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Walter Walker and His Fight Against Socialism—page 1
Navajo Migrant Workers in the Grand
Valley, 1955-1970—page 19

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Walter Walker
Walter Walker 1902.

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Walter Walker and His Fight Against Socialism
Jeannette Smith*

"The campaign against socialism has to be aggressive in order to win; therefore we have endeavored to be aggressive" declared *The Grand Junction Daily Sentinel's* editor Walter Walker in 1913.¹ Socialism had thrived for many years in Grand Junction and Walter Walker stood as one of the movement's staunchest foes. By examining Walker's reaction to socialism, insight may be gained into the struggle that took place between the socialists and the established capitalists in a small western town, thereby revealing a connection between national events and local politics.

Beginning his career with *The Daily Sentinel* in 1904, Walker, as city editor, launched an assault on the socialists, Grand Junction's preferential voting system, and subsequent elections of socialists to prominent city positions. The barrage continued until after World War I, with the exception of 1910 when Walker left to own and operate *The Plaindealer*, a newspaper in Ouray, Colorado.² Walker returned to become editor of *The Daily Sentinel* in 1911 after Isaac Newton Bunting died. In 1917, Walker and his wife bought the paper and ran it until his death on October 8, 1956. Walker was a member of the Democratic Party, a successful businessman, and a powerful civic leader.³

Before World War I, American socialism emphasized reform. The Gilded Age had created economic monopolies, political privileges, and distinct class lines which threatened the American dream. Unlike Progressive Democrats and Republicans, Socialists did not merely want to reform the system, rather they saw the system itself as wrong.⁴ Although a national party, socialism flourished mostly in local movements suited to the individual needs of particular regions of the United States.⁵

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The Socialist Party wanted to replace existing political inequality with social, economic, and political equality in an effort to help everyone obtain the American dream.⁶ Socialists believed that capitalism had failed. While private enterprisers made enormous profits, workers labored for slave wages instead of enjoying their fair share of the wealth they helped create. However, advocates of reform knew that the dismantling of capitalism would require an evolutionary process. The wealthy yielded great power, and most citizens regarded capitalism and private property as the cornerstones of their economic prosperity.⁷

At the turn of the century, socialists believed the power struggle between the working class and the capitalists was a major issue. Wanting to form a cooperative commonwealth, the Social Democratic Party's goals were to "destroy wage slavery, [and] abolish the institution of private property in the means of production."⁸ In 1900, the party ran Eugene V. Debs and Job Harriman on the presidential ticket and received a disappointing 86,935 votes, or zero point six percent of the vote.⁹ Debs realized his party faced a dilemma; most Americans regarded socialism as a "foreign" ideology introduced by European immigrants. The electorate could not accept European socialism with its emphasis on class relations because many Americans received high wages and enjoyed political freedoms.¹⁰

In 1901, the party changed its name to the Socialist Party of America,¹¹ and continued to emphasize class struggle and the issue of private ownership in the means of employment and in the tools of production. They drew 402,000 votes in the national election of 1904.¹² Four years later the Socialist platform advocated employment through public works projects, nationalization of industry, complete freedom of press, and drastic improvements in working conditions. This new platform garnered 420,390 votes, or three percent of the popular vote, yet not a single vote in the electoral college.¹³ In 1912, the Socialist Party more than doubled their total votes receiving 900,369 votes for the presidency, representing six percent of the popular vote. The party now supported "collective ownership and democratic management' of communication and transportation systems."¹⁴ Boasting a national membership of 118,000 and a socialist press with a circulation of two million, the party was growing.¹⁵

The success enjoyed by the Bull Moose Progressive Party also reflected the appeal of reform politics during this time. Theodore Roosevelt and the Bull Moose Party, often labeled socialist, emerged in

response to the same social problems that generated socialism; however, those in the Bull Moose Party explained they were progressive and perhaps even counterrevolutionary, not socialist. Many felt that the Progressive Party would stop the country's drift towards socialism, and Roosevelt felt his party offered real solutions to legitimate complaints.¹⁶ The Progressives argued that the local, state, and national governments should be made more open and receptive to the "will of the unorganized mass of citizens."¹⁷ In the 1912 election, Roosevelt received 4,127,788 votes, or twenty-seven point four percent of the total vote. The success of both the Progressives and Socialists in this election indicated a growing dissatisfaction with the two party system and the deteriorating social conditions in the United States.¹⁸

Following the national trends and setting a few new ones, Grand Junction was a microcosm of the national experiment in socialism. On September 6, 1908, Eugene V. Debs roared into town on his train the "Red Special," and over one-thousand people attended his speech, making it the largest political gathering in city history.¹⁹ When Debs stepped on stage, a little girl presented him with a bouquet of flowers and he gave her a kiss. He began his speech by commenting on the wonderful audience and sarcastically remarked that the size of the crowd was "flattering...especially for 'undesirable citizens.'" Debs discussed economic and industrial conditions, and outlined the policies of the Socialist Party. He told the crowd that the working class could not expect anything from either Democrats or Republicans. Debs asked the assemblage to join him and his comrades "in the fight for industrial freedom, industrial equality, [and] the wiping out of child labor, of poverty and of wretchedness."²⁰

When Grand Junction voters elected the Socialist Party candidate Thomas Todd as their new mayor on November 2, 1909,²¹ they had approved the charter-commission form of government proposed by James Bucklin.²² This charter had installed the preferential voting system whereby each citizen voted once for each candidate by place—first, second, or third. The first place votes counted above all the others unless there was no clear winner, in which case subsequent votes were counted. In 1909, Todd did not win in first place votes, but after counting the second and third place votes, Todd had the clear majority.²³ This disturbed Walter Walker and motivated him to speak out against the preferential voting system.²⁴

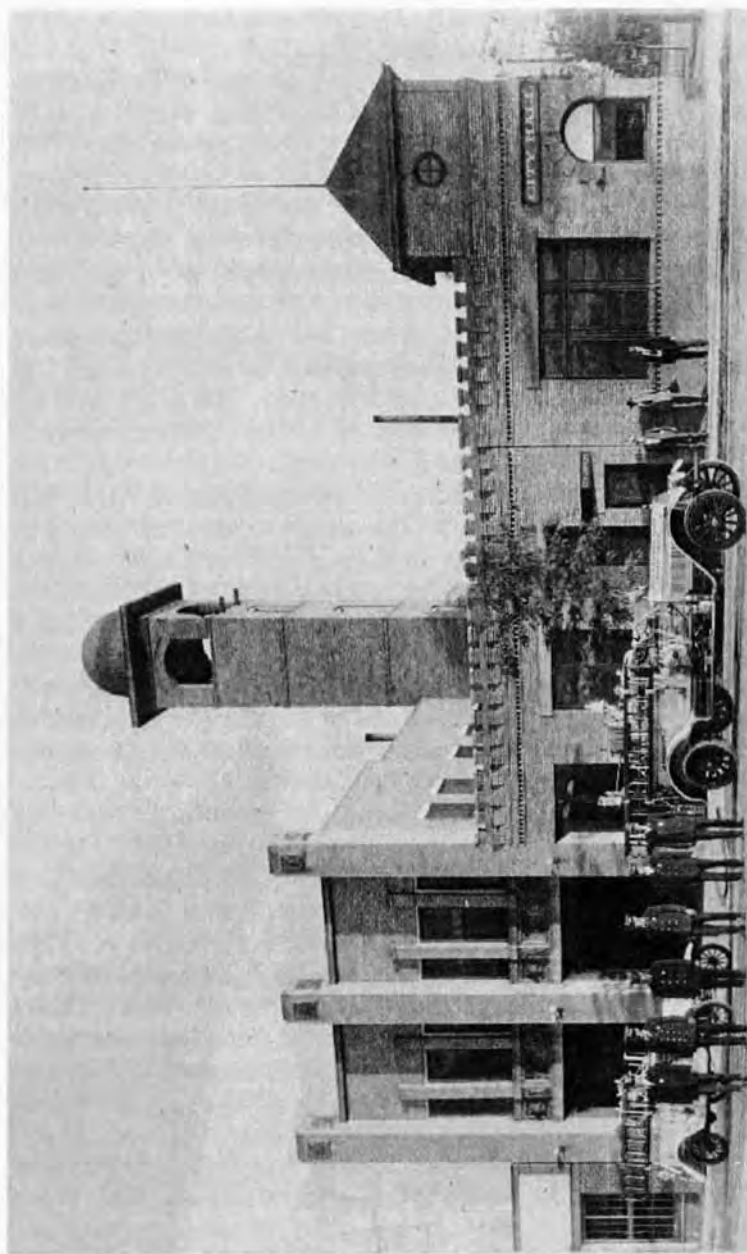
Once in office, Thomas Todd began implementing several so-

cialistic programs. A municipal woodpile was created on the corner of Second and Ute, near the downtown area. Homeless men, "hobos," or any other unemployed man could chop wood in exchange for groceries from the city. At some future date, a circular saw was to be installed to lessen the burden on the worker. Walker stated that a rumor was going around that "any one holding a red card could chop wood."²⁵ According to Walker, the men did not like to chop wood all day for only three meals and one night's lodging, and because no self-respecting socialist would work there, only hobos chopped wood. Local coal interests also objected to the program, claiming it was illegal for the city to sell the wood for profit; they argued it competed with private enterprise.²⁶

Mayor Todd wanted to involve the municipality in other businesses as well. In a speech delivered in January 1912, he pushed for a municipally owned icehouse, claiming it would save the city \$30,000 per year. Apparently, the amount of ice sold in the city for one year was only worth \$27,000, so Walker quickly expressed his problem with Todd's plan; how could the city save \$30,000 per year when the total expenditure was \$27,000? Walker suggested that Mayor Todd investigate first before promising great things from municipally owned enterprises.²⁷ Shortly after the woodpile and icehouse controversies, Walker accused Mayor Todd of being more interested in plugging the "Socialist machine" than helping Grand Junction grow.²⁸

Walker brought attention to the problem of attracting capital investment to Grand Junction. After Mayor Todd proposed the municipal icehouse, E. A. Sunderlin, the owner of an electric plant in Fruita, Colorado questioned the prospect for capital investment in Grand Junction. He felt that Todd and the socialists discouraged capital investors. Why would anyone invest in a city where good will and support could not be expected from everyone in the community?²⁹ Walker added to the assertion, charging that Mayor Todd held the city back. He also accused Todd of using his power to give socialists special privileges.

To support his charge of special privileges, Walker pointed to a band concert in Children's Park in August 1912. Not only did Todd choose and hire the band, but after the concert there was a socialist gathering with guest speakers. Walker accused the socialists of using the band, paid for with city funds, to attract a crowd for their political speeches. Walker reported that a Democratic candidate for senator, Thomas J. O'Donnell, had requested permission for use of a park for his speech and was denied. The city commissioners told O'Donnell he "might hurt the



Grand Junction City Hall and Fire Station.

(Grand Junction Fire Department Collection, Research Center and Special Library, Museum of Western Colorado, 1990.58.)

grass." Walker facetiously concluded that the parks were not for Democrats or Republicans, only Socialists. Walker proclaimed this an abuse of the mayor's power and unfair to other political parties. He used this as an example of how wrong he perceived the nature of any socialist administration to be.³⁰

Todd responded to these charges in a letter to *The Daily Sentinel*, wherein he claimed Walker had misrepresented the facts. City commissioners had told O'Donnell the park he requested for the evening meeting had new grass and shrubbery, and thus would be available only for day meetings. Gatherings at any other park either day or night would have been acceptable. Next, Todd offered O'Donnell the use of Children's Park, but his advance agent felt it would be too difficult to draw a crowd. The city then offered use of the corner at Fifth and Main, and O'Donnell accepted. Todd ended his letter: "I am content now to leave it up to the readers of *The Sentinel* whether you did or did not even to the slightest extent, try to be fair in the matter."³¹

The sparring between Todd and Walker continued. About a month later, local socialists decided to hold a second public concert. Wanting to avoid another scandal, they decided the party would pay for the band. At this event, held on September 20, 1912, chief of police Shiperd B. Hutchinson lectured about socialists, calling them more religious and better people than "co-operation [*sic*] church goers." Walker reported the event and said the majority of people left after the concert, insinuating that the party's efforts had failed.³²

Despite these controversies, the socialists retained their respect for Mayor Todd. As mayor of Grand Junction, Thomas Todd had earned himself a nationwide reputation, and members of his party urged him to run as a presidential candidate in 1912. Upon hearing this, Walter Walker wished him well.³³ The mayor traveled to the Socialist Party's national convention where he represented Colorado. Publicly he said he was not seeking a national office, but hoped Grand Junction would get some publicity as a result of the attention he was receiving.³⁴ After arriving at the convention, the mayor explained his position as a red card man holding office in a conservative western town. He asked for suggestions that would advance his administration and the Socialist platform while still obeying the laws of the democracy. At the convention, it was suggested to Todd that he run for the vice-presidential nomination, but Todd declined.³⁵

Another popular Grand Junction socialist and enemy of Walter

Walker was chief of police Shiperd B. Hutchinson, who had been a resident of Grand Junction since 1898, and became the first chief of police under the new commission form of government in 1909. He served as an active member of the Socialist Party until he retired from political life in 1919. Hutchinson later became one of the best known and most highly regarded ranchers in the community until on July 5, 1929, he was struck and killed by lightning while unloading hay from a wagon.³⁶

According to Hutchinson's critics, while he served as chief of police, the city became a paradise for hobos. William F. Buthorn, the owner of La Court hotel in Grand Junction, told Walker of an incident Buthorn had with a California man. This Californian had read an article in a California paper describing Grand Junction as a place where hobos got three square meals a day at the taxpayers' expense.³⁷ Walker, in his newspaper, took exception to Grand Junction's reputation as a "hobo's haven" and launched a campaign to dispel this myth.

A robbery involving a tramp occurred in August of 1912, prompting Walker to run an editorial claiming Grand Junction's socialist administration pampered hobos, and the city paid the price with a higher crime rate.³⁸ Hutchinson responded immediately, stating that there was no proof, except the robbery the week prior, of any crimes being committed in Grand Junction by the hobos since he had been on the police force. Taking the side of local vagabonds, he described how a tramp jumped into the river after a man and succeeded in saving the victim's life. Hutchinson claimed that the local residents, not transients, committed the robberies and shootings in Grand Junction. He felt that not all hobos were crooks, and not all crooks were hobos. He asserted he had never invited the vagrants into town. Wanting these individuals to work for food, he had asked the citizens of Grand Junction not to feed them unless they worked, and stated that the city never fed vagrants without requiring them to work. Hutchinson, ending his rebuttal, said, "After all the only real difference between us is this: You love and support the system that produces the tramp, yet you despise the tramp the system produces, while I despise the system that produces the tramp, yet I pity the tramp."³⁹

Hutchinson ran for Mesa County Sheriff in 1912 and, predictably, Walker opposed his candidacy. Walker accused Hutchinson of dividing the vote, which might enable Billy Struthers, a "dry" candidate, to defeat Charles Schrader, the incumbent. Before the election, Walker had predicted no more than 700 Socialist votes in Mesa County,⁴⁰ but Hutchinson received 2,029 votes.⁴¹ *The Daily Sentinel* reported that

Hutchinson received "over 1,800 votes," not acknowledging the number of actual votes. Mesa County cast 1,000 votes for Debs that same year, a forty percent increase over the 1908 election.⁴²

In April 1913, the International Workers of the World (also known as the IWW or Wobblies), a socialist group Walter Walker also considered onerous, came to town. William D. "Big Bill" Haywood led the IWW, which was created in 1905 when he called to order the "Continental Congress of the working class." This was considered a radical organization determined to create one union for all the workers of the world.⁴³ If they could form a national union, they believed that one great strike of laborers could overthrow capitalism.⁴⁴ Members of the IWW traveled from one community to another giving speeches on street corners. Because of their reputation for incendiary ideas, officials claimed they caused public unrest, and the Wobblies were often jailed immediately upon entering a community on grounds of civil disobedience. The Wobblies, on the other hand, believed that they had the right to free speech.⁴⁵

When Haywood gave a speech in 1911 advocating the use of violence, reporters in Grand Junction questioned area Socialist Party members about Haywood's statement. Bart Lynch, another Socialist candidate for Mesa County Sheriff, distanced himself from Haywood's remarks by stating, "We believe in evolution not revolution." Dr. Riley Moore said that Haywood did not speak for the party, and J.J. Weigman believed Haywood stepped outside of party lines by declaring such things.⁴⁶

Members of the IWW planned to visit Grand Junction, give speeches, and experience its now famous hobo hospitality. An advance agent for the IWW met with Mayor Todd, Shiperd B. Hutchinson, and Dr. Riley Moore, and announced that seventy-five members would be in town on April 9, 1913. Hutchinson proposed that the city feed the men, assuring the commissioners that they would work for every penny they received. The commissioners voted for the measure, and the city administrators appropriated twenty-five dollars of the city's money to feed the members when they arrived.⁴⁷

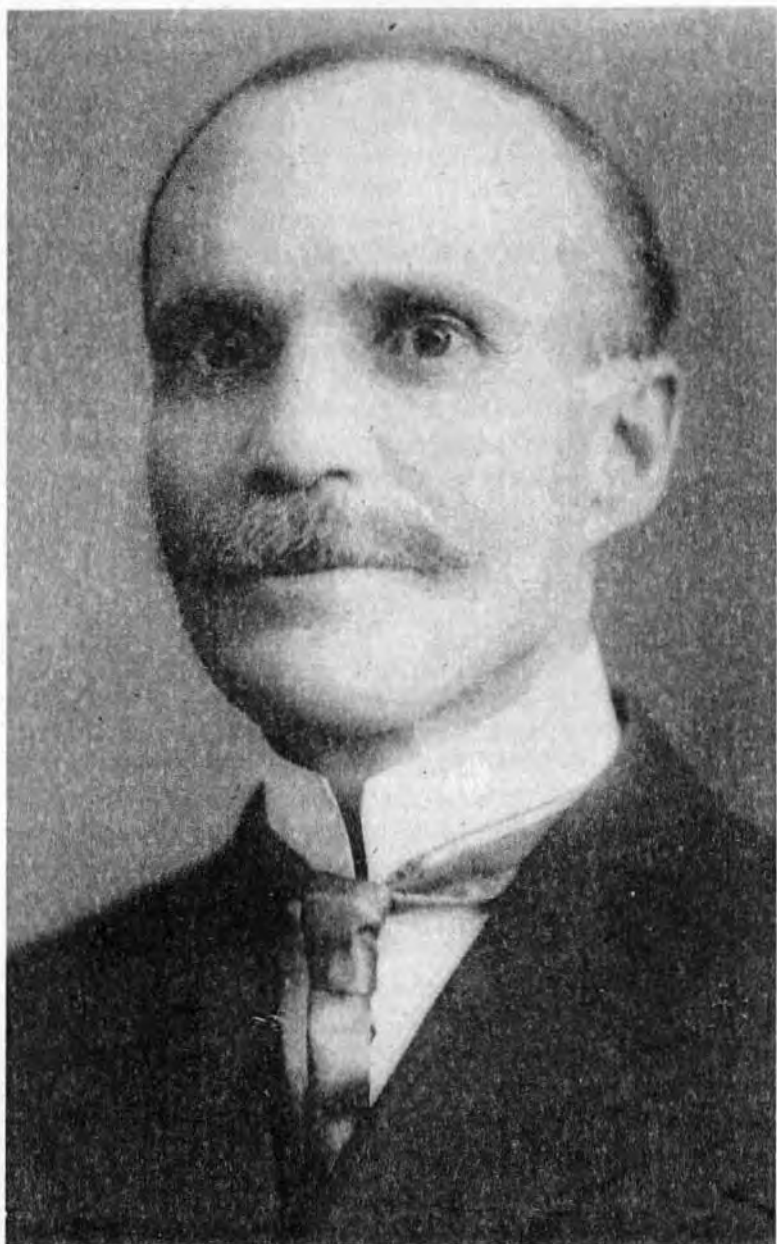
Walker was infuriated that the city had agreed to feed the "worthless, country-hating, law-denouncing, drones."⁴⁸ He reported that the Associated Press was sending a report to every part of the West about the "Mulligan Stew" Grand Junction would provide for the IWW. Instead of stew, Walker urged the commissioners to appropriate more po-

lice patrols to run the IWW out of town.⁴⁹

The Daily Sentinel reported that the railroad had offered jobs to fifty members of the IWW as they passed over Soldier Summit, Utah, paying \$1.25 to \$2.50 per day to work; the Wobblies refused. Instead, they opted to go to Grand Junction where they could "eat and sleep at the city's expense." There was also talk of a recall of the city commissioners who advocated feeding the IWW members, and that dissatisfied people of the city had nicknamed Mayor Todd's administration the "Mulligan administration."⁵⁰ According to Walker, many citizens had notified him of their approval of his own stance.

Walker looked at the city records for the previous December and found that the commissioners had denied a request for a donation to the "worthy poor" because they could not legally give to charity. How was the situation with the IWW different? Walker reported that the news of free food and lodging had spread quickly, and many more Wobblies were on their way. He threatened the city commissioners with recall petitions if they appropriated any more money to feed the men.⁵¹ Eventually, 140 members of the IWW arrived in Grand Junction, but they did not receive a warm reception. The Wobblies planned a street meeting for April 11, 1913 to publicly express their views. However, Walker had aroused the citizenry and the meeting never took place; his editorials demanded that the friendly treatment of the radicals stop. According to Walker, the townspeople had lost patience with the mayor and chief of police, and wanted the Wobblies out of Grand Junction. Walker thundered, "GRAND JUNCTION IS NOT A SOCIALISTIC COMMUNITY. NEVER WAS AND NEVER WILL BE." In his view, the people did not want the socialists running the city to please themselves.⁵² Walker asserted that having the IWW in Grand Junction was a dangerous situation. He charged the radicals with begging, threatening, and demanding free meals. He urged the people to defend themselves, and they did.

Walker admitted that he used *The Daily Sentinel* as a tool in an attempt to remove Todd and Hutchinson from office, and he claimed that hundreds of citizens stood behind him. At a public meeting, formal steps were taken to recall Todd. There, citizens made it clear to Todd that the removal of Hutchinson as chief of police would satisfy most people, but Todd remained defiant and refused to remove him. When Walker wrote that the city commissioners would probably fire Hutchinson themselves, Hutchinson resigned on April 12, 1913.⁵³



*James Bucklin, Founder of
Grand Junction's Charter
Government.*

(Research Center and Special Library,
Museum of Western Colorado.)

In the autumn of 1914, the tensions between Walker and the socialists escalated. James Bucklin proposed for the second time in the same year a special election for voting on municipal ownership of the gas and electric power plants. The Municipal Ownership League, a local organization, promoted the idea.⁵⁴ Walker dedicated himself to defeating this proposition, asserting that the majority of businessmen, taxpayers, and average citizens disapproved of municipal ownership of utilities.

Walker, pushing his views the night before the election, claimed that burdening Grand Junction with another heavy bond just so Bucklin could boast a municipally owned electric and gas plant was wrong. Walker felt that if the bond issue passed, Grand Junction would suffer financially, commercially, and developmentally, and place the city in a precarious condition, the worst in its short history. Walker asserted that those who backed this measure had no proof that it would benefit the city. *The Daily Sentinel* countered the promise of reduced electric bills with the fact that the city would amass a great debt in order to finance the municipal electric plant. Walker instructed the voters to reject this proposition in "an overwhelming manner."⁵⁵

Voters defeated the municipal ownership proposition 763 votes to 574. Walker claimed this defeat revealed that Grand Junction citizens were tired of "civic strife and municipal reform," that the people had spoken in a fair manner, and he stated he wanted Bucklin to quit raising the issue every six months. In fact, Walker believed the citizens would not tolerate Bucklin trying to subject the city to another special election.⁵⁶

While Walker fought socialists at every turn, he defended their political rights and praised their commitment to their party. Walker reported many of the injustices suffered by the socialists and stated he disagreed with the treatment they received. On January 24, 1913, Debs was arrested at his home in Terre Haute, Indiana.⁵⁷ Walker responded in his editorial by reaffirming that although he was not a socialist in any way, he felt that they deserved fair and just treatment like any other American. The federal government objected to the socialist publication *Appeal to Reason* and its exposure of conditions in a federal prison. Walker blasted the nation's leaders saying that they harassed Socialist Party leaders and publications simply because they were socialists. He felt that such heavy handed actions by the federal government could backfire and generate sympathy for the socialist cause.⁵⁸ When Massachusetts proposed bills to legalize censure of displaying certain flags, Walker decided that

state had carried things too far; he felt the bills were directed specifically at the socialists and their party flag. These bills attacked personal liberties, and such actions would only create more votes for the Socialist Party.⁵⁹

When George Kunkel began preparing the building at 612 Main Street as a place to publish his socialist newspaper *The Critic*, Walker found a desirable socialist trait. Members of the Socialist Party donated their time to help Kunkel remodel the building, and Walker wrote an editorial praising the volunteer efforts: "The writer is not a socialist, but, nevertheless we have a great respect for loyalty to and sacrifice for a cause, no matter whether we stand for the cause or not."⁶⁰ Walker did not agree with the socialists, but he respected their convictions and commitment to the cause.⁶¹ Perhaps Walker was using energy of the Socialist Party to demonstrate the lethargy of the Democratic, Republican, and Bull Moose Parties. He stated that the other parties would be hard pressed to find members to work "solely for the love of the party and the principles for which they stand."⁶² Walker concluded that the Socialist Party deserved a spot in national and international politics because the party had sparked true devotion in its members.⁶³

Local socialists not only helped to remodel a building for *The Critic*, but they also volunteered to circulate the first five thousand copies which appeared on May 23, 1914. Walker argued that if any other party circulated such a paper it would cost a great deal of money because they lacked the socialists' volunteer spirit. Walker declared this to be the reason the Socialist Party grew every year. To remain competitive, the other political parties needed to find the same ardor.⁶⁴

While Walter Walker defended the civil liberties of socialists and used the example of their devotion and energy to chide those in the political mainstream, he relished any opportunity to expose them as hypocrites. On April 20, 1914, Walker asked his readers if they had seen the "beautiful circular"⁶⁵ which the socialists distributed to advertise a street meeting. Using a sarcastic tone, Walker said the party claimed "to be a great friend, defender, and protector of Union Labor."⁶⁶ He then revealed that the circular had been printed in a "scab" print shop, even though Grand Junction had three union print shops. He reminded the readers that the socialists were always criticizing others for using nonunion circulars, yet it was apparently a different situation entirely when the matter involved socialist dollars.⁶⁷

Soon a major battle occurred between Walker and socialists involving more than just a nonunion print shop. The Socialist Party of

America opposed American entry into World War I, and the local socialists advocated the national party's anti-war stance. In February 1917, Grand Junction socialists organized a meeting for those who objected to being "forced into war."⁶⁸ According to the party, only two percent of the local population supported the war in Europe which had been raging since 1914, and the other ninety-eight percent needed to gather to let President Wilson know that Grand Junction was not pro-war. After the meeting, they planned to send a telegram to the President informing him of their opinion.⁶⁹

After Walker learned of the meeting, he instructed his readers to "see to it THAT NO TELEGRAM IS SENT TO [THE PRESIDENT] ... PURPORTING TO SPEAK FOR THE CITY AS A WHOLE OR THE CITIZENSHIP AS A WHOLE."⁷⁰ Walker proclaimed that Grand Junction was a patriotic city and the citizens could not allow the President to construe any other impression. Walker then claimed, "there is NO ROOM in America except for PATRIOTIC AMERICANS."⁷¹

Walker reported that at their meeting the socialists used a series of shenanigans to get the results they wanted. Hutchinson chaired the gathering and was one of the speakers at the event. Walker branded him "the city's most rabid and prominent Socialist," and claimed that only party members applauded him.⁷² Senator Horace T. Delong also spoke, stating he "was making the plea of his life" for peace; again the only favorable response came from the socialists.⁷³ When referring to Rev. J. E. Bryant's speech, Walker noted the irony of these political leaders applauding the church and Christianity since they had previously scoffed at and rejected the church and religion.⁷⁴ With the speaker's platform closed to those who opposed them, Walker claimed that in this meeting the socialists tried to "muzzle free speech." When all the speakers had been heard, Delong presented the resolutions to the crowd. Once he read them, he asked those in favor of peace to "stand up and vote yes." Walker called this a "subterfuge" and a "peace plea" intended to confuse the people.⁷⁵ At this point, the opposition asked to be heard and gained control of the meeting.

Someone asked where they had placed the American flag because it had been missing all night. Shortly thereafter, the Sons of the American Revolution came marching in with the flag which caused wild cheering among everyone except the socialists. James McClintock, a socialist, asked to be heard and eventually he proposed an amendment to the resolution: "The sentiment of the people of Grand Junction is for

peace, provided no overt act is committed by any nation that will necessitate President Wilson taking different action."⁷⁶ The only men who arose to vote "yea" were the socialists and a "nay" vote was not taken. Walker reported that he then struggled to make it to the platform, acting for hundreds of citizens in attendance, and denounced "the meeting as a Socialist plot" and exposed the real reason for the meeting—to harass the President of the United States. Walker asked the crowd if they wanted Grand Junction to get "freak advertising" again because of the "Socialistic domination."⁷⁷

Walker suggested that the people of the community send a message to Wilson supporting him, "ENDORISING ALL HE HAS DONE IN THE GERMAN CRISIS AND PLEDGING HIM OUR SUPPORT IN ANYTHING HE MAY HAVE TO DO."⁷⁸ Reporting that in the crowd of over eight hundred people, seven hundred stood up and shouted "yea," Walker felt this demonstrated to the socialists that the majority of people did not want the "reds" speaking for them.⁷⁹

The next day Senator Delong and other leaders sent the President their own resolutions, which angered many in the community. Walker boasted that the crowd the previous night had been filled with his fellow patriotic Americans who stood by their president. On behalf of all Grand Junction, he sent the following telegram to the White House:

Hon. Woodrow Wilson,
President of the United States,
White House, Washington D.C.

February 6, 1917

In one of the greatest mass meetings ever held in this western city by an almost unanimous vote a resolution was adopted tonight endorsing your courageous and patriotic action in the war situation, expressing genuine satisfaction in your great leadership, voicing utmost confidence in your ability to guide us in these critical days and pledging you the united support of the people of this great section of Colorado. Our people are with you, and in any emergency you can count on our loyalty and citizenship.

[Signed]

THE DAILY SENTINEL (Democratic),

Walter Walker, Editor.

THE DAILY NEWS (Republican),

J.A. Barkley, Editor.

CHARLES E. CHERRINGTON, Mayor.⁸⁰

The socialists' resolutions and Walker's telegram represented salvos in the fight between the contending political philosophies which had divided Grand Junction for a decade. While skirmishes between Walker and the socialists continued into the 1920s, the events of the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia made many Americans more fearful of ideologies like socialism and communism. As was the case elsewhere in the United States, conservative political views such as Walter Walker's prevailed over those of socialists. The fight between Walker and Grand Junction's socialists lends an interesting aspect to the city's history while revealing much about Walter Walker.

Walter Walker, using his editorials to fight the reforms the socialists tried to implement in Grand Junction, represented the establishment that fought socialism on the local level. While writing countless editorials detailing and attacking the activities of the local socialist movement, and attempting to discredit and expose local "reds," Walker also defended the Socialist Party when they were treated unfairly, and spoke highly of many of the men he had previously denounced. However, Walker supported the rights of the socialists in order to protect democracy and to prevent the Socialist Party from being martyred; people flocked to this movement because of the current system's failure, and Walker felt that inactivity toward the injustices suffered by the Socialist Party would only turn more citizens toward them. He praised socialists who stood up publicly for that in which they believed, encouraging men of all political persuasions to do the same.

Walker agreed there were problems in America that necessitated protests, but he did not believe that socialism was the solution. He viewed the social, civic and economic revolutions advocated by the Socialist Party as too anarchic; instead, he felt the issues needed to be countered with a more constructive and mainstream program which did not disturb "the very foundations on which society and the state are built."⁸¹ He told people they had to get involved in the fight against socialism, primarily through voting, and Walker never let *The Daily Sentinel* readers forget what happened when socialists held office in Grand Junction. For years he fought the reputation that the city had received during Mayor Todd's administration, reiterating many times that Grand Junction never was and never would be a socialist community. His diligent campaign lasted until the early 1920s, after which, there is little mention of the local socialist movement in his editorials.

NOTES

¹*The Grand Junction Daily Sentinel*, 9 May 1913. Hereafter cited as *Daily Sentinel*.

²Wilber Fiske Stone, ed., *The History of Colorado*, vol. IV (Chicago: The SJ Clarke Publishing Company, 1919), 415.

³*Daily Sentinel*, 10 October 1956.

⁴H. Wayne Morgan, *American Socialism: 1900-1960* (Englewood: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1964), 7.

⁵Irving Howe, *Socialism and America* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Publishers, 1985), 7.

⁶Morgan, *American Socialism*, 22.

⁷*Ibid.*, 21-22.

⁸Earl R. Kruschke, *Encyclopedia of Third Parties in the United States* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, Inc., 1991), 165.

⁹*Ibid.*

¹⁰Nick Salvatore, *Eugene V. Debs: Citizen and Socialist* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1982), 186-187.

¹¹*Ibid.*, 189.

¹²Krutschke, *Encyclopedia of Third Parties*, 165.

¹³*Ibid.*, 166.

¹⁴*Ibid.*

¹⁵Howe, *Socialism and America*, 3.

¹⁶John A. Gable, *The Bull Moose Years: Theodore Roosevelt and the Progressive Party* (Port Washington: National University Publications, 1978), 85-86.

¹⁷John A. Garraty, *The American Nation*, Fifth Edition, vol. I (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1971), 247

¹⁸Gable, *Bull Moose Years*, 131.

¹⁹*Grand Junction News*, 7 September 1908.

²⁰*Daily Sentinel*, 7 September 1908.

²¹*Ibid.*, 3 November 1909.

²²James Bucklin was one of the founders of the Grand Junction Town Company. Bucklin considered himself a pioneer of thought and others considered him a "radical thinker." He became a member of the Progressive Party, and believed strongly in grass roots movements. He wanted to make Grand Junction "a model of a free, progressive city." He and Walker did not get along, and Walker resented the reforms Bucklin proposed. See Don A. Mackendrick, "Thunder West of the Divide: James W.

Bucklin, Western Colorado Utopian Reformer," *Essays and Monographs in Colorado History* (1984): 35-53.

²³*Daily Sentinel*, 1 May 1913.

²⁴The preferential voting system was abolished in 1915. Mackendrick, "Thunder West of the Divide," 48.

²⁵*Daily Sentinel*, 18 December 1911. A man who held a red card would be a member of the Socialist Party.

²⁶*Ibid.*, 22 December 1911.

²⁷*Ibid.*, 26 January 1912.

²⁸*Ibid.*, 31 January 1912.

²⁹*Ibid.*, 30 January 1912.

³⁰*Ibid.*, 26 August 1912.

³¹*Ibid.*, 27 August 1912.

³²*Ibid.*, 21 September 1912.

³³*Ibid.*, 4 May 1912.

³⁴*Ibid.*, 9 May 1912.

³⁵*Ibid.*, 29 May 1912.

³⁶*Ibid.*, 7 July 1929.

³⁷*Ibid.*, 22 April 1913.

³⁸*Ibid.*, 6 August 1912.

³⁹*Ibid.*, 2 August 1912.

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, 18 October 1912.

⁴¹Mesa County Abstract 1904-1920 (Document found in vault at the Mesa County Clerk and Records office, Grand Junction, Colorado.)

⁴²*Daily Sentinel*, 8 November 1912.

⁴³Richard E. White, *"It's Your Misfortune and None of My Own": A New History of the American West* (London and Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), 293.

⁴⁴*Daily Sentinel*, 14 May 1912.

⁴⁵White, *"It's Your Misfortune and None of My Own,"* 293.

⁴⁶*Daily Sentinel*, 27 December 1911.

⁴⁷*Ibid.*, 9 April 1913.

⁴⁸*Ibid.*

⁴⁹*Ibid.*

⁵⁰*Ibid.*, 10 April 1913.

⁵¹*Ibid.*

⁵²*Ibid.*, 12 April 1913.

⁵³*Ibid.*

⁵⁴*Ibid.*, 17 September 1914.

⁵⁵Ibid., 30 September 1914.

⁵⁶Ibid., 2 October 1914.

⁵⁷Ibid., 25 January 1913.

⁵⁸Ibid.

⁵⁹Ibid., 4 February 1913.

⁶⁰Ibid., 12 March 1914.

⁶¹Ibid.

⁶²Ibid.

⁶³Ibid.

⁶⁴Ibid., 23 May 1914.

⁶⁵Ibid., 20 April 1914.

⁶⁶Ibid.

⁶⁷Ibid.

⁶⁸Ibid.

⁶⁹Ibid., 5 February 1917.

⁷⁰Ibid.

⁷¹Ibid.

⁷²Ibid.

⁷³Ibid., 7 February 1917.

⁷⁴Ibid.

⁷⁵Ibid.

⁷⁶Ibid.

⁷⁷Ibid.

⁷⁸Ibid.

⁷⁹Ibid.

⁸⁰Ibid.

⁸¹Ibid., 4 June 1912.

Navajo Migrant Workers in the Grand Valley, 1955-1970

Sue Casebolt*

From the mid-1950s through the 1960s, migrant workers were essential to the agricultural industry in the Grand Valley. Navajos, along with other minorities and farmers from the Midwest, contributed their labor to the area's fruit and vegetable businesses. Although dispersed throughout the Grand Valley, Navajos concentrated in the lower valley towns of Fruita, Loma, and Mack. The influx of temporary residents brought concerns about housing, medicine, and schooling from local people, and from state and federal agencies. Due to their work habits, customs, and attitudes toward traditional American society, Navajos differed from other workers, making them a conspicuous component of the migrant population. They added to the cultural diversity of the area until the late 1960s when mechanization gradually replaced human labor.

Grand Junction, like much of the nation, experienced prosperity during the 1950s and early 1960s. New streets, railroads, and Interstate Highway 70 strengthened the local economy and made it easier to transport goods in and out of the Grand Valley. The uranium boom added to the economy by bolstering the mining industry, banking, and small businesses. Grand Valley school districts grew as administrators planned additional building projects to meet the demands of a growing population. Meanwhile, enrollment at Mesa Junior College increased, and a beauty college offering vocational training for women opened. Agriculture expanded as farms, ranches, dairies and orchards benefited from a strong local economy.

Agriculture in the Grand Valley had traditionally relied on outsiders to fill labor needs. In the 1930s the Great Depression forced many people who were passing through the area to stop and find work in the

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crop industry. Some of these people stayed to become permanent residents and lifelong agriculturalists. With the 1940s and the outbreak of World War II came labor shortages in the fruit and vegetable industry, which were filled by prisoners of war, men and women from Mexico, and Japanese internees. Grand Junction also experienced labor shortages in the 1950s, forcing the agricultural industry to continue using outside sources of labor. By this time growers in the Grand Valley were becoming acquainted with the Navajos.¹

Traditionally, Navajos are farmers, horsemen and shepherds, who excel in weaving, jewelry making, rug making, pottery and other forms of handwork. These art forms, which are produced on the reservation, provided jobs and income for the Navajos.² Their desire to maintain a unique culture through strict adherence to traditional agricultural, artistic, and religious practices sometimes interfered with the expectations placed on them by their employers. For example, performances of the Blessing Way accounted for many return trips to the reservation. A religious ritual for good hope, good health and prosperity, the Blessing Way is a form of sacred communication that is important to Navajos.³

In addition to remaining faithful to their religious beliefs and cultural practices, maintaining strong family bonds is also important to the Navajos. Their devotion to the family unit resulted in Grand Valley agriculturists hiring family units rather than single workers. Entire Navajo families worked the fields, and each family member helped in maintaining a livelihood on the farms.⁴ Since group or family oriented labor was better suited to the flat, open vegetable fields rather than orchards, Navajo families tended to migrate to the lower valley towns where vegetable farming predominated. Men, women and children worked together, and older children usually served double duty by watching over siblings as the rest of the family worked. Their religious beliefs, the importance they placed on family, and the responsibility they share in maintaining their livelihood influenced their work patterns in the Grand Valley.

The field farmers of the lower Grand Valley appreciated the work habits of the Navajos, finding them to be good employees who worked at a slow-and-steady pace. In addition, Navajos were known to be calm, peaceful people, not rowdy or disruptive. According to one farmer's daughter, they were a "timid people."⁵ A typical day in the field demonstrated why Navajos' work habits, family ties, and reputation as methodical workers suited them to the vegetable fields. Days began

with a ride by pickup truck to the fields where they remained the entire day. They took lunch breaks, water breaks, and mothering breaks on the job. Navajo mothers often breast-fed babies at the end of a row, and families clustered at the road's edge for drinking water and a midday lunch. The workers hoed weeds, and thinned sugar beets, onions, and tomatoes, working each field several times throughout the growing season. On any given summer day, entire families could be seen methodically working through the fields, Sundays included.⁶

While working in the fields Navajos wore traditional dress. Although they wore more clothing than other field workers, they tolerated the heat without complaining or slowing their pace. One employer, Mildred DeKruger, noted that the heavy velvety material of the women's skirts, their long sleeved shirts, and the layers of clothing made it hard for her to believe they could withstand the often extreme midday temperatures.⁷

In addition to working hard in the fields, Navajo women processed and stored food supplies, cooked, cleaned, and cared for the children. When Navajos butchered animals, the men attended to the killing, then the women gutted, skinned, quartered, sliced and dried the meat to prepare it for storage. Men also worked the fields and took care of duties such as wood chopping, feeding the livestock, painting and doing odd jobs; however, Grand Valley farmers viewed Navajo women as the hardest working family members.

Although most Navajos worked in the vegetable fields, some were employed in the orchards around Palisade and Orchard Mesa. Here, however, their work habits were viewed differently. Fruit growers described Navajos as being "too slow" and "too lax," and many orchardists did not hire entire family units. The fruit growers preferred Mexican National laborers because, as Harry and Margaret Talbott explained, they could hire single male Mexicans, complete the harvest sooner, and avoid the worry of having children in their orchards. However, orchardists did like to employ Navajo women in the packing sheds because of their "color sense" and steady work pace. They efficiently separated the bruised and damaged apples from the deep, pure, red apples that wholesalers desired.⁸

Cultural differences between Navajos and their employers caused some problems; employers complained that Navajos were not always dependable. The Navajos' desire to participate in ceremonies such as the Blessing Way resulted in many of them returning to the reservations

during the growing season. In July of 1965, nearly two hundred Navajos were brought in to work in the beet fields, but by mid-season, only seventy to seventy-five of them remained. According to one report, the Navajos left "because of tribal celebrations and responsibilities back on the reservation."⁹ Even when farmers increased wages many Indian workers refused to stay. Those who remained often left after the first light frost or snow, leaving the produce unharvested. To avoid this, those in the sugar beet industry began recruiting labor locally and from Texas, Wyoming, Arizona, and Mexico.¹⁰

Managers of the Grand Valley Kuner-Empson Cannery found Navajo workers frustrating. In 1967, in an effort to combat labor shortages, the cannery chartered busses to the reservations on three separate occasions to bring Indian workers to Grand Valley fields. However, only a handful of Navajos showed up at the pickup location, and many of the planned bus trips from the canneries to the reservations were canceled due to lack of Indian recruits. Some Navajos who did travel to the fields left after only a few days. According to *The Grand Junction Daily Sentinel*, "One of them went to town and bought an old car and picked up six others and headed back to their homes."¹¹

Several Clifton tomato farmers complained that Navajos "were not physically able to do a large amount of picking in a day and that many of the male recruits were over seventy years of age, slowing the harvest pace considerably."¹² Farmers also charged that Navajos could or would not lift full crates of tomatoes, and substituted buckets and pans to fill the field boxes which slowed production. Farmers claimed that Mexican workers could pick twice as many boxes a day as could Navajos. Some farmers threatened to stop growing hand-picked crops completely if they could not obtain sufficient labor.¹³

Along with labor problems, Navajos also faced housing shortages in the Grand Valley. Farmers like the DeKrugers housed Navajos on their land near Loma. Small homes for hired hands became houses for Navajos, and in one case an old train caboos was used. Two Navajo families often shared a residence. Due to the lack of sufficient housing, and the unsettled nature of field work, Navajos brought few belongings with them. Some houses contained only a cooking stove, cooking utensils, and beds, with water pumps and privies located outside. Although small and Spartanly outfitted, they were usually located far enough from the main house to afford some privacy.¹⁴

Grand Valley canneries also provided housing for Navajos.

Usually, the canneries rented houses on nearby farms or provided tent-houses on their own property for the workers. Donald Fiscus, a former supervisor for Kuner-Empson Company, explained that tent-houses were easy to set up and take down, while providing adequate summer housing. Tent-houses consisted of wooden floors, usually ten by fourteen feet, four foot side walls, and a wooden door. Attached to the side walls was an A-shaped canvas high enough for the average person to stand. The tent-houses were supplied with small kerosene or coal stoves, cooking utensils, bunk beds, mattresses and bedding. Such dwellings accommodated four to six single workers.¹⁵

Organized labor camps also provided a residence for the Navajos and other migrant workers in the Grand Valley. After World War II a Civilian Conservation Corps camp, located in Fruita at the base of the Colorado National Monument, was used to house migrant workers. Camps in Grand Junction and Palisade were used to house migrant workers as well. These converted camps were used extensively during the growing season, and consisted of small, one room cabins clustered around communal privies, washrooms, and water pumps. Inside were a few cots, a table, cooking utensils, and a wood burning stove. Often, these rooms accommodated up to thirteen people or several families. The majority of Navajo workers, however, lived on the farms where they could more easily maintain family traditions.¹⁶

In time, the overcrowded conservation camps sparked public controversy and eventually led to state involvement. In June of 1961, state inspectors threatened closure of the Palisade camp because of unsanitary and unfit living conditions. Newspapers publicized the problem of migrant housing throughout the Grand Valley. Colorado State Senator Charles Bennett commented that the Palisade camp was "horrible," and that he "wouldn't want [his] dog to live like this."¹⁷ Another Colorado State Representative, Ted Rubin, remarked that the labor camp in Palisade was "pretty grim."¹⁸ These emotionally charged comments enraged locals who defended their migrant housing. A local resident stated, "If the legislators are shocked now, what would have been their reaction ten years ago?"¹⁹ Closure of the camp threatened crop harvest and the agricultural industry of the entire Grand Valley.

The State Legislature commended Mesa County for making an effort to solve the housing problems, but it was difficult for communities to meet the new standards. There were always more workers than available housing, and overcrowded conditions continued. By September of

1961, the Grand Valley Agriculturists and Fruit Growers Association was forced to comply with the standards. Though it angered many locals, the issue brought in more state and federal monies to solve the migrant housing problems in Mesa County.²⁰

Health care for migrant workers also became controversial in the early 1960s. The standard procedure throughout the late 1930s and into the 1950s was for local growers to contribute to a medical fund for the workers. Cooperation among the local growers, doctors, the Mesa County Medical Society, and the State Health and Welfare Departments helped curb the cost of medical care for migrant workers. Several local doctors also volunteered their services and their clinics to care for migrants.²¹

However, the rising cost of health care and an increasing number of patients made the burden on local resources too great. Clinics were flooded with children and sometimes entire families suffering from diarrhea caused by eating too much fruit. A federal grant issued in August 1963 helped finance health clinics and medical care for migrant workers in the Grand Valley.²² Navajos, however, remained skeptical of the white man's medicine. Even though many of them had visited modern medical clinics, they still preferred to receive care from their own healers who treated the whole body, not just the ailing part.²³

Education for migrant workers became another issue of local concern. Many local people believed education to be the key for improved lifestyles. However, like housing and health care, educational problems attracted a swarm of people, all with their own solutions. Some whites believed that migrant children needed to be in the classrooms and that educational opportunities should be available for adult Navajos as well. Reformers argued that education would break the language barrier, improve health, and open more employment opportunities for Navajos. Thus migrant schools were established; unfortunately, the quest to educate Navajos progressed with little or no input from Navajos.²⁴

Summer schools were established in the Grand Valley, but the Navajos did not make formal education a priority, and their children were not accustomed to attending school. Their mobile lifestyle allowed little opportunity for formal education, and because they worked as family units, sending children to school disrupted the family structure and the traditional way of working. While curious about schooling, many had no long-term commitment to institutionalized education.²⁵

Meanwhile, educators endeavored to entice Navajos to their

schoolhouses. Grand Junction School District 51 tried to attract migrant students by offering courses in arts and crafts, organized athletics, and recreation. Films, games, toys, and music provided incentives for children. Socially interactive programs became the selling technique used by educators to attract Navajo enrollment. Navajo parents had to be convinced of the benefits offered by white schools before permitting their children to attend. Many Navajo children enrolled in the migrant schools in the Grand Valley, but attendance fluctuated throughout the growing season.²⁶

One teacher in Fruita, Miss Helen Sandoval, a Navajo college student, worked to bridge the language gap for her fellow Navajos. As well as teaching younger children in the classroom, she worked extensively with Basil T. Knight, a truant officer for District 51. She accompanied him into the fields to talk with parents and acquire information for school records. The summer migrant schools grew each year as Navajo parents, who appreciated the efforts of Miss Sandoval, became interested in trying the white man's way of schooling.²⁷

Adult education also had to be aggressively sold to attract students. Classes for adult migrants included homemaking skills, sewing, carpentry, health education, and auto mechanics. In September 1967, Mesa Junior College offered a Continuing Education program that emphasized carpentry, mechanics, and electrical training. Administrators organized the program to teach a variety of skills rather than one trade. They also offered English language classes so that language barriers between locals and migrant workers could be overcome.²⁸

After District 51 opened summer migrant schools on a regular basis, other institutions and programs developed in the Grand Valley. Day care centers opened, local churches offered vacation Bible schools, and city recreation programs became available. State and federal programs allocated funds to agricultural counties across Colorado which helped communities like Grand Junction.

Ironically, some government involvements designed to enhance cultural understanding and sensitivity actually caused labor problems. Public Law 78, or the Bracero Law, implemented between Mexico and the United States, was designed so Mexican laborers could be used for temporary agricultural employment. When it expired on December 31, 1964, canneries and local farmers encountered numerous labor and economic problems. The loss of Mexican workers meant that crops might rot in the fields. Low wages made it difficult to recruit domestic labor

and many farmers saw Navajo workers as too nomadic to provide a reliable source of labor. The intention behind the termination of the Bracero Law was to increase domestic labor opportunities especially for Native Americans; instead, it discouraged farmers and created local and national controversy.²⁹

One proponent of the termination of the Bracero Law, Robert Goodwin of the Department of Labor, explained that the expiration of the law would bring good results because it would encourage farmers to use local and Navajo labor. However, in order to do this, farmers would have to increase wages and engage stronger methods of recruitment. In Yuma, Arizona it proved effective; the Navajos and the Yaqui Indians did replace the Braceros, adequately meeting labor demands. In Colorado, however, many farmers were already facing labor shortages, and the termination of the Bracero Law only added to their problems.

Most Navajos paid little attention to the opportunities created by the expiration of the Bracero Law. Despite the fact that there was less competition for employment from Mexican Nationals, the Navajos expressed little concern and displayed no real change in their migrant work patterns. They did not lobby for or against the law, nor did they change their work habits or attitudes. The end of the Bracero Law eventually became a catalyst for the mechanization of agriculture which did impact the Navajos as well as other migrant workers, canneries, farmers, businesses, and local residents.

Technological advances included machine harvesting, herbicides, pesticides, monogerm seeds, fertilizers, pre-cooling plants, insect research, and chemical weed control. America and Grand Junction were moving into a new technological age. Even simple hand held tools underwent technological changes as short handled hoes were replaced with longer handled ones, changing the nature of field work. For the Navajo and other migrant workers, mechanization meant fewer agricultural jobs because machines and herbicides were aimed at replacing manual labor.³⁰

For example, the mechanical tomato picker replaced many field workers and changed the harvest process for Kuner-Empson. This four-wheel drive harvester, used exclusively on acreage farmed by Kuner-Empson, worked large areas and harvested two rows simultaneously. The harvester carried a crew of twelve to sixteen sorters who removed damaged or green tomatoes, allowing the good ones to continue up the conveyor belt and into storage bins. According to Kuner-Empson, this new harvester allowed Grand Valley farmers to produce a higher quality

and quantity of tomatoes per acre than tomato growers in California.³¹

The multi-row harvester for sugar beets also increased production, reduced labor costs, and enabled farmers to increase the amount of acreage they could farm. In 1967, there were an estimated twenty-five to thirty beet harvesters in use throughout Mesa County. The increase of tomato and beet harvesters drastically reduced the number of jobs available to Navajos in the Grand Valley.³²

Chemicals, fertilizers, insecticides, improved seeds, and even new storage facilities also decreased the need for migrant workers. Fruit growers used insecticides to kill the Oriental fruit moth which had threatened the peach crops. Apple growers sought ways to improve the endurance and the shipping process of fruits by investing in pre-cooling and cold storage facilities. For the field farmers, the invention of Tillam, a weed killer, cut down on weeds and meant most fields no longer needed to be weeded by hand. The monogerm tomato seed created tomato crops that ripened simultaneously and were more conducive to machine harvesting.³³

As technology changed the nature of agriculture, business, and the labor market, the number of Navajo migrant workers in the Valley decreased from once significant numbers in the 1950s and 1960s to very few in the 1970s. Their work habits and strong family bonds set them apart from other groups, and their social and religious structures shielded them from the pressures of the modern world. Navajos supplied a crucial element to local agriculture prior to mechanization, and their contributions were integral to the success of many local agriculturists, and to the strength of the Grand Valley's economy.

NOTES

¹Harold Zimmerman, "Harvesting Peaches with German Prisoners of War," *Journal of the Western Slope* 2, no. 1 (Winter 1987): 18-21; Robyn Pride Guerrie, "Sights on the West Coast But Home in Grand Junction," *Journal of the Western Slope* 10, no.4 (Fall 1995): 12-23; Kristi Mease, "The Labor Shortage and its Solution During World War II in the Valley of Western Colorado," *Journal of the Western Slope* 7, no.3 (Summer 1997): 1-5.

²Sally Crum, *People of the Red Earth: American Indians of Colorado* (Sante Fe: Ancient City Press, 1996), 177-179.

³Clyde Kluckhohn and Dorothea Leighton, *The Navajo* (Garden City: The American Museum of Natural History, 1962), 181, 212-213.

⁴*Ibid.*, 212-213.

⁵Mildred DeKruger, interview by author, Fruita, Colorado, 2 October 1996.

⁶*Ibid.*

⁷*Ibid.*

⁸Margaret and Harry Talbott, interview by author, Palisade, Colorado, 12 October 1996.

⁹*The Grand Junction Daily Sentinel*, n.d., Clippings in Power's Scrapbook, 1965, Property of Dorothy Power, Grand Junction, Colorado. Hereafter referred to as *Daily Sentinel*, Power's Scrapbook.

¹⁰*Ibid.*

¹¹*Ibid.*

¹²*Ibid.*

¹³*Ibid.*

¹⁴DeKruger.

¹⁵Donald Fiscus, interview by author, Grand Junction, Colorado, 19 November 1996.

¹⁶*Daily Sentinel*, n.d., Power's Scrapbook, 1961.

¹⁷*Ibid.*

¹⁸*Ibid.*

¹⁹*Ibid.*

²⁰*Ibid.*

²¹*Ibid.*

²²ibid.

²³Kluckholm and Leighton, *The Navajo*, 167.

²⁴*Daily Sentinel*, n.d., Power's Scrapbook, 1963.

²⁵ibid.

²⁶ibid.

²⁷ibid., 1961.

²⁸ibid.

²⁹ibid., 1965.

³⁰ibid.

³¹ibid., 1963.

³²ibid.

³³ibid.

Book Review

I Never Knew That About Colorado: A Quaint Volume of Forgotten Lore.
By Abbott Fay (Ouray: Western Reflections, Inc., 1997, Pp. 192.
Softbound, \$12.95).

When I first picked up *I Never Knew That About Colorado*, a drawing on the cover caught my attention. Why did a cowboy bearing a striking resemblance to Adolph Hitler appear there riding a horse branded with a swastika? After reading the selection in the book entitled "Adolph Hitler's Colorado Ranch" (subtitled "*Yippie yi yo and seig heil!*"), I learned that Hitler actually did own twenty sections of land near the town of Kit Carson, although he never ranched there nor rode across it on a horse emblazoned with swastikas. Contemplating Hitler in cowboy regalia on Colorado's plains typifies the serendipity that makes this book fun and informative.

I Never Knew That About Colorado contains fifteen chapters with headings like "About Original Coloradans", "About Remarkable Folks", "About Laws and Outlaws", "About Muscular Achievements", and "About Grave Matters" (which deals with death). Under these and ten other similar headings, appear one-hundred-and-twenty-two vignettes about Colorado's past. The book covers myriad topics which begin with Paleolithic people (about 8,000 years before the present, in this case) to the 1990s. Over forty illustrations grace the narrative.

Those conversant with history on the Western Slope recognize the name of author Abbott Fay. Many know his books, which include

Mountain Academia: A History of Western State College of Colorado (1968), *Ski Tracks in the Rockies: A Century of Colorado Skiing* (1984), and *Famous Coloradans: 124 People Who Gained Nationwide Fame* (1990). Other readers remember him as a history professor (now retired) from Western State College, instructor of continuing education classes, tour guide, or lecturer on topics relating to Colorado's history. In all, Abbott Fay has spent about fifty years dealing with the history of our state. From these years of experience, he gleaned those tidbits that constitute *I Never Knew That About Colorado*.

Although no organizational scheme could convey the contents of this freewheeling book, this reviewer found four categories of articles particularly interesting: those dealing with the Western Slope, those which suggest topics deserving more investigation, those immortalizing some of Colorado's zaniest characters, and those containing fascinating trivia.

Much of the book deals with the Western Slope. Over seventy of the one-hundred-and-twenty-two articles include information on Colorado's Western Slope. The Anasazis, Ouray, Colorow, Nathan C. Meeker, Camp Hale, Fort Crawford, the Black Canyon of the Gunnison, and other well known persons and places all receive attention. Articles that touch on topics needing more scholarly work include: Indian slavery in Colorado, Nucla and its socialistic past, "Colorado's Woman Warriors" (including a group in Grand Junction known as the "Amazons"), the uranium boom, and Cotopaxi's beginnings as a utopian community.

I Never Knew That About Colorado abounds with curious characters. Dr. George C. Balderson, a physician from Paonia who practiced medicine in Telluride, did not trust anyone else, so he removed his own appendix. Katherine Slaughterback, or "Rattlesnake Kate," found herself surrounded with rattlers, shot several, and then launched an attack with a sign she "ripped" from a nearby post. After about two hours of concentrated effort, she had killed about one-hundred-and-forty reptiles, which she skinned and used to make a snakeskin dress for herself. Other interesting persons include: Laura Evans, a former "Madam" who lectured others about morality, one James Nelson Gernhart who "wore out his own coffin" giving public enactments of his upcoming funeral, and those enthusiastic folks from Baldwin who decided to conquer the rival town of Vulcan.

Much of the material in the book is simply fun to know. David Stanley, before departing for Africa to locate Dr. Livingston, had Western Slope connections. Prospectors set aside a rich place deposit called "Whis-

key Hole" in South Park for inept prospectors who would otherwise not have found enough gold to buy whiskey. How many people know that the Brown Palace Hotel in Denver, in its efforts to be a full service institution, originally included a crematorium? Did someone really toss a keg of dimes over the rim of the Black Canyon in 1880? Is a law passed in 1953 that prohibited anyone except the Colorado State Patrol from driving a white automobile still valid?

I Never Knew That About Colorado makes contributions to Colorado history. It serves social history by illuminating people, events, and folklore that have caught people's attention in the past. A bibliography of over a hundred entries will help those who wish to explore topics in the book. It is good public relations for history, because people who do not normally read about the past will enjoy this work. Certainly teachers will find attention-getting bits of information for lectures. Abbott Fay set out to write a popular, entertaining, and informative book, and he accomplished that.

Paul Reddin
Professor of History, Mesa State College

Book Review

Race to the Moonrise: An Ancient Journey. By Sally Crum. (Ouray: Western Reflections, Inc., 1998, Pp. 100 w/map. Paperback, \$12.95).

Race to the Moonrise, a children's book, combines entertainment and edification in a way designed to appeal to those in upper elementary and lower middle school. The volume chronicles the struggles of ten-year-old Little Basket and her twelve-year-old brother Long Legs to travel by foot from northern Mexico to Finger Rocks, a location in present-day southwestern Colorado where the Moonrise Ceremony will be held. There Little Basket's "special powers" are needed to add to the potency of the ceremony which will save Southwestern Indians from a decline in resources that threatens them all. On the way to Finger Rocks, Little Basket and Long Legs must collect offerings from many different Indian groups, including those known today as Mogollon, Hohokam, Sinagua, Hopi, and Ancestral Pueblo (Anasazi). The two Indian children visit each of these groups, secure their gifts, overcome many obstacles, and finally make it to Moonrise.

The youngsters in the novel encounter much peril, including a poisonous gila monster that clamps itself bulldog-like on Little Basket's hand, the wrath of a grizzled old shaman, a tattooed villain intent on murder who stalks them, a rattlesnake poised to strike, and a flash flood. In addition, Little Basket and Long Legs face mystery: what caused the disappearance of their father, and is he still alive somewhere in the north? In addition to enjoying the mystery and adventure, youthful readers will

learn something from *Race to the Moonrise* because it brims with details about geography and Indians.

Race to the Moonrise documents ancient ways of life in the desert Southwest. It illustrates the hardihood of traders who ran from village to village with their goods, and suggests much about the network of trails they traveled. Readers get myriad details about each of the cultures that Long Legs and Little Basket visited, including descriptions of fields, crops, clothing, dwellings, and food. Crum's delineation of the situation in 1200 A.D. is excellent. By that time deforestation, loss of topsoil, and limited water resources created crisis among Indians in the Southwest. As a result, much was changing—Chaco Canyon stood nearly deserted, the inhabitants of the Mesa Verde area radically altered their lifestyle, and people pinned their hopes on rites of world renewal like the Moonrise Ceremony.

Most readers know Sally Crum for *People of the Red Earth*, her scholarly survey of Colorado's Indians. In *Race to the Moonrise*, she has combined her anthropological knowledge with a compelling narrative. The Intertribal Cultural Committee of the Council for Indian Education has approved *Race to the Moonrise* for use with Indian children. Many other teachers will find a place for the book in their classrooms. The pages are on heavy tannish-gray paper, making the volume able to withstand hard use. The volume includes eight full-page drawings, and subtle Indians designs appear on other pages. A "Preface" and a map make it easy for readers to follow the route taken in the book and to identify the peoples that Long Legs and Little Basket meet along the way. The last sentence in the "About the Author" section and copy on the back cover suggest that more books about Little Basket and Long Legs will appear. That is good news for young readers on the Western Slope.

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Book Review

Early Days on the Western Slope of Colorado. By Sidney Jocknick. (Ouray: Western Reflections, Inc., 1998, reprint. Pp. 448. Paperback, \$24.95).

Early Days on the Western Slope of Colorado is a reprint of a classic work on the Western Slope that first appeared in 1913, and was reprinted in 1968. First editions are rare and expensive, and even the 1968 volumes are difficult to find. This reprint by Western Reflections makes available, for a reasonable price, a book which everyone interested in the history of the Western Slope will welcome.

Jocknick was one of the first white men to record happenings on the Western Slope in a detailed and systematic way. He wrote about his own experiences and events around him, and learned all that he could about those happenings which he recognized as noteworthy historical occurrences. Chronologically, the book covers 1870 to 1913; however, the author's most significant contribution is the period from 1870 to the early 1880s. Approximately the first two-thirds of the book are arranged chronologically, with the remainder consisting of topical chapters devoted to such things as Spanish exploration, biographical sketches, and quick histories of towns and cities on the Western Slope.

Jocknick's experiences and his strong personality bring focus to the book. Having tired of a desk job in Washington D.C. and hankering for adventure, he arrived in Colorado Territory in 1870 with a position at the Ute Agency in Denver. When the opportunity came to cross

the Continental Divide and work at the Los Pinos (or Cochetopa) Agency, Jocknick seized it and began life on the Western Slope. In the next ten years he worked as a cook and cowboy at Indian agencies, as well as spending time as hunter, trapper, newspaper correspondent, mail carrier, miner, and farmer. In addition, he collected information about the Western Slope and became one of its most enthusiastic boosters.

Working at Indian agencies enabled Jocknick to learn much about Ute Indians and the agency system. He came to know many Utes, saw them as individuals, and judged them with the same candor that he expressed about everything. In his opinion, Ouray was "a real Indian, who richly deserves the grateful consideration of the people of Colorado" (p. 234) and Colorow was "an old reprobate of an Indian" (p. 326). Other Utes, like Sapinero and Shavano, fell somewhere between these extremes. Generally, he believed that liquor caused problems for Indians and that the agency system depended largely on the ability of Indian agents whose character ranged from the conscientious and efficient to the absurd. He saw Nathan Meeker as a fool whose incompetence led to an unnecessary disaster. Like many other misguided white men, Meeker believed that Indians could learn "civilization" quickly. Any right thinking person, Jocknick believed, could see that the process would take time, and that Indians living in their traditional manner deserved respect. He lambasted his government which refused to honor its treaties with Indians.

Jocknick met notable and colorful people. He lavished praise on Otto Mears and knew many of the people involved in territorial and state politics. Jocknick laughed at the incompetence of Indian agent Reverend Jabeze Neversink Trask, and argued religion with Captain William H. Hooper who led Mormon settlers into Utah. Why, Jocknick asked this advocate of polygamy, if God accepted the idea of multiple wives, did He take only one of Adam's ribs instead of a bunch to create a flock of wives for Adam? Jocknick was more receptive to the ideas of Professor E.K. Porter of Boston who brought a Helen-of-Troy story line to the abandonment of Colorado's ancient cliff dwellings. The professor studied rock art on the Western Slope and concluded that it told of inter-city Indian warfare over a beautiful Indian woman. That, not drought or other natural causes, ended the golden age of Indians in Colorado. Jocknick also found accounts of badmen irresistible, and recorded information about ones like Oregon Bill, Happy Jack, Antoine (or Antonito), a Ute named Modesty, and suave George Howard (George Howard Stunce).

Early Days on the Western Slope of Colorado includes information on many other topics. Trails and freighting on the Western Slope get much attention, and Jocknick carefully locates these routes for the reader with reference to present-day cities and well known geographic features. He discusses forts, provides vigorous accounts of the negotiation of treaties with the Utes, and tells of toll roads, survivors of the Packer party stumbling into his cabin, railroads, the Gunnison Tunnel, carrying mail by ski and dogsled, mining rushes, and the establishment of towns like Gunnison, Lake City, Rico, Ridgway, Ouray, and Silverton.

He documents the close connection between the Western Slope and the San Luis Valley and demonstrates that what happened in Denver did impact the Western Slope even in this early period. He listened carefully and read widely, particularly when it concerned his part of the state. He thought about the future, and recognized that resources like water, timber, oil, oil shale, and even uranium, would play important parts in the direction of the Western Slope.

A captivating playfulness, absent in most contemporary writing, marks passages in the book. For example, when discussing the demise of badman George Howard, he concludes: "He has paid the penalty and we trust gone to that bourne where an ounce of virtue balances a pound of cussedness. Peace be to his dust!" (p. 256).

Reprinting this book serves local and regional history, people who enjoy it, and those who research and write about it. Scholars will continue to use the book as both a primary and secondary source for a period on the Western Slope that is not well documented. Many will appreciate the fact that the book contains an index and an appendix that includes the treaties negotiated with the Utes. Twenty-five photographs add to the book's appeal. Non-specialists and those wanting a readable introduction to the early history of the Western Slope will find the volume valuable. According to the introduction in this work, *Western Reflections* will follow Jocknick's *Early Days on the Western Slope of Colorado* with other out-of-print classic works about that part of the state which faces the Pacific Ocean. That is good news for many people.

Paul Reddin

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