

LOUISVILLE HISTORIAN

A publication of the Louisville Historical Commission & Society Issue No. 35 August, 1996 Eileen Schmidt - Editor

THE MUSEUM CORNER

The annual meeting of the Historical society was held in the museum on Sunday, May 5, 1996. A very interesting program about the life and works of photographer, Ed Tangen was presented by Tom Meier, Director of the Boulder Historical Museum and Society. Mr. Meier has written a book portraying the life of Mr. Tangen and is a well-known authority on the subject. We are fortunate to have several photographs taken by Mr. Tangen in our museum. The meeting was well attended and everyone seemed to enjoy the program. Refreshments were served. The "Taste of Louisville" was held on June 12 and was literally rained out. Members of the "Broken Sixpence" provided music at the museum in the afternoon, but since most of the activity on the street stopped early, the museum so closed. It is again time to renew membership in the historical society. Dues of \$5.00 are due on September 1. Attached to this newsletter is a form for renewing your membership, please complete and forward to us. If your newsletter has a colored sticker on the front, you will be dropped from our membership unless dues are paid this year.

The following people have already paid dues for this coming year, so please do not pay again.

Maribeth Bosko Kathleen Crannell Jennie Milano

The Historical Commission will hold a silent auction on Sunday, September 1 at Memory Square Park from 12:00 noon until 2:00 p.m. Various businesses in the city are contributing items for this silent auction and Elle Cabbage has assisted us in obtaining items for this event. All bids will be opened at 2:00 p.m. and the articles can be picked up at that time. The museum will be open during the parade on Labor Day and for a short time following. We will be closing about 1:30 p.m. Cookies and punch will be served and we plan to raffle an over-night stay at Harvey's Hotel in Central City. The value of this package will be approximately \$130.00. Chances will be sold for \$1.00 each or six for \$5.00. We hope to see you then.

We are hoping to find an ashpit at some location in town that could be moved to the grounds of our house. If you have any information regarding an ashpit, please call 666-6853.



BASEBALL IN LOUISVILLE

The grand opening of the new Louisville Sports Complex, located on Highway 42, was held on Monday, July 1, 1996. The need for this type of complex has been apparent for several years and completion of the facility has been eagerly awaited. They began playing ball at the complex last month. Baseball has always been very popular in Louisville and people have been very supportive of their teams. As the new Complex opens, memories of past baseball teams are brought to mind. Miners Field is a very special place to the "old-timers" of the town.

The land where Miners Field is located was owned originally by John Balanti. Many believe that it was used as a baseball field before 1890. The Rocky Mountain News and The Denver Post both had advertisements painted on the wooden fence that surrounded the field. The neighbors eventually tore down the fence and used the lumber for sheds for their yards. Later, Dixie Elrod had another fence built and the same thing occurred. There was no fence around the field when it was used as a playing field by the high school after the new school was built in 1940. During the early days, Lawrence Mossoni let the teams use his store for storing their equipment and as a place to change to their

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uniforms before and after games. The old field had leachers on the east side of the field. A bandstand was located on the west side and there was a band concert after the games. Miners Field was badly neglected for a number of years. In the 1960's (probably 1962) Dixie Elrod, Bob Ferrari, and Dick Franchini held a drive to improve the property. They collected money and were instrumental in having the lights installed and the field improved.

Before the new Complex opened, there were plans to remove the lights from Miners Field, although they would continue to use it during daylight hours. A group of citizens spearheaded by Bill and Paula Elrod, gathered petitions signed by interested persons and presented them to the city council asking that Miners Field be maintained as is with the lights being left in place. An agreement was reached, whereby the lights will remain on the field for the time being, but will only be used on very special occasions.

In the early days (1930's) of baseball in Louisville, various businesses sponsored baseball teams. The teams were members of the Northern Colorado League, Southern Division. Some of the other members of the league in which they played were Boulder, Frederick, Brighton, and Ft. Lupton. Some of the businesses which sponsored the teams were the Rex Theater, Model Theater, J. J. Steinbaugh, Louis Eberharter (grocery and general store), Kate Allera (general store), Celeste Romano (saloon), Mike Colacci (restaurant), Mike Forte (grocery store), City Meat Market ute McCorkle), John Pellillo (shoemaker), The Hub (clothing store), Carveth Bros. and Dalby (general store), First State Bank, C. W. Powell (mortician), and the Louisville Elevator.

Louisville's own, Bert Neihoff, played ball from 1913 until 1918 in the major leagues. In 1915, when he was a member of the Philadelphia Phillies, he played in the World Series. Although the Phillies lost the series to Boston, this was one of the highlights of his career because President Woodrow Wilson attended the game. His baseball career came to an abrupt end after his leg was badly broken, but he went on to manage several teams and became a scout in Southern California.

Another well known baseball player who hailed from Louisville was Toney (T. W.) LaSalle. Although he played in the minor leagues, he had been spotted by the major league scouts and was to report for a try-out when he suffered a broken leg as the result of an automobile accident.

The Security Benefits Association was one of the organizations which sponsored baseball teams. These teams often traveled to Elitch's or Lakeside to play teams from Denver. Two of the more interesting teams the Security Benefits Association players encountered were "The House of David" and "The Bearded Bandits." When the men on the house of David team removed their baseball caps their hair fell to their waists and they also had beards. The

arded Bandits had beards which fell down to their belt ouckles. Several of the mines sponsored teams at the time.

The American Legion also sponsored baseball teams in the 1930's and on August 17, 1936, the Louisville American Legion team won the regional tournament when they beat Albuquerque.

In an article written by Carolyn Conarroe which appeared in The Louisville Times on July 7, 1993, she reports that women also played on ball teams. The information concerning these women's teams was taken from this article found in the Louisville Times. The women played softball and recently several of these women met to recall the teams on which they played. The Hi-Way mine was a generous sponsor of one of the women's teams. The Security Benefits Association also sponsored teams of women as well as men. Some of the women who played on the Security Benefits Association team were Inez (Tavado) Graham, Katie Rosser, Mae Clark, Bernice (Ferguson) Sneddon, Iona (Bowes) Thomas, and Olive (Clark) Sneddon who pitched. Other women who played on various teams were Mina (DiGiacomo) Tesone, Mary (DiGiacomo) Poydock, Mary Thomas and Bessie Thomas. In 1935, the players on the Hi-Way mine team were Elsie Melcoff, Ann (DiFranci) Romano, Eloise (Guffy) Coet, Mary Geitz, Jewel (Guffy) Coet, Inez (Tavado) Graham, Rita (Cook) Byrd, Marge Martella, and Vivian (Stevens) Dhieux. When asked why they played ball, the ladies recalled that they had to make their own fun and there really wasn't much to do in Louisville at that time for young women.

Now with the Rockies playing in Denver and the new beautiful sports complex in Louisville, it looks as though baseball will be around for sometime to come.

EARLY UNREST IN MINING INDUSTRY

There were many things about coal mining which tended to bring about labor disputes between mine operators and various groups of miners. Many times the operators refused to pay for work in the mines which had to be completed before the actual mining of coal could commence. Rock had to be cleared out of the rooms prior to the loading of coal and often times props to support the roof, because the soil was composed of clay or slaty rock, had to be constructed before work could begin. Also the rooms (the areas where the coal would be dug out) had to be made high enough for the coal cars to enter and pass through the tunnels which where made after the coal was removed. Often the operators were unwilling to pay for this extra work because they felt it was part of the miner's job to prepare for getting the coal out. Many times the storage of coal cars caused problems; also delays in getting empty cars to the miners created dissention between the operators and miners. Since many miners were paid on the basis of the number of tons of coal loaded each day, a shortage of cars were definitely a problem.

The early coal miners in the Louisville area were either from Northern Europe or were descendants of those originating from this area. Since many of these men worked in the coal mines of England and Wales, it was only natural



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that they would sertle in this area where they could find work in the mines. They not only had mining experience, but many were acquainted with collective bargaining principles. As the twentieth century began, those new workers coming to the coal fields were largely Southern European (Italians, Slavs, Greeks, and etc.). In 1911, James Dalrymple, State Director of coal mines in Colorado stated, "Today we have a very incompetent class of miner, few of them have ever seen a coal mine until they started working in ours and very few of them understand English. They cannot read our mining laws or understand what is being said to them by officials in charge. They know practically nothing about the mining of coal or the dangers connected therewith."

One of the causes given by the operators for the strike of 1913 was that there were so many nationalities represented among the miners and because they couldn't understand each other's language, they distrusted one another. It is believed that the first non-English speaking miners were introduced into Colorado during the strike of 1913, when they were imported as strike-breakers. The defeat of the strike was attributed to this cause.

In 1930, when a poll was taken by the State Department of Coal Mine Inspection, to determine in what languages it would be necessary to have the state mining laws printed, it was found that 60 percent of Colorado miners were of foreign stock who could not read English. Most of these miners, however, were eager to learn English and to become American citizens. Many of them would not permit the children of the family to speak their mother tongue even while in the home. Most became very patriotic Americans and were very proud citizens.

Coal miners lived fairly isolated lives in the towns in the areas which were populated almost entirely by the miners and their families. Poverty was quite common and many of them were discontented with their lives. Many times, bitter discontentment and dislike for the mine operators was passed on to their children. The first strike that occurred in this area (in Eric and Louisville) began in 1882 when the miners went on strike for an increase in wages. The strike was called by two local unions which had combined to increase their strength. Work stopped for sixtyone days and even though the operators employed strikebreakers, the miners were granted a higher wage scale, Again in 1883, they asked for a wage increase, but in addition, asked that check weighman be selected by the miners themselves. This strike also succeeded. It is felt that these first two strikes were responsible for the enactment of the first laws to regulate mining. These initial laws provided some safety devices in the mines and stated the amount of ventilation to be provided for each mine.

This was the beginning of an attempt to make the mine owners or operators responsible for accidents. The statute also created the office of State Mine Inspector who build be responsible for mine inspections and the

enforcement of mining laws which the miners hoped would be passed by the legislature in the future

In 1884, the Louisville miners and a few others in the area went out on strike asking for a wage increase and made a few other minor demands. It was not a widespread strike and the operators succeeded in reopening the mines without meeting the demands of the miners. Again in 1885, the miners decided to strike when their wages were decreased. The miners were off the job for only 21 days and were successful in reaching a satisfactory settlement. During this same year, laws were further amended to improve conditions in the mines. In July 1886, the miners of Boulder and Weld counties, met at Louisville and formed the Coal Miner's Federation which was strictly a local union and had no athliations with any outside organization. Two years after the organization was founded, the Colorado Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that the union was functioning well and few disputes between the workers and the operators had occurred since its formation.

Between 1886 and 1902, there were no major disputes in the local coal fields, in spite of the fact that conditions were extremely bad and the miners were very disgruntled. During this period, some short strikes were called demanding that wages be paid in cash rather than scrip, that the wages be increased, and that the operators improve the company stores where miners were forced to buy all their essentials. Working hours were very long, safety devices were inadequate, sanitation, recreation, and housing conditions were deplorable. In addition to these complaints, the miners were in constant fear of losing their jobs if they attempted to join a union.

On September 25, 1903, at the annual convention of District 15, United Mine Workers of America, a series of resolutions were some of the more important demands.

- Clause 1. Eight hours shall constitute a day's work.
- Clause 2. All wages shall be paid semi-monthly, in lawful money of the United States and the scrip system shall be abolished entirely.
- Clause 3. An increase of 20% on contract and tonnage prices and 2,000 pounds constitute a ton.
- Clause 4. All underground men, top men, and trappers, receive the same wages for eight hours as they had been receiving for days up to 12 hours.
- Clause 5. Better ventilation of the mines in compliance with the requirements of the mining laws of the state of Colorado.

Some of these demands were met by the operators while they completely disregarded others. The legislature was finally passed that declared it unlawful for an employer to interfere with an employee's right to join a lawful labor union.

All seemed to be quiet on the surface of the labor front during the years 1903-1909, but again on April 4.

10. a strike began, but since the summer slump had begun, nothing was done to settle the differences until August when the state Labor Commission tried to negotiate a settlement of the dispute. Operators imported strike-breakers from Virginia, Tennessee, and other states, it was alleged that many of them were held hostage in stockades around the mines. Finally in March of 1912, the American Fuel Company signed an agreement with the U.M.W.A. and many independent miners followed suit. However, the Rocky Mountain Fuel Company, refused to take part in the settlement.

In 1911, the State Mine Inspector reported that sanitary conditions in the mines of Boulder County were very bad and he accused the Rocky Mountain Fuel Company of being the worst offender in this respect. Newspapers were so biased in favor of the mine owners that the public knew very little about the plight of these workers. During this time, many of the miners left this area to seek work in other places. These conditions were in existence when the terrible strike of 1913-1914 took place. This was a particularly bloody strike which resulted in the deaths of many miners and brought untold suffering into the lives of their families and many others. Much has been written about this strike because the state militia and finally United States troops were called in by the Governor to help restore cace. As in all strikes, when a settlement was finally ached, some of the demands of the miners were granted, but in the end the workers had also lost a great deal. Wages and working conditions were somewhat improved.

On September 18, 1927, the organizers of the Industrial Workers of the World, succeeded in getting the mines in the northern coal fields of Colorado to vote in favor of a sympathetic strike in support of those miners in the Southern coal fields. Although the State Industrial Commission declared the strike illegal, the miners staved off work. The strike in the northern fields was more general than it was in the south. The Columbine Mine, owned by the Rocky Mountain Fuel Company and the Black Diamond Mine owned by the Black Diamond Fuel Company both continued operation. The governor threatened to send the state militia into the area if the miners persisted in picketing the mines, especially, the Columbine. Every morning at dawn (except Sunday) large groups of men, women, and children gathered at the Columbine to sing labor songs and march through the area to Serene, the small town located there. This picketing became a social event, coffee and doughnuts were often served and sometimes baskets of food were distributed. On Sunday, November 20, state law enforcement officers arrived at the Columbine mine property. As the sun came up the next day, the picketers began arriving on the scene. As the group began to make ir way, fighting broke out between the marchers and the w officers and a warning shot was fired in the air. As the picketers surged forward, the guards began firing handguns,

rifles, and a machine gun into the group. Several men were killed and 60 picketers were seriously wounded. The governor finally ordered the militia to the area. At the conclusion of this strike which was called the "Wobblie" strike because it was organized by the "Wobbles" (as members of the I.W.W. union were nicknamed).

Josephine Roche gamed control of the Rocky Mountain Fuel Company after her father's death. Miss Roche was quite sympathetic to the miners and their cause. She did many things to improve the lives of the miners and their families. Increases in wages were granted, shorter working day, and improved working conditions were instituted by her.

John L. Lewis who had become president of the United Miner Workers of America, became a hero in the eves of many of the miners because of the improvements he was able to negotiate with the mine owners and operators. The miners and their families suffered through the depression as others throughout our country did, but World War II brought many changes to the mining industry of Louisville. The young men returning from military service were not willing to work in the coal mines as their fathers had done. Some of the mines in this area were in operation until the 1950's when natural gas became the major form of fuel used by both private homes and industry. Those early days of mining were filled with hardships caused by terrible working conditions and surviving the strikes along with other unrest became a part of the daily lives of these early miners and their families. They were a hard-working group and certainly contributed a great deal to Louisville and its interesting history.

SHORT HISTORY OF NEWSPAPERS

The following is a short history of newspapers that have been published in Louisville since 1887. This information can be found in files of historical facts which are stored at the Historical Museum.

"A newspaper has been published in Louisville since 1886. A few years during that time, publications ceased altogether and several times in the early years, more than one newspaper was in existence.

The Louisville Miner, published in 1887 and 1888, is the first recorded paper.

The Louisville-Lafayette Advance was published in Louisville by the Louisville Publishing Co. from 1892 until 1897.

Editor and publisher of the Advance was George Frith who was active in town affairs and served as a Town Trustee.

The Advance published Ordinances passed by the Town Board of Trustees, and the subscription rate was \$1.50 a year.

Brooks Vindication was the name of a paper published 1896 and 1897 in Louisville.

A third paper appearing in Louisville in 1896 was the Colorado Sun. This paper is reported to have been published until 1901.

The Louisville Journal appeared between 1900 and 1912, according to the book <u>Guide to Colorado Newspapers:</u> 1859 - 1963.

However, the minutes of the meeting of the Board of Trustees of the town for January 1900 relates that the Trustees ordered an Ordinance to be published in a Boulder County Paper, The Representative, as there were no papers being published in Louisville in January 1900.

The Black Diamond World was a Louisville publication between 1901 and 1909.

C. W. Brown came to Louisville from Emporia, Kansas in 1901. He brought with him the newspaper equipment and press which he had purchased in Elizabeth, Colorado.

The first office of the Black Diamond World was in the middle of the 800 block of Main St., called Second St. at that time.

In 1905, Brown bought a building occupied by Dr. D. F. Wolfer which had been on the northwest corner of Main St. and Spruce St. Brown moved this building to the 700 block of Grant St. Through the years, it was to be a school, a hospital during a flu epidemic, and a residence.

In 1907, The Black Diamond World was sold to a Mr. Rudd and finally to S. A. Heckethorn.

In the meantime, C. W. Brown went to Chicago to study the linotype. In 1908, Brown returned to Louisville, bought a linotype, incorporated the Louisville News. Publishing Co. and began to publish the Louisville News. The office was located on Pine St. east of the bakery.

M. M. Hollingsworth was publisher of the Louisville News in 1911, and D. L. Hollingsworth was the publisher in 1912, according to the record of the published ordinances for the Town of Louisville. The Louisville News ceased publication in 1915.

The Louisville Enterprise was published in 1914 and 1915.

The Louisville Times began publication in 1913."

The above information may have been published at sometime in the Louisville Times.

We are fortunate to have three of the editions of "The Black Diamond World" in our files. These papers have been microfisched by the Colorado Historical Society and are on file at the Colorado Historical Museum also. It is interesting to note that the above article names C. W. Brown as the owner, but the newspapers in our files list C. W. Bowman as the publisher. The following is an article from the edition of the Black Diamond World dated July 10, 1901, reporting the festivities which took place in town on July 4, 1909.

"The day in Louisville was appropriately observed, any amusements and attractions being on the program. No arrests, no disorderly conduct by any one and no accidents—a regular old time Fourth celebration. The floats parade was

not so large but it did credit to the occasion. The judges were undecided as to which was the most attractive and divided the prize between Prof. Hessler and Mr. Steinbaugh.

The horseless carriage, a mule harnessed wrong end to the shaves of a buggy and driven by James Connors, was awarded the prize as being the most comical.

John Tartaglio took second comic prize with his wagon drawn by a William Goat.

The hose race was won by Erie, the Louisville team making the run in the shortest time but failed to get water.

The 100 yard race for men was won by Centerfield Brown, while V. Thirlaway took second place.

Old man's race was won by H. D. Tobey while William McAllister came in for second.

Quoit contest was won by Adam Dixon. There were a number of other contests but we failed to get them.

Upon the whole all seemed to enjoy the sports in general and were well satisfied."

Some of the businesses advertising in the newspaper at that time were:

J. V. Sickman, Attorney and Counselor at Law Miller, Barnd, & Affolter, Attorneys at Law. Office at bank

Lynch & Harris - feed, sale, and livery stable. Horses bought and sold, team work of all kinds

Ernest Jannucci Meat Market and Italian Products Jewelry - H. M. Scanlon, Proprietor

Front Street Restaurant, Rhoades Bros., Props. - first class meals served at all hours - fresh oysters served in any style, dinner 25 cents - open all nights.

C. A. Carlson - clothes cleaned, pressed and repaired a specialty

Wm. Pearson - watchmaker, jeweler, optician, school supplies, stationery, and candy - new building on the old stand

LOUISVILLE MALE TAX

The following newspaper clipping was sent to the Historical museum by Carmen Scarpella, a long-time Louisville resident who now resides in Longmont. Although the material isn't dated, it is believed to have been printed in the early 1940's.

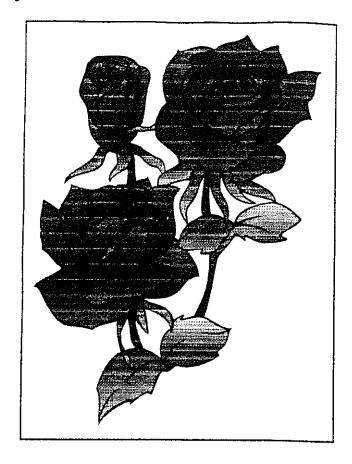
COLORADO TOWN HAS MALE TAX LOUISVILLE, Colo. (AP) - Although Colorado has no poll tax, male citizens in Louisville, a northern Colorado town of 2,700, have to pony up a \$3 tax every year. Either that or do four hours' work for the city at 75 cents per hour.

The tax has been in effect since 1892 and catches every male between 21 and 60 except war veterans and city firemen. "It's very handy when it comes time to cleaning out the curbs and gutters in the spring," said John A. Dionigi, city clerk and recorder. "Of course, some people mistake it for a regular poll tax and think it applies to voting. But it doesn't. If you're a Louisville male, you pay it whether you want to vote or not."

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Carmen is often in Louisville where he still has friends and relatives. On Friday mornings, a group of men who graduated from Louisville High School meet at the Blue Parrot restaurant for breakfast. They talk about the great football teams the high school produced and often about the rivalry between Lafayette and Louisville teams. They enjoy sharing their memories with old friends.

Often, they reminisce about cleaning ashpits, cutting weeds, cleaning the gutters, and doing other work that would spruce up the town for spring. Most of the men who grew up in our town, remember that each spring they could earn a little extra money by working other men's "poll tax." The above article shows that the tax paid by men really was not a "poll tax" which was a tax paid by men so they could vote (women hadn't been granted the right to vote when the tax originated). Most of the townspeople called it a poll tax, however. Older men were often willing to pay the young boys to work their taxes rather than do it themselves or actually pay the amount of the tax. During those times, when money was pretty scarce, the boys often earned enough to ask their favorite girl to the prom or to buy something that they hadn't been able to afford. Everyone came out of the arrangement a winner.



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