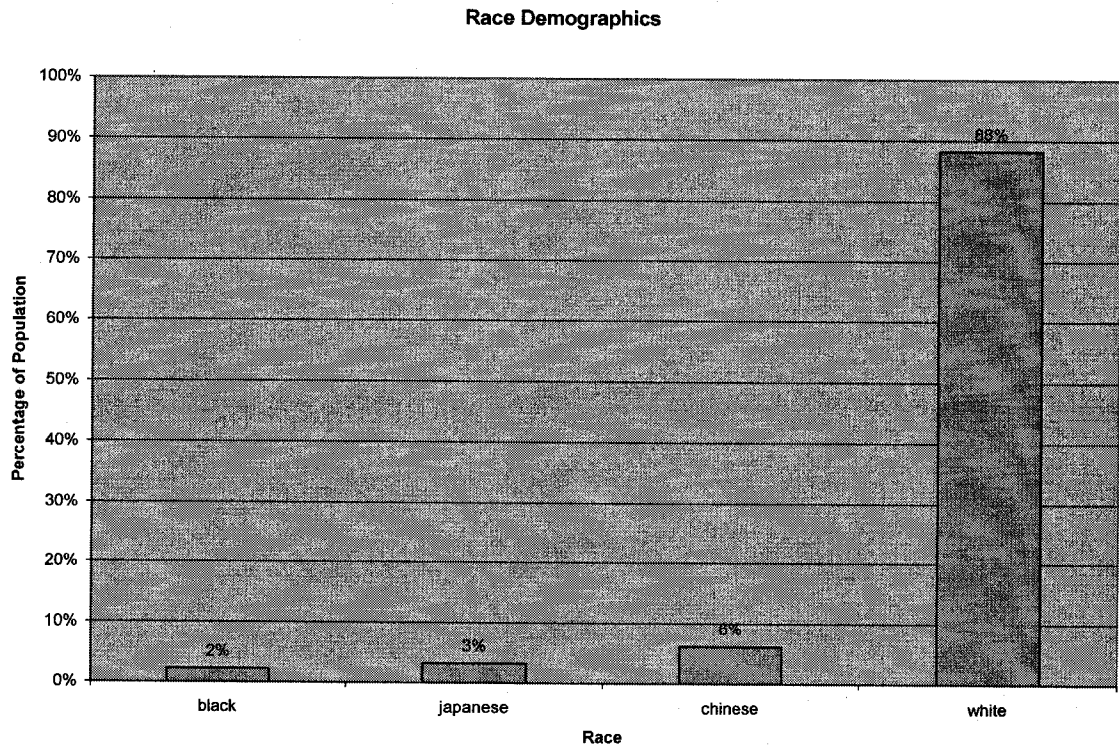


Figure 23. 1900 Rock Springs Population by Race⁴⁴

⁴⁴ Ibid.

The pressures for emigration were significant in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and Rock Springs with its booming coal mines and heterogeneous population proved a most inviting destination for émigrés. John Bodnar has identified several causal factors in the movement of European peoples to the New World, including encroachment of market forces upon traditional agricultural and nascent manufacturing cultures.⁴⁵ Related to such exigencies were state and local efforts to lure immigrants to Wyoming. Local boosters, including newspapers, trumpeted Rock Springs' attractions. Referring to the town as "the Unique City of the West," the *Rocket* also noted that there "are from thirty-five to forty different dialects spoken in the city: Japanese, Mexican, Chinese, Korean, Italian, Finnish, Swedish, Norwegian, Spanish, French, German, Greek and Austrian are a few."⁴⁶ Statewide immigration rhetoric abetted such booster hyperbole. A 1908 state publication proclaimed the state as the "Undeveloped Empire on the Continental Divide," promising that the "door of opportunity is open to young and energetic men."⁴⁷ Continuing throughout the decade, Rock Springs newspapers beat the drum of local boosterism, advertising the charms and opportunities of the local

⁴⁵ See John Bodnar, *The Transplanted: A History of Immigrants in Urban America* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985).

⁴⁶ "Composition," *Rock Springs Rocket*, December 7, 1906, 1; Roland C. Smith, "Rock Springs, a Home City," *Rock Springs Rocket*, January 30, 1908, 1.

⁴⁷ "Wyoming: The Undeveloped Empire on the Continental Divide," McInerney Collection, Wyoming State Archives, Cheyenne, Wyoming, H83-7, 511.

municipality. These advertisements contributed to the increasing heterogenization of the municipality.⁴⁸

While UPCC recruitment spread globally, it increasingly focused on European labor. Undoubtedly, anti-Asian sentiment partially influenced corporate recruitment strategy; UPCC's highly successful recruitment practices among Europeans also contributed to such practices. Frederick Luebke has suggested that the diversity of European settlement of the Great Plains has been that of a "forgotten people";⁴⁹ however, the history of UPCC mining in Rock Springs evinces the fundamental centrality of Euroamerican immigration. Of course, Europeans did not come to Rock Springs merely to mine coal. A diversity of experiences—retail, housekeeping, service, wholesale, manufacturing, ranching, lodging, and other enterprise—involved local residents. Coal mining dominated local labor opportunities, but local population growth offered opportunities outside the mines.

Southeastern Europeans proved an increasingly new presence in local culture. Italian immigrants to Rock Springs came from all regions: Tyrol, Piedmont, Sicily, and elsewhere. Yet, local newspaper coverage seemed most interested in a minority group from the South. Throughout the summer of 1913, the *Rocket* reported on the predations of the so-called Black Hand upon local businesses, especially the Bertagnollis, successful

⁴⁸ See "Why Emigrate," *Rock Springs Rocket*, December 1, 1911, 4; "A Bit of History," *Rock Springs History*, February 3, 1911, 4.

⁴⁹ See Frederick C. Luebke, "Ethnic Group settlement on the Great Plains," *Western Historical Quarterly* IV (October 1977): 405-430; Frederick C. Luebke, "Introduction," in Frederick C. Luebke, *European Immigrants in the American West: Community Histories* (Albuquerque; University of New Mexico Press, 1998), vii-xix.

merchants from Tyrol.⁵⁰ Most of these settlers chose Rock Springs after living elsewhere. Once in Rock Springs, such migrants discovered kindred souls and wanted to establish community networks. The August 1913 meeting of Italian lodges in Rock Springs attracted seven different societies from surrounding areas. Yet life in the New World, especially in the mines, proved alienating to many despite communal (or surreptitious) connections with local countryman.⁵¹

Along with Italian immigrants came the Greeks. While not as numerous, the latter, along with other eastern Europeans, represented a significantly large enough presence to justify an Orthodox church. According to Dean P. Talagan, Greeks were among the earliest European settlers in Wyoming, having helped build the transcontinental railway. Like other European immigrant groups, Greeks in Rock Springs sought accommodation with local economic and political traditions while retaining their socio-cultural integrity. In the early period, 1890-1910, most Greeks worked the mines. They labored there in hopes of material rewards that would allow them either to benefit family back home or succeed in the New World. Some, however, like Nick Angels, a

⁵⁰ "Black Hand Among Us," *Rock Springs Rocket*, June 6, 1913, 1; "Black Hand Not Caught," *Rock Springs Rocket*, June 13, 1913, 1.

⁵¹ "Italian Societies," *Rock Springs Rocket*, December 19, 1913, 4; Kathka, in Hendrickson, 69; "Convention of Italian Societies," *Rock Springs Rocket*, August 15, 1913, 1; "Meeting of Italian Lodges," *Rock Springs Rocket*, August 16, 1912, 1; "Italian Brass Band," *Rock Springs Independent*, November 30, 1906, 1; "Hanged Himself," *Rock Springs Independent*, January 29, 1903, 5.

For a general study on western settlement of Italians, see, for example, Dino Cinel, "Italians in San Francisco: Patterns of Settlement," in Frederick C. Luebke, *European Immigrants in the American West* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1998), 65-74.

miner electrocuted to death in No. 7 in 1912, found the promised land less than it promised to be.⁵²

While Italian and Greek immigrants migrated to Rock Springs mines, other central and southern Europeans, especially Slavic peoples, also found UPCC employment attractive. Hungarians, Croats, Tyroleans, and Slovenians increasingly found employment in Sweetwater County an answer to socioeconomic pressures in the old country. While few in number, the presence of Hungarian émigrés induced the *Rocket* to feature on its front page the American travels of Princess Aurelia Beth. Immigrants from southeastern Europe did not always find Rock Springs hospitable. For example, the parents of Eleanor Tolar found southwestern Wyoming with its sagebrush, sand, and “everlasting wind” drastically different from the fecund, verdant lands of Croatia.⁵³ Unlike the Greeks and Italians, Slavs and Magyars represented an especially heterogeneous group, as evidenced by a survey of immigrant demographics.⁵⁴

Eastern Europeans immigrant experiences were both similar and dissimilar to those of other immigrants. Slovenian-born Mary Zaversnik found travel to Rock Springs

⁵² David P. Talagan, “Faith, Hard Work, and Family: The Story of the Wyoming Helene,” in Gordon Olaf Hendrickson, *Peopling the High Plains: Wyoming’s European Heritage* (Cheyenne: Wyoming State Archives and Historical Department, 1977), 156, 161; “Greek Miner Is Electrocuted,” *Rock Springs Rocket*, October 4, 1912, 1.

⁵³ Eleanor Tolar, “Immigration,” in Barbara Smith, ed., *Rock Springs Stories* (Rock Springs: Adult Writers Project/Western Wyoming Community College, 1991), 14.

⁵⁴ Rhode, *Booms and Busts*, 109; “Hungarian Princess Here,” *Rock Springs Rocket*, October 1, 1909, 1; Earl Stinneford, “Mines and Miners: The Eastern Europeans in Wyoming,” in Gordon Olaf Hendrickson, *Peopling the High Plains: Wyoming’s European Heritage* (Cheyenne: Wyoming State Archives and Historical Department, 1977), 121-126

quite arduous, as did other immigrants. Yet, like other émigrés, she found helpful folk along the way. Robert Rhode writes:

Mary had some help from Slavic benevolent societies whose members offered guidance to new arrivals. Someone pinned on her coat a tag with her name and destination: 'Rock Springs, Wyoming,' words with little meaning for Mary; she couldn't even pronounce them. But that tag helped her get on the right train out of New York, helped her make the correct change of train at Chicago, and, miracle of miracles, got her off the train safely in Rock Springs. ... Eventually, Mary and her husband, Anton, and their children also moved up, literally, to a house in the No. 4 District.... Mary Zaversnik found that many of her neighbors...were Slovene, but just as many were not....⁵⁵

Mary's experiences, of course, reflected many of the challenges of the émigré experience—potential alienation, loneliness, ethno-cultural dependence, and other factors. Yet the number of Slovene immigrants and their ethnic organizations made her trek to Rock Springs less harrowing. In fact, Tyroleans and Slovenians were especially adept at creating lasting local institutions that eased pains of immigration. The arrival of Father Anton Schiffrer in 1910 marked the onset of a concerted effort to establish a Slavic parish. By 1913, the "Krainers," as the Slovenians were sometimes called, had come together in their diverse fraternal organizations to erect *Slovenski Dom*, an impressive social edifice near the Slavic Catholic Church. Both *Slovenski Dom* and Sts. Cyril and Methodius represented simultaneously ethnic solidarity and municipal pluralism.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ Rhode, *Booms and Busts*, 109-111.

⁵⁶ UPCC, *History of Union Pacific Coal Mines*, 237-238; "Services in New Slavish Catholic Church, *Rock Springs Rocket*, December 27, 1912, 1; "Krainer Lodges To Build Home," *Rock Springs Home*, September 26, 1913, 1; "Slovenski Dom," *Rock Springs Rocket*, December 19, 1913, 4.

The Eastern European presence in Rock Springs was certainly not problem-free. Jewish immigrants always remained a distinct minority and could not maintain a permanent local synagogue. In fact, the dearth of Jewish immigrants made it difficult to provide kosher products for immigrants. In Rock Springs, Julius Greenbaum seemed the successful newcomer in the 1890s, but his killing of his wife and her alleged lover made statewide news. A similar domestic controversy led to a shooting affray involving Tyroleans Anton Novak and Frank Taucher in 1911. Fortunately for both Novak and Taucher, none of the five shots fired caused harm. While this incident echoed the wild western ethos of Wyoming, Henry Bertagnolli's endeavors represented a more typical and certainly more productive type of western life. Immigrating to the coal mines in 1880, Bertagnolli, disillusioned by the horrors of the Chinese massacre, moved to the service trades before beginning a retail enterprise in foodstuffs and hardware. In 1895, he founded Union Mercantile and Supply Company, a highly successful retail outlet, which attracted working-class customers by appealing to union members. Bertagnolli boasted three stores, including outlets in Superior and Kemmer. Like Bertagnolli, central European immigrants such as William Gottsche, banker and rancher, and Peter Christian Bunning, service and construction entrepreneur, enjoyed considerable success. Both Gottsche and Bunning also experienced political success, serving as state legislator and mayor respectively.⁵⁷

⁵⁷ Penny Diane Wolin, *The Jews of Wyoming: Fringe of the Diaspora, 1860 to 2000* (Cheyenne: Crazy Woman Creek, 2000), x, 15, 28; "Shooting Affray," *Rock Springs Rocket*, November 17, 1911, 1; Kathka, in Hendrickson, 75-77; Donald Hodgson and Vivien Hills, "Dreams and Fulfillment: Germans in Wyoming," in Gordon Olaf

The appearance of new European groups did not entirely displace older immigrant cultures. Danes in Rock Springs, for example, continued to attract local press coverage for their annual gatherings. Using Kent's Ranch as site of the annual Brotherhood picnic, local Danes accommodated the larger community with food and athletic events. In 1905, the *Rocket* noted that the Dane Brotherhood "is one of the largest in Rock Springs and is noted for the successful manner in which its annual outing and entertainments are conducted."⁵⁸ Yet, the Danish population eventually was superseded by other Scandinavians, specifically the Finns. Erick Harmala and Sofvija Hakkila were, in some ways, typical of turn-of-the-century Finnish immigrants. He was born locally of Finnish parents, and she immigrated from Rantsala, Finland, with her parents in 1890. Erick worked in the mines when he met Sofvija, but by dint of hard effort and frugal savings they eventually afforded a farm in Montana. Not all Finns in Rock Springs escaped the mines, but most strove to create a vibrant local culture, especially in terms of fraternal and political organizations. Finn Hall was central to key social events in Rock Springs,

Hendrickson, *Peopling the High Plains: Wyoming's European Heritage* (Cheyenne: Wyoming State Archives and Historical Department, 1977), 44; UPCC, *History of Union Pacific Coal Mines*, 220-221.

For general commentary on Eastern European immigrant experiences in the West, see, for example, Robert E. Levinson, "American Jews in the West," *Western Historical Quarterly* V (July 1974): 285-294; William Toll, "The Origins of an Ethnic Middle Class: The Jews of Portland in the Nineteenth Century," in Frederick C. Luebke, *European Immigrants in the American West* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1998), 75-90; Anna Zellick, "Childhood Memories of South Slavic Immigrants in Red Lodge and Bearcreek, Montana, 1904-1943, in Frederick C. Luebke, *European Immigrants in the American West* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1998).

⁵⁸ "Danish Brotherhood Dance," *Rock Springs Miner* March 11, 1905, 3.

including local socialist politics. The Finnish Lutheran Church also evinced a significant, albeit brief, institutional growth.⁵⁹

As local Scandinavians thrived, so too did the immigrants from the British Isles. Cultural affinity with national ethnic traditions accommodated their ready transition to local culture. Robert Rhode remarks, "The English, Scots, Welsh, and Irish continued to dominate Rock Springs until well into the twentieth century."⁶⁰ Such influence stemmed largely from British control over coalfield management positions and the opportunities that allowed in entrepreneurial endeavors. Beyond economics, Anglo and Celtic holidays remained popular in Rock Springs, although perhaps less ethnically directed than generally celebratory in nature. St. Patrick's Day, for example, increasingly became an occasion for general merriment, while Robert Burns's Birthday and St. David's Day faded in general importance as the twentieth century progressed.⁶¹

⁵⁹ "Danish Brotherhood Picnic," *Rock Spring Miner*, June 16, 1906, 3; "Danish Brotherhood Entertain," *Rock Springs Rocket*, May 9, 1913, 1; Grace Devries Harmala Jarvi, "Harmala Family Tree," Finnish Collection, Rock Springs Historical Museum, Rock Springs, Wyoming; "Finn Hall," *Rock Springs Miner*, February 5, 1903, 5; "Fair at Finn Hall," *Rock Springs Miner*, January 15, 1903, 1; "Plea to the Public," *Rock Springs Miner*, March 19, 1903, 5; Sydney E. Ahlstrom, *A Religious History of the American People* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1972), 761.

⁶⁰ Rhode, *Booms and Busts*, 106.

⁶¹ Rhode, *Booms and Busts*, 106; "St. Patrick's 'Wild Deer,'" *Rock Springs Miner*, March 16, 1907, 1; "St. Patrick Day," *Rock Springs Rocket*, March 17, 1911, 1; "Burns' Anniversary," *Rock Springs Independent*, January 26, 1906, 1; "For 'Bobbie' Burns' Anniversary," *Rock Springs Rocket*, January 23, 1908, 1; "To Celebrate Bobby Burns Anniversary," *Rock Springs Rocket*, November 19, 1912, 1; "St. David's Day," *Rock Springs Independent*, February 23, 1906, 1; "Welsh Choir August 17th," *Rock Springs Rocket*, July 25, 1912, 1; "Caledonians Entertain," *Rock Springs Rocket*, March 14, 1913, 1.

Changing Ethno-Racial Realities

This then was Rock Springs as it entered the new century. As the Chinese population decreased year by year, Japanese and Korean immigrants came to the city, although their residence, on the whole, was more transitory. The number of African American and Mexican residents remained a small but important part of the cosmopolitan nature of the city and would increase in years to come. The Finns, who had arrived in such large number in the 1890s, played an important role in the Rock Springs workforce and in bringing socialist politics to the town. In local politics, Anglo-Americans continued to play a principal role, although the business community witnessed a variety of ethno-racial participants. While UPCC remained the largest employer and, undoubtedly, the most powerful institution in southwest Wyoming, the heterogeneous population of Rock Springs increasingly demanded a vibrant and expansive set of community networks to intersect the diverse groups in the municipality.⁶²

For aspects of British experience in the West, see, for example, Dean L. May, "Fleeing Babylon: The English Mormon Migration to Alpine, Utah," in Frederick C. Luebke, *European Immigrants in the American West* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1998), 33-48; David M. Emmons, "Irish Miners: From the Emerald Isle to Copper, Butte," in Frederick C. Luebke, *European Immigrants in the American West* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1998), 49-64.

⁶² United States Government, *Twelfth Census of the United States*, "Schedule No. 1.-Population, Sweetwater County, Rock Springs, Wyoming" (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1900); United States Government, *Thirteenth Census of the United States*, "Schedule No. 1.-Population, Sweetwater County, Rock Springs, Wyoming" (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1910).

Who were these Rock Springs miners and the women who supported them? While no archetypal mining family existed, anecdotal evidence from the *UPCC Employes' Magazine* provides a glimpse of ordinary life in the Euroamerican mining community. In 1869, at the age of twenty-four, James Murphy emigrated from Scotland to Youngstown, Ohio, where he married Mary McAlister. Migrating to Rock Springs, the Murphys set up their household among the mining families, which well remembered James's cheery ways even after the loss of his bride left him to raise alone a boy and a girl. Another early resident from the British Isles, Benjamin Ledbetter, emigrated to Rock Springs in 1875, at the age of seventeen. Beginning as a driver in No. 3 mine, Ledbetter survived the Euroamerican exodus following the 1885 massacre, working as a driver, boss driver, and assistant foreman in No. 1 mine until it closed in 1910. Coal miner David G. Thomas (later a successful attorney and judge) recalled his British-born friend Tom Croft, a miner whose domicile "was erected and furnished by him in 1891, the stone and carpenter work being done between shifts, or in hours after his daily work was done. When the home was finished his family moved in and were living in comfort while he was following his occupation in the mine."⁶³ After a drunken shooting affray of 1891 destroyed the domicile, the steadfast Croft carefully rebuilt it. Joseph Iredale, born in Merryport, England, in 1860, emigrated to the Wyoming coal mines in the late 1870s. His natural leadership skills prevailed, and over the years he served several terms in the state legislature, including one term as Vice President of the Senate, where he proved pivotal in bringing the state's first general hospital to Rock Springs. Iredale married Agnes

⁶³ David G. Thomas, "Tom Croft," *UPCC Employes' Magazine* 1 (June 1924), 18.

Paterson, who had emigrated from England in 1875, and they raised one son and two daughters. Mrs. Eliza Davis Griffiths, widow of a UPCC general superintendent, looked after her six sons and a daughter following her husband's death, undoubtedly with help from fellow Methodists such as the Iredales. Rock Springs women continually negotiated familial responsibilities with economic exigencies. Scottish-born Mary Taylor, for instance, entered employment of UPCC in 1901 as an assistant cashier of the company store and remained with the corporation through 1942. Mrs. Olstrom, whose husband had died while a UP rail employee, ran a boardinghouse for UP men. On a September day in 1895, espying a burning rail trestle, Olstrom single-handedly flagged down an approaching locomotive, saving the train and its crew and passengers from certain destruction. The grateful contingent collected a purse of \$50 to reward the heroine. Such stories reflect the diversity of experiences confronting working people in turn-of-the-century Rock Springs. The experiences of Barton Grosso, Sr., were similar to many immigrants. Born in the Italian province of Piedmont, Grosso immigrated to the United States in 1892. Intending to stay in Colorado, he found seasonal day labor unsatisfactory and moved north to Rock Springs and better prospects. Such examples reflect how mobility, family, and labor intersected in ordinary people's attempts to find some personal autonomy in Rock Springs.⁶⁴

⁶⁴ "James Murphy Called," *UPCC Employes' Magazine* 4 (October 1927), 351; George B. Pryde, "Another Old Timer Passes," *UPCC Employes' Magazine* 2 (November 1925), 15; Thomas, "Tom Croft," 19; "Mr. Joseph Iredale, President of the Old Timers' Association," *UPCC Employes' Magazine* 4 (August 1927), 277; "Death of Mrs. Joseph Iredale," *UPCC Employes' Magazine* 10 (August 1933), 290; "Mrs. Eliza Davis Griffiths Called Home," *UPCC Employes' Magazine* 5 (December 1928), 485; "Old Timers' Photo Album," Union Pacific Coal Company Archives, Archaeological Services, Rock Springs,

The differentiated nature of retail and service opportunities allowed some immigrants to escape the mines. A perusal of the 1900 United States Census and a 1901 state business directory, for example, reveals show a variety of ethno-racial groups represented in local business. Unsurprisingly, some Chinese residents, including Ah Dor, Bing Kee, and Haw Yuen Chin, operated restaurants, which represented an inexpensive investment for new entrepreneurs. European immigrants were also engaged in the service sector. The saloon trade especially interested risk-takers. Among immigrant saloon keepers were Scottish-born John Andersen, Danish-born Eugene Rizzi, and Austrian-born Louis Magagna and John Dern. German-born brewer Otto Rauch supplied these and other establishments. In the retail sector, English-born grocer Richard Walters; dry goods retailers Christopher Juel, a Swede, and Otto Rasmussen, a Dane; shoe retailer John Kastner, an Austrian; and German-born butcher Carl Hefner all operated successful enterprises. Other ongoing businesses included partnerships such as Endrissi and Mazzolini, Kangas and Ranigen, Mrak and Kershnik, Patochvich and Savchar, and Kershnik and Brida. Immigrant women also contributed to the business culture. Scottish-born Marion Menough, a lodger with the Thayer couple, worked as a dressmaker, as did Martha Ludvigson, from Norway, who supported a son on her earnings as a dressmaker. One among many, Itonic Hemska, a Hungarian, operated a

Wyoming; Box 8A; "Brave Mrs. Ostrom," *Rock Springs Miner*, September 19, 1895, 3; Kathka, in Hendrickson, 69.

boardinghouse for fellow countrymen working in the coal mines. Thus the productivity of UPCC mines afforded residents considerable opportunities for economic independence.⁶⁵

Late-nineteenth-century Rock Springs also offered various socio-cultural opportunities to diverse individuals. Massachusetts-born D. M. Thayer ascended from retail clerk to entrepreneur. From protecting Beckwith-Quinn interests during the massacre, Thayer rose through retail ranks, became local postmaster, ran a photographic studio, supervised the Wyoming Miners' Hospital, and clerked for UPCC. Other native-born whites shared Thayer's success. Yet opportunity was not restricted to just this group. Increasingly, foreign-born residents found Rock Springs ripe for enterprising persons. Demographic records of Italian immigrants, which include Tyroleans, who identified themselves as ethnically distinct, show an especially entrepreneurial ethos in dry goods, saloons, barbershops, and other business concerns. Tyrolean Henry Bertagnolli labored five years in the mines before founding Union Mercantile. Other southern and eastern Europeans engaged in local enterprise included saloon keepers Endrissi and Massolini and Mrak and Kershisnik as well as saloonkeepers; retailers Frank Kershisnik and E.L. Rasmussen.⁶⁶

⁶⁵ United States Government, *Twelfth Census of the United States*, "Schedule No. 1.-Population, Sweetwater County, Rock Springs, Wyoming." (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1900); The Gazetteer Publishing Co., *Wyoming State Business Directory with Live Stock Department, Wool Growers' Department, Classified Department, 1901-1902*, v. 1 (Denver: The Gazetteer Publishing Co., 1901).

⁶⁶ Kathka, in Hendrickson, 68-69; 75-77; The Gazetteer Publishing Company, *Wyoming State Business Directory with Live Stock Department, Wool Growers' Development, Classified Department* (Denver, 1901); Articles of Incorporation for Sweetwater County, 1869-1929, Sweetwater County Historical Museum, Green River, Wyoming.

Negotiating Community Development

Along with economic opportunities for upward mobility, residents of Rock Springs utilized various devices to negotiate and organize community life. For example, when looking at residential patterns and community building, Dee Garceau observes, "The result was that small, ethnic neighborhoods formed, changed, dissolved, and re-formed, as new arrivals settled in vacant housing, some families moved to bigger quarters, and others moved to nearby company towns.... If an immigrant family successfully negotiated with the UP for a change of address, or accumulated enough savings to rent privately owned housing, they would move adjacent to another family of the same nationality if such housing were available."⁶⁷ Therefore, unlike other municipalities, where region and ethnicity were linked in both social loyalty and cohesiveness, Rock Springs witnessed spatial-cultural development in which ethnicity constituted only one factor in group identity. Ann Buston Dominiski remembers, "When I was growing up in Rock Springs, ... there were different neighborhoods known by numbers. For instance, there were numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, according to the mines." Therefore, group consciousness among whites transcended ethnicity to also encapsulate local geography. Of course, kinship played a central role in connecting ethnic whites from disparate parts of the town, especially through religious and associational

⁶⁷ Garceau, *The Important Things of Life*, " 28.

ties. In fact, Garceau notes that the "lack of residential ethnic cohesion would heighten the urgency of creating ethnic community through other means."⁶⁸ Kinship, religion, associationalism, enterprise, locality, and labor organization proved key ingredients in community construction, especially when considering the influential socioeconomic role of UPCC.⁶⁹

Several factors facilitated persistent ethno-racial boundaries. Racial boundaries certainly defined the nature of local culture for Chinese, African Americans, and Japanese residents, as well as these groups' relations with other local ethno-racial groups. The Japanese experience was similar to that of earlier Chinese experiences: almost exclusively male, employed in the mines, and housed in UPCC boardinghouses. By 1900, the Chinese residents evinced greater economic diversity. While still largely male and grouped in company barracks, the Chinese worked in various retail, professional, and service trades and had a greater tendency to purchase properties than the Japanese. The African American population, largely tied to mine labor, was still too small to evince specifically *de facto* racial segregation. With few nuclear families in Rock Springs, Asian and Asian American residents shared, what Dee Garceau discovered common with Euroamericans, the use of adult sibling ties for extended family networks. Local Asians used sibling ties to accommodate familial networks since their nuclear families were

⁶⁸ Ibid., 29.

⁶⁹ Ann Buston Dominiski, "Number 6," in Barbara Smith, ed., *Rock Springs Stories* (Rock Springs: Adult Writers Project/Western Wyoming Community College, 1991), 39; Garceau, *"The Important Things of Life,"* 28-29; Richard White, *"It's Your Misfortune and None of My Own,"* 298, 302-303.

often still in China, and Euroamericans in Rock Springs employed similar ties to compensate for UPCC efforts at preempting ethnic clustering.⁷⁰

While residential racial segregation persisted, diverse Euroamericans settled wherever affordable housing could be found. Of course, UPCC continued interspersing diverse Euroamerican groups in various neighborhoods in order to undermine effective labor organization. Immigrants, however, found ways to compensate for such corporate machinations. Dee Garceau notes that saloon keepers often sent newcomers to local women who took in boarders of their same nationality; lodges and mutual aid societies also fostered ethnic commonality. Failure to construct large ethnic enclaves did not forestall some specifically local and residential patterns. Robert Rhode argues that M Street long served as a focal point for Tyrolean immigrants. And the 1900 and 1910 census returns show significant heterogeneous residential patterns, especially among Tyroleans, Finns, and Hungarians.⁷¹

⁷⁰ United States Government, *Twelfth Census of the United States*, "Schedule No. 1.-Population, Sweetwater County, Rock Springs, Wyoming" (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1900).; Garceau, *"The Important Things of Life,"* 42, 44.

Garceau notes in regard to late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Slavic, Finnish, German, and Italian immigrants that "reciprocal obligation between family members seems to have been a common rural tradition in late-nineteenth-century Europe. So, too, was the practice of going far afield to support the family," as evidenced in immigrants to Rock Springs and rural Sweetwater County (*"The Important Things of Life,"* 40).

⁷¹ See Gardner and Binkerhoff, *An American Place*, 60; Garceau, *"The Important Things of Life,"* 45, 59; Rhode, *Booms and Busts*, 111-112; United States Government, *Twelfth Census of the United States*, "Schedule No. 1.-Population, Sweetwater County, Rock Springs, Wyoming" (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1900).

Thus, the ethno-racial patchwork of Rock Springs evinced a great diversity of nationalities in the first decade of the new century. A variety of factors contributed to the heterogeneity of the municipality: economic vulnerability, religious oppression, military operations, family networks, institutional welfare, material opportunity, and other push-pull factors that brought diverse peoples to Rock Springs. In UPCC mines alone, one witnessed dramatic changes between 1900 and 1910: Austrian workers declined from 118 to 14 and Chinese laborers dropped from 154 to 50, while Slavonians increased from 69 to 100, Greeks from none to 64, and Croats from none to 182. Local residents comprehended such ethno-racial changes. The *Miner*, for one, noted a “radical change in the character of the immigration” to the municipality.⁷² Local residents understood that no discrete ethnic enclaves had developed. Various sources attest to the purposefully random nature of Rock Springs’ ethnic settlement. UPCC believed heterogeneity would thwart effective labor organization. Longtime resident Gisela Bertagnolli Wilde’s memoir reflects the highly differentiated nature of local ethnic settlement (see Table 2).⁷³

Such heterogeneity challenged local community construction. In 1911, local Slovenes discovered a confidence game in which a man claiming to be an immigration agent traveled from New York City to Rock Springs with a young bride-to-be, claiming that the law stipulated that “officials sent a man with all girls from foreign lands to their

⁷² “The Immigration Wave,” *Rock Springs Miner*, July 2, 1903, 4.

⁷³ Rhode, *Booms and Busts*, 106-107, 111-112; Gardner and Binkerhof, *An American Place*, 60; Garceau, “*The Important Things of Life*,” 45; Kathka, in Hendrickson, 73.

Table 2
Ethnic Composition of "M" Street Neighborhood, c. 1915⁷⁴

"M" STREET HOUSING c. 1915					
Left Side of the Street			Right Side of the Street		
Structure	Family Surname	Ethnicity	Structure	Family Surname	Ethnicity
Boarding House (La Casa Espangiola)	Tayo	Spanish	House	Brun	French
Finn Store	Sturholm	Finnish	Boarding House	Frances	Welsh
House	Thevel	French	House	Zueck	Tyrolean
House	Valenzano	na	House	Morgan	Tyrolean
House	Martin	Finnish	House	Allenius	Swedish
Finnish Church	na	Finnish	House	na	Greek
Boarding House	Gaviotis	Greek	House	Brown	na
House	Bertagnolli	Tyrolean	House	Sother	Norwegian
House	Bertagnolli	Tyrolean	House	Sturm	German
House	Facinelli	na	House	Zueck	Tyrolean
House	Facinelli	na	House	Facinelli	na
House	Moon	na	House	Lundeen	Swedish
House	Lewis	French	Cigar Store	Lowe	na
House	Jacobsen	Finnish	House	Chavalier	French
Boarding House	Zueck	Tyrolean	House	Menghini	Tyrolean
Klondike Saloon	Boschetti	Italian	House	Cameron	na
			House	Storey	na

⁷⁴ Gisela Bertagnolli Wilde, "Journal," 1981-1982, photocopied, Hay Library, Western Wyoming Community College, 1-11, 15-20. Many of the businesses in the neighborhoods also combined as residential buildings for their owners. The Facinellis' most likely were Tyrolean, but Wilde simply records them as "Jewish." The Gaviotis home had originally belonged to Matt Contralto and his wife, presumably Italian or Tyrolean. In addition, the Finnish Church also served as a part-time school and was used for services by an African American congregation.

places of destination."⁷⁵ The confidence man had swindled the Slovenian girl of \$19 and presented her local contacts with a bill for more than \$300 before his scheme was discovered. Problems with immigration law, however, were a constant reality. Especially troublesome were cases in which well-meaning locals misinformed newcomers as to residency and other requirements. Frank Kershisnik saw his Certificate of Naturalization vacated by the Assistant United States Attorney for the Third Judicial District in January 1909 because he had resided in Rock Springs three months less than the law required. The same occurred for Valentine Stalic in 1914, whose error was at least partially attributed to his illiteracy. Similar cases among Austrian immigrants, especially Slovenians, suggest faulty advice from compatriots expected to comprehend the vagaries of naturalization.⁷⁶

Yet the great majority of newcomers successfully negotiated naturalization protocol. Even those encountering earlier difficulties, such as Anton Justin and Frank Fortuna, later successfully naturalized as citizens. Both Kershisnik and Stalic became respected businessmen and leaders in the community. In the prewar period, Sweetwater County witnessed immigrants naturalizing from Austria, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Italy, Russia, Great Britain, France, Denmark, Germany, and other lands.⁷⁷ Chinese, Japanese,

⁷⁵ "Alleged Immigration Agent Bogus," *Rock Springs Rocket*, April 7, 1911, 1.

⁷⁶ Sweetwater Clerk of Court, Naturalization Records, Wyoming State Archives, Cheyenne, Wyoming, H83-7. 511, Box 1, "Cases of Cancelled Naturalization."

⁷⁷ Sweetwater County Clerk, Petitions, Oaths, Declarations [in Regard to Immigration and Naturalization], Wyoming State Archives, Cheyenne, Wyoming.

and Koreans, of course, were prohibited by federal law from becoming citizens but, if born in the United States, claimed automatic entitlement to birthright citizenship.

Conclusion

The forgotten people in the ethno-racial construction of Rock Springs were Native Americans. Despite their transitory presence, the Shoshone, Ute, and Cheyenne Indians claimed this land as their own. With the arrival of the transcontinental railway, the Plains Indians suffered defeat, deprivation, and dislocation. Significantly, as Rock Springs developed from coal camp to first-class Wyoming city, the original inhabitants became an alien presence despite their seasonal migrations from the Wind River Reservation to Utah and back again. Yet, on occasion, the tribes could still cause a stir. Remarking on the "Indian Outbreak" near Newcastle, Wyoming, the *Rock Springs Miner* commented that "the education of the Indian is like a dog, which can be taught tricks, but is still a dog, nevertheless, and lacks the brain necessary to be a man."⁷⁸ This lack of faith in the ability of Native Americans to "progress" was also evidenced in the *Rock Springs Independent's* endorsement of the campaign to open up access to Shoshone agricultural and mineral resources, remarking that the only obstacles were "a few Indians, and white men who have married squaws."⁷⁹ Such sentiments reflected the continuing racialized

⁷⁸ "The Indian Outbreak," *Rock Springs Miner*, November 5, 1903, 2.

⁷⁹ Quoted in "Shoshone Reservation," *Rock Springs Independent*, March 9, 1906, 1. See also "Shoshone Reservations," *Rock Springs Independent*, March 2, 1906, 1.

perspective of Rock Springs Euroamericans, which, ironically, coincided with journalistic recognition of local ethnic diversity. The May 28, 1909, issue of the *Rock Springs Rocket* featured a front-page article on "The Meeting of Nations," where several ethnic groups were "represented in costume and song, the parts taken by little tots from the first grade and pupils from the higher grades."⁸⁰ Thus, while Native Americans remained outside the ethos of progress, Asian Americans stayed inside their segregated communities, and African Americans remained a marginal presence, ethnic white Rock Springs began to celebrate its diversity in symbolic ways. At the same time, in economic, social, and cultural relationships, diverse Euroamericans began framing community institutions and traditions independent of UPCC control and, at times, intersected with the racial groups from which they sought to remain physically separate.

This increasingly diverse mix of alien, native, and naturalized citizens, working around the corporate policies of UPCC, creatively constructed autonomous community. Dee Garceau notes that both formal and informal means built such community. She states that "[e]thnic lodges and mutual aid societies, for example, emerged in Sweetwater coal towns as much in response to the need for social networks as to cushion the expenses of death and disability. But equally significant were immigrants' *informal* efforts to build ethnic community in the midst of heterogeneous neighborhoods."⁸¹ By examining economic, civic, and cultural life in Rock Springs from 1901 to 1913, one may begin to

⁸⁰ "Meeting of Nations," *Rock Springs Rocket*, May 28, 1909, 1.

⁸¹ Garceau, "*The Important Things of Life*," 59.

appreciate the formal and informal means by which residents sought to create their own community.

CHAPTER SIX
SOCIOECONOMIC LIFE IN ROCK SPRINGS, 1885-1910

Introduction

Turn-of-the-century America was in many ways problematic for corporate capital. Increasingly, movement toward a regulatory state undermined a *laissez-faire* ethos. Yet, despite the Sherman Anti-Trust Act and the Interstate Commerce Act, corporations in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries wielded enormous influence throughout American society. Richard Franklin Bensei notes the efficacious conjoining of capital and political interests in the postwar years.¹ This nexus of political and corporate interests proved especially fortuitous in the mining industry, as described by Duane Lockard. He states:

Corporations schemed to get mineral rights or land to exploit the rich lodes of coal that lie in such abundance beneath American soil. Corporate decisions determined the fate of hundreds of thousands of miners in the roughly 150 years of extensive coal operations in this county. Corporate officials used their economic power to gain control of governmental policy in order to bury safety legislation, to fend off laws for the prevention or treatment or compensation of black lung. They committed fraud on a massive scale to hide their failure to comply with the law stipulating dust

¹ Richard Franklin Bensei, *The Political Economy of American Industrialization, 1877-1900* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), xvii-xix.

controls. Their actions damaged the environment, crushed competition, and conspired to advance coal interests with little regard for other consequences.²

Because of the significance of coal interests, UPCC significantly influenced the development of Rock Springs, affecting ethno-racial demographics, economic enterprise, and municipal development. Local corporate hegemony, of course, depended upon working-class obeisance. And laboring people attracted retail and service enterprise, which lured business, civil, and other white-collar residents. These individuals and their ethno-familial networks represented communities increasingly independent of UPCC, communities that would help define an emerging Rock Springs municipality.³

By the close of the nineteenth century, Rock Springs residents had adjusted to the permanency brought by industrial wage labor and negotiation of ethnic, racial, and class boundaries. For many mining communities such challenges brought turbulent labor actions and violence. Price V. Fishback reports that the bituminous coal industry from 1890-1909 led the country in strike-related deaths, more than double those in manufacturing and other industries.⁴ Local residents knew the tumultuous nature of the coal-mining industry, reading accounts of Homestead and Couer d'Alene in local newspapers. But Rock Springs remained untouched by labor violence during the quarter-

² Lockard, *Coal*, 164.

³ Gardner and Flores, *Forgotten Frontier*, 89.

⁴ Price V. Fishback, "An Alternative View of Violence in Labor Disputes in the Early 1900s: The Bituminous Coal Industry, 1890-1930," *Labor History* 36 (Summer 1995): 428-429.

of-a-century following the massacre due to the legacy of 1885, changing demographics, and evolving community patterns. In addition, the proliferation of independent business enterprise and the diversity of municipal and community experiences certainly provided alternative opportunities for local residents, even those in UPCC employment.⁵

The Mining Industry in Rock Springs

In his study of the coal industry, Duane Lockard argues that historically "American coal corporations have had a wide-ranging discretionary authority to operate as they see fit,"⁶ and in the Gilded Age UPCC possessed tremendous autonomy in supervising its southwestern Wyoming operations. This autonomy helped UPCC weather its parent company's financial woes during the Panic of 1893 and increase productivity by century's end. This, in turn, brought increasing numbers of laborers to the regions. In the massacre year, for example, UPCC operated five mines in Rock Springs alone (No. 2 mine had closed two years earlier) and opened Mine No. 9 in 1890. While some prospecting occurred elsewhere, these explorations produced little profit until the Superior mines began operation in the early twentieth century, leaving the Rock Springs mines clearly in the ascendant in the closing years of the nineteenth century. In 1894,

⁵ Richard D. Loosbrock, "The Changing Faces of a Mining Town: The Dual Labor System in Elizabethtown, New Mexico, *New Mexico Historical Review* 74 (October 1999): 353; Philip J. Mellinger, *Race and Labor in Western Copper: The Fight for Equality, 1896-1918* (Tucson and London: University of Arizona Press), 3; "The Dead Year," *Rock Springs Miner*, January 4, 1893, 2.

⁶ Lockard, *Coal*, 164.

Wyoming coal inspector David G. Thomas, a Rock Springs resident, reported: "The Union Pacific coal company was the largest operator and employer of labor, its output for its Rock Springs, Almy, Carbon and Hanna mines aggregating 1,470,6431 tons of lump coal and 35,154 tons of nut coal. The number of employees was 1,975."⁷

Increased production in UP mines in the late nineteenth century resulted from several factors, which, in turn, produced various consequences for inhabitants of Rock Springs. The fast pace of industrialization in the United States, despite periodic financial panics, placed a premium on coal production. Increasing immigration afforded companies like UPCC with a large base of cheap labor the opportunity to invest in further economies of scale. Mechanization of mining also contributed significantly to growth in coal production. In 1881, a primitive telephone connected No. 1 and No. 2 mines, offering enhanced communication between supervisors. More importantly, one year later, UPCC introduced the "Air Legge," compressed air undercutting machines, in No. 4, which not only represented a "great improvement over the hand cutting method" but also enhanced worker safety. The next decade witnessed the debut of air-driven puncher machines in No. 8. This machinery produced better coal at a faster pace than previous methods. By the close of the 1890s, UPCC began replacing compressed air used for cutting, drilling, and hoisting purposes with electricity, which later allowed for the first electric cutting

⁷ Quoted in "Wyoming Coal Mines," *Rock Springs Miner*, January 11, 1894, 3. See also Rhode, *Boom and Busts*, 50, 79; Gardner and Johnson, "Cultural Resource Inventory". vol. 1, 38.

machines in mines Nos. 8, 9, and 10. Despite these technological advances, however, UPCC still relied heavily on human labor.⁸

Even with these industrial improvements, Rock Springs mining methods in the decade following the massacre seemed to some "crude and primitive."⁹ The official history of the UPCC provides the following account of coal mining prior to the appearance of the first electric mine locomotive in 1892:

The coal was pick-mined, shot with black powder, hauled by mules through the mine slope to the outside, loaded into wagons and taken to the railroad track Each miner carried an oil lamp with a cotton wick and an iron lamp, pick to lift up the wicking, as part of his personal equipment. The lamps gave little light, but much ill smelling smoke Since there were no street lamps in Rock Springs, the men had to wear their cap lamps to work, in order to find their way through the streets. They left home and returned thence in their pit clothes.¹⁰

For miners and their families, coal mining throughout the period proved both backbreaking labor and extremely hazardous.

While Rock Springs did not witness a catastrophic accident, such as the explosion at the 1881 Red Canyon coal mine near Almy, Wyoming, that cost sixty lives, work in the UPCC mines remained perilous. A perusal of UPCC accident records for the early 1890s reveals various injuries: bruised fingers, head cuts, broken backs, punctured wrists, broken legs, burned eyes, ripped nails, broken ribs and the like, largely from falling rock

⁸ Rhode, *Boom and Busts*, 79; UPCC, *History of Union Pacific Coal Mines*, 165-167.

⁹ UPCC, *History of Union Pacific Coal Mines*, 52.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

or coal, kicking mules, car accidents, or detonations. Accidents, however, could prove deadly. In March 1893, eighteen-year-old Finnish immigrant John Houda died after being struck by falling rock in No. 3. Three months later Peineo Julio, an unmarried Italian miner, was leaving No. 1 behind five coworkers when an empty car struck him; medical assistance above ground failed to save the 23-year-old. The next month, on Tuesday, July 25, 1893, rocks loosened by a shot of powder collapsed upon Charles Borbein in Mine No. 1. Carried home by coworkers, he never recovered and died two hours afterward. Less than two years later, falling coal also killed miner Antonio Bonia, who had been working under coal loosened by a blast. In April 1897, Finnish immigrant Eric Norbakka, working in No. 1, suffered a broken leg, scalp and facial lacerations, internal injuries, and a fractured spine from yet another accident of falling coal. Norbakka left behind a wife and two children. The Finn band played solemn airs during the funeral service and the procession from the church to the cemetery. These and other accidents repeated a pattern of official investigation that always cleared the company of wrongdoing and blamed worker negligence. Undoubtedly, worker haste and carelessness contributed to mine accidents, as the findings of coal miners sitting on coroners' inquests attested. However, the pressure placed upon miners by the company to increase production without commensurate gains in wages or working conditions exacerbated the problem.¹¹

¹¹ Union Pacific Railway, Coal Department, Accident Record, June 16, 1891-July 25, 1893, Union Pacific Coal Company Archives, Archaeological Services, Rock Springs, Wyoming; "Accident in the Mine," *Rock Springs Miner*, March 9, 1893, 3; "Accidental Death," *Rock Springs Miner*, June 29, 1893, 1; "Fatal Mine Accident," *Rock Springs Miner*, June 21, 1894, 1; "Chinaman Killed," *Rock Springs Miner*, August 31, 1893.

See also Philip A. Kalisch, "The Woebegone Miners of Wyoming: A History of Coal Mine Disasters in the Equality State," *Annals of Wyoming* 42 (October

Concern with profitability not only maximized coal production but also diversified UPCC operations. The "Annual Report for Year 1895" noted that the mines were "all in good order" and that there were no labor troubles save for complaints of "unsteady work."¹² Although Beckwith-Quinn did not formally exist as a UP company store, its franchise with the corporation had produced a healthy income stream for the latter, and as UP weathered the rocky shoals of the depressed 1890s, the corporation consolidated various means to generate revenue. When UP constructed a power plant in 1886 and laid the water pipelines in 1888-1889, the company's principal motives were to enhance its primary economic operations in southwestern Wyoming--the railway and, in Rock Springs specifically, the coal mines. Nevertheless, utilities owned by UP soon became part of many residents' daily lives as electricity and water soon became key services. It would be several years, however, until the entire town was connected, and Rock Springs would still lack a modern sewage system until the mid-1920s. Aside from Beckwith-Quinn & Co., UP also franchised retail operations to Ah Say, who owned the "exclusive store privilege in Chinatown" in return for a royalty of five percent of gross sales (or a minimum royalty of \$100 a month). The contract began on June 1, 1891, and

1970): 236-242; "Heart-Rending," *Rock Springs Miner*, March 28, 1895, 2; The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, "Mining Disasters (Incidents with 5 or more fatalities), <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/mining/data/disall.html>, 2001, accessed March 12, 2004; "Killed in No. 1," *Rock Springs Miner*, July 27, 1893, 1; "Killed in the Mine," *Rock Springs Miner*, February 14, 1895, 1; "Fatal Accident," *Rock Springs Miner*, April 15, 1897, 1.

¹² "Annual Report for Year 1895 of the Union Pacific Coal Company, for Wyoming and Utah," Box 20B, UPCC Archives, Archaeological Services, Rock Springs, Wyoming, 2, 5.

UP reported royalty payments of \$721.45 for that seven-month period.¹³ The 1891 UPCC Annual Report showed other revenue streams that year. Coal lands leased to John Ludvigsen for the purpose of supplying fuel to the town returned a royalty payment of \$428.25 to UPCC. The report also shows that the company owned 311 single and double tenement houses valued at \$87,245.00 in town, which resulted in \$21,615.80 in annual rents. Less \$4,615.23 in expenditures for repairs and improvements, rental property alone garnered UPCC over \$17,000 for 1891. Such subsidiary enterprises not only reflected the multivariied nature of UP operations but also the local primacy of UP, which included a company store and tenements.¹⁴

UPCC sought to use its economic clout to influence settlement patterns in Rock Springs and much of Sweetwater County. Dee Garceau argues that UPCC land and labor

¹³ *Annual Report for Year 1891 of the Union Pacific Coal Company, for Wyoming and Utah*, Box 20B, UPCC Archives, Archaeological Services, Rock Springs, Wyoming, 14.

¹⁴ For a view of company stores, of which Beckwith-Quinn reflected many aspects, see Eric Margolis, *Western Coal Mining as a Way Of Life: An Oral History of the Colorado Coal Miners 1914* (Manhattan, Kansas: Journal of the West, 1985), 184. and White, "It's Your Misfortune," 275. See Rhode, *Boom and Busts*, on power plants, power lines, and water mains (66-67). For coal leasing and tenement rental, see *Annual Report for 1891*, 13-14. "W. H. Mellor, Pioneer Mining Superintendent, and Charles H. Mellor, Oldest Old Timer in Rock Springs," *UPCC Employes' Magazine* 5 (September 1928), 12-13; Union Pacific Coal Company, "Statement of Operations," 1897-1900, Box 14, UPCC Archives, Archaeological Services, Rock Springs, Wyoming, 4-5; "Annual Report 1895," 3; "Annual Report for Year 1896 of the Union Pacific Coal Company, for Wyoming and Utah," Box 20B, UPCC Archives, Archaeological Services, Rock Springs, Wyoming, 2; "Annual Report for Year 1898 of the Union Pacific Coal Company, for Wyoming and Utah," Box 20B, UPCC Archives, Archaeological Services, Rock Springs, Wyoming, 43; "Annual Report for Year 1901 of the Union Pacific Coal Company, for Wyoming and Utah," Box 20B, UPCC Archives, Archaeological Services, Rock Springs, Wyoming, 47.

policies pursued a "company town" orientation that sought to establish "absolute control" of the municipality.¹⁵ In this regard, UPCC sought to influence not only spatial arrangements of the community but also its socio-cultural identity. UPCC manager Dyer Clark wrote his supervisors in 1900 that "[e]very possible care is taken to keep nationalities mixed, and not to allow any nationality to predominate"¹⁶ Yet UPCC sociological plans yielded before increasing employment demands. So too did opportunities for private enterprise develop separate from corporate control. Integrated cultural and economic networks allowed some aspects of community life to define itself independently of UPCC control.

UPCC assumed that Rock Springs would function as a company town, yet such expectations ignored the complexities of racial, ethnic, religious, organizational, and class dynamics. In *Forgotten Frontier*, Gardner and Flores remark that Wyoming coal towns reflected a coal company's decision "to invest in constructing a town, it was built post-haste. Profits were only realized once the town and mining equipment were in place; therefore, companies spared little effort in beginning their operations."¹⁷ UPCC pursued various means to make Rock Springs a company town: political lobbying, employment of Pinkertons, company stores, scab labor, blacklists, company housing, and so forth. The recruitment of an ethnically diverse workforce, including Japanese, Korean, African American, and Mexican laborers in the 1910s, was meant to fragment worker solidarity,

¹⁵ Garceau, *"The Important Things of Life,"* 20.

¹⁶ Gardner and Binkerhoff, *Historical Images of Sweetwater County*, 60.

¹⁷ Gardner and Flores, *Forgotten Frontier*, 105.

thus facilitating company hegemony in Rock Springs. Such overt policies, however, did not produce immediate dividends, so the company sought to rely upon various community-based methods in the years to come, including social benefits for pensioned workers, community-based philanthropy, more cooperative approaches to labor negotiations, and emphases on worker safety.¹⁸

UPCC pre-First World War welfare capitalism reflected both the company's desire to maximize labor productivity as well as a commitment to municipal stability. Company ethno-racial policies sometimes mitigated *noblesse oblige*, as when, for example, UPCC officials scrambled to explain why the desire of UP President Harriman's wife for bathhouses to promote worker hygiene would not work in Rock Springs due to the town's hyper-ethnic diversity. While UPCC management rejected bathhouses and communal laundries for one reason or another, the coal company, nevertheless, sought to extend a helping hand to the growing municipality. For example,

¹⁸ Ibid., 113. Company housing continued to provide a steady revenue stream throughout this period. UPCC records show net receipts of \$12,746.79 for 385 tenements in 1901, \$20,906.23 for 378 tenements in 1908, and \$21,232.94 for 348 tenements in 1912. Interestingly, by 1908, UPCC had stopped reporting tenement income and inhabitancy by race, where previously tenement occupancy had been reported according to white, Chinese, and Japanese categories (see "Annual Report for Year 1901 of the Union Pacific Coal Company, for Wyoming and Utah," Box 20B, UPCC Archives, Archaeological Services, Rock Springs, Wyoming, 47; "Annual Report of Assistant General Manager Year ending June 30, 1908," Box 20B, UPCC Archives, Archaeological Services, Rock Springs, Wyoming, 96; "Annual Report of Assistant General Manager Year ending June 30, 1912," Box 20B, UPCC Archives, Archaeological Services, Rock Springs, Wyoming, 109).

An important work on the nature of corporate capitalism is Charles Perrow, *Organizing America: Wealth, Power, and the Origins of Corporate Capitalism* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2002); especially interesting is the discussion of the railroads and their subsidiary interests in determining corporate structures and relations to organized labor.

UPCC began sponsoring lawn and garden contests in the desolate environs of Rock Springs. Italian settlers in particular, remembering the greenery of their native land, showed a knack for beautifying the arid spaces of the town. Along with urban beautification campaigns, the company store sought to influence community life. UPCC retail and service institutions functioned as both a conduit of credit and paternalism, representing simultaneously corporate predation on workers and unique economic opportunities for workers such as Mary Taylor, a Scottish-immigrant who after forty years rose to a white-collar position in the store. While company stores, housing, and beautification efforts represented just the beginning of corporate welfare, mine safety remained the most pressing corporate issue of the period.¹⁹

Labor and Capital in Rock Springs

Despite corporate welfare programs, UPCC did not find the prewar years free from labor turmoil. Despite the earlier organizational challenges encountered by the Knights of Labor, the United Mine Workers of America began a lengthy, assiduous campaign to organize UPCC coalfields. Despite facing a powerful corporate giant,

¹⁹ A. H. Mohler [President, UPCC], Letter to F.A. Manley [Vice President and General Manger, UPCC], August 15, 1913, Union Pacific Railway Archives, Lincoln, Nebraska, box 16; "File: UPCC Misc. Co. Welfare Items," Union Pacific Coal Company Archives, Archaeological Services of Western Wyoming College; David Kathka, "The Italian Experience in Wyoming," in Hendrickson, 75; "Old Timers' Photo Album," n.d., Box 8A, Union Pacific Coal Company Archives, Archaeological Services of Western Wyoming College.

UMWA organizational efforts proved quite successful locally.²⁰ Historians note several reasons for local labor resentment. Gardner and Flores state, “Unsafe working conditions, the perceived paternalistic nature of coal companies, and substandard living conditions at many coal camps made Wyoming coalfields ripe for labor trouble in the first decade of the twentieth century. Poor wages added fuel to simmering fires. Unionization grew out of real and perceived problems facing coal miners throughout Wyoming and the West.”²¹ These disputes fed upon earlier grievances and overrode UPCC anticipated ethnic cleavages. By 1903, according to David Wolff, UMWA had established an important presence in Rock Springs. He writes: “[A] UMWA local apparently formed in Rock Springs in September 1903. At the end of the month, the *United Mine Workers' Journal* claimed the miners in southern Wyoming were ready to strike, and it warned of great consequences. The *Journal* cautioned that another Rock Spring Massacre could occur: ‘It is said that the white miners will seize upon the opportunity to drive out the Chinese and Japs, and [the result could be] a recurrence of the bloody scenes of fifteen years ago.’”²² Such threats, however, proved fictitious, since the historical conditions, notably depressed economic circumstances and acutely anti-Chinese sentiments of 1885 no longer existed. Eschewing ethno-racial dynamics, UMWA finally won UPCC and other southern Wyoming coal producers’ recognition by 1906, reflecting recognition of both the significance of the President's Square Deal rhetoric as well as local strides in

²⁰ Wolff, *Industrializing the Rockies*, 166-167, 169-170, 181-182, 198-199.

²¹ Gardner and Flores, *Forgotten Frontier*, 110.

²² Wolff, *Industrializing the Rockies*, 206.

organizing.²³ This victory cemented the vital interconnection of labor-corporation-entrepreneurial interests and contributed to further municipal development.²⁴

Corporate recognition, however, did not equal labor peace, for UPCC management continued to find reasons for labor confrontations. In 1907, UPCC miners were particularly restive, perhaps empowered by their new labor affiliation. The *Rock Springs Miner* reported in May 1907 in banner headlines: "Mines Closed: Every Mine in Rock Springs Shut Down on Account of Shortage of Men which is Caused by Attempt to Organize Local Branch of the United Mine Workers of America."²⁵ The prospect of a lengthy strike afforded some Rock Springs residents an opportunity to spend a few months visiting relatives abroad, rekindling ethnic ties and spreading tales about a land of opportunity where working people could agitate for a better life. However, the quick resolution of the strike within a month meant most workers remained in Rock Springs.

²³ Rhode states that when labor recognition of UMWA was assured, UPCC "turned its end of the negotiating over to Morgan Griffiths, a Welshman who came to the United States in the early seventies, worked his way across the continent as a miner, joined the Knights of Labor, and arrived in Rock Springs in 1879. He quickly rose to supervisory positions and in 1907 was the general underground foreman for UPCC in Rock Springs. He was trusted by the mine[r]s and talked their language. A general agreement was reached, and the mines were soon back to work producing coal at a record rate to meet a record demand. . . . That agreement with the UMW, signed on September 1, 1907, was statewide and included a clause establishing the eight-hour day in Wyoming coal mines" (*Booms and Busts*, 91).

²⁴ Wolff, *Industrializing the Rockies*, 137, 153-154; 205-207; 214-215; 221-223. Rhode, *Boom and Busts*, notes that based on local news accounts "it is clear that the mine owners, led by UPCC and using the full clout of the railroad, vigorously opposed the union, even for a brief period carrying out a threat to close the mines" (89). For a more specific lens on Wyoming labor history, see Fletcher, "A History of the Labor Movement in Wyoming," 30-36.

²⁵ "Mines Closed," *Rock Springs Miner*, May 25, 1907, 1.

The successful job action had reaffirmed UMWA's status as the collective bargaining agent of the miners, and workers had received a ten percent pay raise. The *Rock Springs Miner* proclaimed, "The prospects for the future of Rock Springs never looked brighter and there is no doubt that the next five years will see it the center of one of the greatest coal mining regions of the world."²⁶ Following the success of the UMWA, the December 4, 1908, *Rock Springs Rocket* heralded on its front page: "Council Organized," which related the previous month's establishment of the Sweetwater County Trades and Labor Council, a syncretic collective devoted to worker solidarity, safety, and enhanced quality of life.²⁷ The synthesis of labor interests eventually coalesced into a Labor Temple and the proliferation of diverse labor organizations locally, yet coal miners' interests continued to dominate local labor-capital relations.²⁸

In 1911, national coal industry politics threatened Rock Springs labor peace. As early as February 1911, UMWA representatives at a national conference in Indianapolis,

²⁶ "Mines Are All Working," *Rock Springs Miner*, June 15, 1907, 1.; "Coal Mines Solidly Union," *Rock Springs Miner*, August 11, 1907, 1; Rhode, *Boom and Busts*, 91, 93. For background see, "Mines Closed," *Rock Spring Miner*, May 25, 1907, 1; "Mines To Be Opened," *Rock Springs Miner*, June 1, 1907, 1; Rhode, *Boom and Busts*, 89-93. The far-reaching nature of miners' job actions to the Rock Springs business community can be seen by perusing the local newspapers. For example, see "Strike Settled," *Rock Springs Miner*, June 8, 1907, 2, which heralded the settlement as "welcome news to every resident of Rock Springs and of southern Wyoming. Business has been at a complete standstill the past two weeks, and a continuance of the trouble would have worked great hardship to every one" (2). Worker solidarity despite ethnic diversity related to entrepreneurial exigency as retailers and service providers depended more upon working-class patronage than corporate largesse. Thus, independent business owners tended to reflect pro-labor sympathies through liberal credit practices during job actions.

²⁷ "Council Organized," *Rock Springs Rocket*, December 4, 1908, 1.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

Indiana, called for higher wages. The *Rock Springs Rocket* reported on operators' consistent opposition to wage increases. Local labor interests responded by appealing for community support which was widespread. So significant was local union activity that the statewide federation of labor held its 1913 convention in Rock Springs. While miners agitated for better wages and working conditions, railway workers went on strike. Unlike the tumultuous affair of 1885, these workers promised "to keep away from Union Pacific property."²⁹ While radical movements, such as the Industrial Workers of the World, espoused more confrontational strategies, the UMWA espoused a more democratically oriented vision. Essentially, the health and vigor of labor organization in Rock Springs and Sweetwater County disproved UPCC's stated goal of ethno-racial undermining of labor solidarity.³⁰

Among local workers, ties to labor organizations were not exclusively economic but reflected community impulses nearly as important as links to ethnic and religious groups. Business cordiality toward labor recognition reflected the strength of UMWA efforts and other labor organizations locally. May 1914, for example, marked a labor-merchant agreement for Sunday and holiday closings of

²⁹ "Strike Situation Unchanged," *Rock Springs Rocket*, October 6, 1911, 1.

³⁰ "Wage Scale Still Unsettled," *Rock Springs Rocket*, February 2, 1911, 2; "Benefit for the Strikers a Grand Success," *Rock Springs Rocket*, February 2, 1911, 1; "Federated Labor Union Dance," *Rock Springs Rocket*, December 29, 1911, 1; "Rock Springs Was Host to Delegates of the State Federation of Labor," *Rock Springs Rocket*, July 11, 1913, 1.

local businesses.³¹ Retail and service establishments operated by former miners and their kinfolk certainly appealed to working people. Progressive workers in Rock Springs also sought to create their own economic niche in a cooperative store. A notice in the June 1, 1917, issue of the *Rocket* noted: "The Co-operative Society will open [its] store for business on June 15. The store is located in the building occupied by the Hub store a few years ago. At the present time they will handle a stock of groceries with a meat market in connection. Having bought the Kornos meat market [sic]. Later they expect to ad a stock of general merchandise. W. E. Hill is the manager of the new store."³² The cooperative store lasted a little under two years, handicapped by poor management and the perils of competition. It did, however, represent one of several progressive features of prewar municipal life, many originating with working people. The Rock Springs Union Education Association, organized in the spring of 1914, was another such endeavor, seeking to foster appreciation of working-class movements among Rock Springs residents. That same year the local labor temple provided a library for its members. And local labor interests strove to make the 8-Hour Day anniversary a significant local holiday.³³ Not only did local labor organization reflect cooperative ventures but

³¹ "Clerks and Merchants Sign Agreement for Sunday Closing and Most of Legal Holidays," *Rock Springs Rocket*, May 29, 1917, 1.

³² "Co-operative Store to Open June 15," *Rock Springs Rocket*, June 1, 1917, 1.

³³ "Unions Organize Educational Body," *Rock Springs Rocket*, April 17, 1914, 1; "Labor Temple Has Well Chosen Library," *Rock Springs Rocket*, May 22, 1914, 1; *Rock Springs Rocket*, March 27, 1914, 1.

also radical ideology. Operating out of the Finn Hall, Sweetwater Socialists represented a significant political presence, garnering nearly a sizable vote in the 1912 elections. While never approaching majority status, prewar Rock Springs socialism evinced both foreign-born ideological orientation and domestic commitment to social justice.³⁴

Labor organization, therefore, made significant strides at the same time that UPCC operations expanded. The Labor Temple offered a capacious facility for a variety of labor groups, including a well-stocked Reading Room for educational initiatives. As will be discussed in the next section, labor organizations actively participated in local festive culture. And workers experimented with cooperative enterprise, radical politics, and community building.³⁵ At the same time, UPCC's diverse enterprises continued to produce impressive profits. The total assessed value of UPCC tenement properties in 1917 was over three-quarters of a million dollars. During the period 1915-1918, UPCC showed significant gains in coal production, increasing over six percent during the period, and its company store earnings increased over sixty-nine percent from

³⁴ See "Miners and Operators Fail to Agree on Scale at Cheyenne Convention," *Rock Springs Rocket*, August 14, 1914, 1; "Striking Miners to Accept Terms of Settlement," *Rock Springs Rocket*, September 18, 1914, 1; Gardner and Flores, *Forgotten Frontier*, 125-126.

³⁵ "Introductory Note, Agency History," United Mine Workers of America, District 22 Records, 1914-1957, Accession Number 1736, American Heritage Collection, University of Wyoming, Laramie, Wyoming.

1916 to 1917.³⁶ Yet, economic gain did not guarantee UPCC domination over labor, for the years witnessed continued confrontation between capital and labor, especially as UMWA cemented its presence in the coal mines. Labor disputes, however, did not show the bitter conflicts of previous years; institutional solidity and interclass community ties facilitated more amicable labor relations. In addition, as the Chinese population dwindled and remaining Japanese workers affiliated with UMWA, the diminution of racial politics minimized ethnocentric animosity.³⁷

Enterprise and Municipal Development

Along with the dynamic roles played locally by corporate capital and labor organizations, Rock Springs' independent enterprise contributed significantly to municipal development, especially in its boosting tendencies that mitigated against UPCC hegemony. As early as 1909, the local Business League endorsed initiatives

³⁶ Sweetwater County Assessor, Annual Return of Property of U.P. Coal Company Mines, 1917 Wyoming State Archives, Cheyenne, Wyoming; Union Pacific Coal Company Annual Report of the Assistant General Manager, for the Year Ending June 30, 1916, Box 2, Union Pacific Coal Company Archives, Archaeological Services, Rock Springs, Wyoming, 41; Union Pacific Coal Company Annual Report of the Assistant General Manager, for the Year Ending December 31, 1918, Box 2, Union Pacific Coal Company Archives, Archaeological Services, Rock Springs, Wyoming, 44.

³⁷ For news on class consciousness and labor relations, see, for example, "Lockout at No. 2 Mine" *Rock Springs Rocket*, June 11, 1915, 1; "Protest Meeting," *Rock Springs Rocket*, July 2, 1915, 1.

fostering economic independence, such as good highways, better municipal lighting, and improved local agriculture.³⁸

Undoubtedly, expanded UP operations fed the population boom in early twentieth-century Rock Springs; however, individual consumers turned the municipality into a regional business mecca. The local press played a pivotal role in trumpeting local business, especially to far-flung coal camps. During the prewar period, three different newspapers, the *Independent*, *Miner*, and *Rocket*, operated. The last of these was published by Cora Wanamaker, one of the most powerful women in town, who assumed leadership of the paper following her husband's death. Local business reciprocated through heavy advertising in the local media. These advertisements echoed the boosterish language of the media. Beeman-Neuber Mercantile Company called itself "The Big Store"; the Union Pacific Coal Company Store boasted "the best potatoes" and "choicest apples"; the Rock Springs Commercial Company carried "everything that is new and up-to-date"; and Cosgriff & Couzens without "a single doubt" carried the "best quality merchandise."³⁹

³⁸ "Enthusiastic Meeting of the League," *Rock Springs Rocket*, April 2, 1909, 1.

³⁹ For Rock Springs newspapers, see [Newspapers in Sweetwater County], n.d., Folder "Newspapers--Magazines," Vertical File, SCHM, 10-11; "Farewell," *Rock Springs Miner*, Nov. 6, 1902, 2; "The *Independent's* Nightmare," *Rock Springs Miner*, Nov. 18, 1902, 2; "An Independent Paper," *Rock Springs Independent*, January 19, 1906, 2; "Editorial Announcement," *Rock Springs Rocket*, November 28, 1907, 4; "Called by Death," *Rock Springs Rocket*, February 13, 1908, 1; "Bill Barlow's Bouquet," *Rock Springs Rocket*, August 6, 1908, 4; "Change in Form of Miner," *Rock Springs Miner*, September 3, 1908, 2; Rhode, *Boom and Busts*, 96. For newspaper advertisements, see, for example, *Rock Springs Miner*, October 13, 1904, 1-4; *Rock Springs Independent*, January 4, 1907, 1-4.

The vitality of independent community business, especially ethnic enterprise, was evident locally in the prewar years. Business records of the era attest to both the variety of local business endeavors and the economic participation of diverse ethno-racial populations. A perusal of prewar business directories shows a vibrant local economy that created myriad opportunities for laborers and *petit bourgeois* (see Table 3). Of course, business directories do not reflect the totality of business enterprise since they evince only those businesses advertising in the volume. However, they do reflect a cross-section of successful businesses, including ethno-racial enterprise.

Table 3

Types of Business Enterprise in Prewar Rock Springs⁴⁰

Year	1901		1910		
Sector	Number	Percentage of Total	Number	Percentage of Total	% Increase 1901 and 1910
Retail	48	35.3%	78	30.8%	162.5
Service	55	40.4%	124	49.0%	225.5
Finance	3	2.2%	13	5.1%	433.3
Manufacturing	8	5.9%	19	7.5%	237.5
Professional	22	16.2%	19	7.5%	-13.6

⁴⁰ *Wyoming State Business Directory* (1901); GAZETTER Publishing Co., *The Wyoming State Business Directory with Live Stock Department, Wool Growers' Department, Classified Department, Foreign Advertisers Department, 1910*, vol. V (Denver, 1910), Sweetwater County Historical Museum, Green River, Wyoming.

Local journalism gladly conveyed the success of independent enterprise. Banking was an especially popular topic, with local institutions publishing regular statements. For example, in 1902, the Rock Springs National Bank reported assets of nearly one half million dollars certified by cashier George H. Goble.⁴¹ This was a tremendous achievement for an institution that its original Cheyenne investors had believed risky at best. In fact, during the prewar years the Rock Springs National Bank, Miners State Bank, and North Side State Bank provided significant investment credit for local entrepreneurs. The fact that many bank directors were foreign-born (Tim Kinney was from Ireland, V. J. Facinelli from the Tyrol, Chris Bunning was born in Germany and had met his wife in Denmark, Frank Kershisnik was from Slovenia, and Joseph Young from England) augured well for foreign-born entrepreneurs. Immigrant bankers and business people also helped native-born financial capitalists, such as Augustine Kendall and Thomas Seddon Taliaferro, Jr., realize the interconnection between local economics and ethnic, racial, and class relationships. It certainly offered immigrants greater opportunities. By the early twentieth century, Chinese such as Ah Dor, Bing Kee, and Haw Yuen Chin operated food establishments. Euroamericans, including the Bertagnollis, Razzes, Endrizzis, Facinellis, Kershisniks, Larsens, Sorensens, Tuels, and others, had left the mines behind to enter the commercial field, reflecting the ethno-democratization of town life. In addition, at the turn-of-the-century, a handful of women proved successful entrepreneurs, especially in the service trades. Jennie Boland operated

⁴¹ "No. 4755, Report of the Condition of the Rock Springs National Bank," *Rock Springs Miner*, November 27, 1902, 8.

a restaurant; Mrs. James Carr oversaw a local hotel; Mrs. William H. Matthews ran her own greenhouse; and Mary Menough supervised a local millinery. Perhaps the inchoate nature of commercial culture in Rock Springs allowed women opportunities to participate in enterprise. While Rock Springs depended upon UP coal demand, the town had established a business culture beyond merely coal production.⁴²

Conclusion

Undoubtedly, UPCC loomed as the great economic presence in the lives of Rock Springs residents, and, as Gardner and Flores point out, the 1910s "proved to be [a decade] of growth for the Wyoming coal industry."⁴³ Nevertheless, the very success of coal production resulted in a growing, diversified community that defied the

⁴² *Gazetter Publishing Co., The, Wyoming State Business Directory with Live Stock Department, Wool Growers' Department, Classified Department* (Denver, 1901), Sweetwater County Historical Museum, Green River, Wyoming; Rhode, *Boom and Busts*, 74; "No. 4755, Report of the Condition of the Rock Springs National Bank, at Roc Springs, Wyoming, at the close of Business," Feb. 5th, 1909, Walter B. Dunston, Notary Public, and Tim Kinney, et al. Directors," Folder "Banks--Sweetwater County," Vertical File, SCHM; "No. 3920, Report of the Condition of the Rock Springs National Bank, at Roc Springs, Wyoming, at the close of Business," Jan. 31, 1910, D. A. Reavill, Notary Public, and J. H. Anderson, et al. Directors," Folder "Banks--Sweetwater County," Vertical File, SCHM; "Certificate of Articles of Association of the Miners State Bank," D.A. Reavill, Notary Public, and Amos Kendall, et al. Directors, February 9, 1911, Folder "Banks--Sweetwater County," Vertical File, SCHM; Wyoming State Historic Preservation Office, "Taliaferro House," n.d., <<http://wyoshpo.state.wy.us/taliafer.htm>>, April 5, 2007; Claude Elias, "Short History of the Rock Springs National Bank," in Thomas P. Cullen, ed., "Rock Springs--A Look Back" (Portland: Thomas P. Cullen, 1991, typewritten), Rock Springs Public Library, 325-326; V. J. Facinelli, "Short History of the North Side State Bank," in Thomas P. Cullen, ed., "Rock Springs--A Look Back" (Portland: Thomas P. Cullen, 1991, typewritten), Rock Springs Public Library, 327-328.

⁴³ Gardner and Flores, *Forgotten Frontier*, 126.

characteristics of a company town. Opportunities abounded for enterprising individuals. The very diversity of the population afforded various groups occasion to create organizations independent of UPCC control. Family life, religious affiliation, festive culture, and municipal development all mitigated hegemonic control by UPCC. The corporation's coal arm certainly wielded significant influence in the city, but the historical development of the community offered different groups opportunities to express their own autonomous visions of what Rock Spring would become. Social and cultural developments in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries would loom as important as economic matters in the evolution of municipal community in Rock Springs.

CHAPTER SEVEN

TOWARD A MUNICIPAL COMMUNITY, 1901-1913

Introduction

In her insightful *Red Lodge and the Mythic West*, Bonnie Christensen writes of a prewar Montana coal-mining town quite similar to Rock Springs. She states, "For its first four decades, Red Lodge was a town whose public identity centered around industrialization, workers, and immigrants--all coated in the dust and grime of coal. Coal, quite simply, dominated the town's early years from the built environment and economy to the population composition and life patterns of local residents."¹ As described previously, UPCC operations dominated local economics and significantly influenced socio-cultural patterns in Gilded Age Rock Springs. Yet Union Pacific operations only reflected a part of the story of local municipal development. Apart from the coal mines and corporate offices, churches, schools, organizations, politicians, entrepreneurs, and neighborhoods offered independent and contrasting views of the nature of the city. For Red Lodge, Christensen examines the characteristics of community identity and how residents "have shaped and adapted their public identities in response to local, regional,

¹ Christensen, *Red Lodge*, 41.

and national concerns."² In Rock Springs, too, this process occurred, although the more highly race-conscious nature of local life and the centrality of the city to corporate operations offered different challenges to the formulation of community identity than in Red Lodge. In particular, the proliferation of business in Rock Springs in the prewar years presaged a more independent, thriving community. While UPCC operations accounted for the growing consumer base utilizing retail and service enterprises in prewar Rock Springs, churches, associations, dance halls, saloons, laundries, hostelrys, and other ventures reflected increasingly autonomous inclinations. The news at the turn-of-the-century that Rock Springs had achieved official state recognition as a "first-class city" with a population of over 4,000 residents only further encouraged the dynamic, boosting spirit of the locality.³

A "First-Class City"

Public recognition as a "first-class city" overjoyed Rock Springs boosters. For a viable municipal community to exist, local entrepreneurs, labor leaders, and other

² Ibid., xiii.

³ Rhode, *Booms and Busts*, 125. For discussions of the boosting spirit in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, see, for example, Daniel J. Boorstin, *The Americans: The Democratic Experience*, New Ed. (New York: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 2000); Don Harrison Doyle, *The Social Order of a Frontier Community: Jacksonville, Illinois, 1825-70* (Champaign and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1990); Carl Abbott, *Boosters and Businessmen: Popular Economic Thought and Urban Growth in the Antebellum Middle West* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1981).

residents sought to create a local identity that transcended UPCC influence and the legacy of the Chinese massacre. Local newspapers continually publicized local community consciousness during the prewar years. In 1904, the *Miner* defended the local state hospital against Cheyenne investigators looking into its operating procedures. Later, local officials lobbied state political leaders for a regional land office that would administer Shoshone reservation claims while at the same time denigrating Amerindian ability to administer effectively such territorial holdings.⁴ Despite failing to acquire the land office, local boosting continued fervently during the era. By 1910, the city's population neared 6,000, and the Rock Springs newspapers boasted of the heterogeneity of the local population. The *Independent*, emphasizing local socioeconomic opportunity noted: "A number of the English and Irish have taken up ranches and given up the mines for the better and purer air of the country. What is true of the English and Irish may be said of most of the other nationalities that have come to this city in large numbers and among them are some of our best citizens and wealthiest men."⁵ The *Rocket*, in a 1908 front-page headline, warned residents, "Don't Be a Chronic Knocker," and spent the next several years advocating municipal improvements in transportation, sanitation, and traffic

⁴ For Rock Springs' aspirations to land office, see "As Others See Us," *Rock Springs Miner*, September 8, 1904, 1; "Rock Springs: The Logical Point," *Rock Springs Miner*, February 17, 1906, 1; "Why Rock Springs Should Be Selected," *Rock Springs Independent*, March 2, 1906, 1.

⁵ "Great City Is Rock Springs," *Rock Springs Independent*, October 6, 1905, 1.

control.⁶ Clearly, Rock Springs' economic and communication sectors reflected key prewar ideals of municipal progress.

Rock Springs, however, also evinced a less salutary side. Too much flamboyant frontier spirit remained. Bar fights, opium dens, and firearms accidents remained very much a part of local culture. Prostitution became a visible part of turn-of-the-century public debate with progressive-minded citizens agitating against city brothels in the prewar years. Carol Lee Bowers argues that prostitutes in urban Wyoming "lived both inside and outside the community. They made significant contributions to the local community, both voluntarily as consumers and involuntarily through the payment of fines and fees imposed by the courts. However, as social pariahs, prostitutes also lived both literally and figuratively on the social margins. . . ."⁷ For the most part, prostitutes in Rock Springs evaded public censure in the years prior to 1905. Kitty Hicks, one of the most successful local businesswomen, operated the White House for several years, serving alcohol and sexual favors to local business leaders and working men. The White House, located in the southeast corner of town near No. 1 hill, was a large building with delicately wrought white trim. Despite its popularity, the brothel faced a vigorous antiprostitution campaign in 1906 led by the *Independent*. Stating that the White House and its competitor the Green House were "menace[s] to public safety," the newspaper led

⁶ Rhode, *Booms and Busts*, 99; "Don't Be a Chronic Knocker," *Rock Springs Rocket*, March 216, 1908, 1; "A Movement for Civic Betterment," *Rock Springs Rocket*, February 9, 1911, 1; "The Town with the Pay Roll," *Rock Springs Rocket*, December 19, 1913, 1.

⁷ Carol Lee Bowers, "Railroad Ladies: Prostitution in Laramie, Wyoming, 1868-1900," *Wyoming History Journal* (Summer 1995): 19.

a public campaign against the bordellos, centering greatest public scorn upon issues of liquor consumption and violence.⁸

Moral reform ethics reflected not only political but also associational efforts. Various private organizations contributed to the municipal development of Rock Springs in the prewar period. Churches played a key role. As more Eastern and Central Europeans immigrated to Rock Springs, especially Tyroleans and Slovenians, Catholicism exerted a growing cultural influence. By the war years, there were two parishes in Rock Springs. These churches, along with Protestant bodies, hosted educational, social, and cultural events for the community, including fundraisers for various humanitarian enterprises. Some of the churches, such as the African American congregation, found the prewar years problematic for financial reasons, but religious diversity flourished in the town.⁹ Catholics, Mormons, Congregationalists, Baptists, and Lutherans all evinced steady growth.

⁸ See "Life at the 'White House'," *Sweetwater Guide*, "March 14, 1989, A1, A7, Folder--"Sorting Houses," Vertical Files, Sweetwater County Historical Museum, Green River, Wyoming; Rhode, *Booms and Busts*, 96; "Immediate Action!", *Rock Springs Independent*, July 20, 1906, 1; "Grant No License," *Rock Springs Independent*, August 3, 1906, 1.

⁹ "The House That Jack Built, Up to Date," *Rock Springs Miner*, July 25, 1914, 1; "Society Vaudeville Is a Great Success," *Rock Springs Miner*, April 29, 1916, 1; "Christian Scientist Church," n.d., Folder "Churches—Christian Science," Vertical File, Sweetwater County Historical Museum, Green River, Wyoming, 9D; "The Rock Springs Methodist Church: 70th Anniversary—1961, A History of the Church," Rock Springs Methodist Church, Rock Springs, Wyoming, 1961, Folder "Churches—Methodist," Vertical File, Sweetwater County Historical Museum, Green River, Wyoming, 9D.

Local Methodists, despite a staggering debt load during the era, established a settlement house under deaconesses Elsie Harrison and Nettie Bell.¹⁰

This religious heterogeneity certainly attested to the vibrantly diverse community patterns in town, although sometimes with problematic characteristics. For example, vestiges of conflict between the increasing Roman Catholic population and Protestant-controlled institutions surfaced, as attested by a 1905 *Miner* editorial that sought to defend itself against charges of anti-Catholic bias in reporting on the temperance activities of Fathers Walsh and Delahunty.¹¹ Nevertheless, local journalists celebrated religious life, including the return of the Salvation Army to town, the Catholic capture of the “golden chalice” over a contingent from the state capital, the organization of a new Baptist church, and the construction of a new Methodist church. A late-1913 *Rocket* article evidenced the diversity of religious institutions in Rock Springs. Featured were the Congregationalists, Baptists, Catholics, Episcopalians, Finnish Lutherans, Methodists, and Latter-Day Saints, which, when one considers smaller meetings of African American Baptists, Jews, Orthodox Christians, Hindus, Muslims, Shinto, Joss House, and other religious practitioners, represented a part of the wider spiritual community in prewar Rock Springs.¹²

¹⁰ “The Rock Springs Methodist Church, 7; Christine Confer, “A History of the Methodist Religion, Rock Springs, Wyoming, 1875-1989,” 1989, Sweetwater County History Collection, Hay Library, Western Wyoming Community College, 8-9.

¹¹ “No Offense Intended,” *Rock Springs Miner*, April 8, 1905, 2.

¹² “The Salvation Army,” *Rock Springs Miner*, April 20, 1907, 2; “Rock Springs Wins Chalice,” *Rock Springs Rocket*, October 23, 1908, 1; “Baptist Church Organized,” *Rock Springs Rocket*, February 24, 1911, 1; “Methodists To Build Up-to-Date Edifice,”

Construction of municipal community not only involved business enterprise, labor, moral reform campaigns, and religious organizations but also local politics. Politics during the 1910s witnessed ongoing competition between the major parties, although in Rock Springs Republicans tended to win in local elections. G.O.P. businessmen E.S. Lauzer and J. H. Anderson triumphed in mayoral elections. The major parties, however, were not the only political players in Rock Springs. The Women's Christian Temperance Union represented a strong reformist tradition, especially among local Protestants, and Wyoming women had, of course, been voting since 1869. The Socialists, despite their minority status, nominated and supported candidates on municipal and statewide tickets. By the mid-1910s, however, Democratic candidates enjoyed greater success locally. Mrs. Thomas S. Taliaferro proved a most popular Democratic hostess, enjoying, along with her attorney husband, key connections with state politicians. And by 1916, even the local paper endorsed the Democratic ticket.¹³

Rock Springs Rocket, May 9, 1913, 1; "Our Churches," *Rock Springs Rocket*, December 19, 1913, 9.

¹³ "J. H. Anderson Re-Elected Mayor with a Plurality of Fourteen Votes," *Rock Springs Rocket*, May 15, 1914, 1; "Unofficial Election Returns, of Vote Cast Tuesday, November 3, 1914, Sweetwater County, Wyoming," *Rocket Springs Rocket*, November 6, 1914, 6; "E.S. Lauzer Elected Mayor Gilmore and Love Councilmen," *Rock Springs Rocket*, May 12, 1916, 1; "Sweetwater County Official Returns," *Rock Springs Rocket*, November 17, 1916, 8; "W.C.T.U. Holds Election of Officers," *Rock Springs Rocket*, November 7, 1914, 1; "Socialists Nominate a City Ticket," *Rock Springs Miner*, May 6, 1916, 1; "Mrs. Taliaferro Gives Banquet to Democratic Club," *Rock Springs Rocket*, November 17, 1916, 1; "Woman's Democratic League Begins Activities to Create Interest in Party," *Rock Springs Rocket*, April 24, 1914, 1; "First Woman's Political Meeting Held in Rock Springs on Wednesday Evening," *Rock Springs Miner*, October

While national politics engaged local political loyalties, more immediate concerns intrigued Rock Springs residents. While the “hell-on-wheels” days of railroad construction were long past, Rock Springs continued to experience the legacies of frontier lawlessness and would do so throughout the twentieth century. The 1914 trial of Edward Snyder evidenced local fears over his alleged involvement in the so-called white slave trade, which reflected continuing public concerns with the local brothels, although prostitution remained quite open throughout much of the post-war period. Vice was not the only local danger. One year later, also in the spring, a death from diphtheria occasioned a medical quarantine of several homes. Not only nature but also local business could prove perilous. UPCC was notoriously profligate in managing its explosives. In 1914, seven-year-old Frank Berek, found a dynamite cap near No. 2 Mine and began hammering it with a stone. After it exploded, young Frank lost the sight of his left eye and had the thumb, index, and middle fingers of his left hand amputated.¹⁴

Such persistent frontier conditions in urbanizing Rock Springs mandated institutional development. Throughout the Progressive period, local residents sought to create institutions capable of dealing with municipal exigencies. In

14, 1916, 1; “Why Should the Voter Change Wilson for Hughes When We Are So Prosperous,” *Rock Springs Rocket*, October 6, 1916, 1.

¹⁴ “Snyder Convicted of White Slavery,” *Rock Springs Miner*, November 28, 1914, 1; “Quarantine Declared Against Diphtheria,” *Rock Springs Miner*, March 18, 1915, 1; “All Rock Springs Schools, Churches and Theaters Ordered closed Today,” *Rock Springs Rocket*, March 12, 1915, 1; “Dynamite Cap Explodes in Hands of Small Boy,” *Rock Springs Adviser-News*, July 23, 1914, 1.

1904, the fire department began the transition from volunteer to professional status with upgraded equipment. The opening of a public library caused a flurry of debate early in the century. Some residents undoubtedly agreed with Mr. Dooley's lament that such a building had "all the dead authors inside, and outside all the living authors wishing they were dead."¹⁵ Yet contributions by drugstore entrepreneur R. L. Newman and then an endowment by the Carnegie Foundation guaranteed library services, much to the delight of local teachers and bibliophiles. Population growth not only demanded local library services but also an upgrading of the post office.¹⁶

Health care required the most attention in the prewar years, especially since Wyoming politicians had allotted the first state hospital to Rock Springs as the municipality's share of state institutions doled out to major cities. This facility, Rock Springs Miners' Hospital, served multitudinous functions. In 1902, for example, county physician Harvey Reed reported that the hospital had treated forty-two pauper patients of whom twenty-nine were discharged as recovered convalescent or recovered, five had died, seven were currently patients, and one had run away. The hospital was at once both boast and bane locally. Let Cheyenne, Laramie, and Rawlins house, respectively, the state capital, the

¹⁵ Louis R. Harlan, *Booker T. Washington: Volume 11—The Wizard of Tuskegee, 1901-1915* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University, 1986), 133.

¹⁶ "Firemen in Rock Springs Then and Now," *UPCC Employees' Magazine* 5 (February 1928), 70; Rhode notes that longtime Rock Springs teacher Mary Clark left the school system to oversee the public library for three decades (*Booms and Busts*, 104).

university, and the prison; Rock Springs had the state hospital. But the first building, constructed in 1894, had burned in 1897, occasioning the use of a newly built city hall as a temporary medical center until the new hospital opened. And contentious state politics constantly underfunded the rebuilt facility. Nevertheless, local residents believed that their share of state largesse—the hospital—reflected the status of a “first-class city,” one that could only be enhanced by public and private cooperation.¹⁷

Beginnings of Municipal Construction

Despite significant building projects, such as the hospital, city hall, and the library, many newcomers to Rock Springs often noted the dingy, desolate appearance of the town. By the mid-1910s, residents agitated for a more salubrious city environment. A continuing sense of local aggravation existed between the city and UP water companies. A 1915 *Rocket* headline declared: “Water Company Does Not Care to Furnish City with

¹⁷ Reed, Harvey, M.D., County Physician for the Eastern District of Sweetwater County, Report to the Board of County Commissioners,” January 2, 1903, “Sweetwater County and Wyoming,” Vertical File, Sweetwater County Historical Museum, Green River, Wyoming, 1; “New Pest House,” *Rock Springs Miner*, March 5, 1903, 4; [Editorial], *Rock Springs Miner*, August 20, 1908, 4; “The Hospital Situation’ and “Is the Hospital a Burden to the Taxpayer,” *Rock Springs Miner*, August 26, 1904, 2; “The Wyoming General Hospital,” *Rock Springs Miner*, August 18, 1904, 1; “The State Board of Health and Rock Springs,” *Rock Springs Miner*, May 20, 1905, 2; “The Sage Brush Commotion,” *Rock Springs Miner*, September 16, 1905, 2; “City May Secure Carnegie Library,” *Rock Springs Rocket*, November 28, 1907, 1; “Will Have a Carnegie Library,” *Rock Springs Rocket*, February 6, 1908, 1.

Water.”¹⁸ Not only did UP water policy impact infrastructure development and municipal sanitation, it also affected local aesthetics. The *Rocket* accused a paltry water supply of preventing green lawns and luscious gardens. The lack of “green space,” however, did not preclude efforts at beautification. In 1914, the *Adviser-News* urged residents to show their pride in their community by cleaning up waste and rubbish and painting buildings. The newspaper claimed, “It is natural for visitors to size up a town by appearances. A dirty, rusty town appeals to nobody, and we must keep Rock Springs from such unsightliness as will cause people to think we are on the down grade.”¹⁹ The desire to beautify the town also pushed local authorities to build playgrounds. City officials also increasingly sought to improve law enforcement. The *Miner* reported more vigorous efforts to police illegal gaming and illicit liquor sales, especially at the brothels.²⁰

The physical environment of Rock Springs also attested to both its frontier character as well as its ethno-racial diversity. The prewar years, as Lawrence A. Cardoso shows, represented increasing statewide nativism, which reflected national tendencies. During this period, the Chinese population declined significantly. For example, in 1913,

¹⁸ “Water Company Does Not Care to Furnish City with Water,” *Rock Springs Rocket*, December 17, 1915, 1.

¹⁹ “Clean Up and Paint Up,” *Rock Springs Adviser-News*, April 30, 1914, 2; “Newman’s Public Library,” *Rock Springs Miner*, March 19, 1903, 4; “Council Proceedings,” *Rock Springs Rocket*, April 9, 1903, 1; “Public Library,” *Rock Springs Miner*, April 15, 1905, 3; “Rock Springs Post Office,” *Rock Springs Rocket*, January 22, 1903, 1.

²⁰ “If You Are Figuring on Having a Lawn at Any Price Asked—Forget It,” *Rock Springs Rocket*, May 21, 1915, 1; “Playgrounds a Reality,” *Rock Springs Rocket*, October 23, 1914, 1; “Marshals Get Busy with Gamblers,” *Rock Springs Miner*, March 18, 1916, 1; “Mayor and Liquor Men Hold Meeting,” *Rock Springs Miner*, July 15, 1916, 1.

the legendary dragon first failed to appear during the Chinese New Year's parade, for too few hardy Chinese remained in town to handle its bulk. Public concern over Chinese activities, however, continued throughout the period. The *Miner*, for instance, featured a front-page story in late summer 1914 on "Chinamen Tom" Kwong and Liu Hung Wah, allegedly connected with the opium trade. Also, before the war, Italian criminal activities became a source of news. In 1913, successful entrepreneur and municipal leader John Bertagnolli, along with his brother Phillip, received an extortion note attributed to the Black Hand. These incidents prefigured disturbing ethno-racial incidents to come during the First World War.²¹

This period also witnessed growing tensions between UPCC and independent entrepreneurs, who increasingly controlled local government. Robert Rhode notes that "[t]he relationship between the town and the Union Pacific Railroad and its subsidiary companies was an uneasy one that swung like a pendulum between angry conflict and friendly cooperation. Without the company the town would not exist; but the town wanted freedom to grow up and make decisions on its own."²² Rhode maintains that UP's will generally prevailed, but, when considering capital-labor relations, municipal development, and independent organizational evolution in the early twentieth century,

²¹ Lawrence A. Cardoso, "Nativism in Wyoming 1868 to 1930: Changing Perceptions of Foreign Immigrants," *Annals of Wyoming* 58 (Fall 1986): 27. For the national context, see Philip Perlmuter, *Divided We Fall: A History of Ethnic, Religious, and Racial Prejudice in America* (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1992), 208-209.

See also Rhode, *Booms and Busts*, 99, 121; "Chinamen Charged with Making Opium," *Rock Springs Miner*, August 29, 1914, 1.

²² Rhode, *Booms and Busts*, 97.

non-UP interests increasingly held their own. In the years before the Great War, the principal concerns included Bitter Creek's flooding and menace to sanitation, the need to move the central viaduct and provide a crossing at K Street, and the threat of mine subsidence. Local officials could not easily redress such problems. However, they became increasingly a part of an ongoing civic discourse, which progressive municipal leaders, such as Mayor Christian Peter Bunning, would address in the postwar years.²³

Undoubtedly, UP and its interests heavily influenced local economic life during the prewar period; however, enough peripheral socioeconomic activity developed that ensured independent municipal community after the coal boom gave out thirty years later. As has been noted, the state legislature acknowledged Rock Springs' statewide significance years before by granting it the first state hospital. In 1908, President Roosevelt signed the Omnibus Public Building Bill, which guaranteed Rock Springs a new federal building. The building project represented a point of pride to local residents. Ironically, the bill itself was promoted assiduously by Senator Francis Warren, the one-

²³ See Rhode, *Booms and Busts*, 86-89; "Want Viaduct Removed and Ask for Crossing," *Rock Springs Rocket*, October 31, 1911, 1; "Does Not Look Encouraging," *Rock Springs Rocket*, March 15, 1912, 1; "Letter Regarding Viaduct," *Rock Springs Rocket*, August 19, 1912, 1; "Boy Killed on U. P. Crossing," *Rock Springs Rocket*, November 1, 1912, 1; "Hurt at Railroad Crossing," *Rock Springs Rocket*, November 15, 1912, 1; "Crossing Is Safe-Guarded," *Rock Springs Rocket*, December 20, 1912, 1; "Mayor George Ossleton Reviews City's Subsidence History," *City of Rock Springs Newsletter* II (June 1987): 1, 8, Folder—"Rock Springs Subsidence," Vertical Files, Sweetwater County Historical Museum, Green River, Wyoming.

time territorial governor whose conduct during the 1885 massacre was roundly disparaged by most Rock Springs residents.²⁴

Municipal development during the period also embraced the turn-of-the-century transportation revolution. While primarily a railroad town, Rock Springs could not resist the arrival of the horseless carriage. Emblematic of the nexus between technological development and civic pride, the Good Roads Convention became a local topic of interest. In 1905, a *Rock Springs Miner* editorial noted: "The good roads movement comes into Wyoming at a juncture which demands improved conditions in the growing cities on the U.P. line. These experts are prepared to outline and illustrate scientific construction of city streets, sidewalks, sewage, drainage, and their methods emphasize the economical and permanent improvement of road and street construction so that the people's money will show good result."²⁵ Despite these early efforts, Rock Springs residents continued to debate the efficacy of a modern automobile transit system. UP played a dilatory role in such discussions. However, local interests, especially the newspapers and consumers buying the new automobiles, continued to call for improved roads in town and throughout the county.²⁶

²⁴ "Bill for \$85,000 Appropriation for Federal Building Becomes a Law," *Rock Springs Rocket*, June 4, 1908, 1; "Federal Building Started," *Rock Springs Rocket*, April 12, 1912, 1.

²⁵ "The Good Roads Convention," *Rock Springs Miner*, August 26, 1905, 2.

²⁶ "Good Roads Convention," *Rock Springs Miner*, September 2, 1905, 1; "Net at City on Wednesday Evening," *Rock Springs Rocket*, April 30, 1909, 1; "May Pave Main Streets," *Rock Springs Rocket*, March 22, 1912, 1; "Sweetwater County Autoists Asleep," *Rock Springs Rocket*, April 26, 1912, 1; Rhode, *Booms and Busts*, 100-101.

Despite efforts to provide modern sidewalks, passable roads, clean water, and incandescent lighting, until Rock Springs authorities could control the annual flooding of Bitter Creek the town would continue to appear a frontier outpost. Newspaper accounts for the next few years recounted the pestilence of Bitter Creek. Not only did the waterway fail to provide potable water, but its regular spring flooding destroyed workers' homes and businessmen's properties. A 1914 seasonal flood left the cellars of numerous homes filled with mud and water. On one occasion, the annual spring floodwaters afforded Lettie Tresp the opportunity to drown herself.²⁷ Most perplexingly, modern engineering techniques could have prevented the seasonal predations of Bitter Creek, but corporate interests and municipal policies failed to perceive that control of Bitter Creek was essential to municipal modernity. This failure reflected the persistent frontier ethos of the community, as miners and other residents simply accepted the natural surroundings as they appeared. Yet the coming of disparate groups and a prevailing progressive temper exerted unbearable pressure on local leaders and their constituents to envision a better future.²⁸

Perhaps few could have conceived that municipal modernization would also embrace Americanization, but public schools in Rock Springs, as elsewhere in the

²⁷ "Worst Flood Ever Known in This District Leaves Ruin in Its Wake," *Rock Spring Rocket*, July 31, 1914, 1; "Despondent Because of Ill Health Woman Leaps into Bitter Creek," *Rock Springs Rocket*, April 10, 1914, 1; "Rock Springs Swept by Raging Torrents on Tuesday Night—Thousands of Dollars Damage," *Rock Springs Miner*, July 31, 1915, 1.

²⁸ Quoted in Rhode, *Booms and Busts*, 85-9; "Cloud Burst Sunday," *Rock Springs Miner*, August 25, 1906, 3; "Flood Waters Visit Our City," *Rock Springs Rocket*, July 30, 1908, 1; "City Schools Are Closed," *Rock Springs Rocket*, Mary 20, 1901, 1.

country, found themselves pushing assimilationist values. Political leaders and the public expected schools were to facilitate homogenization into capitalist, democratic, and Euroamerican ideals largely through language, civics, and vocational education programs. The local school system began in the early 1880s with an emphasis on primary school instruction. Local women carried out the bulk of instruction and administrative oversight in the early days. However, the growth of the school system proved an attractive draw to both male professional educators and politicians interested in serving on the county school board. One indicator of local school expansion was student enrollment, which showed between 1880 and 1913 an increase of students in Rock Springs schools of over 400%.²⁹

For the most part, the prewar educational history of Rock Springs represented an emphasis on progress, citizenship studies, and institution building. However, some difficulties did arise, reflecting the nature of municipal development. First, overcrowding became a salient issue for voters. Second, because teachers tended to be local residents, the community identified intensely with pedagogues. Third, because of increasing immigration from central and southern Europe, some controversy over the role of religion, evincing Protestant-Catholic antagonisms, occasionally surfaced. Thus, while the school system ideally represented the progressive and inclusive nature of community

²⁹ "The Early History of Schools in Rock Springs," *Rock Springs Rocket*, December 19, 1913, 1.

life in Rock Springs, it also mirrored material and cultural accommodations reflective of local demographics.³⁰

Perhaps the most positive prewar municipal development was the dedication of a new, larger high school building in early 1916, with more classroom space and improved facilities for domestic sciences and industrial arts. A high school represented not only community permanence but a fundamental commitment to progress. It epitomized the inclusivity of Rock Springs since all races were accepted, all classes were welcomed, and all citizens expected the institution to turn out patriotic American citizens (as discussed more fully in the next section), especially as the nation entered a global war.³¹

Beyond public institutional culture, residents of Rock Springs sought various means of interconnecting some of their diverse ethnic, racial, religious, and class communities. Dee Garceau notes the important role of Rock Springs kinship regardless of the lack of discernible ethnic neighborhoods, yet organizational community also played a key role in cementing community bonds. Rock Springs witnessed the proliferation of

³⁰ Ibid.; Clara Wisniewski, "School Days," in Barbara Smith, ed., *Rock Springs Stories* (Rock Springs: Adult Writers Project/Western Wyoming Community College, 1991), 29; "The Rock Springs Schools," *Rock Springs Miner*, September 17, 1903, 1; "Superintendent's Report," *Rock Springs Miner*, February 25, 1904, 3; "The School Election," *Rock Springs Miner*, May 6, 1905, 2; "The Rock Springs School," *Rock Springs Miner*, February 17, 1906, 1; "Twenty-Second Annual Teachers' Institute," *Rock Springs Rocket*, May 14, 1909, 1; "1911 Commencement," *Rock Springs Rocket*, May 26, 1911, 1; "New High School Building Assured," *Rock Springs Rocket*, October 11, 1912, 1; "Miss Jones Remembered by Students," *Rock Springs Rocket*, December 20, 1912, 1; "School Rooms Over Crowded Says the Board of Directors," *Rock Springs Rocket*, May 2, 1913, 1.

³¹ "High School Building Ready for Opening," *Rock Springs Rocket*, January 21, 1916, 1; "Entire Town Represented at Dedication of New High School," *Rock Springs Miner*, February 4, 1916, 1.

traditional fraternal organizations, such as the Masons and Knights of Pythias, yet other groups, such as the Pioneer Club of Sweetwater County, chartered in 1905, represented an important link with regional culture, reflecting the frontier ethos that local mythopoeism sought to rekindle. Other organizational efforts during the prewar years included the Elks, Searchlight Club, Caledonians, Odd Fellows, Maccabees and the Lady Maccabees, Owls, Eagles, Joy Club, High Five Club, Lyric Theater, Ladies' Relief Society, Whist Club, Saxophone Band and local orchestra, and Women's Christian Temperance Union, among others. Clearly, the local population could support and nurture a diversity of clubs and organizations. Certainly, these groups, especially in the prewar years, drew most heavily from northern and western European and native-born whites. However, intermarriage and networked business, political, and organizational ties promised greater heterogeneity. Asian American and African American residents remained outside these organizational ties. However, fraternal and other groups offered opportunities for many Euroamerican residents to cross ethnic boundaries, as well as for the municipality to promote itself as a beehive of progress among residents of the state as Rock Springs attracted its fair share of organizational conventions during the period.³²

³² Garceau, *"The Important Things of Life,"* 52; Rhode, *Booms and Busts*, 95; "History of Pioneer Club of Sweetwater County, Wyoming," in Mary A. Clark, "Incidents of Pioneer Days in Rock Springs," Sweetwater County, March 12, 1936, Wyoming State Archives, Cheyenne, Wyoming, 1-2; "B.P.O.E.," Folder "Fraternal & Civic Organizations," Vertical File, Sweetwater County Historical Museum, Green River, Wyoming, 1; "The Maccabees," *Rock Springs Independent*, June 3, 1905, 1; "The Joy Club," *Rock Springs Independent*, June 3, 1905, 1; "Searchlight Club," *Rock Springs Rocket*, February 19, 1909, 1; "Lyric Theater," *Rock Springs Rocket*, March 11, 1910, 1; "Ladies' Relief Society Anniversary," *Rock Springs Rocket*, March 11, 1910, 1; "High Five Club," *Rock Springs Rocket*, March 11, 1910, 1; "The Ladies of the Maccabees," *Rock Springs Independent*, October 2, 1902, 1; "Whist Club Meets," *Rock Springs*

While local organizations provided entertainment and leisure to Rock Springs residents and inhabitants of outlying coal camps, other venues served similar purposes. Rhode notes that “[p]eople from the outlying camps frequently came to Rock Springs for shopping and entertainment, which would include shows by traveling troupes that came through on the railroad and stopped for one-night stands at the Grant Opera House, later renamed the Union Opera House when the unions acquired the building on North Front.”³³ The historian also recalls motion pictures, a small zoo, fraternal picnics, operas, prizefights, and dances among the local attractions. Local news accounts provide insight into these and other cultural fare. St. Valentine’s Day of 1903 witnessed a fancy dress ball at the opera house. Two years later, the great Floto Show brought the circus to town. Various theatrical fare, including the renowned Robert Downing as “The Gladiator” and a rendition of Wagner’s “Parsifal,” entertained local audiences. Yet Rock Springs residents imbibed not only theatrical fare but also popular culture, such as the “ocean-to-ocean auto racers” who coursed through the nearby desert in 1909.³⁴

Holiday celebrations also provided opportunities for expressing inter- and intra-group community ties as well as providing means whereby kinship and ethnic groups

Rocket, April 8, 1910, 1; “Orchestra Reorganized,” *Rock Springs Rocket*, September 18, 1908, 1; “Saxophone Band Returns,” *Rock Springs Miner*, July 23, 1903, 1; [W.C.T.U Will Meet], *Rock Springs Rocket*, September 22, 1911, 1; “Fraternal Organizations Gather Many in the Fold at Rock Springs” *Rock Springs Rocket*, January 9, 1908, 1.

³³ Rhode, *Booms and Busts*, 95.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 95; “The Fancy Dress Ball,” *Rock Springs Miner*, February 19, 1903, 1; “Big Circus Coming,” *Rock Springs Miner*, June 3, 1905, 1; “Theatrical,” *Rock Springs Miner*, January 29, 1903, 1; “Best Opera of the Season,” *Rock Springs Rocket*, October 30, 1903, 1; “Ocean-to-Ocean Auto Racers Here,” *Rock Springs Rocket*, June 18, 1909, 1.

from Green River and surrounding coal camps could connect with residents of Rock Springs on a semiregular basis. Summertime usually meant picnics. Local Swedish residents enjoyed outings at Kent's Ranch, while Finns picnicked along the Green River. The traditional summer holidays—Memorial Day, Independence Day, and Labor Day—included various activities, some national in observation, such as fireworks, and others more regional, such as the rodeo. In the spring, Eight-Hour Day celebrated the rights and aspirations of Wyoming coal miners and was nearly as popular in Rock Springs, where not only miners but “all crafts of labor” were invited to join in the festivities.³⁵ Other holidays, such as Halloween and Christmas, allowed residents of the diverse communities to celebrate together, although, of course, discrete ethnic groups continued their own unique celebrations, especially during religious holidays, and racial boundaries largely precluded whites and non-whites from significant interaction.³⁶

³⁵ “Celebrating Eight Hour Day,” *Rock Springs Rocket*, March 29, 1912.

³⁶ Rhode, *Booms and Busts*, 91, 93; “First Labor Day Celebration,” *Rock Springs Rocket*, September 7, 1907, 1; “Labor Day, 1912, Rock Springs, Wyoming,” Rock Springs, 1912, 68-123-4, Photograph Collection, Folder A18—“Rock Springs Business Exteriors,” Sweetwater County Historical Museum, Green River, Wyoming; “4th of July Celebration,” *Rock Springs Miner*, July 9, 1903, 1; “\$3,000 in Prizes and Two Days Celebration at Rock Springs, 3-4,” *Rock Springs Rocket*, July 2, 1908, 1; “Hallowe’en Observed,” *Rock Springs Independent*, November 3, 1905, 3; “Christmas Is Observed in Rock Springs,” *Rock Springs Rocket*, December 26, 1913, 1.

Conclusion

The decade and a half before the Great War proved crucial in the development of municipal community in Rock Springs. UPCC appeared relatively healthy and expanded efforts in occupational safety with the creation of a new office of Safety Director. The United Mine Workers weathered initial crises to become a permanent presence in Sweetwater County coal mines. Local growth meant not only greater employment opportunity, more business enterprise, and reform politics, but increased crime, a more heterogeneous population, and thriving vice industries. The portents for a turbulent future were rife. Americanization would attempt to address the perceived problems of extreme heterogeneity. War propaganda and hyperpatriotism roiled ethno-racial relations (as seen in the next chapter). Differing municipal agendas pitted city government against UPCC. Local entrepreneurial culture played an increasingly important role in the development of local economics and politics. And all of the aforementioned coalesced into increasingly mythopoeic attempts to define the Rock Springs experience. The result was, at once, at variance with the xenophobic trends of the Tribal Twenties and symptomatic of the boosteristic impulse of Babbitt's America.³⁷

³⁷ UPCC, *History Union Pacific Coal Mines*, 246; Wolff, *Industrializing the Rockies*, 221-223; Rhode, *Booms and Busts*, 95-96.

PART 3
THE CONSTRUCTION OF MUNICIPAL COMMUNITY,
1914-1929

CHAPTER EIGHT

CONSTRUCTING THE MUNICIPAL COMMUNITY, 1914-1929

Introduction

The years from the Great War to the Great Depression embodied both continuity and change for Rock Springs. Ethno-racial diversity predominated locally, although the Chinese population virtually disappeared while Mexican and African American residents increasingly found work in the mines. Cultural heterogeneity dominated UPCC ranks, although laborers increasingly discovered common interests in the local labor organizations. While UPCC remained the leading business interest in town and an influential voice in municipal affairs, it could never dictate local policies. Under the leadership of independent capitalists such as Mayor Peter Christian Bunning, a German-born immigrant,¹ the municipal community navigated the shoals of robust Americanization and idiosyncratic western values. Schools taught immigrant children English and American lore while foreign-born politicians winked at Prohibition enforcement that sheltered a vibrant saloon culture both frontier and European in orientation. Out of this volatile mix would eventually evolve a mythopoeic pageantry in

¹ UPCC, *History of Union Pacific Coal Mines*, devotes an entire chapter to Bunning, who went from mine worker to entrepreneur to politician in Rock Springs (220-227).

which local residents sought to articulate the meaning of their unique historical experiences.²

The Ethno-Racial Matrix of Rock Springs, 1913-1929

The end of the First World War revitalized local festive culture in Rock Springs. For Labor Day in 1919, traditionally one of the town's most popular holidays, Rock Springs inhabitants combined customary celebrations with special tributes for the veterans. The two-day celebration began with a parade featuring two bands and marching veterans. Sunday's activities included games such as quoits, *bocco bollo*, baseball, and football, as well as UPCC's annual First Aid contest. A second parade followed on Monday morning, and later that day, participants vied for ribbons in numerous races and a variety of competitions. This local festive culture served to connect diverse community networks into a broader municipal community, expressing townspeople's fervent faith in both progress and community.³

Rock Springs' residents were not alone in facing material and cultural challenges after the Great War. In the postwar years, Americans struggled with questions of national identity and cultural diversity. Historians have argued about the socio-cultural contest of the New Era. William E. Leuchtenburg viewed the period as a quest for "normalcy,"

² Hendrickson, *Peopling the High Plains*, 169-194.

³ "Homecoming and Labor Day Celebration a Big Success," *Rock Springs Rocket*, September 5, 1919, 1.

during which the populace "yearned for release from the attacks of the reformers and the demands they made for altruism and self-sacrifice."⁴ John Higham saw the "Tribal Twenties" as characterized by not only the persistence of prewar nativism but also the "loss of the spirit of confidence characteristic of the war years."⁵ Ellis W. Hawley perceived the "New Era" as neither "the Indian summer of an outmoded order or even ... the seedtime of [New Deal reforms] ... but rather ... the premature spring of the kind of modern capitalism that would take shape in the America of the 1940s and 1950s."⁶ "Nervous Decade," "Roaring Twenties," or "Jazz Age," the events of the 1920s in their complexity and dynamism seem to defy neat categorization. In fact, in Wyoming, an influential historian ascribes the period 1920-1939 as the "Depression Years" because of the economic crises in agriculture and mining.⁷ Yet Rock Springs, largely because of its own socio-cultural currents and the pressures of local municipal development, experienced the troubled economics of the state in unique ways.

The question of how to cope with the continuing legacies of heightened nationalism brought on by the war proved to be one of the most pressing issues for local residents. Like other American communities during the war years, Rock Springs

⁴ William E. Leuchtenburg, *The Perils of Prosperity, 1914-1932* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), 84.

⁵ John Higham, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860-1925* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2002), 270.

⁶ Ellis W. Hawley, *The Great War and the Search for a Modern Order: A History of the American People and Their Institutions, 1917-1933* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1979), vi.

⁷ Larson, *History*, 411-446.

experienced excessive patriotism and Americanization ideologies. Large public gatherings dovetailed with the local festive culture to create a cauldron of cultural cross-purposes. From April 1917 through the postwar homecomings, Rock Springs hosted a variety of public demonstrations to boost war fervor and enforce community conformity. An early meeting in May 1917 witnessed what the *Rock Springs Rocket* called the "largest crowd" ever gathered in town for any occasion. In October of that same year, the Grand Theater—decorated extravagantly with American flags—hosted a "Liberty Day" meeting, where local businessman T. S. Taliaferro, Jr., proclaimed: "It is not my purpose to create any feeling of race, nationality, or political ideas, but to unify God's people. It is far from my intention to say anything to lead you to believe that the United States or the Government or the administration has any antipathy toward any race of people."⁸ Such noble words certainly reflected the stated desires of the municipal community, but, like much of the public ritual in Rock Springs, these sentiments expressed more myth than reality. The historical experience of the war years suggests that persistent ethnocentric tendencies, echoing back to the Chinese Massacre, lurked beneath the harmonious municipal veneer of the postwar years.⁹

⁸ "Enthusiastic 'Liberty Day' Meeting Hon. T. S. Taliaferro, Jr., Speaker," *Rock Springs Rocket*, October 26, 1917, 1.

⁹ See "Mass Meeting for the Patriotic Citizens," *Rock Springs Rocket*, April 6, 1917, 1; "Big Demonstration When Boys Departed," *Rock Springs Rocket*, May 13, 1917, 1; "Enthusiastic Patriotic Mass Meeting in Rock Springs Wednesday Night," *Rock Springs Rocket*, May 13, 1917, 1; "Enthusiastic 'Liberty Day' Meeting," *Rock Springs Rocket*; "Homecoming and Labor Day Celebration," *Rock Springs Rocket*, 1.

Opinion-shapers, especially newspapers, strove to promote inclusivity in the war effort. As early as August 1917, the *Rocket* reprinted an editorial from the *Wisconsin State Journal* arguing that by "fighting with us, [immigrants] will also be fighting for their native lands."¹⁰ Not content with merely exhorting all local inhabitants to do their part, the *Rocket* began attacking the German adversary. Two months after publishing an editorial proclaiming that American mothers "are soldiers, and brave ones too," the *Rocket* declared "Germany Hates Feminism" in an effort to anchor anti-German sentiments in a metaphorical defense of American womanhood. By spring 1918, the newspaper accelerated its attacks on Germans by applauding the work of Dr. M. A. Anderson to root out "Hun spies," proclaiming the "time has come to crush out the work of spy and traitors and pro-German sympathizers. They all belong to the same category."¹¹ Wartime propaganda perpetuated by the *Rocket* and public rituals allowed submerged ethno-racial tensions to surface, especially for German Americans. Working people willingly accepted their role as seen by the September 30, 1917, demonstration by Rock Springs Slovaks, who marched through town with placards proclaiming "United States Is in the War to Save Small Nations" and "We Are Ready to Live or Die for America," before gathering in Slovenski Dom for patriotic songs, speeches, and declarations.¹²

¹⁰ "The Alien and the Drafted Army," *Rock Springs Rocket*, August 31, 1917, 4.

¹¹ "Down with the Spies and the Traitors," *Rock Springs Rocket*, March 29, 1918, 1.

¹² See "Slovaks Hold Big Patriotic Demonstration Last Sunday—Big Parade," *Rock Springs Rocket*, October 5, 1917, 1; Gardner and Binkerhoff, *Historical Images*,

Local opinion-shapers, including various private and public interests, contributed to anti-German sentiment. In the spring of 1918, Rock Springs Deputy Marshal John Stoddard completed registration of alien enemies, although the *Rocket* lamented that the twenty aliens affected seemed a "small percent."¹³ The American Protective League appeared in Rock Springs five months later, and, while its initial focus was on violation of retail food codes, its announced vigil against all "disloyalty" heightened homefront tensions. Unsurprisingly, then, Rock Springs soon witnessed anti-German violence. In one case, Deputy Marshal Stoddard battered a German accused of resisting arrest following a disturbance aboard the train from Green River to Rock Springs. On another occasion, a crowd attacked a German immigrant accused of disloyal speech, resulting in the latter's arrest and conviction. Integrated into the larger ethno-racial history of Rock Springs during the late 1910s and 1920s, however, these incidents reveal the persistence of a deeply embedded ethnocentrism, which again suggests the importance of residents' ongoing attempts to construct a more harmonious municipal community.¹⁴

100; "Mothers Are Soldiers," *Rock Springs Rocket*, August 10, 1917, 4; "Germany Hates Feminism," *Rock Springs Rocket*, October 26, 1917, 3.

¹³ "Registration of Alien Enemies Finished," *Rock Springs Rocket*, February 15, 1918, 1.

¹⁴ "American Protective League Formed," *Rock Springs Rocket*, July 19, 1918, 1; "Obstreperous German," *Rock Springs Rocket*, April 27, 1917, 1; "Forgot It Was America," *Rock Springs Rocket*, April 12, 1918, 1. More notable than the anti-German acts themselves were the coverage accorded them by the *Rocket*. In the first incident, the newspaper called for the jailing of the accused for the duration of the war, making what on the surface appears a mere scrape with the law an issue of disloyalty. The *Rocket*, in the second case, simply noted that a "man who forgot he was not in Germany, suffered a good beating ... at the hands of loyal citizens when he insulted the flag.... Guess he will learn whose country he is living in."

Analysis of the larger ethno-racial history of Rock Springs, 1918-1929, requires an examination that extends beyond a superficial Euroamerican ethnic concord into the racially constructed borders in the town. While UPCC sought to integrate Euroamerican residential areas, racial enclaves persisted, such as "Chinatown," "Japtown," and "Nigger Town,"¹⁵ existed. Longtime resident Lettie Meacham recalls, "Black people would associate with white people but they had their own place. On Eight-Hour Day the blacks had a dance in one place while the whites had a dance in another. Nationalities were not discriminated against in Rock Springs. Dago (Italian), Bohunk (Hungarian), Limey (English) were terms used openly with no maliciousness."¹⁶ In fact, the very conception of no discrimination by "nationality" belies the racist undertones of community life in Rock Springs, because, after all, African Americans were by nationality "Americans" but still excluded by means of racial identity.¹⁷

¹⁵ Nigger Town also appears occasionally as "Colored Town."

¹⁶ Janie Allen, Oral History Interview with Lettie Meacham, Rock Springs, Wyoming, April 28, 1982, Western Wyoming Community College Library, Rock Springs, Wyoming, 3.

¹⁷ For comments on the cultural tolerance of the community, see, for example, L. Skaggs, Oral History Interview with Magdalena Elizabeth Anselmi Huntley, Rock Springs, Wyoming, December 12, 1989, Western Wyoming Community College Library, Rock Springs, Wyoming, 24; Kathy Smith, Oral History Interview with John B. Dickson, Rock Springs, Wyoming, December 14, 1982, Western Wyoming Community College Library, Rock Springs, Wyoming, 6; John F. Haughey, Oral History Interview with Elsie Cottrell, Rock Springs, Wyoming, April 17, 1985, Western Wyoming Community College Library, Rock Springs, Wyoming, 5; Chris Plant, Oral History Interview with George and Cora Berta, Rock Springs, Wyoming, February 6, 1981, Western Wyoming Community College Library, Rock Springs, Wyoming, 13.

These sentiments were also echoed, in part, by Rhode, *Booms and Busts*, 115, and more critically by Gardner and Flores, *Forgotten Frontier*, 109.

Segregated residential patterns partly reflected deep-seated cultural tensions; the subtext of residents' recollections provides additional evidence on the nature of ethno-racial relations. While generally averring that discrimination or intolerance did not exist, childhood memories of Rock Springs in the postwar years imply rigid racial boundaries. While admiring the annual presence of the Chinese dragon in New Year's celebrations, Rock Springs children frequently defiled the graves of recently interred Chinese by stealing food and various mementos left by the grieving. Most frequently, non-Euroamericans were exoticized -- "Tamale Joe," the longtime, sole Turk in town, and "Charlie the Chinaman," a cart peddler, representing two examples of this trend. Ethno-racial relations in Rock Springs evinced differentiation by "lightness" of skin color, which Rena Myrtle Ward Davis identified by recalling, "[W]hite children were allowed to associate with the Chinese but generally never associated with the blacks who kept to themselves."¹⁸ This separation did not result from the self-isolation of the latter, as an

For UPCC housing policy, see Gardner and Flores, *Forgotten Frontier*, 107-108; Rhode, *Booms and Busts*, 111-112, but for ethnically and racially stratified neighborhoods, see Ranae Evans, Oral History Interview with Ena Myrtle Ward Davis, Rock Springs, Wyoming, December 1983, Western Wyoming Community College Library, Rock Springs, Wyoming, 4; Bette Baughman, Oral History Interview with Mary Radosevich, Rock Springs, Wyoming, December 3, 1982, Western Wyoming Community College Library, Rock Springs, Wyoming, 2; Becky Budd, Oral History Interview with Art Rosatti, Rock Springs, Wyoming, December 2, 1983, Western Wyoming Community College Library, Rock Springs, Wyoming, 5-6.

¹⁸ Evans, Interview with Davis, 5.

examination of attitudes in Rock Springs shows, especially the ways newspapers highlighted racial differences.¹⁹

As a frontier mining town, Rock Springs witnessed a considerable degree of violence, but in explicating that violence for the public, the local newspaper highlighted non-Euroamerican involvement in distinctive and highly provocative ways. Lurid headlines such as "Mexican Found with a 'Sleepy Potion,'" "Dusky Spouse Was Haled [sic] Into Court," "\$10 Fine Slapped onto Mexican 'Peeping Tom,'" "Mexican Gang Is Broken Up," "Cold Blooded Murder at Superior, Negro Shoots and Kills White Man," "Dat Man Is a Awful Demon," "Darky Hits Chocolate Paramour," and "Young Negro Shoots Lopez" not only identified specific crimes with ethno-racial identities, which was not the case with Euroamerican crime, but propagated racist thinking. In these stories Latinos are referred to as "disciples of Obregon," a Latina was found to have "a

¹⁹ Ibid., 4; Maria Shaffer, Oral History Interview with Armand Kellog, Rock Springs, Wyoming, July 17, 1994, Western Wyoming Community College, Rock Springs, Wyoming, 2; Evonne Inks, Oral History Interview with Isabell Jane Huling, Rock Springs, Wyoming, April 25, 1985, Western Wyoming Community College Library, Rock Springs, Wyoming, 5-6; Bonnie Likwartz, Oral History Interview with Henry and Bernice Likwartz, Rock Springs, Wyoming, November 27, 1984, Western Wyoming Community College Library, Rock Springs, Wyoming, 3; Theresa Young, Oral History Interview with Paul Oblock, Rock Springs, Wyoming, June 14, 1983, Western Wyoming Community College Library, Rock Springs, Wyoming, 5.

An excellent example of racist subtext may be found in Joni Stainbrook, Oral History Interview with Mary Goleb Bogataj, Rock Springs, Wyoming, 1986, Western Wyoming Community College Library, Rock Springs, Wyoming, where Bogataj recalled, "One thing we kids used to do was if they had a Chinese funeral, we'd always wait until they left and then we'd go and raid it 'cause we got big oranges and apples, all kinds of candy." Stainbrook asked her interviewee whether or not the kids ever felt bad about the grave desecration, which the latter remarked, "No! That was the first time we ever had big oranges and that"(5). Bernice Likwartz recalls that her own mother would pilfer bowls of rice and rice wine from the Chinese gravesites (Likwartz Interview, 3).

complexion like a ripe olive," and another Latino was described as "the dusky son of Obregon." Stories concerning African Americans parodied dialects. The "dusky spouse" was alleged to have told a judge that when his wife "got stubborn, youah honah, I jest natchally snatched her in off the street thass all," while in a supposedly upbeat story an "ebony nabob" was recorded when ordering a meal in as stating, "Jess get about five dollars worth of simmered chicken in front of dis citizen quick as the Lawd will let you; and smothath it with Alabama gravy."²⁰ What was particularly dangerous about such racist stereotyping was that it fed upon and nurtured ethnocentrism by reinforcing racial boundaries and cultivated the potential for ethno-racial conflict.

Since the 1885 massacre, potentiality for racial violence simmered in Rock Springs. In 1915, Deputy Marshal Tom Harris died following a shootout during a failed burglary attempt at a Rock Springs saloon. Rafugia Angel, the perpetrator, described by local papers as belonging to the "cowardly race" of Mexicans, barely escaped a lynch

²⁰ See "Mexican Found with a 'Sleepy Potion'," *Rock Springs Rocket*, February 6, 1925 [incorrectly marked as January 30, 1925], 7; "Dusky Spouse Was Haled [sic] Into Court," *Rock Springs Rocket*, July 4, 1924, 2; "\$10 Fine Slapped onto Mexican 'Peeping Tom,'" *Rock Springs Rocket*, September 5, 1924, 1; "Mexican Gang Is Broken Up," *Rock Springs Rocket*, June 20, 1924, 1-2; "Cold Blooded Murder at Superior, Negro Shoots and Kills White Man," *Rock Springs Rocket*, July 1, 1921, 1; "Dat Man Is a Awful Demon," Darky Hits Chocolate Paramour; Draws 20 Long Days," *Rock Springs Rocket*, July 27, 1928, 7; "Young Negro Shoots Lopez," *Rock Springs Rocket*, October 8, 1926, 1; "Colored Man Says This Is Eldorado," *Rock Springs Rocket*, February 3, 1928, 5.

This type of racist profiling becomes especially evident when compared to the rare article characterizing the ethnicity of a Euroamerican, such as one piece that described playfully a bloody brawl involving miners at a boardinghouse as caused by "a Grecian subject, one of the star boarders" whose desire for peace and quiet after a day in the mines conflicted with a drinking bout then in progress, leading to that "great American outdoor sport of rough and tumble." See "And the Boys All Said 'Twas Most Lovely Evening," *Rock Springs Rocket*, August 1, 1924, 1.

mob when secreted out of town by car and rail to the county seat at Green River. Two years later, law enforcement authorities arrested a young African American male known only as Hamilton, recently released from the penitentiary in Rawlins, for allegedly attempting to sexually assault three Blairtown women. While waiting in a Rock Springs cell for his transfer to the county lockup, Hamilton fell prey to a terrorist mob that broke into the jail, bound the accused securely, and marched him off in the vicinity of the nearest UP bridge. According to reports in local newspapers, police found Hamilton's corpse the next morning with a piece of rope still tied about his neck and two bullet wounds in his head. One year later, nearly to the date of the Hamilton murder, residents in nearby Green River lynched an African American janitor accused of murdering a popular Euroamerican employee of the Union Pacific, hanging him from a lamp post near the railroad depot. This type of violence, when connected with other evidence of local xenophobia, ethnocentrism, and racialist profiling, suggests that the ideal of Rock Springs as "melting pot" simply glosses over historical reality and reflects more the mythopoeic orientation of a Euroamerican-dominated city that conceived of "toleration" narrowly.²¹

Racialist thinking and violence also appeared to threaten civil peace in Rock Springs on a more organized level during and after the war years. In Wyoming, the Ku Klux Klan "seemed to be concerned primarily with promoting Americanism, much in the

²¹ See Cole Harris, Oral History Interview with George Coleman, Rock Springs, Wyoming, March 18, 1986, Western Wyoming Community College Library, Rock Springs, Wyoming, 4-5; "Colored Man Is Lynched for Attempts to Assault Women," *Rock Springs Rocket*, December 15, 1917, 1; "Vigilantes, Sweetwater County," Vertical File, Sweetwater County Historical Museum, Sweetwater County (WY) Courthouse, Green River, Wyoming.

tradition of the One Hundred Percent American Clubs,"²² and Klan activity in Rock Springs proceeded along similar lines, although the organization's activities appeared to be more ethno-racial in tone than anti-Catholic or anti-radical. Longtime resident Art Rosatti recalls, "The Klan was quite active in Rock Springs, even though they spent most of their time burning crosses on [Camel's Head]."²³ At one point, Klan vigilantes attempted to punish a Slavic immigrant accused of killing a child while driving intoxicated. The local Klan's small numbers and the strong anti-Klan sentiments of the local Knights of Columbus who publicly countered Klan activities, however, reduced the group's influence in Rock Springs to rumors and shadowy intrigues.

Another example of ethnically identified violence alarmed residents more than the actions of the Klan. Several times during the 1910s, successful Tyrolean immigrant entrepreneurs John and Phillip Bertagnolli received extortion threats, and by 1917 a note demanding \$10,000 in cash bore the impression of the infamous "Black Hand" (or reputed Sicilian criminal gang *Le Mano Nero*). The Bertagnollis ignored the threats even

²² Hendrickson, *Peopling the High Plains*, 57.

²³ Budd, Rosatti Interview, 5-6. Interestingly, Rosatti appears to have confused the Hamilton lynching with Klan activity as well as creatively misconstruing the facts of the murder. He told his interviewer that the local Klan discovered that an African American was having an affair with a Euroamerican woman and then caught the man "and took him down to the bridge..., put a noose around his neck and threw him over. But the negro happened to have a strong neck and the rope broke and he landed on the ice below. Like a fool he got up and started to run and one of the KKK members shot him in the back." This type of confusion in memory is not atypical. Ann Buston Dominiske confused the Klan with the reputed "Black Hand" bombing of the Bertagnolli's house on J Street in 1919, as well as mistaking the facts of the Hamilton lynching. See Brenda Shepard, Oral History Interview with Ann Buston Dominiske, Rock Springs, Wyoming, April 17, 1984, Western Wyoming Community College, Rock Springs, Wyoming, 7.

after discovering an unexploded bomb outside one of their homes. Finally, after midnight, on January 29, 1919, a large section of the front wall of John Bertagnolli's house was shattered by a bomb. The incident frightened the Rock Springs community with the prospects of organized vice and violence rather than the spontaneous and individualistic truculence that generally reflected an enduring frontier ethos. Black Hand extortion threats aimed primarily against Italians and Tyroleans continued through the early 1920s.²⁴

Despite these ethno-racial tensions, denizens of Rock Springs frequently crossed cultural boundaries and in so doing sought to overcome many perceived obstacles to construct a greater sense of order and harmony. Inter-ethnic cooperation, especially among the Euroamericans, remained commonplace in Rock Springs during and after the Great War. The annual Danish picnic at nearby Kent Ranch regularly attracted townspeople of diverse ethnic identities. The Slovenian lodges not only utilized Slovenski Dom as their own headquarters but encouraged other ethnic organizations to use it, particularly Slavic ones. The Finns' meeting hall continued to welcome different organizations in Rock Springs, as well as the local Socialist Party. Parades, festivals, and

²⁴ See Don Langewisch, Oral History Interview with John and Evelyn Bozner, Rock Springs, Wyoming, n.d., Western Wyoming Community College Library, Rock Springs, Wyoming, 62-63; Rhode, *Booms and Busts*, 121, 123; "Youthful Black Hand in City," *Rock Springs Rocket*, November 2, 1923, 1. David Kathka, "The Italian Experience in Wyoming," concludes the following concerning the Bertagnolli incident: "May immigrants were convinced that the bombing was indeed the work of the notorious Black Hand Society and talked about it only behind closed doors. They maintained that the society successfully extorted money from a number of victims who quickly paid up and remained silent for fear of violent reprisals" (in Hendrickson, *Peopling the High Plains*, 81-82).

public events celebrated vary openly the diversity in the community. And it was not just in the festive culture of Rock Springs where ethno-racial borders proved permeable.

Economic activity also facilitated intercultural cooperation because of the need for broader access to goods and services; this was especially true if the laboring classes and middling entrepreneurs created mutually beneficial economic opportunities apart from UPCC.²⁵ At the point of commercial exchange, ethno-racial border crossing most visibly appeared in early twentieth-century Rock Springs. While economic patterns in Sweetwater County, including Rock Springs, showed significant ethnic solidarity in commercial enterprise, as shown by Dee Garceau, both geographical isolation and the threat of corporate domination of the market demanded that local consumers and merchants operate more inclusively. Longtime resident Art Rosatti recalled that some local businesses in the first few decades of the century posted signs forbidding African Americans from trading there, but he also recalled that Dick Helm, an African American barber, enjoyed substantial patronage from Euroamericans in the town. Other residents remembered that the Chinese community after the massacre remained isolated spatially

²⁵ See Rhode, *Booms and Busts*, 115; A. Dudley Gardner, Oral History Interview with Celia Gatti, Rock Springs, Wyoming, July 13, 1989, Western Wyoming Community College Department of History and Archeology, 3, 16; Barbara Allen Bogart, Oral History Interview with Tony Corona, Denver Colorado, October 7, 1995, Sweetwater County Historical Museum, Ethnic Music in Sweetwater County Oral History Collection, Sweetwater County Courthouse, Green River, Wyoming, 7; "Slovaks Hold Big Patriotic Demonstration," *Rocket*, October 5, 1917; Barbara Allen Bogart, Oral History Interview with Archie Piirainen, Rock Springs, Wyoming, August 31, 1995, Sweetwater County Historical Museum, Ethnic Music in Sweetwater County Oral History Collection, Sweetwater County Courthouse, Green River, Wyoming, 3; "Artist from Slovenia Delights Many in Song Recital Slovenski Dom," *Rock Springs Rocket*, January 25, 1919, 3; "Finn Picnic Here Saturday-Sunday," *Rock Springs Rocket*, June 22, 1923, 6; Inks, 6.

and culturally from the Euroamerican community. Yet, while Chinatown had its own stores, Chinese also engaged in commercial activity throughout the town, working in restaurants, marketing vegetables, and operating a laundry. The Okanos proved to be one of the most successful of the ethnic entrepreneurs in town. Jiro Okano recalled that his father had immigrated from Japan to Seattle and then moved to Rock Springs, where he worked in the mines before opening a fresh fish market near the railway depot where he could take advantage of the UP's "Railway Express" service. Comprehending that local Catholics represented a potentially large market, the Okanos moved south of the railroad tracks to be closer to their Euroamerican customers. Jiro's brother George recalled that their father—as did Euroamerican entrepreneurs in town—readily assisted their diverse clientele during the boom-and-bust cycles of coal mining, especially during strikes, by extending generous credit or accepting partial payments. Thus, while ethnic groups loyally patronized enterprises operated by group members—Paul Oblock recalls Rock Springs Commercial as the Slovenian store, the Union Mercantile as the Italian store, and the Chinatown drugstore as the Chinese store -- Rock Springs consumers desired largely unrestricted access to all merchants.²⁶

²⁶ See Garceau, "*The Important Things of Life*," 129-150; Budd, Rosatti Interview, 5-6; Plant, Berta Interview, 10-13; Shaffer, Kellog Interview, 2; Inks, Huling Interview, 5; Skaggs, Huntley Interview. 25; Rusty Dickson, Oral History Interview with Jiro Okano, Rock Springs, Wyoming, December 3, 1985, Western Wyoming Community College Library, Rock Springs, Wyoming, 2-3; Joe Otto, Interview with George Okano, Rock Springs, Wyoming, December 12, 1989, Western Wyoming Community College Library, Rock Springs, Wyoming, 2-3.

Ethnicity, Labor, and Negotiations with Corporate Hegemony

By the early 1870s, UPCC had joined in partnership with the Beckwith-Quinn retailing outfit to operate a general merchandise store in Rock Springs. Further penetrating the retail sector broadened UPCC's influence in the coal camp beyond simply being the largest employer, tax payer, and housing provider. By the 1920s, the company's forays into cultural affairs meant to strengthen corporate hegemony in Rock Springs. Yet because of the development of ethnic organizations, expansion of church activities, inter-class cooperation, broadening retail and service sectors, and municipal development, UPCC's local dominance was never complete and hegemony remained an unrealized corporate goal.²⁷

The retail sector in Rock Springs during and after the Great War reflected essential American faith in economic competition as well as the significance of ethnic loyalties in shaping both consuming habits and working-class resistance to corporate retail monopoly. With its commercial interests in Rock Springs, UPCC revealed the multivaried side of its corporate agenda. In their study of Wyoming coal mining, Gardner and Flores relate how important the "company store" was at the turn of the century in integrating various threads of economic and social life in a coal town. Referring to an early UPCC manager, these historians of Wyoming coal mining write:

²⁷ See Rhode, *Booms and Busts*, 36-37; UPCC, *History of Union Pacific Coal Mines*, 49. Eventually, UPCC allowed its partnership with Beckwith-Quinn to lapse in order to open its very own retail outlet. Beckwith-Quinn's last manager, A. F. Neuber, found a partner to reopen the store as Beeman and Neuber Mercantile (Rhode, *Booms and Busts*, 103).

D. O. Clark talked about company stores in terms of making a profit. To him, they were money-making ventures and should be perpetuated as such.... At the turn of the century, Clark felt that recruiting family men to work in the mines was a good investment; they were more stable and more dependable than their unmarried counterparts. To this end, Clark actively recruited miners with families and encouraged the company to build and rent housing for families. In Rock Springs, for example, he informed the president of Union Pacific that having men with families 'is a good investment' as it gives the company a 'better class of men and more mouths to feed, so the company is a gainer all around.' Not only would the families live in company houses, but as Clark states, they would buy groceries in the company store.²⁸

By requiring miners to purchase goods at the company store, particularly by paying them in scrip, Clark cited net profits of nearly \$20,000 annually. Unlike smaller, outlying camps, however, Rock Springs was large enough and so heterogeneous in nature that UPCC could not keep out retail competition. Three of the principal retail competitors of the UPCC concern belonged to immigrant entrepreneurs. These were the Union Mercantile and Miners Mercantile companies, which opened in the early twentieth century, operated by Tyrolean-born Henry Bertagnolli and Joseph Anselmi respectively and Slovenian-born Frank Kershisnik's Rock Springs Commercial. These businesses thrived despite UPCC competition principally because they responded effectively to working-class needs. John B. Dickson, for one, recalls how local merchants convinced

²⁸ Gardner and Flores, *Forgotten Frontier*, 104-105.

him and his partner S. M. Ward to extend credit at their delicatessen to miners throughout the lengthy strike of 1919, although at some considerable cost to small businesses.²⁹

Retail competition proved beneficial for the working people of Rock Springs, but UPCC continued to reap profits and increasingly used its store and other outlets to influence cultural life. A particularly intriguing colloquy involved E. R. Jeffries and UPCC Superintendent George B. Pryde in 1924 concerning Christmas gifts given townspeople through the company store. Jeffries noted the "haphazard" way the company distributed \$1,100 worth of boxed chocolates and other donations and suggested that the company instead donate community Christmas trees to each mining camp. Pryde responded: "I note particularly the item of \$1,100.00 for candy which we gave away. I am in accord with you in believing that the giving away of boxes of candy to our customers at Christmas time is of very little material benefit to us. I think the proper thing is to convince the people that we are selling good merchandise all the time at bed rock prices, giving them good service during the whole year and then it should not be necessary to convince them at Christmas time by giving them a box of candy...."³⁰

²⁹ See Gardner and Flores, *Forgotten Frontier*, 105; Rhode, *Booms and Busts*, 103, 109; Smith, Dickson Interview, 5

³⁰ George B. Pryde. Letter to E. R. Jeffries, Rock Springs, Wyoming, November 1, 1924, Box 16, File: UPCC Misc. Co. Welfare Items, UPCC Archives, Archaeological Services, Rock Springs, Wyoming.

While agreeing to donate a Christmas tree to each camp, UPCC management maintained that economic investment coincided with socio-cultural benefit to the corporation as well as the community.³¹

Throughout the 1920s, at a time when corporations sought to co-opt organized labor through a variety of devices, UPCC dabbled in welfare capitalism. In the mid-1920s, the company began a college scholarship program for sons of miners, who after college graduation followed their fathers into the mines but at the elevated status of engineer. The company also spent \$100,000 to erect a new Rock Springs Community Hall with a large auditorium in the summer of 1929, principally for the use of its workers and the Old Timers' Association launched by UPCC President Eugene McAuliffe in the summer of 1925. Beginning with 269 members and first meeting in Rock Springs on June 13, 1925, the Old Timers' Association embodied UPCC paternalism with large annual meetings, publications, and honors bestowed on long-time managers and workers. The company, however, was not just interested in honoring length of worker service but also desired to manage worker behavior. To that end, UPCC sponsored a series of safety programs, culminating in a series of company first-aid fairs that included the awarding of watches, oil paintings, books, and other gifts intended to maximize productivity through indoctrination of workers according to company safety guidelines. Nor did the company forget workers' children. By the late 1920s, UPCC had created a nature retreat at

³¹ See E. R. Jeffries, Letter to George B. Pryde, Rock Springs, Wyoming, October 30, 1924, Box 16, File: UPCC Misc. Co. Welfare Items, UPCC Archives, Archaeological Services, Rock Springs, Wyoming,

Newfork Lake, which the company affiliated with the Girl Scouts of America. Perhaps the most influential of the programs was the launching of the *Employees' Magazine*, which began in 1925 with a mix of corporate, personal, and cultural news and information.³²

When one examines the context of these corporate programs, however, the complex motives of management become evident. For example, the Girl Scout camp, which was the scene of the tragic drowning of four young girls on August 6, 1928, serves as an intriguing case study. In 1925, Jessie McDiarmid, a trained sociologist (at least according to UP standards) hired by the company to edit the *Employees' Magazine*, expressed shock to Eugene McAuliffe that her beloved Girl Scouts found her attempts to create a campground to be unsatisfactory in terms of facilities and programming. In a pair of patronizing letters, McAuliffe responded to both McDiarmid's discomfort and the Girl Scouts' presumptuousness. He scolded McDiarmid:

I am afraid you are an over-sensitive soul, overlooking the fact that the national officers from uplift organizations are employed to criticize.... I am sure the parents of your little kingdom of mixed nationalities, your loyal young subjects, and everyone connected with the Union Pacific Coal Company properly evaluate the work accomplished.... [The Girl Scouts] should keep in mind that [they] are usually organized in English speaking

³² See [UPCC Scholarship Program], Box 19, File: The Union Pacific Coal Company Scholarship and Special File No. 285, The Union Pacific Coal Co.'s Scholarship, 1928 to 1936, UPCC Archives, Archaeological Services, Rock Springs, Wyoming; "Cornerstone of New U. P. Community Hall Laid by Grand Lodge," *Rock Springs Rocket*, May 31, 1929, 1; "Dedicated to Faithful Employees," *Denver Post*, July 28, 1929, n.d., Box 3, File: "Old Timers," UPCC Archives, Archaeological Services, Rock Springs, Wyoming; UPCC, *History of the Union Pacific Coal Mines*, 246-248, 263-264; Eugene McAuliffe, Letter to Jesse McDiarmid, Omaha, August 21, 1925, Box 19, File: Girl Scouts" UPCC Archives, Archaeological Services, Rock Springs, Wyoming; Eugene McAuliffe, Letter to Girl Scouts, Inc., Omaha, December 1, 1925, Box 19, File: Girl Scouts," UPCC Archives, Archaeological Services, Rock Springs, Wyoming.

communities, and playgrounds are accessible to their homes, churches, etc., while you are compelled to assemble a very mixed class of children, widely separated by race, religion, and tongue, carrying them on extreme distances to find even a half suitable playground.³³

McAuliffe's missive reflects the condescension with which UPCC managers held its sociological department, although it also reflects corporate awareness of the difficulties faced in Rock Springs due to ethnic diversity and physical remoteness. These themes McAuliffe painstakingly pointed out in a lecture to the Girl Scouts. He wrote:

Southern Wyoming is a barren area, grassless and treeless, water very scarce, lakes and streams non-existent, in fact every ounce of water used is pumped through a pipe line into every place, including Rock Springs.

Our employees embrace thirty-five distinct nationalities, including Americans (black and white), people from the British Isles and Canada, all the eastern European countries, Germany, Austria, Italy, Russia, as well as Chinese and Japanese, every principal religion represented, the only force working seriously for the integration of the people, the public school and to a less extent the Christian churches....

Since coming to the [UPCC] property, I have attempted to work out a social betterment program, particularly for the women and children, whose lives are rather drab and I have tried to keep in mind the fact that paternalistic social work rarely proves helpful, much of the same attempted by certain coal companies really a substitute for wages and labor conditions.³⁴

McAuliffe then criticized the Girl Scouts' eastern biases and threatened to affiliate with the Campfire Girls.

³³ McAuliffe, Letter to McDiarmid. Although the historical record is unclear, presumably the national office's principal objections centered on the distance of camp facilities from Rock Springs, the lack of a suitable play area in the campground, and the failure of local programming to mesh with GSA standards.

³⁴ McAuliffe, Letter to GSA.

Although his measured tone in the letter reflects a fear of the dangers of "paternalistic social work," a closer look at UPCC ideology embodied in its *Employes' Magazine* demonstrates that paternalism was central to these types of corporate activity.³⁵ According to McAuliffe, he launched the *Employes' Magazine* not to produce a "material return" to UPCC but to offer its employees and their families the services of a trained sociologist (McDiarmid) without being intrusive. A quick perusal of the magazine's contents, nevertheless, shows that the periodical spoon-fed its readership a specific corporate ideology, including essays straight from management pens. First, the magazine pushed the Americanization agenda that courses in Rock Springs' Night School and the hypernationalist prose of the *Rock Springs Rocket* represented. A survey of topics in the literary and social features of the magazine during the 1920s exhibits highly Anglophilic tendencies, patriotic themes, and political conservatism.³⁶ Second, safety remained a key theme. Monthly graphs, such as that in the January 1925 issue which showed a substantial decrease in mining accidents, reminded workers of safety goals. Third, the magazine pushed a pro-business agenda, featuring favorable articles such as one

³⁵ "City Mourns Loss of Four Girl Scouts," *Rock Springs Rocket*, August 10, 1928, 1.

³⁶ Topics for the first two volumes of the *Employes' Magazines* included Robert Burns, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, William Shakespeare, Robert Browning, Edgar Allen Poe, "Verses Inspired by the Great War," Alfred Lord Tennyson, the "children's poet" Eugene Field, John Keats, Oliver Goldsmith, Secretary of Commerce Herbert Hoover, John Muir, a comparison between Chauncey Depew and Mother Jones (not in the radical labor leader's favor), Walter Chrysler, physician/humanitarian Dr. Wildred T. Grenfell, American painter Rose Bonheur, and President Calvin Coolidge. See *Employes' Magazine*, v. 1-2, January 1925-November, 1926.

examining pioneer banking in Rock Springs. Fourth, social and cultural events, ranging from Old Timers' Day celebrations to individual residents' travels and weddings, appeared regularly, along with featured highlights of select "Old Timers." Finally, the *Employes' Magazine* kept up a constant barrage of anti-radical polemics against such figures as Eugene Debs and Mother Jones. On the death of Bill Haywood, for instance, the publication sneered that the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) founder had wasted his native talents "in attempting to tear down the work of millions, who have through generations tried to make for prosperity and order."³⁷ Instead, the magazine preferred the preaching of capitalist apologists such as Harvard's Thomas Nixon Carver, who taught the working-class readership that bigness in business was the apotheosis of individual achievement and liberty.³⁸

UPCC's treatment of its aging Chinese workers in the 1920s clearly reflected corporate paternalism. By the 1920s, the number of Chinese miners had dwindled from a few hundred in the 1890s to a mere handful, although several pensioned Chinese laborers

³⁷ "The Passing of 'Big Bill' Haywood," *Employes' Magazine* 5 (June 1928), 218.

³⁸ See, for example, "The November Accident Graph," *Employes' Magazine* 2 (January 1925), 18; Augustine Kendall, "Pioneer Banking Days," *Employes' Magazine* 3 (May 1926), 156-157, 160; "Formal Opening of Union Pacific Coal Company's New Store at Rock Springs, Wyoming," *Employes' Magazine* 4 (March 1927), 83, 85; "Old Timer and Mrs. John Doak of Rock Springs," *Employes' Magazine* 5 (November 1928), 437; "Rock Springs," *Employes' Magazine* 5 (December 1928), 496; "The Union Pacific Coal Company Old Timers' Association: The Story of the Organization of the Old Timers, an Association of Men of Twenty or More Years Service," *Employes' Magazine* 2 (July 1925), 18-30; "The I. W. W. Comes to Wyoming to Save the U. M. W. A.," *Employes' Magazine* 5 (October 1928), 386-387; "A Woman and a Man: A Contrast-Not of Sex, but of Character and Temperament," *Employes' Magazine* (June 1926), 186-188; "The Death of Eugene V. Debs," *Employes' Magazine* 3 (November 1926), 320-321; "Big Business and the Individual," *Employes' Magazine* 3 (May 1926), 164-165.

were still in town. The company, aware of the problems facing this aging population, responded in several ways. First, the Old Timers' Association made sure that the Chinese were welcomed into the organization, featuring several in the *Employes' Magazine*. Second, UPCC provided several houses free of rent along with free water and coal to elderly "decrepit" Chinese workers. Third, the company tore down the old Chinatown shanties, moving the inhabitants to "more comfortable houses" near No. 4 mine. Finally, after some deliberation, UPCC offered to return the "China Boys" to their homeland with a pension. In both 1925 and 1927, a total of twelve Chinese miners returned home after receiving a free suit, monies from both UPCC and the United Mine Workers of America, and a gala send-off dinner at a Rock Springs cafe. In future articles, the *Employes' Magazine* recalled UPCC's munificent treatment of the Chinese. Clearly, the company demonstrated sincere obligation to these workers, although expressing such sentiment in rather paternalistic terms and perhaps engendered by a guilty corporate conscience, for these men carried with them not only the good wishes and pensions proffered by the Euroamericans in Rock Springs but also the memories of the horrors of 1885. Lao Chung carried not just memories of the massacre back to China from Rock Springs but also a bullet in his back that he took to his grave in 1927.³⁹

³⁹ See Union Pacific Coal Company, "Report of Operations for year 1895." Box 20B, UPCC Archives, Archaeological Services, Rock Springs, Wyoming, n.p.; Union Pacific Coal Company. "Annual Report for year 1897." Box 20B, UPCC Archives, Archaeological Services, Rock Springs, Wyoming, 50; Union Pacific Coal Company. "Report for period March 11, 1898 to September 1, 1898"; Union Pacific Coal Company. "Annual Report of the General Superintendent, for the year ending December 31, 1920," Box 20A, UPCC Archives, Archaeological Services, Rock Springs, Wyoming, 118; Union Pacific Coal Company, "Annual Report of the General Superintendent, for the

The history of labor-capital relations in Rock Springs reveals a sometimes torturous past, although by the 1920s, UPCC and the UMWA seemed to have achieved a *modus vivendi* in labor relations that middle-class interests in Rock Springs facilitated. Throughout the period 1918-1929, miners in southwestern Wyoming found their job security challenged by a variety of factors that their strongly organized labor movement helped mitigate. *Forgotten Frontiers: A History of Wyoming Coal Mining* describes the decade between 1910 and 1919 as the "Coal Age," when a booming national market—especially during the war years—and high productivity in the mines proved a boon to coal companies and miners. Then, in the postwar period, coal mining entered a transitional period. Gardner and Flores state:

Wyoming coal was no longer in as great a demand as it had been during World War I, and in the years between 1920 and 1930, coal miners and their families had to face the ups and downs of an unstable coal market.... To overcome the financial burdens of underemployment, women and men were forced to stretch their incomes. Life was not easy in coal camps

year ending December 31, 1925," Box 20A, UPCC Archives, Archaeological Services, Rock Springs, Wyoming, 200; Union Pacific Coal Company, "Annual Report of the Assistant General Manager, for the year ending December 31, 1929," Box 20A, UPCC Archives, Archaeological Services, Rock Springs, Wyoming, 150; "Leo Chee Sends Chinese Dragon Flag for the Union Pacific Coal Company Museum," *Employes' Magazine*, 7 (September 1930), 366; E. S. Brooks, Perquisites granted Superintendents and others at our various camps, Rock Springs, September 11, 1923, Box 16, Folder: 187 Miscellaneous Correspondence relative to Tenements, Year 1920, 1921, 1922, 1923, 1924, Rent, Water, and Light Schedules (See Special File #54), UPCC Archives, Archaeological Services, Rock Springs, Wyoming; Frank Tallmire and J. J. Harrington, "'Homeward Bound,'" *Employes' Magazine* 4 (December 1927), 423-427; "Ten Chinamen to Native Land," *Rock Springs Rocket*, November 6, 1925, 1; "To Send Chinese to Native Land," *Rock Springs Rocket*, October 28, 1927, 1; "News of the Safe Arrival of the Four Old Chinamen," *Employes' Magazine* 5 (February 1928), 71; "China Boys' All Well," *Employes' Magazine* 12 (February 1935), 69; "Our Old 'China Boys,'" *Employes' Magazine* 13 (January 1936), 26; "Letters from China," *Employes' Magazine* 16 (July 1939), 282; "Lao Chung Dead," *Employes' Magazine* 4 (September 1927), 306.

where the miner worked maybe one or two days a week. At times, men would go months without work. Added to the uncertainties were changes in mining techniques that lessened the number of miners needed to dig coal. Gone were the days of the Coal Age when laborers were the principal means of extracting coal and loading carts. Machines were replacing miners, and layoffs were all too common.⁴⁰

While UPCC miners in Rock Springs and other camps benefited by the fact that their operations served a steady corporate consumer, they too suffered from layoffs and reduced hours. In addition, mining remained a dangerous occupation. Major explosions at nearby Kemmerer and Sublet in the mid-1920s killed nearly eighty miners (some of whom once worked in Rock Springs), and while the January 1925 *Employes' Magazine* reported improved safety conditions, it still noted quite hazardous conditions with handcarts. Finally, UPCC managers continued the longstanding tradition of attempting to divide workers through ethnically selective hiring and residential placement practices. The company required many of these workers to sign yellow dog contracts and further fought unionization by supporting the secretive, anti-labor Citizens' Alliance.⁴¹

Capital-labor antagonism resulted in various job actions in the decade following the war. In the momentous year 1919, coal miners went on strike nationally. While corporate mining profits soared, workers' wages remained stagnant due to companies utilizing remaining national emergency measures affecting labor relations. Settled in May 1920 the strike gained miners raises ranging up to \$1 a day depending on work

⁴⁰ Gardner and Flores, *Forgotten Frontier*, quoted 133, see also 126-127.

⁴¹ See Gardner and Flores, *Forgotten Frontier*, 115-116, 154-155; "November Accident Graph," 18; Rhode, *Booms and Busts*, 89, 91.

classification retroactive to April 1, 1920 and lasting for two years. By April 1922, however, the declining coal market had hurt UPCC profits, and the company and its competitors in Wyoming proposed cutting wages. Miners in Rock Springs and the rest of Wyoming walked out for over two months in an attempt to preserve the wage increases of 1920. They succeeded by forcing companies to guarantee prevailing wage rates for at least another year. Worsening economic conditions, however, chastened Wyoming miners at a time when eastern miners were more restive. When rumors of a new strike wave surfaced in 1927, Wyoming UMWA representatives, whose membership rolls had dropped nearly twenty-two percent in three years, announced that they refused to participate in a sympathy strike but instead would seek to expand organizational efforts into Utah and Colorado as well as improve the popular insurance fund begun in 1920. Increasingly, by the late 1920s, worsening economic conditions forced the Wyoming UMWA to retreat even more, dropping the Jacksonville Agreement provisions that forbade individual districts from negotiating their own wage scales and to accept wage cuts, although proportionally, less steep cuts than elsewhere in the nation. In Rock Springs, UMWA members voted overwhelmingly for the new contract by 618 to 319, exceeding the statewide percentages backing the pact.⁴²

⁴² See "Operators Will Meet Mine Workers but Wyoming Cannot Act," *Rock Springs Rocket*, October 31, 1919, 1; "No New Developments in Coal Strike Miners and Operators Fail to Agree," *Rock Springs Rocket*, November 7, 1919, 1; "Agreement Reached," *Rock Springs Rocket*, May 21, 1920, 1; "Coal Strike Satisfactorily Settled After a Struggle of Five Months," *Rock Springs Rocket*, August 18, 1922, 1; "Wyoming Coal Strike Now Matter of History—Mines Resume Operations," *Rock Springs Rocket*, August 25, 1922, 1; "No Coal Strike in Wyo. April 1," *Rock Springs Rocket*, March 11, 1927, 1; "Wyoming Coal Miners Refuse to Approve Sympathy Strike," *Rock Springs Rocket*, March 18, 1927, 1; "Miners Vote Favors New Agreement"; 4 Years Peace

Anti-labor polemics animated this troubled period. Noting that Rock Springs police had arrested three IWW organizers in July 1928, the *Employes' Magazine* responded in October with the following diatribe:

The I.W.W. organization, made up of foreign speaking misfits, seeks, through vicious propaganda, to overturn our theory of government, substituting therefor [sic] the theories and practices advanced by the Bolsheviks of the Old World....[T]hese mental incompetents ... essay to substitute Russian Soviet methods for those that prevail in this country....If the published utterances and vocal mouthings of the I.W.W. are to be taken at par, the ideal conditions found ... [in] Russia are what the working men of the United States need to fill their cup of happiness to overflowing.

It is up to the mine workers of Wyoming to decide whether or not they wish to retain their present union [the UMWA]; the operators of the state are friendly to it, but it is certain that a lawless organization whose waking hours constitute one long continuous attack on American ideals and American institutions, will have serious difficulty in getting a foothold in the state of Wyoming.⁴³

Despite the ethnocentric jibes, the article's invoking of "American ideals," as well as the benefits of American material life, coalesced with the prevailing Americanization ethos. The article also evinced a fundamental acceptance of the UMWA. Applauding the Mine Workers leaders for their skills in securing the membership "the highest union wage scale in the United States" and improved working conditions, the *Rocket* admonished union

Assured," *Rock Springs Rocket*, November 30, 1928, 1; "Uniform Wage Scale Dropped," *Rock Springs Rocket*, July 20, 1928, 1; "Wage Scale Agreement Is Reached," *Rock Springs Rocket*, October 12, 1928, 1; "Miners Vote Favors New Agreement; 4 Years Peace Assured," *Rock Springs Rocket*, November 30, 1928, 1; Larson, 412; Rhode, *Booms and Busts*, 132.

⁴³ "I.W.W. Comes to Wyoming," 386-387. Obviously the composer of this jeremiad was either incapable of comprehending or indifferent to the fact that the IWW espoused anarcho-syndicalist ideas rather than Marxist ones.

members not to strike that year. The local paper hinted that poor local economic conditions prevented local merchants and bankers from guaranteeing credit to miners during a strike, something they had done frequently in the past.⁴⁴

Fortunately, for Rock Springs workers, such rhetoric did not forestall effective labor organization. A key to organized labor's success in Rock Springs was that the principal union shrewdly determined to follow a strategy of inclusion rather than exclusion, voting in 1907 to allow Japanese miners to join the union, thus denying UPCC the tool of undercutting working-class solidarity through exploitation of diversity. Since Japanese miners represented the fifth largest ethnic group hired by UPCC in 1906 (about seven percent), union leaders put aside their prejudices to solidify labor's position.⁴⁵ This awareness that institutional solidarity represented a potentially powerful weapon against the corporation was evident in various labor activities in Rock Springs and helps explain the strong union support in the town. Perhaps this momentous decision represented a fundamentally progressive development in Euroamerican labor ideology since the 1885 massacre.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ "To Strike or Not to Strike?", *Rock Springs Rocket*, November 11, 1928, 1.

⁴⁵ This rapprochement between Euroamericans and Japanese miners in Rock Springs stands in contrast to anti-Japanese sentiment elsewhere nationally, such as the national controversy over the 1906 San Francisco school board's policy of separate schools for students of Japanese ancestry, which led to the so-called "Gentleman's Agreement" that strictly curtailed Japanese immigration. See Vincent P. DeSantis, *The Shaping of Modern America, 1877-1916* (New York: Forum Press, 1973), 246.

⁴⁶ See Gardner and Flores, *Forgotten Frontier*, 117-118; "Mines Closed," *Rock Springs Miner*, May 25, 1907, 1; "Mines to Be Reopened," *Rock Springs Miner*, June 1, 1907, 1; "Mines Are All Working," *Rock Springs Miner*, June 15, 1907, 1; Union Pacific

Throughout the 1920s, Rock Springs' unions worked to build coalitions among the diverse townspeople and to create sustaining institutional traditions. The Central Trades and Labor Council (CTLC), an umbrella organization helping build worker solidarity, proved to be a pivotal agent in coordinating organized labor interests in town. Even as the coal miners' union struggled during the depressed 1920s, CTLC facilitated new organizations among retail workers, cooks and waiters and beverage dispensers, auto mechanics and apprentices, and bakers and confectionery workers. The organization also used its resources to operate the Rock Springs Labor Institute, which offered technical and other classes taught by high school teachers, ministers, and others at Rock Springs High School. At the downtown Labor Temple, labor leaders offered social and educational forums for area workers. For example, in May 1924, Dr. H. Gossard of the University of Wyoming addressed a gathering at the Temple, where he spoke on the "Legitimate Demands of Labor," using Ramsay McDonald's British Labour movement as a model for a politicized American working-class organization. Not all labor activity, however, was educational. Doris Dorrence, for one, recalls that Rock Springs' labor organizations traditionally sponsored dances, rodeos, and other activities for the city's children. In fact, partly through festive culture, local labor organizations were able to reach the broader community.⁴⁷

Coal Company, "Annual Report of the General Superintendent, for the year ending June 30, 1906," Box 20A, UPCC Archives, Archaeological Services, Rock Springs, Wyoming, 61.

⁴⁷ See "More Branches of Organized Labor Are Established," *Rock Springs Rocket*, April 16, 1926, 1; "The Rock Springs Labor Institute Starts New Term," *Employes' Magazine* 3 (March 1926), 99; "Gossard Talked at Labor Temple," *Rock*

Three of the most popular celebrations in Rock Springs during the 1920s were Old Timers' Day, Eight-Hour Day, and Labor Day. Old Timers' Day usually occurred in June in Rock Springs and celebrated the workers and managers of UPCC who had twenty or more years of experience. The festivities included a dinner and pageant, speeches, and awards. Unlike Old Timers' Day, Eight-Hour Day, the annual April commemoration of the miners' winning of the eight-hour work day, and Labor Day included all residents of Rock Springs and surrounding coal camps. Ordinarily a two-day event, Eight-Hour Day included elaborate musical and dance programs, free picture shows, and formal evening dances all planned by CTLC committees. Labor Day proved an even larger public celebration, with two days full of various activities, including the city's annual rodeo, under CTLC's supervision with assistance from local businesses and government. Activities also included a parade, athletic contests, and free movies for the children. Organized labor in Rock Springs, therefore, transcended a merely economic role to become a resourceful and necessary builder of community ties, bringing together diverse peoples and uniting laborers and independent businesspeople.⁴⁸

Springs Rocket, May 10, 1924, 10; Linda Lindsey, Oral History Interview with Doris Dorrence, Rock Springs, Wyoming, April 16, 1985, Western Wyoming Community College Library, Rock Springs, Wyoming, 4.

⁴⁸ See, for example, "Old-Timers to Gather June 13," *Rock Springs Rocket*, May 29, 1925, 1; "Features of Old Timers Event," *Rock Springs Rocket*, May 14, 1926, 1; "Eight Hour Day to Be Observed," *Rock Springs Rocket*, March 6, 1925, 1; "Celebrations of Eight-Hour Day," *Rock Springs Rocket*, March 27, 1925, 1; "Celebration Was Best Yet," *Rock Springs Rocket*, September 11, 1925, 1; "Cowboys and Wildhorses Await Sound of Gun To Start Rodeo Events," *Rock Springs Rocket*, August 28, 1929, 1.

In addition to the cultural role that organized labor played in Rock Springs, it also assumed a political role. Miner William Juvan, Sr., remembers that life was "lots better with the union.... [I]f it weren't for the unions, you'd be picking dirt outside with the chickens. That's what the union is good for."⁴⁹ Organized labor was able to achieve a better local quality of life through workplace agitation, cultural activities, and political organization. Local workers voted for a variety of parties, including the Democrats, Republicans, Populists, and Progressives. According to Gardner and Flores, the Socialist Party attracted significant support in Rock Springs throughout the Great War. The Socialist presence in town was large enough to attract the statewide Socialist Convention in 1908. Locally, the Socialists met at the Finn Hall, where they regularly slated nominees for mayor and city council and fought for better working conditions. As Dr. Gossard's comments at the Labor Temple attest, Rock Springs workers had become increasingly politicized, especially with the deteriorating economic conditions and the energizing prospects of national third-party politics. That August, at another political meeting at the Temple, one Progressive Party backer exhorted the crowd in the following manner: "President Harding had his Daugherty and President Wilson had his A. Mitchell Palmer.... I cannot urge you men too strongly, therefore, to look squarely past the words 'Republican' and 'Democrat' on the election ballot, and to look into the very heart of the men whose names are printed thereon...."⁵⁰ Despite such impassioned rhetoric, however,

⁴⁹ Oral History Interview with William Juvan, Sr., Rock Springs, Wyoming, n.d., Western Wyoming Community College Library, Rock Springs, Wyoming, 5.

⁵⁰ "Aid Labor's Friends," *Rock Springs Rocket*, August 8, 1924, 6.

Rock Springs remained generally a Democratic stronghold in a Republican state. For the most part, workers identified their interests throughout the 1920s with the Democrats rather than the pro-corporate Republicans. The latter's isolationist and *laissez-faire* rhetoric did not sit well with a diverse, western constituency attuned to international and corporate politics.⁵¹

Constructing and Governing the "Melting Pot" of the West

While early twentieth-century Rock Springs' population growth qualified the one-time coal camp as one of Wyoming's "first-class cities," the physical appearance of the municipality appeared to belie such a distinction. Mariam Banks recalls, "Rock Springs was a dirty little town."⁵² Edna Kershisnik remembered that there did not "seem to be any pride in [Rock Springs residents'] homes. There was very little grass, wooden sidewalks,

⁵¹ See Gardner and Flores, *Forgotten Frontier*, 125-126; "Gossard Talked," 10. The 1928 election totals reflect the largely Democratic leanings of the city's populace. That year Secretary of Commerce Herbert Hoover garnered 21,391,993 popular votes for roughly fifty-eight percent of the national total while Democratic Governor Al Smith of New York won 15,016,169 popular votes, or forty-one percent of the total. In Rock Springs, the totals were Smith with 2,986 votes (c. 55%) and the Republican Hoover 2529 votes (c. 45%). See "Voters Revolt Party Dictum and Scratch Tickets for Favorites," *Rock Springs Rocket*, November 9, 1928, 1.

⁵² Kevin Banks, Oral History Interview with Mariam Banks, Rock Springs, Wyoming, December 2, 1989, Western Wyoming Community College Library, Rock Spring, Wyoming, 1.

what there were. No paved streets, the mud was a foot deep when it rained."⁵³ By the 1920s, however, because of grandiose dreams and dogged persistence, the newcomers and natives of Rock Springs had made considerable strides in creating a comfortably habitable urban environment. Municipal leaders had undertaken several important projects, including resolving transportation problems caused by the railroad, addressing the annual flooding of Bitter Creek, building a new city park, upgrading educational facilities, and restraining illicit trade in town. City development was not just a governmental undertaking, however, for diverse ethnic organizations and church groups also played key roles in creating a better quality of life in the municipality. Such efforts helped Rock Springs residents transcend UPCC hegemony to create a self-empowered sense of municipal community that melded smaller, discrete community identities within the ideals of Progress, Americanization, and Internationalism.

Prior to the 1924 mayoral election, the chief impetus behind city development had come from the private sector, especially UPCC. By the Great War, Rock Springs possessed most of the accoutrements of an urbanizing community, including public schools, churches, library, telephone service, theaters, retail and service venues, and a hospital. By decade's end, UPCC finally constructed bathhouses for the miners despite the fact that water still had to be piped in for daily consumption. Rock Springs joined the air age in the 1920s as one of the stops on the first federal airmail route. In 1923, developers opened the region's first golf course south of town near Kent's Ranch. Other

⁵³ Maggie Fenton, Oral History Interview with Edna Kershisnik, Rock Springs, Wyoming, April 21, 1988, Western Wyoming Community College Library, Rock Springs, Wyoming, 1.

entertainment venues that opened during the decade included several saloons, the Playmore Dance Hall and Rialto Theater. Extra-curricular activities at the schools became quite popular. School bands frequently entertained townspeople during public affairs, and, under the leadership of local music teachers John Brueggemann and James Sartoris, local musicians in 1923 won the first of seven consecutive state music championships. Not to be outdone, local sports teams shone brightly throughout the 1920s, and Rock Springs residents were especially proud of the 1924 state championship basketball team, treating the young men to a tour of Chicago, Illinois. Yet such accomplishments could not hide the fact that quality of life in Rock Springs still suffered from both a frontier roughness and corporate carelessness.⁵⁴

Significant problems remained to be solved in Rock Springs during the New Era, and powerful corporate interests kept a watchful eye on public works for tax reasons. For years, traffic in downtown Rock Springs had suffered from a dangerous central rail crossing, where Union Pacific trains roared through at least once an hour, jostling nearby businesses with a piercingly shrill whistle and threatening bodily injury to pedestrians. Edna Kershisnik remembered that one solution to the traffic problem had been a "big metal frame" with thirty steps up and thirty steps down that provided pedestrians the only safe way to traverse the tracks in the middle of town. This proved less than satisfactory to many residents. Contributing to the traffic problems in Rock Springs, road surfaces deteriorated rapidly under the increased traffic flow brought by the new Lincoln Highway

running through town. Along with poor roadways, sidewalks in town were virtually nonexistent, forcing pedestrians often to take to the muddy streets, which were frequently inhabited by horses, poultry, and their offal. Even more perplexing to residents, especially civic boosters proud of their locale and hoping to attract more citizens and business, was the fact that Rock Springs possessed the dubious distinction of being the largest city in the United States without a man-made sewer system. Before tackling this particular need, however, municipal leaders would have to control the annual flooding from Bitter Creek that still drove some miners out of their creekbed dugouts, swamped nearby streets, and threatened property with water damage on a semi-annual basis. Still other problems remained. There was little park space. The city continued having problems piping in enough potable water. Prostitution, narcotics, and illegal booze threatened law and order. What could be done? UPCC argued for civic improvements, but it was also a central player in fighting city tax increases, one of which had gone down to ignominious defeat earlier in the decade. What Rock Springs needed was an administration that could successfully negotiate between the various power bases in the area, including UPCC, independent businesses, labor organizations, churches, and ethnic groups.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ See Rhode, *Booms and Busts*, 127-128, 135-136, 144, 146; "Rock Springs Boys, the 1924 Basket Ball Champions in Chicago," *Employes' Magazine* 2 (April 1925), 27.

⁵⁵ See Rhode, *Booms and Busts*, 97, 100-101, 137, 139-141; Fenton, 1; "John W. Hay Addresses Rock Springs Lions on Urgent Needs of the City," *Rock Springs Rocket*, May 12, 1922, 1; C. E. Swann, "Flood Control at Rock Springs," *Employes' Magazine* 16 (December 1939), 492-493; "President McAuliffe Cites Flood Danger and States Position of City's Largest Taxpayer," *Rock Springs Rocket*, March 20, 1925, 5; "Enlarged Water Supply Shortly," *Rock Springs Rocket*, December 17, 1926, 1; "Start Movement to

In November 1923, voters in Rock Springs elected as mayor Democrat Peter Christian Bunning, a man who not only could create the kind of administration needed to effect substantial municipal improvement but also reflect the life experiences of many city residents. Born in Gebin, Schleswig-Hoolstein, Germany, in 1859, young Chris Bunning emigrated from Germany to Denmark following completion of compulsory military service, where he worked as foreman on a dairy farm before marrying Marianne Nielson. The couple soon left Denmark for the United States but did not come to Rock Springs until Bunning heard of UP job opportunities following the Chinese Massacre. He labored for both the railway and UPCC before accepting appointment in 1896 as Chief of Police. Following a four-year term, Bunning left public service to try his hand at business and proved to be one of the most resourceful ethnic entrepreneurs in Sweetwater County. First, Bunning entered the contracting business, where his personal and political connections allowed him access to lucrative contracts, including the construction of the Rock Springs-to-Green River highway. Bunning next opened his own mine (Little Megeath) on the western side of Rock Springs, using wagons to deliver coal in the area. This coal enterprise convinced the German-born entrepreneur to try his hand at the transfer business, in which he again prospered. Finally, Bunning assumed the presidency of the Rock Springs Fuel Company. At sixty-four years of age, having proved his merit as an independent businessman, Bunning re-entered public service by defeating the Republican incumbent for mayor of Rock Springs in 1923. For the next decade, Chris

Provide More Playgrounds at Schools," *Rock Springs Rocket*, February 20, 1925, 1; "Storm of Protest Against Proposed New Tax Ordinance," *Rock Springs Rocket*, July 11, 1924, 1; "Thumbs Down Tax Ordinance," *Rock Springs Rocket*, July 25, 1924, 1.

Bunning proved to be a dynamic leader who successfully managed the various interests in Rock Springs to modernize material conditions in the city.⁵⁶

UPCC's *Employes' Magazine* applauded Bunning's efforts in office, stating that "given a chance" Bunning would "pull the old town out of the morass of mud, dust, bumps and uncleanness that it reveled in since ... the late 'sixties."⁵⁷ The achievements of the Bunning years, 1923-1931, were not all directly attributable to the mayor's own initiative or inspiration; both public- and private-sector groups had been pushing modernization schemes for quite some time. Bunning's success, rather, rested upon his ability to deliver the goods politically. The devastating Bitter Creek flood of April 1924 and Bunning's politicking moved the body politic to take positive action, approving a plan to channel the stream away from the center of Rock Springs, diverting it through a sparsely populated area north of the city. The administration included a municipal sewer system in the creek diversion plan. This project won approval from independent businesses and UPCC, and the latter even offered to donate property for the creek diversion plan in addition to footing its part of the capital expenditures required by the project. Mayor Bunning, however, was unsatisfied by these efforts alone, for he recalled

⁵⁶ See Penny Boysen, Oral History Interview with Chris Gras, Rock Springs, Wyoming, June 11, 1991, Western Wyoming Community College Library, Rock Springs, Wyoming, 1, 6-8, 11-14; Cullen, "Growing Up in a Wyoming Coal Town, 23-25; "Mayor Bunning of Rock Springs," *Employes' Magazine* 5 (January 1928), 6; "Ex-Mayor Bunning Honored," *Employes' Magazine* 11 (March 1934), 119-121; "Peter Christian Bunning," *Employes' Magazine*, September 1935, 345-346; "Bunning Defeats Parker in Mayoralty Race, Heavy Vote," *Rock Springs Rocket*, November 6, 1925, 1.

⁵⁷ "Mayor Bunning," *Rocket*, 6.

the green spaces in the cities of his native Germany and believed that Rock Springs needed the same. Fortunately, various local clubs and civic organizations had banded together in 1925 to create a recreation and playgrounds association. The mayor utilized this potential constituency to acquire land reclaimed from Bitter Creek's old downtown floodplain to build Rock Springs' first park, a venture cynics dubbed "Bunning's Folly." Immediately, local residents took to the park concept, and the local chapter of the American Legion moved its memorial to Bunning Park. The popularity of the project allowed the administration to develop a second downtown park. Finally, Bunning's mayoralty witnessed the paving of over five miles of city streets that had previously been covered by cinders, dust, and dirt, more effectively linking the city to the Lincoln Highway and eliminating some of the worst traffic engineering problems caused by Rock Springs' haphazard street plan.⁵⁸

⁵⁸ See "Ex-Mayor Bunning," 119-122; "Flood Control," 492-493; "Great Corporations and Smallest Property-Owners Have United in Support of City's Proposed Sewer System," *Rock Springs Rocket*, March 26, 1925, 1; "Start Movement to Provide More Playgrounds," 1; "Peter Christian Bunning," 345-346.

On the park-building agenda of Bunning, the *Employes' Magazine* remarked: "To intimate that a treeless and well-nigh grassless city can be made beautiful would ordinarily invite a smile, but beauty is, after all, a relative quality, and when compared with the conditions that governed in this thrifty little city but five years ago, it is proper to say that Rock Springs, under the guiding hand of Mayor P. C. Bunning, is, in a relative sense at least, becoming quite beautiful.... A few days ago the Mayor invited us to inspect the new City Park, created a year ago, and we were thrilled to find therein eighteen varieties of trees and some fifty species of the flowery kingdom, all thriving, the flowers, with their velvety background of grassy lawn, presenting a gorgeous spectacle.... The members of the American Legion paid a fine tribute to the successful creation of the new park by moving their splendid war monument to a central location therein, and those who pause to admire the grass, the trees and the flowers will not, as their eyes rest on the image of the youthful soldier, fail to give recurring thought to the patriotism which inspired the tremendous sacrifice leading to the raising of the City's war

While the Bunning administration's efforts at modernization drastically improved the material conditions of the urban environment and certainly enhanced quality of life in Rock Springs during the 1920s, private efforts at civic improvement also enabled pursuit of an agenda dedicated to "Progress." New to Rock Springs during the 1920s, the American Legion quickly moved into the festive culture of Rock Springs, organizing public observance of Armistice Day with a parade led by a bugle and drum corps and a memorial service at the high school. For children in Rock Springs, civic-minded citizens, including F. B. McVicar and UPCC's Jessie McDiamird, organized viable Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts groups and then lobbied UPCC and local businesses for the resources to build a permanent Scout Camp. Playing on local boosters' pride, Scoutmaster McVicar complained, "Other cities, smaller than ours, and with less resources have established permanent Boy Scout Camps that are a proved success.... Is it fair to any boy that he grow to manhood without contact with the sort of life that a camp affords?"⁵⁹ Later in the decade, both scouting groups participated in UPCC's First Aid Day competitions, which reflected the merging of corporate and civic interests. UPCC also sought to influence the fledgling Community Council movement that first appeared in Rock Springs by mid-decade. The council sought to coordinate organizational life in the city, especially by

monument." See "Rock Springs Beautiful," *Employes' Magazine* 5 (September 1928), 342.

Unwilling to rest on its laurels for the creek diversion and sewer projects, the Bunning administration also extended the storm ditch and storm sewer, reinforced the concrete box culvert under the UP tracks, and installed new bridges on Rainbow Avenue and Elk Street necessitated by the creek diversion.

⁵⁹ F. B. McVicar, "A Plea for a Permanent Scout Camp," *Employes' Magazine* 2 (April 1925), 13.

facilitating the flow of charitable projects toward civic improvement. Subtly, UPCC managers, such as McAuliffe and Pryde, lobbied the Community Council to address social and cultural needs that the corporation itself did not want to fund fully but thought efficacious in pacifying workers. Some of the resulting projects included among other things relief for the elderly and needy, book donations to public institutions, and support for scouting activities.⁶⁰

Unfortunately for Rock Springs residents, successful government initiatives and active civic involvement did not rid civic life of problems. Since many Rock Springs residents emigrated from cultures accustomed to wine and other alcoholic beverages as part of celebrations, local people, unsurprisingly, produced a great deal of homemade spirits during Prohibition. Such practices were not against the law, however, and local newspapers readily advertised the arrival of wine grape shipments to Rock Springs. What was prohibited was the home manufacture of wine of too high an alcohol content or for the purposes of commercial sale. In 1923, federal agents arrested eighteen people for illegal alcohol-related activities in southwestern Wyoming, including several in Rock Springs, among them, Tony Vilego who possessed eleven fifty-two-gallon barrels and two ten-gallon barrels of wine. Two years later, authorities raided twelve different Rock Springs establishments based on rumors of bootlegging, gambling, and "harboring

⁶⁰ See "Archie Hay Post, American Legion, Leads Rock Springs and District in Public Observance of Armistice Day," *Employes' Magazine* 3 (December 1926), 359, 363; "Boy and Girl Scout First Aid Meet at Rock Springs June 18th," *Employes' Magazine* 4 (July 1927), 233; "Community Council Established in Rock Springs," *Employes' Magazine* 3 (September 1926), 261; "Organized Neighborliness—Our Community Council," *Employes' Magazine* 5 (March 1928), 102.

women of the underworld." Given such intensive scrutiny by law enforcement agencies, many residents in Rock Springs were well aware of bootlegging activities. Moreover, miners recalled that one could smell the bootlegged liquor in town. One reminisced:

When you went down to No. 4 [Mine], you could really smell it where they threw out the old mash after all the whiskey was out of it. They would try and bury it in the garden, but you couldn't miss it. And every house you went into around here, they always had a pitcher of beer.... My dad never did make moonshine for the family, but he made it a lot for people that owned bars.... During prohibition in the bars, you used to could go down there and get half a pint or a pint of moonshine anytime....⁶¹

Eventually, in 1930, federal authorities embarrassed Rock Springs residents by arresting Mayor Bunning, four present or former councilmen, the city attorney, police chief, police judge, city treasurer, deputy sheriff, and four police officers on conspiracy charges to violate the Prohibition laws. The charges stemmed from city tolerance of "soft drink parlors" and other establishments popularly known to be violating the law, yet the weak charges, public indifference, and the popularity of these public officials made conviction of the accused impossible.⁶²

Aside from bootleg liquor and gambling dens, illicit sex was a much sought after commodity in Rock Springs. Jose Martinez recalled that houses of prostitution were

⁶¹ Gardner and Flores, *Forgotten Frontier*, 138.

⁶² See "Wine Making in Progress," *Rock Springs Rocket*, September 28, 1928, 3; Gardner and Flores, *Forgotten Frontier*, 137; "Large Quantity Wine Uncovered," *Rock Springs Rocket*, November 30, 1923, 1; "Four Sets Officers Conduct Raids," *Rock Springs Rocket*, January 30, 1925, 1; Rhode, *Booms and Busts*, 149-151.

"bountiful" during his youth, and Magdalena Elizabeth Anselmi Huntley remembered the popularity of the infamous White House, which had survived earlier antiprostitution reform agitation, and other brothels. Another resident recollects that prostitutes frequented the many local saloons in town, where they met potential customers at the bar, hoping to entice them to visit rooms upstairs. Generally, local law enforcement looked the other way when it came to bootlegging and prostitution since, after all, as the principal urban area servicing various mining camps and ranches, such activities produced commercial benefits. By contrast, law enforcement proved exceptionally vigilant when rumors of narcotic trafficking arose and primarily accused non-Euroamericans. Janet V. Heikes recalls that her father, Thomas Stoddard, then the youngest elected sheriff in Wyoming, arrested several Chinese prostitutes working out of a local opium den.⁶³

The degree of physical violence evident in 1920s Rock Springs reinforced its continuing frontier ethos even during this period of civic progress. In 1923, two masked robbers shot well-respected butcher Frank Ferlic to death in his American Meat Market in front of the latter's seventeen-year-old son. Two years later, in a local dance hall, a quarrel during a celebration by the local Mexican community led to a shooting spree, leaving one man dead and another critically injured. Again, two years later, two friends

⁶³ See Kathy Kienitz, Oral History Interview with Jose Martinez, Rock Springs, Wyoming, November 27, 1984, Western Wyoming Community College Library, Rock Springs, Wyoming, 3; Skaggs, Huntley Interview, 50-51; Don Campbell, Oral History Interview with Max Lebar, Rock Springs, Wyoming, n.d., Western Wyoming Community College/Department of Archeological Services, Rock Springs, Wyoming, 4.

shared a bottle of moonshine in a local restaurant before one pulled out a gun, murdered the other, and attempted suicide. These three incidents are indicative of the violence that characterized postwar Rock Springs.⁶⁴

Despite the challenges presented by vice and violence, postwar religious life continued to thrive in Rock Springs. During the 1920s, Rock Springs religious organizations, included Catholic, Jewish, Orthodox, Congregational, Episcopalian, Methodist, Baptist (including "Colored Baptists"), African Methodist-Episcopal, and Latter-Day Saints congregations, as well as a branch of the Salvation Army. Because of the large European immigrant population, Rock Springs boasted two Catholic churches: one on the northside of town called Our Lady of Sorrows that served less affluent parishioners, and the other on the southside of the tracks, Saints Cyril and Methodius, that catered to Slavic-Americans. In 1924, Eastern Orthodox Christians, including Serbians, Russians, Bulgarians, Romanians, and Syrians, under the leadership of Revered J. V. Tkoch first organized and then dedicated a church building one year later. Eventually, Rock Springs Greeks, because of their larger numbers and better financial resources, bought the church building and affiliated with the Greek Orthodox Church. Also in the mid-1920s, local Jewish people organized as the Congregation Beth Israel, although small

⁶⁴ See Anne B. Miller, Oral History Interview with Janet V. Heikes, Rock Springs, Wyoming, November 1, 1985, Western Wyoming Community College Library, Rock Springs, Wyoming, 1-2; "Big Haul of Opium," *Rock Springs Rocket*, June 27, 1919, 1; "Federal Narcotic Squad Raid Rock Springs Dope Peddlers," *Rock Springs Rocket*, June 23, 1922, 1; "Mexican Found with a 'Sleepy Potion,'" 7; "Frank Ferlic, Local Merchant, Shot without Warning by Masked Bandits—3 Suspects Arrested," *Rock Springs Rocket*, February 23, 1923, 1; "Man Was Shot to Death Here," *Rock Springs Rocket*, July 10, 1925, 1; "Christmas Row Fatal to One," *Rock Springs Rocket*, December 30, 1927, 1.

numbers of congregants made it difficult to sustain a regular synagogue. Morris Weiss avers that Christian Rock Springs never discriminated against Jews in town. One religious body in town that did suffer from prejudice was the AME church. Its leadership requested funds from the UPCC but did so in vain. E. S. Brooks, UPCC general manager, claimed that he was "in no position to make donations to any denomination," although he offered free coal for the AME. Yet, only two months earlier, UPCC had provided for the painting and wiring of the Catholic Church in Cumberland.⁶⁵

⁶⁵ See Mary A. Clark, "Churches and Schools of Rock Springs," in Thomas P. Cullen, *Rock Springs- A Look Back* (Portland, Oregon: Thomas P. Cullen, 1991.), Typewritten, Rock Springs Public Library Local History Collection, 337-338; Anne S. Pryde, "History of the Congregational Church of Rock Springs," in Cullen, *A Look Back*, 339-346; Cecil S. James, "History of Latter Day Saints' Church of Rock Springs," in Cullen, *A Look Back*, 347-352; Emily Connor, "History of the Episcopal Church of Rock Springs," in Cullen, *A Look Back*, 352-354; Hubert Webster, "History of the Methodist Episcopal Church at Rock Springs," in Cullen, *A Look Back*, 354-359; Jennie Harvey, "History of First Baptist Church," in Cullen, *A Look Back*, 359-367; Jennie Harvey, "Church of Saints Cyril and Methodius," in Cullen, *A Look Back*, 367-370; "Rock Springs Churches," *Employes' Magazine* 2 (April 1925), 20-21; Rev. William R. Marshall, "Congregational Church Dedicated," *Employes' Magazine* 8 (January 1931), 25-26; Christine Confer, "A History of the Methodist Religion, Rock Springs, Wyoming, 1875-1989," Paper, Typewritten, 1989, Western Wyoming Community College Library, Rock Springs, Wyoming; "Dedication of Church of Our Lady of Sorrows, Rock Springs," *Employes' Magazine* 10 (January 1933), 16-17; "Dedication of City's Newest Church Was Held Sunday," *Rock Springs Rocket*, December 18, 1925, 1; "The Coming of the Sacraments of the Church and the New North Side Roman Catholic Church, Rock Springs, Wyoming," *Employes' Magazine* 2 (August 1925), 19-20; "Orthodox Church Dedicated by Metropolitane John of New York," *Employes' Magazine* 2 (October 1925), 20; Dean P. Talagan, "Faith, Hard Work, and Family: The Story of the Wyoming Hellenes," in Gordon Olaf Hendrickson, ed., *Peopling the High Plains: Wyoming's European Heritage* (Cheyenne: Wyoming State Archives and Historical Department, 1977), 162-163; "Rock Springs' Latest Church Organization," *Employes' Magazine* 2 (November 1925), 4; Kathy Gilbert, Oral History Interview with Morris Weiss, Rock Springs, Wyoming, The Road to Rock Springs/Ellis Island in Wyoming Project, American Studies Program, University of Wyoming, Laramie, Wyoming, 6-7.

Local churches both served spiritual needs and sought to improve the quality of local life. Catholic churches proved to be vigorous champions of religious and civic life. Priests at the two churches ministered to the needs not only of Rock Springs parishioners but also those of the faithful in various far-flung coal camps, where the churches had missions. Father Anton Schiffrer, a Slovenian immigrant and longtime priest at the northside church, proved a worthy friend to his many Slavic parishioners, frequently taking fellow immigrants to the county seat in Rock Springs to help with immigration and naturalization procedures. At the Methodist Episcopal Church, Reverend Dr. P. R. Keplinger operated a night school for the foreign-born in Rock Springs and, in another part of the church, offered a community reading room. Several of the churches, including Mormons and Congregationalists, set aside space and programs for Scouting activities. Rock Springs Methodists helped sponsor athletic programs as well as a local boys club. Religious leaders also played a pivotal role in the creation of International Night. Baptist Reverend Stephen D. Pyle, filled with missionary zeal and committed to the ideals of internationalism, proved the dynamo behind the Lions Club four-year experiment with the International Night celebration, and he received instrumental support from Orthodox priest J. V. Tkoch in launching the first International Night. Organized religion, therefore, proved essential in developing community life in Rock Springs while at the same time helping ensure cherished ethnic traditions and networks.⁶⁶

⁶⁶ See Harvey, "First Baptist Church," 367-370; Gloria M. Tomich, *Our Lady of Sorrows Centennial*, Special Limited Edition (Rock Springs: Our Lady of Sorrows Catholic Church, 1987), 12, 14-35; "Reverend Father Anton Schiffrer—In Rock Springs for Fifteen Years—Is Honored on Anniversary," *Rock Springs Rocket* 2 (March 1925), 5; James, "Latter Day Saints," 349; Marshall, "Congregational Church," 26; Confer,

Various nationality organizations, especially Euroamerican groups worked closely with churches to preserve ethnic identity and tradition. These ethnic organizations also, in the case of Rock Springs, offered links to residents of different ethnicities, thereby penetrating cultural borders at least at the level of public interface. Undoubtedly, two of the most organizationally effective ethnic groups were the Finns and Slovenes. Finnish immigrants represented a large presence in Rock Springs during the late nineteenth century, and the Finn Hall boasted a wide variety of organizational, social, and civic-minded affairs. In fact, as discussed previously, Finn Hall, which was the home of the Finnish brotherhoods, long remained the meeting place of Rock Springs' small but very visible Socialist Party. The Slovenes came a few decades after the Finns, many from the regions near Slovenia's major city, Ljubljana. The Slovene organizations ran the gamut from conservative Catholic groups to left-leaning social democratic clubs. All worked together in Rock Springs, however, to build the picturesque Slovenski Dom, a large meeting hall on Bridger Avenue near the Slavic church, Sts. Cyril and Methodius. The Slovenes held an annual Grape Festival and Dance, which, while based on Slovenian folk legends, welcomed the participation of other ethnic groups, some of whom attended in their own native costumes. The Danish and Finnish brotherhoods continued welcoming

"Methodist Religion," 9; Webster, "Methodist Episcopal," 357; Talagan, "Faith, Hard Work, and Family," 163.

Interestingly, organized religion's bent for community service could not overcome denominational borders. Many Protestant churches discussed during the period, Rock Springs Methodists, Congregationalists, and Baptists, discussed plans for a federated church to serve the broader Protestant community, but gave up the idea after no satisfactory plan could be approved by all three bodies. See "Plan to Unite Churches Laid," *Rock Springs Rocket*, March 16, 1928, 1; "Federal Church Plan Dropped," *Rock Springs Rocket*, May 25, 1928, 1.

the community at large to annual gatherings at Kent's Farm and Green River respectively. The successful negotiation by organizations of ethnic boundaries resulted from various factors. First, Euroamericans undertook most of the negotiation, for, except in cases of highly public, civic celebrations, ethnic organizational activities excluded non-Euroamericans. Second, the very diversity of a community boasting over four dozen nationality groups made interethnic socializing less threatening for numerically marginal groups since they were partaking in broader community events. Third, and perhaps most significantly, ethnic border-crossing on an institutional level dovetailed neatly with the highly intensive Americanization campaigns of the period.⁶⁷

⁶⁷ See Rhode, *Booms and Busts*, 110, 112, 115; Stainbrook, Bogataj Interview; 3, 8; Julie Jensen, Oral History Interview with Evelyn Lewis, Rock Springs, Wyoming, December 1, 1985, Western Wyoming Community College Library, Rock Springs, Wyoming, 8; Form 2202, Record of Declaration of Intention, vols. I-VII, nos. 1 to 2259, Court of District of Sweetwater County, Division of Naturalization, Department of Commerce and Labor, October 11, 1906 to June 28, 1929, Clerk of the District Court, Sweetwater Courthouse, Green River, Wyoming, Naturalization Records; Young, Paul Oblock Interview, 5; Barbara Allen Bogart, Oral History Interview with Fannie Yenko, Rock Springs, Wyoming, September 14, 1995, Sweetwater County Historical Museum, Ethnic Music in Sweetwater County Collection, Sweetwater County Courthouse, Green River, Wyoming, 4-7; Barbara Allen Bogart, Oral History Interview with Tena Lenzi, Rock Springs, Wyoming, November 7, 1995, Sweetwater County Historical Museum, Ethnic Music in Sweetwater County Collection, Sweetwater County Courthouse, Green River, Wyoming, 1-2, 4; Barbara Allen Bogart, Oral History Interview with Elsie Gentilini, Rock Springs, Wyoming, November 16, 1995, Sweetwater County Historical Museum, Ethnic Music in Sweetwater County Collection, Sweetwater County Courthouse, Green River, Wyoming, 1, 6-11; Earl Stinneford, "Mines and Miners: The Eastern Europeans in Wyoming," in Gordon Olaf Hendrickson, ed., *Peopling the High Plains: Wyoming's European Heritage* (Cheyenne: Wyoming State Archives and Historical Department, 1977); 130-131; Gordon Olaf Hendrickson, "Immigration and Assimilation in Wyoming," in Gordon Olaf Hendrickson, ed., *Peopling the High Plains: Wyoming's European Heritage* (Cheyenne: Wyoming State Archives and Historical Department, 1977); 180-182; Gardner and Flores, *Forgotten Frontier*, 126; Garceau, "The Important Things of Life," 60.

Formal education in Rock Springs was institutionally inclusive. Rock Springs offered a vocational program and adult night school, especially aimed at immigrants and their children. Schools welcomed children of all heritages—African, Asian, European, and Latino(a), although many recalled that racial groupings tended to stick together. Still, some remembered a distinctive kind of ethno-racial openness among schoolchildren. Lois Reed states:

[Y]ou went to school, you sat by black, white, asian [sic]. I mean, everybody was your friend. You didn't think anything about it.... I don't remember any prejudice. You didn't, you went to school. You learned and you didn't carry that with you.... Well, they used to call Rock Springs the melting pot, melting pot of the west because we had so many nationalities and everybody got along. I can remember as a kid, though, that you didn't have. OK, we were number ones and over there, they were the kids from number four and there was the kids from number three and when we went to Yellowstone, we were the yellow bellies and the kids that went to Washington School were the wash tubs, and that sort of thing. I can't remember really as a, I can't remember going down to number four because those ornery kids down there we weren't allowed to associate with. We went with them and run around with them at school but you weren't allowed to associate with them....⁶⁸

Isabell Jane Huling concurs that as schoolchildren she and her Rock Springs classmates appear to have been largely ignorant of racial boundaries, but she also recollected that "[s]egregation was more evident as the dating years were approached."⁶⁹

⁶⁸ Ruth Case, Oral History Interview with Lois Reed, Rock Springs, Wyoming, November 3, 191, Western Wyoming Community College Library, Rock Springs, Wyoming, 21.

⁶⁹ Inks, Huling Interview, 6.

Rock Springs High School by the 1920s enjoyed new facilities and a fully developed curriculum consisting of courses in English, rhetoric, history, civics, Latin, French, biology, physics, chemistry, elementary science, algebra, geometry, and general math. Highly popular among students and local business people, vocational programs sought to prepare students for work immediately following high school; these included home economics, woodworking, machine shop, normal (i.e., education) training, and a fairly sophisticated electrical department. Adult workers, many of whom sought alternatives to working in the mines where layoffs had become common, also entered vocational training programs. The 1921 Rock Springs High School *Sagebrusher* annual showed the curriculum (see Table 4) for the evening vocational school.

In addition to the vocational program offered at night in the high school, civic leaders arranged for the school district to operate an Americanization school. At first, the Americanization program offered two sets of classes to adult learners: Beginning English and Citizenship. By the mid-1920s, the curriculum had developed into programs for beginning and advanced students as well as branching out to include both "advanced Americanization" for those who passed the naturalization examination and neighborhood reading programs for women.⁷⁰

⁷⁰ See *The Sagebrusher*, Annual (Rock Springs: Rock Springs High School, 1922), 10; "Rock Springs High School," *Employes' Magazine* 2 (August 1925), 22-28; Charles Cameron, "Electric Department of the Rock Springs High School," *Employes' Magazine* 2 (May 1925), 6; "Rock Springs Night School to Open on Tuesday, January Third," *Rock Springs Rocket*, December 23, 1921, 1; "Night School Term Finished," *Rock Springs Rocket*, March 7, 1924, 2; "Night School Begins Soon," *Rock Springs Rocket*, December 12, 1924, 1; "Vocation School Closed; Success," *Rock Springs Rocket*, March 13, 1925, 9; "Vocational School Finds Much Favor," *Rock Springs Rocket*,

Table 4
Vocational Night School Courses
Offered at Rock Springs High School, 1920-1921⁷¹

Course:	Instructor:	Enrollment:
Millinery	Miss Harvey	27
Millinery	Miss Menghini	22
Cooking	Miss Sloan	26
Sewing	Miss Johnson	16
Commercial	Miss Fizhugh	5
Bookkeeping	Asst. Miss McTee	
Typewriting	na	11
Shorthand	na	7
Commercial	na	10
Arithmetic		
Mine Electricity	Mr. Ziegler	14
Mine Mathematics	Mr. Foote	12
Mechanics	Mr. Sneddon	11
Auto Mechanics	Mr. Benedict	10
Total		171

January 9, 1925, 9; "Night School in Full Swing," *Rock Springs Rocket*, January 14, 1927, 1; *The Sagebrusher*, Annual (Rock Springs: Rock Springs High School, 1921), 50.

⁷¹ *The Sagebrusher*, Annual (Rock Springs: Rock Springs High School, 1921), 49. The vocational program offered more courses suited to "traditional" female roles in domestic or clerical tasks, thereby resulting in a larger number of women students.

Conclusion

The night school program helped integrate immigrants into the culture of American industrial capitalism. For the foreign-born and their children, the transformation of Rock Springs during the first three decades of the twentieth century—and especially the dozen whirlwind years after the Great War—must have seemed remarkable. From a dusty, nearly grassless coal camp, Rock Springs had grown into a real city with telephone service, a sewer system, new and improved educational facilities, talking pictures, parks, an impressive UPCC corporate headquarters building, elaborate church edifices, and more. What this must have said about America to the foreign-born cannot be underestimated! True, not all residents of the city enjoyed equal access to facilities or opportunity. Violent crime abounded. Four times as many saloons as churches existed in the city. But could not further improvements be had? Was this not America where anything was possible? At the graduation ceremonies of Rock Springs' Night School, successful students received certificates, gave their names to the reporters for printing in that week's *Rocket*, and listened to the words of wisdom offered by dignitaries invited for such occasions. In March 1925, one of these distinguished speakers, Val L. Sullivan, naturalization examiner for the central Rocky Mountain region, explained that

the nucleus of the present naturalization law was signed by George Washington, that it had from the beginning been the aim of this country to naturalize and merge the foreign-born while in European countries the tendency was to segregate them according to nationality.⁷²

⁷² "23 to Finish Night School Next Week," *Rock Springs Rocket*, March 6, 1925, 3.

Of course, Sullivan forgot that unlike the days of Washington, the immigration policy of the United States had become more restrictively exclusive of certain ethnic groups, that Asian immigrants could not naturalize, and, in addition, that contemporary policy coexisted with a radically different racial demographic than in the early Republic. Many non-Euroamericans, for example, had not had the opportunity to undergo "emerging." Nor did native-born non-Euroamericans truly enjoy the full rights of "Americanization." No matter Sullivan's neglect, his words appeared to ring true to the largely Euroamerican audiences at Rock Springs' Night School celebrations. The students had "progressed" from Europeans to Americans! Now they could truly join the Pageant of Progress in their little "melting pot of the West."

CHAPTER NINE

CELEBRATING THE ROCK SPRINGS COMMUNITY, 1914-1929

International Night, 1928

They huddled together against the frigid December winds. Slowly, the crowd grew larger outside the Rialto Theater, for no one wanted to miss the 1928 International Night celebration which promised to be bigger and better than any of the previous four. In past years hundreds had been turned away by Lions Club organizers who could not find a large enough facility to include everyone who wanted to glimpse the pageantry of this self-acclaimed "melting pot."¹ Many of these same persons had viewed various ethnic exhibits earlier in the day at the Elks Club, but the evening's affair was the true gala. Finally, the theater doors opened, spilling out into the night the excited patrons, laughing and gossiping in sundry languages. The huddled onlookers watched the crowd dissipate before marching into the Rialto for the final performance of what had become an annual event.²

¹ For the idea of Rock Springs as "melting pot," see Rhode, *Boom and Busts*, 113.

² See "Throng Braves Storm to Participate in International Night," *Rock Springs Rocket*, December 7, 1928, 1; "International Night Set for Dec. 3; Henry Suzallo Will Speak," *Rock Springs Rocket*, November 23, 1928, 1; "Fourth Annual International Night to Be Observed Monday, December 3," *Rock Springs Rocket*, November 30, 1928, 1; Grace H. Webb, "International Night," in Cullen, *A Look Back*, 477-491.

Inside the warm, brightly lit theater, the audience scrambled for seats. Because of the popularity of International Night, organizers had reserved no seats (and barred children from attending the evening performances partly out of fear of little ones being trampled by the eager masses). After the lucky ones found their places and the house lights dimmed, the unique, colorful world of Rock Springs appeared on stage. Following the introductory verses of "Spirit of America" performed by Lillian Grace Walton, troupe after troupe of ethnic performers marched upon the stage bedecked in native garb and offered their gifts of word, song, and dance. Scottish immigrants James Noble and William H. Wallace led off the entertainment with bagpipe music. Then came Slovakian singers and dancers, Tyrolean folksingers, and Croats playing the *tamboritza jointette*. Japanese martial artists then mounted the stage to perform Jiu-Jitsu and Ken-Jitsu. When they finished, Italian-born John Corona soloed on his accordion, followed by accordion player Frank Plemel, who accompanied Slovene-Americans dancers in the "Spic Polka" and "Poustar Tonc." Hearty applause abated only for the reading of personal greetings to the audience from the rich and famous, including Secretary of State Frank B. Kellog, Senator William E. Borah, British Ambassador Sir Esme Howard, Belgian ambassador Prince Albert De Ligne, and Nicholas Murray Butler among others. Then the crowd hushed in anticipation of a special treat.³

Fifty-three men and women, all dressed in native costumes and holding unlit candles, gathered upon the stage. Bagpiper James Noble, originally from Musselburgh,

³ Rhode, *Booms and Busts*, 128-129; "Fourth Annual," *Rock Springs Rocket*, 1; Webb, "International Night," 484-490.

Scotland, poignantly uttered, "As light begets light so love begets love the world around."⁴ He then turned toward Swiss-born Mrs. Hugh McLeod and lit her candle from his own. As Noble did so, McLeod echoed the former's words in High German. She in turn lit the candle East Prussian-born Henry Bluhm, who repeated the adage in Middle German. And so it went. As the miners and ranchers, widows and teachers, saloon keepers and merchants, homemakers and nurses, listened for the words in their own language, the fifty-three representatives lit one another's candles and spoke the chosen words. Frisian, Danish, Flemish, Dutch, Swedish, Norwegian rounded out the Teutonic language group. Other European tongues included French, Langue d'oc, Walloon, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, Romanian, Great Russian, Little Russian, White Russian, Serbo-Croat, Polish, Basque, Slovenian, Czecho-Moravian, Slovakian, Bulgarian, Greek, Lettish, Lithuanian, Gaelic, Welsh, Armenian, Albanian, Finnish, Lappish, and Magyar. Bulgarian immigrant Anestos Kalokoff spoke in Turkish followed by Wolf Cohen and Nito Kurland in Modern Hebrew and Leon Doan in Arabic. Asian speakers addressed the audience in Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Hindustani, and Punjabi. And then came the North Americans. Native Americans spoke the words in Seneca, Choctaw, and Cherokee. The Reverend J. W. Randolph spoke for the "Negro Race." Finally, James Dewar, a Canadian immigrant, and Urbano Ramirez, formerly of Mexico City, completed the candle-lighting ceremony. As the fifty-three persons stood upon the stage illuminated by soft candlelight, the audience felt part of something special—a moment when the personal diminished before a self-professed belief in a universal ideal of commonality.

⁴ Webb, "International Night," 486.

The pageant spoke to the faith in local progress that Rock Springs believed it had made since 1885. It was a grand moment, if only a mythopoeic one. Myth-making, however, may represent a significant sense of community development if only chiefly from the perspective of how a municipality wished to clarify its historical experience.⁵

Building upon the audience's mythic faith in Progress, renowned internationalist Dr. Henry Suzallo,⁶ stressed the dynamism of American civilization in his address, "The New and Old Americans." Suzallo proclaimed:

America has never had anything to give the newcomer ... except the most important thing in the world—a fair chance...!

America is a place of change! When an old American meets a new condition of life and work, he changes his mind slowly, carefully to meet new problems. But the new American finds that he has to change his mind quickly to catch up with all the things that have happened to generations of men and women who came from Europe long ago.

Progress is a dearly beloved word among us; but the new American has to be the most progressive of all—you have to follow the example of the men and women who came before you....

In Europe the common man has only to work and play. In America he has two more things to do, namely, he works, he plays, he helps to run the government and he keeps on going so that every year he will be a

⁵ Sharon Bedard, Oral History Interview with Lucy Ward Braes, Rock Springs, Wyoming, July 22, 1984, Oral History Collection, Western Wyoming Community College Library, Rock Springs Wyoming, 5; Ann Burns and Nancy Crawford, Oral History Interview with Elsie Oblock Frolic, Rock Springs, Wyoming, January 8, 1977, Oral History Collection, Western Wyoming Community College Library, Rock Springs Wyoming, 6; Webb, "International Night," 486-488; Rhode, *Booms and Busts*, 135;

⁶ Suzallo, the American-born child of Dalmatian immigrants, earned his Ph.D. in 1905 from Columbia University and served in a variety of positions both as a faculty member and administrator at, among other institutions, Stanford, Columbia, and Yale. He served with the Carnegie Foundation as Trustee, Vice-Chairman, and then Chairman. His international connections included service on the Advisory Board for the Institute of International Education and the Advisory Council of International Relations. See "Fourth Annual," *Rocket*, 1.

better and wiser man than he was before, more respected by his neighbors; but, most of all, more respected by himself!⁷

Enthusiastic applause followed the address, and then the assemblage lustily sang "America," bringing to a close Rock Springs' fourth and, unbeknownst to any of the assembled, final International Night celebration.⁸

Pageants of Progress and the Rock Springs Municipal Community

In her study of nineteenth-century German immigrants in Milwaukee, historian Kathleen Neils Conzen remarked that the "shared need for celebration and the *communitas* it generated" brought individuals together in a larger cultural aggregate. She argues that "the forms of celebrations that they adopted helped them to conceptualize their commonality in ethnic terms, and in defense of their festive culture they entered as a group into American public life."⁹

⁷ "Throng Braves Storm," *Rocket*, 1.

⁸ For the nature of historical community and identity in Rock Springs, especially that intersecting with issues of race, ethnicity, class, and gender, see Garceau, *Important Things of Life*; Hendrickson, *Peopling the High Plains*; Storti, *Incident at Bitter Creek*; Gardner and Binkerhoff, *Historical Images*; UPCC, *History of the Union Pacific Coal Mines*; Gardner and Johnson, *Cultural Resource Inventory & Mitigation of Thirty-seven Mine Reclamation Sites in Sweetwater County, Wyoming*, 2 vols.

⁹ Kathleen Neils Conzen, "Ethnicity as Festive Culture: Nineteenth-Century German America on Parade," in Werner Sollors, ed., *The Invention of Ethnicity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 48.

In Rock Springs, diverse people defined celebration as more than a leisure activity; it became a central trope in defining what the municipality should mean and project to the outside world. These individuals and groups utilized their festive cultures to "conceptualize their commonality" and, in so doing, "entered as a group into American public life." Thus, public ritual and celebration in Rock Springs helped integrate the disparate networks of class, ethnicity, race, and religion into a broader municipal community. Such public expressions did so in three ways: codifying identity and meaning, commodifying cultural exchange, and co-generating Americanization and Internationalism. These processes were vital for a place like Rock Springs, for, as one western historian has argued concerning mining camps, such industries "exacerbated a rapid and dislocating process of urbanization and industrialization in a region that was isolated and raw.... The presence of this kind of economy created a distinctively unrooted culture that combined hyper-individualism with industrial processes and boom-and-bust economies that severely limited personal control...."¹⁰ Through various cultural expressions local residents defined their sense of municipal community as predicated on a pluralism that sustained interclass cooperation and nurtured a faith in progress. By decade's end, local festive culture transmuted into a significant expression of internationalism that defined what the municipal community sought to be.

As a late-blooming western town, Rock Springs suffered from a certain disadvantage when it came to constructing a public culture. Such a reality, perhaps,

¹⁰ Anne F. Hyde, "Round Pegs in Square Holes: The Rocky Mountains and Extractive Industry," in David M. Wrobel and Michael C. Steiner, eds., *Many Wests: Place, Culture, and Regional Identity* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1997), 96.

instead led civic leaders to foster an annual calendar of celebrations that allowed local merchants to accumulate both social and economic profits. Memorial Day, Independence Day, Armistice Day, and Christmas were all annual holidays Rock Springs residents celebrated much like other Americans. Following the Great War, local residents embraced an abundance of holidays, some newly established and others not. The short-lived Defense Day aimed to guarantee national security "not by a large military organization but by the united efforts of all its citizens." Chinese New Years was always a favorite with local residents because of its pageantry and exoticity. Other ethnic celebrations involved the broader community, including the Scottish tradition of "First Footing" at New Year's and the Slovenians' Harvest Festival every autumn.¹¹

Also part of the community's annual festivals, working-class celebrations proved highly popular and inclusive. Eight-Hour Day, celebrated in early April, brought large crowds into town from outlying coal camps for parades, speeches, dances, orchestral performances, and free movie screenings. Processions involving representatives from nearly every union in Rock Springs always began at the doors of the Labor Temple under the watchful eye of the Central Labor and Trades Council. Selected speakers regaled the assemblage with encomia toward the eight-hour day. In 1927, for example, Journeymen Barbers Union International President James C. Shanessy proclaimed:

¹¹ See Pryde, Letter to E. Jeffries; UPCC Archives; "Christmas in the Church," *Rock Springs Rocket*, December 23, 1927, 1; "All Set for 2 Day Fourth Celebration," *Rock Springs Rocket*, July 1, 1927, 1; "A Quiet Fourth in Rock Springs," *Rock Springs Rocket*, July 2, 1926, 1; "Big Events for the 4th," *Rock Springs Rocket*, June 27, 1924, 1; "Splendid Program for Fourth of July Celebration Completed," *Rock Springs Rocket*, July 3, 1925, 1; "Memorial Day, 1924," *Rock Springs Rocket*, May 23, 1924, 1; "Rock Springs Defense Day," *Rock Springs Rocket*, August 12, 1924, 1.

[T]he history of the shorter day and shorter work week movements proves that they go just before a gradually increasing wage scale. If the toilers were wise in their generation they would make the shorter day and week their first objectives, secure in the belief that wages would increase afterward, as they always have increased.¹²

As important as Eight-Hour Day was locally, Labor Day proved an even more popular celebration, particularly as its frontier themes not only thrilled rodeo spectators but also provided a useful metaphorical device. For Labor Day 1924, for example, the *Rocket* exclaimed:

There'll be keow-boys and keow-girls in Rock Springs town the last day of this month...: there'll be vari-colored bandana handkerchiefs, ten-gallon hats, Bull Durham tags and clanking spurs; and there'll be wild cayuses and snorting, rearing steers.... Rock Springs will again take on the appearance of the old cow town of the days of '49 and '10, and most of the inhabitants will lay aside the arduous duties they are then engaged in to live again, for a brief space, those days when men were men and when faint heart ne'er won spade flush.... This turning back a leaf in the book of progress will be in the form of a wild west celebration, to be staged in Rock Springs on the occasion of Labor Day....¹³

The allure of "turning back a leaf in the book of progress" appealed to these city dwellers in 1924—most of whom had as much a notion of the "wild West" as did any Easterner.¹⁴

¹² "8-Hour Day in Rock Springs," *Rock Springs Rocket*, April 8, 1927, 1.

¹³ "Two Days of Wild West in Celebration of Labor Day," *Rock Springs Rocket*, August 1, 1924, 1.

¹⁴ See "Chinese New Year Observed Tuesday," *Rock Springs Rocket*, January 27, 1928, 4; "Lao Chee," 366; "Low Fare Excursion," Advertisement, *Rock Springs Rocket*, August 30, 1928, 3; Jim DeLancey, Oral History Interview with Tom Delmastro, Rock Springs, Wyoming, November 21, 1985, Western Wyoming Community College Library, Rock Springs, Wyoming, 4; Evans, 4; Haughey, Cottrell, 1; Skaggs, Huntley Interview, 33-34; Allen, Meacham Interview, 2-3; Young, Paul Oblock Interview, 5; Julie A. Domson, Oral History Interview with Julia Mae Yugovich Pivik, Rock Springs,

As dear as Rock Springs residents held these annual celebrations, two festive innovations in the mid-1920s especially reflected the development of local municipal community. Rock Springs' Old Timers' Day was a special celebration, incorporating the diverse realities of life in Rock Springs. In 1925, Rock Springs Drum Major A. G. Griffiths, a former Grenadier Guardsman and veteran of the Soudan and Boer Wars, led the first Old Timers parade through the city, symbolizing both the ethnic presence as well as frontier mythology. Scheduled events for that first and subsequent Old Timers celebrations included formal registration and business meeting of the Association, awards ceremonies, sporting events, and an evening banquet program. Later reunions added orchestral programs and teas for women employees and wives. Old Timers' Day effectively integrated veteran and pensioned workers, managers, and executives in a salute to the corporate entity that had contributed so generously to Rock Springs. While UPCC had not succeeded in making Rock Springs a mere "company town," the popularity of the Old Timers Association and its annual reunion nevertheless symbolized

Wyoming, October 1, 1986, Western Wyoming Community College Library, Rock Springs, Wyoming, 6-7; "Eight Hour Day," 1925, 1; "8-Hour Day to Be Celebrated," *Rock Springs Rocket*, March 26, 1925, 1; "Celebration of Eight-Hour Day," *Rock Springs Rocket*, March 27, 1925, 1; "Will Celebrate Eight Hour Day," *Rock Springs Rocket*, February 11, 1927, 1; "Eight Hour Day Program," *Rock Springs Rocket*, March 28, 1929, 1; "Labor Celebrates Amid Enthusiasm," *Rock Springs Rocket*, September 7, 1923, 1; "Wild West To Be Recalled," *Rock Springs Rocket*, July 25, 1924, 1; "Labor Day Program Announced—Something Doing Every Minute," August 22, 1924, 1-2; "Rodeo Will Be Gala Day," *Rock Springs Rocket*, August 14, 1925, 1; "Crowds Throng City Labor Day," *Rock Springs Rocket*, September 10, 1926, 1; "Two Day Fete Huge Success," *Rock Springs Rocket*, September 9, 1927, 1; "Labor Day Sports and Rodeo Thrills Throng: Many Events," *Rock Springs Rocket*, September 7, 1928, 1.

for many the decidedly central role that UPCC had played in both the development of Rock Springs and the lives of its inhabitants.¹⁵

The meeting of the Union Pacific Old Timers Association on July 12, 1926, best exemplifies the mythopoeic ideal of Progress in the construction and celebration of municipal community in Rock Springs. During the evening banquet, following remarks by UPCC managers, United States Senator C. D. Clark from nearby Evanston, strode to the podium and addressed the Old Timers. Reflecting upon a June day back in 1881, when he first came to Rock Springs, Senator Clark waxed poetic, stating:

This, then, in 1881, was an unattractive little town down in what was practically a desert beside a stream of unsavory reputation whose waters furnished no refreshment to man or beast. One would almost be tempted to wonder if any good could come out of such a Nazareth.

But something beyond a desolate desert coal camp was found that bright June morning. The old coal building had a force that for gayety, clear cut manhood and complete efficiency and loyalty has never been excelled in this or any other town....

While we love to dwell with delightful reminiscence on those early days whose rough edges finally softened—we cannot forget the intervening years during which we have seen a city rise from an insignificant village; comfort and luxuries now where then were few convenience and fewer opportunities....¹⁶

¹⁵ See "Will Lead Old Timers in Parade Here Tomorrow," *Rock Springs Rocket*, June 5, 1925, 1; "Old-Timers to Gather June 13," *Rock Springs Rocket*, May 29, 1925, 1; "The Union Pacific Coal Company Old Timers' Association," *Employes' Magazine* 2 (July 1925), 18-30; "Old Timers Gather in Rock Springs for Second Celebration," *Employes' Magazine* 3 (July 1926), 216-227; "Old Timers! June 11th! In Rock Springs! Third Annual Old Timers Day Celebration," *Employes' Magazine* 4 (May 1927), 168; "Plans Complete for Old Timers' Celebration June Eleventh," *Rock Springs Rocket* 4 (June 1927), 198; "Fourth Annual Old Timers' Celebration," *Employes' Magazine* 5 (July 1928), 272ff; Burns and Crawford, Frolic Interview, 13.

¹⁶ "Old Timers Gather," *Employe's Magazine*, 224.

The Senator's paean served as prologue for the moving performance to follow. According to the program, Pageant of Progress was

the story of the Spirits of Adventure, Pioneer, and World Service in their journeyings to and sojourn in the coal districts of Wyoming where, guided by the Spirit of Progress, they develop the new west, build the Union Pacific Railway and discover coal, prepare to send it out to bring cheer and power to all the world...¹⁷

Through a prologue and twenty-two scenes, performers regaled the Old Timers with a narrative that linked their past toil with the conquest of a nation, subjugation of the earth, and service to the world. The construction of Rock Springs, in essence, according to the pageant, was not ultimately about the appropriation of surplus value, despoliation of the earth, or displacement of peoples but about a historically progressive movement of man, fuel, and machine so efficaciously guided by UPCC!¹⁸

Old Timers' Day and International Night functioned as rarefied symbols of Rock Springs' emergent postwar municipal community because they represented concerted efforts to meld diverse community networks into a malleable whole based on interclass cooperation and liberal Americanization. That both public rituals—so vital to the community at one time—ultimately proved superfluous attests to how profoundly Rock

¹⁷ "Pageant of Progress," Program, Pageant Committee for the Old Timers Association of the Union Pacific Coal Company, June 12, 1926, Box 3, Folder "Old Timers," UPCC Archives, Archaeological Services, Rock Springs, Wyoming, 1.

¹⁸ "Old Timers Gather," *Employee's Magazine*, 226-227; "Pageant of Progress," UPCCA.

Springs residents individually, as well as their communal and cultural networks, internalized a reified community identity based on mutual progress.¹⁹

It is worth providing three examples of how deeply the concept of a unifying municipal community had seeped into Rock Springs institutions and traditions before examining in detail the history of International Night, one of the most significant expressions of that evolving ideological orientation. Previously, we had witnessed how public culture contributed to municipal community in Rock Springs by codifying identity and meaning, commodifying cultural exchange, and co-generating Americanization and Internationalism. Three simple stories from the *Rock Springs Rocket* during the 1920s—none historically consequential in and of itself—demonstrate these three processes. First, in a 1924 essay contest on the theme of "Americanization," the local Knights of Columbus chapter, itself largely comprised of immigrants and their sons, awarded first prize to Kate Beyda, who wrote:

With considerable knowledge, that the foreigner has obtained during his five year [naturalization] term, he will be able to understand our government, appreciate the privileges offered by it, as religious freedom, suffrage and a real 'say' in the government. He will learn our principles such as: that labor cannot exist without capital and capital cannot exist without labor. He will discover that he need not follow radical political leaders and that becoming an American citizen he will be considered equal to all other citizens before the law, as the constitution states. Now we have come to the conclusion that the main thing towards success in unmaking a

¹⁹ This degree of unity suggests that frontier conditions, especially intensified individualism, may not have been as debilitating to collectivism as Robert V. Hine suggests, or at least in the case of Rock Springs (see *Community on the American Frontier*, 256-258).

foreigner and making an American citizen is the mastery of the American language....²⁰

Thus, the meaning of the immigrant experience becomes a transitional identity during which a codified naturalization process "unmakes" the old and "makes" an American. Yet the foreign-born should not repudiate completely past identity, rather compartmentalize it, for, as an advertisement by the North Side State Bank pointed out in 1924, ethnic identity and status as an alien resident of the United States could serve as personal securities that could help negotiate a return to the homeland. Ideologically, as the postwar period began, the *Rocket* declared for the League of Nations, co-generating Americanization and Internationalism and challenging the citizenry to answer the "cry for justice for the sacrifices which [the] boys had made."²¹ From such cultural constructions Rock Springs' International Night was born in 1926.²²

No single group better exemplified the spirit of municipal development and civic boosterism during the 1920s than the local affiliate of Lions Club International, which proved to be the key organizational driving force behind International Night. Meeting for the first time in June 1921, the Rock Springs Lions were one of the earliest state chapters, founded a mere four years after the international organization's debut. The local chapter

²⁰ "Transition of the Foreigner," *Rock Springs Rocket*, February 29, 1921, 8.

²¹ "For a League of Nations," *Rock Springs Rocket*, March 14, 1919, 1.

²² See "New Immigration Law Allows Aliens to Visit Europe Freely," Advertisement, *Rock Springs Rocket*, July 4, 1924, 3; "The President Before the Senate," *Rock Springs Rocket*, August 1, 1919, 3.

served as a multifaceted organization supporting the commercial, social, and civic development of the community. The *Rocket* reported:

The club starts out with a determination on the part of the members to make it a real success and a force in the advancement of the city, county and state, as well as a means of social recreation. As nearly as is possible the membership is limited to one from each branch of industry represented in the city and for the most part is composed of the younger business and professional men.... Clubs are usually composed of the younger men, who have earned for them the title of "The Tribe of Pep, Purpose, Push and Progress."²³

Dominated by Anglo- and Irish-American entrepreneurs, Lions members dedicated themselves to the ideal of "Progress." During the next five years, Rock Springs Lions set about their mission, recruiting local members, backing civic improvement projects, and introducing membership to various social, political, and economic issues of some import at weekly luncheons. Lions luncheons proved to be eclectic but shared a certain utilitarianism, tying most themes into the idea of improving local life. For example, in December 1924, the Lions hosted longtime resident and local poet D. G. Thomas, whose narrative of Rock Springs civic improvements and achievements since 1878 thrilled the spectators. Two years later, UPCC's Eugene McAuliffe lectured businesspersons on the necessity of union labor and high wages, averring that men were a greater capital asset than machines, which, of course, reflected the public demeanor of UPCC under his leadership. Attempts to bring the 1926 state Lions convention to Rock Springs consumed much of the club's activities that year, but an energetic program committee still managed

²³ "Lions Club Is Organized at Enthusiastic Meeting," *Rock Springs Rocket*, June 10, 1921, 1.

to stage an elaborate April luncheon, at which "representatives of every nationality in the Rock Springs district, so far as possible, were invited," with over three dozen language groups represented, ranging from Flemish to Basque, Armenian to Modern Hebrew, and Hindustani to Russian. While ostensibly inclusive, the principal focus of the pageant centered upon those of European descent, reflecting the otherness of non-white populations. The popularity of the luncheon birthed the idea of a civic pageant of ethnic diversity.²⁴

Only a few weeks lapsed between the Lions Club's "Equality of Nations" luncheon and the first International Night celebration on May 11, 1926. The luncheon had been a rather hastily organized affair with club members responsible for finding one townsman each to represent the various nationality groups in Rock Springs. Remarkably, under the guidance of Good Fellowship chairman D. C. McKeehan, who was assisted by Baptist minister Stephen Pyle, club members rounded up over three dozen representatives, and Lions and their invited guests chatted, joked, and lunched together before listening to a keynote address by Laramie's Professor Gossard, who had spoken at the Labor Temple on international themes two years earlier. Gossard "pleaded for a new spiritual attitude for the world, and condemned the hatreds of mankind engendered by what he termed 'nationalism.'"²⁵ Reverend Pyle then assumed leadership

²⁴ See "Lions Club Is Organized"; "Lions Hear of Old Days Here," *Rock Springs Rocket*, December 19, 1999, 1; "McAuliffe Was Guest of Lions," *Rock Springs Rocket*, June 11, 1926, 1; "Lions Talk About 1926 Convention," *Rock Springs Rocket*, April 24, 1925, 1; "Many Countries Represented by Guests of the Lions Club," *Rock Springs Rocket*, April 9, 1926, 1.

²⁵ "Novel Feature of Lions Club," *Rock Springs Rocket*, April 26, 1929, 1.

of the larger evening program proposed by Lions Club members and reserved the Elks Home for Tuesday, May 11, and arranged for former Colorado governor and internationalist advocate William Sweet to deliver the keynote. The event featured glimpses

into the intimate life and customs of people from all parts of the globe, entertainment features by yellow men, brown men, white men, black men and red men, and the spirit of broadest fraternity were manifest when representatives of 43 different nationalities assembled for common interest and common enjoyment.²⁶

According to UPCC's *Employes' Magazine*, participants simultaneously celebrated their native and adopted homelands. Governor Sweet, as well, struck a note of international fraternity. Commenting hopefully that immigration restrictions might soon ease, the Coloradoan remarked upon the universality of the human condition and expressed hope that events like Rock Springs' International Night might facilitate international understanding and harmony. The warm memory of this first International Night celebration was rekindled two months later during the local visit of Prince Gustavus Adolphus and Princess Louise of Sweden, when the *Rocket* stated that international themes had dominated that year's city affairs. Little did anyone know that the spirit of internationalism would only grow over the next two years. However, internationalism,

²⁶ "International Day Lions Club Meet Tuesday," *Rock Springs Rocket*, May 14, 1926, 1.

while evincing sidelong glances to non-white groups, tended to focus upon the Euroamerican experience.²⁷

The Rock Springs' Lions Club never hesitated in making their International Night an annual affair, and year-by-year the event simply expanded. A little more than eight months following the first International Night, Reverend Pyle and the Lions Club announced plans for a second celebration planned for Lincoln's Birthday, February 12, 1927. Anticipating larger crowds, the Lions Club moved the principal program for the 1927 event to the Rialto Theater, which had become identified with so much of Rock Springs' festive culture. The organization also reserved the Elks Home for a post-Rialto reception featuring ethnic food, drink, costumes, and displays. For weeks preceding the 1927 event, Lions Club members and assorted members of local associations worked feverishly on all aspects of the spectacle. Finally, on Wednesday, February 12, all was ready, and Lions Club members watched as all 1,250 seats of the Rialto quickly filled and another 325 people seated themselves upon stage, in the aisles, and in any other place they could find. This time nearly four dozen nationality groups participated in the

²⁷ See "International Day"; "Forty-Three Nationalities Represented at International Night in Rock Springs," *Employes' Magazine* 3 (August 1926), 252; "Hundreds in Throng that Greeted the Royal Party," *Rock Springs Rocket*, July 9, 1926, 1; Webb, "International Night," 477. William E. Sweet, born in Chicago in 1869 to Canadian immigrants, received his AB from Swarthmore in Pennsylvania before returning with wife and children to Colorado, where he founded a successful investment banking firm in Denver. Son of an active Colorado Socialist, the younger Sweet became a Democrat and won the gubernatorial election in 1922 by building a power base among farmers and laborers in traditionally Republican Colorado. Defeated in his re-election bid, Sweet thereafter devoted himself to business affairs and an increasing interest in bettering international relations. When he accepted the invitation to deliver the International Night keynote, for example, he had been in Mexico with an American delegation discussing inter-American relations.

program, and, for the first time, onlookers saw the candle-lighting ceremony performed, as participants lit their candles and proclaimed in their native tongues, "As light begets light, so love begets love the world around."²⁸ That year also witnessed the fair tidings from assorted public figures. In this spirit, Rock Springs' only newspaper construed the meaning of the affair in terms of "Americanism." The *Rocket* reported:

The foreigners of Rock Springs learned more of Americanism Wednesday, and Americanism in Rock Springs took on a broader, fuller and deeper meaning as it absorbed the elements of Old World culture which the foreign groups contributed. Each of the forty-six nationalities represented gave to all the others and took from them lessons in human nature and manhood. They all reached a better understanding.²⁹

Residents experienced two International Nights in 1928, with each attracting ever larger crowds. The first occurred on the evening of January 30, a little less than one year following the previous year's event. Again, Wyoming's Republican Governor Frank Emerson appeared as the featured speaker, although the occasion also provided opportunities for Melvin Jones, Secretary-General of Lions International, and noted international traveler and orator Fred B. Smith to speak to the assembled. Pre-International Night newspaper coverage was heavy with sometimes two or three stories

²⁸ "Spirit of Americanism Animated Throng," *Rock Springs Rocket*, March 18, 1927, 1.

²⁹ Quoted in "Spirit of Americanism." See also "International Day Is Set for February 12," *Rock Springs Rocket*, January 28, 1927, 1; "All Invited to a Novel Party," *Rock Springs Rocket*, February 4, 1927, 5; "Club Feature Wednesday," *Rock Springs Rocket*, March 11, 1927, 1. The originally scheduled speaker was to have been Dr. Edward A. Steiner, a Viennese-born academic at Grinnell College, who was renowned for delivering thoughtful and provocative lectures.

appearing in the same edition of the *Rocket*. A newspaper story in mid-January revealed how much of the preparation for this third International Night had been taken over by ethnic groups, stating that it noticed

there is an increasing interest daily in activities preparatory to the 1928 International Night in Rock Springs. Representatives of the foreign organizations are daily carrying out plans for exhibits and entertainment features.

Much interest is centering around costume preparations. For the first time on an International Night program in Rock Springs the Finnish people will appear in their native picturesque attire. The two organizations of Greek people of the city, the Brotherhood of Pericles and the Greek Community, are co-operating with the result that there will Grecian exhibits and costumes. These costumes, a greater number than displayed last year, will be in the white of old Greece and the blue of Crete.³⁰

Finally, on a chilly Monday in January 1928, the big night came. Over 2,000 people crowded into the Rialto, leaving nearly 1,000 more adrift in the snowy Wyoming night. This time, the candle-lighting ceremony involved fifty-six different nationality groups. Entertainment included a Finnish glee club, Scottish bagpipers, Italian folk music, Slovene folk dances, the Basque Jota dance, Japanese martial arts, a Croatian string quartet, and much more. New Yorker and internationalist advocate Fred B. Smith then addressed the audience on the theme of "America at the Crossroads." He warned that ignorance of international and national affairs threatened the citizens of the world with a new danger, that of economic rather than political "autocracy." Smith cautioned the assembled workers and capitalists to adhere to a "Christian [i.e., capitalist] basis of economics." Finally, following the evening program, hundreds adjourned to the Elks

³⁰ "'International' Gains Interest," *Rock Springs Rocket*, January 13, 1928, 1.

Home, where "Grandmother" Mrak demonstrated cluny lace making, Greeks served *menta* and *loukoumi*, Chinese exhibited silken goods, Slovaks danced, and dozens of other participants showcased their ethnic traditions. Once again, International Night had been a great success, and the *Rocket* lauded the work of organizer Stephen D. Pyle³¹ of the First Baptist Church, idealizing Rock Springs' perception of itself for both internal and external consumption.³²

Normally, the next International Night would have taken place early in 1929, nearly a year after the preceding one, but the announcement of Reverend Pyle's resignation from his pastorate in September convinced Lions Club members to move International Night up a month to December 1928 so that they could again use Pyle's formidable organizational talents and indefatigable devotion to the internationalist cause. The quest for municipal uniqueness related to International Night reinforced the nature of the postwar Rock Springs municipal community. No better expression of the phenomenon exists than the following commentary from a *Rocket* editorial:

³¹ It should be noted that Pyle was not the only cleric credited with advancing the cause of International Night. As previously mentioned, Orthodox priest J. V. Tkoch has been mentioned as a moving force behind the event. In addition, although living in Milwaukee due to ill health attributable to selfless devotion to his parish and the harsh southwestern Wyoming climate, Father Anton Schiffrer also received considerable mention in terms of fostering the spirit of internationalism in Rock Springs. See Rhode, 134, and "Rev. Schiffrer Host to Pyle," *Rock Springs Rocket*, July 27, 1928, 1.

³² See "Governor Emerson Coming January 30," *Rock Springs Rocket*, January 20, 1928, 1; "City's Biggest Fete in Offing," *Rock Springs Rocket*, January 20, 1928, 1; "Elaborate Plans Complete for International Night," *Rock Springs Rocket*, January 27, 1928, 1; "Miniature World Viewed at International Celebration," *Rock Springs Rocket*, February 3, 1928, 1, 8; "Stephen D. Pyle,"

With the successful close of the recent celebration of Rock Springs' Internation[al] Night, there follows a wonderful [lesson] in planting the seeds of brotherly love.

Rock Springs, tiny in population compared with greater civic centers of this country, stands out in incomparable position in providing a precedent in one of the holiest aims of civilized existence—the fading of hatred's barriers and the fraternal blending of diversified races of mankind. Industrial centers, attracting various peoples, inadvertently mold a system of goodness that great statesmen have failed to perfect.

There is a great lesson gained in the spirit of innocent harmony engendered in Rock Springs' lone effort to establish, without ado, a brotherhood of humanity among the people of forty-seven divided nations whose blood and traditions have assembled here in the honest pursuit of toil and livelihood. The good world goes back to those warlike settlements of other countries showing that different creeds and races meet at one Mecca of the world in positive peace; and that spot is Rock Springs, Wyoming!³³

Then came news in the September 28, 1928, issue of the *Rocket* of the departure of Reverend Stephen Pyle, the man most singly credited for the success of International Night. Citing that his tenure at First Baptist was "much longer ... than is customary for a single pastorate in one of these frontier western towns," Pyle regrettably tendered his resignation³⁴ It is nearly irresistible to venture a guess as to the reasons for Pyle's departure but nearly as fruitless. He had played a central role in an earlier attempt to federate local churches and must certainly have been discouraged by its failure. Shortly after Pyle left Rock Springs, his marriage to Lethe Morrison, a former high school teacher in Rock Springs, took local residents by surprise, suggesting another possible

³³ "Rock Springs' Distinction," Editorial, *Rock Springs Rocket*, February 10, 1928, 7.

³⁴ "Rev. S. D. Pyle Quits Post as Baptist Pastor," *Rock Springs Rocket*, September 28, 1928, 1.

motive for his departure from town. His heavy involvement in civic affairs, especially with the Lions Club and its various projects, certainly must have exhausted Pyle, and his desire to move on might have been a result of sheer fatigue. Two more plausible possibilities exist. First, Pyle, a graduate of Brown University, and his bride, a graduate of the University of Illinois, may simply have tired of a harsh western climate and isolated cultural environment, as Pyle's use of the words "frontier" and "western" imply. Second, less than a year after his departure from Rock Springs, Pyle wrote back to friends in Wyoming from Switzerland, proclaiming the wisdom of internationalism from the perspective of Europe. Soon thereafter, he and his wife embarked on missionary work in China. Perhaps the real reason for Pyle's resignation and departure was simply zealotry for the cause of internationalism, especially as emblematic of missionary fervor. He had done what he could in Rock Springs and now had moved on to larger arenas because he had "been caught up in the sweep of a movement" called internationalism.³⁵

Pyle's resignation forced Lions Club organizers to move up the date of the next International Night to December 3, 1928. Pyle worked behind the scenes to ensure that his final International Night was a success, and despite travel plans that took him out of the city, he was able while in Denver to correspond with pageant workers encouraging them to "continue their work with the view of making this year's event show the progress

³⁵ Quoted in "Pyle Strikes International Note in Season's Greetings from the Home of the Hauge," *Rock Springs Rocket*, December 27, 1929, 1. See also "Rev. Stephen Pyle to Leave Shortly," *Rock Springs Rocket*, December 7, 1928, 3; "Rev. Pyle and Miss Morrison Take Vows at Hymeneal Altar," *Rock Springs Rocket*, March 1, 1929, 4; Webb, "International Night," 490.

of which it is worthy."³⁶ As previously described, the second International Night celebration of 1928 was the greatest success of them all. This was the one that later popularizers and chroniclers inevitably cited. Grace Webb, for example, says that "[g]reater sincerity, fuller appreciation and keener interest marked the 1928 celebration...."³⁷ For the first time, Tyroleans and Swedish groups created displays for public exhibition. Rock Springs' small Jewish community formally explained the Zionist movement. Slovenes, Italians, Japanese, Chinese, and Slovakian residents redoubled their efforts to manufacture exhibits and incorporate a larger array of native costumes. And, for the first time, because of the great popularity of International Night, organizers scheduled two programs, the first at 6:15 p.m. and the second at 8:30 p.m. with a spectacular fireworks display from the Elks Home put on between shows by the town's remaining Chinese, many of whom, through years of experience in the mines, were adept at handling explosives. International Night was again a stupendous performance, although none of the admiring spectators heading home on that crisp, wintry night in 1928 knew that they had witnessed the final performance.³⁸

³⁶ "International Night Set," *Rocket*.

³⁷ Webb, "International Night," 482.

³⁸ See "Rev. S. D. Pyle Quits," *Rocket*; Webb, "International Night," 482-483; "Throng Braves Storm," *Rocket*; "Fourth Annual," *Rocket*.

CHAPTER TEN

CONCLUSION

The historian searches in vain for a simple explanation as to why Rock Springs' celebrated International Night came to such an unexpected end. After all, the origins¹ of an organization or event are much more accessible in terms of source material than the gradual and sometimes unconscious decision to disband. Historical actors abound who proclaim, "Let's begin!" Unfortunately, in only rare cases do historical actors admit, "Let's give up." So, too, with the demise of International Night in Rock Springs; no extensive paper trail nor clear recollection of a decision to abandon the project exists. How then should the historian conclude the history of International Night, specifically, and Rock Springs, more generally?

To begin, one does find a tiny paper trail in select newspaper accounts in the months following the fourth and final International Night celebration. As early as four days after the December 3 celebration, organizers and the local newspaper spoke of forming a permanent organization comprised chiefly of the various ethnic organizations already participating in International Night to keep the festivity going. In fact, the December 7 edition of the *Rocket* announced a public meeting for Sunday, December 9,

¹ Although, as Marc Bloch once suggested, even the idea of "'origins' is disturbing, because it is ambiguous." See *The Historian's Craft* (New York: Vintage/Random House, 1942, 1955), 29.

at 3 p.m., called by an *ad hoc* committee from the candle-lighting ceremony who had chosen one of their own, Thomas Gibson, temporary chair and announced interest in creating a more permanent organization specifically to perpetuate International Night. The next week's edition of the *Rocket* announced "International Club Under Way: First Steps Taken to Form Society of 43 Tongues," and reported on the group's plans for future meetings. Subsequent discussions in January entailed pleas for representatives from each of the city's ethnic organizations as well as the election of permanent officers. No other news of International Night made the papers until May, when the following item papered at the bottom of page one of the May 17, 1929, *Rocket*:

Fate of International Night Is Discussed

The matter of continuing the observance of International Night, local institution founded by Revered Stephen D. Pyle four years ago and since conducted annually under the auspices of the Lions club, was discussed at Lions Club yesterday. Since Rev. Pyle's departure many have felt that this event, which has attracted national interest, could no longer be observed.

A committee of the Lions club was named to investigate conditions and make recommendations concerning possible International Night affairs in the future.²

The Lions Club, however, had its own hands full with the coming of the 1928 Lions Club state convention to Rock Springs. So it was left for the *Rocket* to urge readers to think about what International Night had meant in vain rhetorical flourishes. By the end of the year, it must have been evident to everyone in town that International Night would not happen in 1929. Instead, in November, the Methodist Church staged its own pageant,

² "Fate of International Night Is Discussed," *Rock Springs Rocket*, May 17, 1929, 1.

"The Striking of America's Hour," a production involving twenty-nine performers representing a dozen or so different nationalities (although not every performer genuinely reflected the group he/she was supposed to represent: a Miss Dorothy Bell, for example, represented Korea), in an attempted melding of the Pageant of Progress and International Night that was, at best, a pale imitation of both. International Night in Rock Springs had come to a quiet end.³

The history of Rock Springs' celebrated festivals during the late 1920s provides a coda for the formative ethno-racial history of the community stretching back before the infamous Chinese massacre of 1885. It also serves to illustrate the diverse threads of that history, which suggest an interweaving of fact and fiction, reality and ideal, fear and hope, on the part of Rock Springs' inhabitants. Why the people of Rock Springs chose to celebrate the cultural diversity of their community at a time when the Ku Klux Klan and xenophobic national immigration restriction disgraced the land is less difficult to explain than why the highly popular celebrations that so reflected the deep faith and abiding hope of the various networks that comprised the municipal community so abruptly and ingloriously ended. Superficially, the celebrations conceived by Baptist minister Stephen Pyle and sponsored by the local chapter of the Lions Club International reflected a strong

³ See "Candle Lighting Group Impressed by Dr. Suzzallo," *Rock Springs Rocket*, December 7, 1928, 1; "Foreign Speaking Groups to Build Organization," *Rock Springs Rocket*, December 7, 1928, 2; "International Club UnderWay," *Rock Springs Rocket*, December 14, 1928, 4; "International Meeting To Be January 6th," *Rock Springs Rocket*, January 4, 1929, 1; "International Night Committee in Effect," *Rock Springs Rocket*, January 18, 1929, 1; "Lions Prepare for Big Convention," *Rock Springs Rocket*, May 17, 1929, 1; "Why Not Have an International Night?," *Rock Springs Rocket*, May 24, 1929, 1; "Pageant To Be Given at Methodist Church Tuesday Eve Next," *Rock Springs Rocket*, November 22, 1929, 4.

internationalist orientation. International Nights, however, at a more profound level, reflected ethnocentric traditions deeply embedded in Rock Springs' history, especially in relation to the maintenance of racialized boundaries and an Americanization ethos that sometimes mitigated inclusion and cultural sensitivity. Finally, the International Night extravaganzas fit nicely into a reified commonality that a neatly structured series of public rituals occurring throughout the calendar year sought to foster.

International Night, in other words, worked in Rock Springs because both the material conditions and cultural history of the community created an ideal setting for such a truly American festival of hopefulness and artfulness. This was especially true during the mid- to late 1920s, when the coal camp-turned-company town truly began modernizing its municipal physicality with elaborate efforts at flood control, waste management, public recreation, adult education, and traffic management. Emerging from the hyper-nationalistic war and postwar years, the workers and capitalists of Rock Springs seized upon the ideal of Progress for their sense of municipal community and sought to express that ideal in both material development and cultural expression. Unlike other key homogenizing celebrations such as Eight-Hour Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, and Old Timers' Day, International Night celebrated the commonality of Rock Springs residents by superimposing upon the various ethnic community networks and their celebratory cultures a reified unity of mythological proportions. Why, then, did the celebrations, which were so popular that organizers had to turn hundreds of people away for lack of space, not continue to play a role in Rock Springs' civic life after 1928?

An easy answer might be that the coming Depression undercut the financial base and optimistic motivation of townspeople to celebrate. Yet other public festivities continued throughout the depression years and evidence clearly suggests that the death of International Night occurred well before the crashes of late 1929. Most contemporaries blamed the discontinuance of the festivals on Reverend Pyle's departure from the community for travels in Europe and a mission in China, as well as the Lions Club's failure to continue sponsoring the annual event. Yet, if International Night was so important to municipal community consciousness, then why did not other interested citizens arise to the occasion, especially the immigrant groups, who appeared early in 1929 quite eager to do so?

I would suggest that several interrelated factors explain the discontinuance of International Night. First, the sheer weight of the organizational effort of International Night, especially considering that two celebrations were held in 1928, overwhelmed the community over time. This, when combined with the depletion of surplus capital and the requisite optimism during the Depression years, helps explain the failure of community members to respond to the challenge. Second, the loss of an energetic organizer like Reverend Pyle, who was a devoutly committed internationalist, must be considered a key reason for the abandonment of International Night, for the devotion of one highly committed organizer may tap previously unknown sources of community activism that would instead lie dormant without such a stimulus. Third, and most importantly, International Night died away because it had served its purpose. Rock Springs residents had proven to themselves that despite their many differences they could get along.

Certainly, community members knew that they had not solved all the problems of vice, violence, economics, and cultural differences, but the pageants had shown that there was more to the legacy of Rock Springs than the Massacre and bituminous coal.

As International Night brought outside attention and apparent internal unity to Rock Springs, the townspeople created a sustaining mythology that seemingly compensated for the legacy of the Chinese massacre and eased the transition from wartime xenophobia to late postwar cultural accommodation. With the departure of the dynamo Pyle, the inhabitants of Rock Springs could settle back into the more familiar pre-International Night cycle of celebrations that highlighted nationalism, labor organization, corporate capitalism, and ethnic solidarity. Rock Springs' workers and capitalists had survived the xenophobic 1920s in part because of the International Night ethos and could now turn to the more material concerns of the capitalist crisis generally known as the Great Depression. International Night went out with a whimper because its core rationale had already deeply embedded itself in the historically constructed municipal community of Rock Springs, which because of the ending of mass immigration from Europe in the mid-1920s witnessed fairly static ethnocultural patterns for another half-century.

So, the International Night celebrations in Rock Springs had served a special purpose. Townspeople, guests, and visitors frolicked amid the pageantry of a community blessed with human differences and committed to the ideal of Progress. Chinese and Germans, Scots and Amerindians, Greeks and Japanese, Slovenes and Irish, all told forty-some different language groups extolled their peculiar distinctions as well as their

commonality as Americans. Food and drink, music and dance, and above all the elaborate staging and costuming, manufactured an alluring myth of cosmopolitan consciousness, but it was a symbolic commodity only valuable if residents sought to purchase it with positive deeds as well as well-meaning words. Yes, they might in a way. Their children would lose the old language. Mealtime would become more homogenized. Concerns of capital and labor eroded diversity. And the very important process of urbanization—creating a real, modern city out of the sagebrush and atop the old coal mines—required presentism over nostalgia. But none could fully escape the legacies of the past. From the whispering echoes of the Comanche to the quiet desperation of the Molly Maguires, from the dying screams of the Chinese to the sobs of coal-mining widows, Rock Springs remained a place with a past, and no ritual, regardless of how public or how profound, could exorcise the deeds and misdeeds of the people who constructed Rock Springs.

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