

THE MAKING OF A GOLD RUSH:

PIKE'S PEAK, 1858-1860

By

THOMAS DEAN ISERN

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PREFACE

In the spring of 1859 the Rocky Mountains awoke to the touch of someone tickling their feet. Throwing off their white sheets, they yawned eastward and spied a surging line of men stretching far away toward the Missouri River, resembling nothing so much as a great ant army. At the toes of the mountains the men-ants formed noisy clusters, then dispersed to climb into the mountains themselves, only to be replaced by new clusters. Never had the Rockies seen men of such an obnoxious breed. Trappers and traders, Indians, explorers, conquering armies and passing tides of emigration had entered the mountains before, but then had gone and left them in peace. But the newcomers tore up the ground like so many badgers; they felled the timber, erected cabins and gave every indication that they would stay indefinitely. The slumber of the Rockies was forever over. The great Pike's Peak gold rush had planted a new commonwealth upon them.

The gold rush itself was an event of sensational color, full of tragedy and triumph. It was wagons, windwagons, wheelbarrows, hand-carts, pedestrians and even dogsleds crossing the plains. It was conniving politicians and speculators. It was fortunes for some men and subsistence on prickly pears for others. It was tens of thousands of personal vignettes, each one a dramatic tale. But it was more than just a great story. It was an event of enduring importance and profound, but ambiguous meaning.

This thesis is a study of the causes of the gold rush, which were much more than a flash of yellow in a prospector's pan, and the resulting nature of the gold rush emigration. When illuminated the causes of the gold rush put its importance into clear focus. An introductory chapter briefly relates the story of the gold rush in a nonanalytical way. Ensuing chapters then proceed in problem-solving fashion to determine the motives of its participants. A concluding chapter points out that the nature of the gold rush emigration, determined by its causes, had important implications both for the nineteenth century and for modern historiography.

The writer extends special thanks to Dr. Norbert R. Mahnken, thesis adviser, whose aid and advisement always were available but never overbearing. Thanks also are due to Drs. Joseph A. Stout and Odie B. Faulk, committee members, from whom the writer has learned much. Also appropriate is a note of appreciation to the history reference and interlibrary loan staff members of the Oklahoma State University Library for their perseverance.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION: THE PIKE'S PEAK GOLD RUSH

Hurrah! for the land where the moor and the mountain,
Are sparkling with treasure no language hath told,
Where the wave of a river and the spray of a fountain,
Are bright with the glitter of genuine gold.¹

Oliver P. Goodwin rode into Leavenworth City on the Missouri River in Kansas Territory on July 21, 1858, feeling tired but self-satisfied. His fatigue was due to a hard twenty-one-day ride he just had finished from Fort Bridger, Utah, with dispatches for his employers, the freighting firm of Russell, Majors and Waddell. His smugness derived from a sense of long-awaited vindication. For almost ten years Goodwin persistently had believed in the existence of gold in the Pike's Peak region of the Rocky Mountains. He had made a prospecting tour of the eastern slope of the Rockies in 1848 on his way home from serving in the Mexican War and found pockets of earth yielding up to \$4.50 per pan. In subsequent years he became a teamster for Russell, Majors and Waddell and called Leavenworth his home. During the next decade he continued to search for and make inquiries about gold in the mountains. Though many westerners and Indians agreed that there probably was gold in the region, few really were interested in such speculative ideas. On his ride east from Fort Bridger, however, Goodwin discovered his faith justified. On the banks and bars of the upper South Platte River a

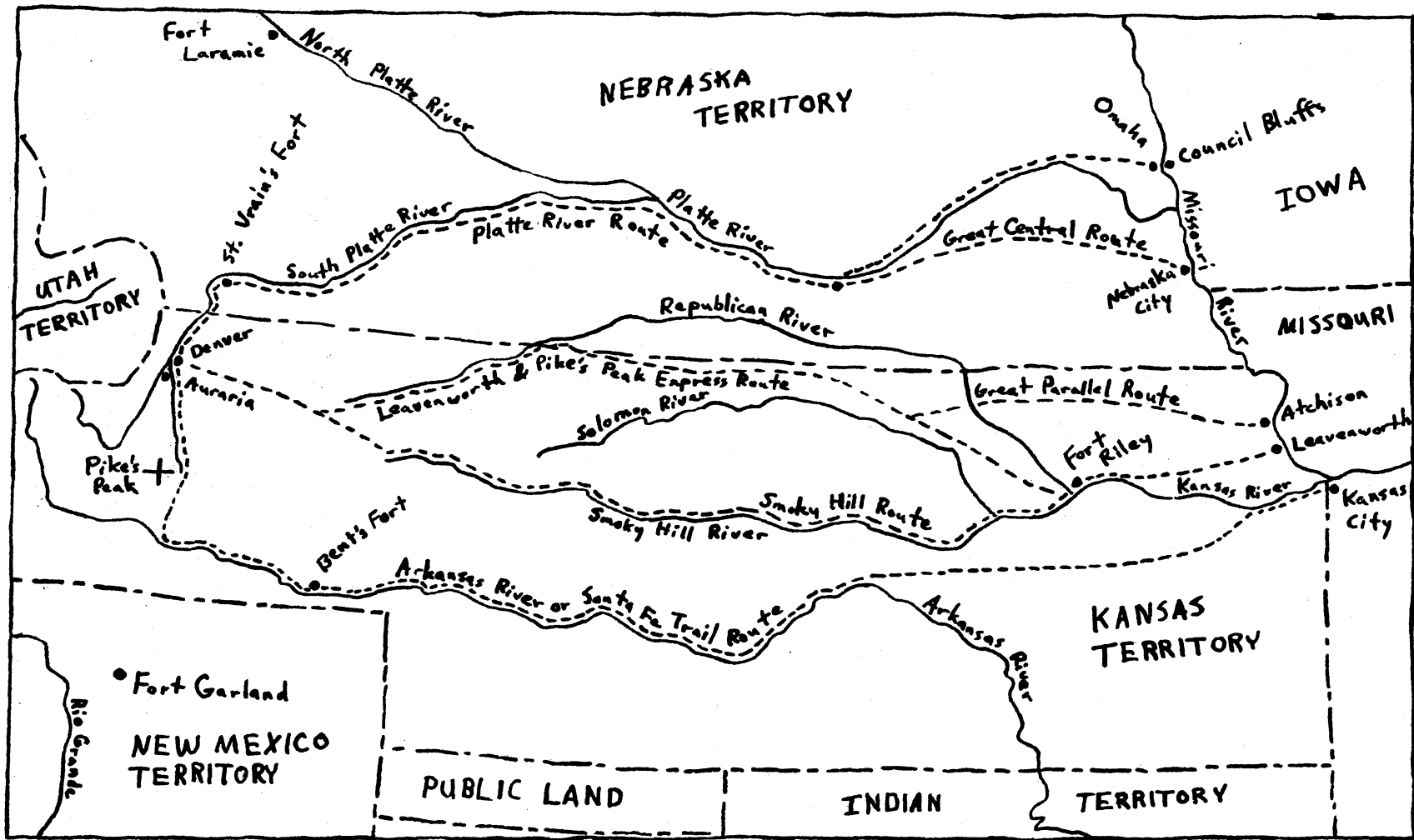


Figure 1. Landmarks of the Pike's Peak Gold Rush

body of men were at work washing out the yellow evidence. Goodwin hurried to Leavenworth to spread the word and bask in his friends' approval.²

Neither Goodwin nor those who listened to his tale realized that the country was on the verge of a gold rush that would rival in magnitude the great rush to California nine years earlier. Nor did they foresee the trials that its participants would endure, or the eventual success of the movement in planting a new commonwealth in the mountains. But their enthusiasm pushed the movement on inexorably. The ensuing Pike's Peak gold rush was beyond their imagination or full comprehension--an event bursting with color and yet pregnant with meaning.

Through July and August of 1858, while Goodwin outfitted himself and re-embarked for the new mines, additional reports of gold discoveries sifted back to towns along the Missouri River by way of freighters and fur-traders. They reported that prospecting parties who had departed in the spring had met with success and were panning fortunes in the foothills. The pioneer prospectors had ventured out in two main groups. More important of the two was a party, led by Georgian William Green Russell, which made a gold strike on the upper South Platte at the base of the mountains in western Kansas Territory. A group of men mostly from Lawrence, Kansas arrived soon after the original discovery and aided in spreading the news.

Reception of the news along the Missouri River was enthusiastic. Old veterans of the California rush listened to the tales, then with condescension responded to queries from their comrades less experienced in such matters as to the probable validity of the reports. But it was a time of depressed economic conditions in the West, and men of

all callings and classes gave the rumors hopeful credence. News of wealth to be had for the digging was welcome both to those who wished to go and dig it and to entrepreneurs who hoped to profit by provisioning the ones who went. By early August newspapers were reporting numerous parties organizing to depart for the mines. Letters from prospectors already in the diggings arrived proclaiming a new Eldorado. Enthusiasm grew until R. T. Van Horn, editor of the Kansas City Daily Western Journal of Commerce, could contain himself no longer and dashed off the inflammatory headline, "THE NEW ELDORADO!!! Gold in Kansas Territory!! The Pike's Mines! First Arrival of Gold Dust in Kansas City!!!" He described the arrival of a group of traders from Fort Laramie, several of whom had visited new mines on Cherry Creek, a tributary of the South Platte. They were veteran mountaineers, and they attested to the reality of the mines while themselves preparing to return there.³

One of the traders, John Cantrell, attracted special attention. He had samples of fine scales of placer gold, gold-bearing quartz and auriferous black sand from the bed of Cherry Creek. Three bushels of the sand when washed out yielded fifteen cents to each two quarts, Van Horn reported. Cantrell also had told his story in nearby Westport, another river town. Newspapers up and down the Missouri reprinted the news.⁴

In the border towns interest deepened. In Leavenworth on cool September evenings knots of citizens gathered on street corners to pool their ignorance about the goldfields. Even though the reported mines were some forty miles north of Pike's Peak, the alliterative name of the great mountain rolled easily off the tongue, so westerners

disregarded geography and attached the catchy name to the mines. "Where is Pike's Peak?" naively asked one. "O, Pike's Peak is in the Rocky mountains, across the plains in Utah," was the uninformed answer.⁵

The geo-political status of the new gold region added to the confusion. Most of the so-called Pike's Peak region was within the boundaries of Kansas Territory, but several other territories included portions of the area. The northernmost mines were in Nebraska Territory, though no one was yet sure just where the line ran. The land west of the Continental Divide was in Utah Territory, and the southern portion of what became Colorado Territory lay within the Territory of New Mexico.

During September and October the "border towns," as the communities along the Missouri River were called, hummed with excitement. Businessmen and municipal officials planned how best to divert through their towns the gold rush that they sensed was coming in order to gain increased trade. Hundreds of impatient opportunists gathered together outfits and left for the mines, unmindful of warnings from friends and from reddening leaves that winter was near. These entrepreneurs hoped to reach the mining region early in order to preempt the best sites for mining and for real estate speculation.

Only the imminence of winter prevented a great rush to the mountains in the fall of 1858. Most potential argonauts wisely heeded the advice of sage heads who warned them not to venture out until the following spring. Winter came suddenly on the plains; moreover many believed it impossible to survive a Rocky Mountain winter. Though this temporarily stifled the rush, all observers predicted a heavy emigration in the spring.⁶

Those who refused to wait began arriving at the diggings in late October. Throughout the winter they straggled in, some suffering frozen extremities for their foolhardiness. Had it not been for the late onset of winter in 1858 the suffering would have been much more severe. Upon arrival few of the emigrants of 1858 attempted to dig for gold. Their priorities called first for laying out town sites up and down the South Platte and its tributaries and then building shelters for the winter. Thus entrenched they confidently awaited spring.

About a thousand men spent the winter in the mining region, scattered through dozens of nascent mining camps, the most prominent of which were the twin towns of Denver and Auraria, facing each other across the mouth of Cherry Creek. Though provisions were expensive the men amused themselves with typical pursuits of an isolated masculine society, drinking and card-playing. The winter was a forlorn one. Christmas was the occasion for a holiday feast in Denver capped by toasts, speeches and a dance. But when one of the leading citizens, General William Larimer, formerly of Leavenworth, exclaimed "What more do we want?" the answer came quickly from Pittsburg, Pennsylvania native Alex O. McGrew, who had walked to Denver pushing a wheelbarrow-- "Women! and the consequent responsibilities!"⁷

Meanwhile in the upper Mississippi, Missouri and Ohio Valleys a great emigration was poised and ready. Word of gold had been spread widely by numerous letters from men in the diggings, enthusiastic newspaper articles and hastily-published guidebooks to the goldfields. There were a few dissenters to the prevailing optimism. William B. Smedley, a Missourian who had gone out with one of the spring prospecting parties of 1858, asserted that the whole affair was "nothing but a

humbug."⁸ But derision greeted such pessimism. William Parsons, another early prospector, disdainfully replied that Smedley had gone home prior to the actual gold discoveries because of "the discouragement and shiftlessness of his own men."⁹ Even Green Russell, leader of the party which made the strike on Cherry Creek, came in for his share of scorn. Coming east for supplies in the fall of 1858 he stated that the mines were yet unproven and that a rush was unwarranted. Frontier residents accused him of lying in order to reserve the riches for himself.¹⁰

Even before winter weather broke bands of Pike's Peakers mobilized. As early as the first week in January they gathered in border towns from other parts of the country to assemble outfits and await tolerable traveling weather. Each steamboat up the Missouri brought new hopefuls. Few of them had any real idea of the troubles they would encounter.

The Pike's Peakers faced a bewildering array of choices as to the best jumping-off point and route to the mines. Agents of the cities of Kansas City and Westport advised them to travel by way of the old Santa Fe Trail up the Arkansas River and then push north along the base of the mountains to the mines. This route was the farthest south of any of the feasible trails and had the virtues of earlier grass and of being more well-traveled than the others. Leavenworth's representatives, however, urged prospective miners to come to that city first and then strike west up the Kansas River and one of its tributaries--either the Smoky Hill, Solomon or Republican Forks--and then northwest to the mines. This was the shortest route but also the least well-known. Nebraskans tried to convince emigrants that the Overland Trail up the Platte, then up the South Platte to the mines was a better way to go.

The towns of Omaha and Nebraska City each claimed to be the best terminus for this route, Omaha advising travel up the north bank of the Platte and Nebraska City on high ground south of the river. The city of Lawrence, Kansas further clouded the issue by saying that Lawrence was farther west than the other outfitting towns but accessible to all three major routes to the mines. Therefore the wise emigrant should come there and have a full choice of alternatives.

Somehow the emigrants made their choices and in February and March, before the brown bluestem of the eastern plains had greened sufficiently to support draft animals, impetuous miners started west. Indeed most of the earliest departers had no stock to worry about. They went on foot and carried pitifully small stores of provisions in sacks on their backs, in handcarts or in wheelbarrows. They were ragged and poor, but in the mines they hoped to recoup their fortunes.

Following the heels of the footmen came another wave of emigrants in wagons. These were less impoverished than their predecessors but even so were hardly affluent. Most were able to pool their resources in groups of four and purchase a wagon and a team of oxen, and some of them decorated their wagon canvas with slogans like "Pike's Peak or Bust." Those unable to afford a wagon paid a small sum to a wagon-owner to carry their baggage and then walked alongside. While most of the pedestrians had chosen the Smoky Hill Route to the mines, believing it the quickest and thus least likely to exhaust their meager provisions, the wagon-borne Pike's Peakers were as likely to choose the Arkansas or Platte Route because they were better-established wagon roads.

The total number of adventurers who set out for the mines in the spring of 1859 was probably around sixty to eighty thousand. But only a fraction of these ever reached the mines, the rest turning back somewhere en route. The disillusionment of the "go-backs" stemmed from several sources. First of these was the great amount of suffering encountered by early emigrants. Those who attempted the Smoky Hill or Republican Routes found unforeseen problems. Many took insufficient food, expecting to live off game along the way. But game proved scarce or elusive, and they found themselves scavenging desperately for food. Prickly pear became a staple for some; one party even turned to cannibalism. They also found water and wood scarce on the stretch between the upper Smoky Hill and the South Platte.

Most of the emigrants turned back because of discouraging reports from the mines borne by men who had reached or claimed to have reached the mines. Two factors combined to produce the negative reports. One was the simple fact that the touted mines of Cherry Creek and the South Platte turned out to be a farce. Gold was scarce, and what there was was so fine that it was difficult to save. New arrivals found that no one could make enough to pay expenses, let alone make a fortune. They proclaimed that they had been "humbled." The other factor causing them to carry back sad reports was that the earliest arrivals, mostly footmen, were ill-prepared either for heavy mining or for extended prospecting. A man on foot could carry only rudimentary mining tools and lacked the equipment to erect the sluice network necessary to extract fine "float" gold, also called "drift" or "scale" gold. Neither had he enough provisions to sustain him in the field for an indefinite

period of time while he prospected for better diggings. His only choice was to turn back immediately and try to make it home.

The go-backs readily proclaimed to those still headed toward the mines that they had been swindled. They blamed the entire fraud on newspapermen, guidebook authors, town speculators and border-town promoters who allegedly had engineered the rush for profit. Most of those whom they met also then turned back and the return exodus became a stampede. By May the rush had turned into a complete bust as the adventurers limped back east swearing vengeance on the men who had deceived them. Their vengeance, however, seldom went beyond mere threats.

Unknown to the discouraged would-be miners a few hardy prospectors were unearthing discoveries that would reverse the tide once more. In January two intrepid argonauts, George A. Jackson and John H. Gregory, had been prospecting individually in the mountains. Each made a strike along a different fork of Clear Creek, also known as Vasquez Fork, then returned to camp until spring when the ground could be worked. In May each took out partners to their respective claims, which proved rich. Word spread quickly in the mining settlements and stimulated a stampede to the new diggings that almost depopulated Denver. This development ended the homeward flow of miners from Denver, and many travelers still on the way west were encouraged to go on to the mines. On June 10 news of the Gregory strike arrived by express in Leavenworth. But by this time the rush had subsided, for most of those who intended to go to the mines had started earlier. The news of the Gregory strike provoked no new gold rush, but it saved the old one from utter failure.

During the summer of 1859 the worth of the new mines became firmly established. An important factor in convincing the rest of the country

of this fact was a visit to the mines by the famous journalist, Horace Greeley. In company with two other journalists, Henry Villard of the Cincinnati Daily Commercial and Albert D. Richardson of the New York Tribune, Greeley in May and June traveled to the mines by Leavenworth and Pike's Peak Express stage and toured the diggings at Gregory Gulch. On June 9 the three newspapermen issued and signed a joint report in which they endorsed the richness of the mines. Greeley's name on this document carried great weight throughout the country. All three journalists also supplied the eastern press with newsletters about the mines, and eventually each wrote a book describing his experiences during the trip.¹¹

In 1860 a new emigration mobilized for the mining region. Part of the travelers still came hoping to get rich quickly, but most had fewer illusions. Some carried stamp mills for crushing gold-bearing quartz or saw mills to provide lumber for new cities. Others brought tools to practice their trades or plows to break the ground of the Platte and Arkansas River bottoms. Most came hoping to work as miners in quartz mining operations, which required great amounts of capital. Gold was the basis of the movement; however it was no wild rush but a steady emigration. The emigrants of 1860 were more prudent than those of the year before. They started late enough in the spring to have good grass and avoided the perilous Smoky Hill Route.

Fewer emigrants journeyed to the mines in 1860 than in the previous year, but in 1860 more of them reached the mining region and remained. Federal census-takers in 1860 found 34,277 residents in Arapaho County, Kansas Territory, which embraced most of the gold region. This figure was really only a good sample of those in the area

at the time. The census-takers scarcely could have taken a comprehensive count of the scattered and mobile population in the mines at that time. Moreover Arapaho County excluded parts of the goldfields, for the northernmost mines lay within Nebraska Territory, the boundary line running just south of Boulder, and the westernmost mines lay in Utah. Thus the actual number in the mines was somewhat above the 34,277 figure, probably nearer 60,000. But even the lower figure showed that the 1860 emigration had brought more new residents than the movement of 1859. Many of those in the mines in fall of 1859 went to milder climes for the winter. As there never were more than 15,000 in the mines at any one time in 1859, not more than ten thousand must have wintered there. Therefore the great majority of those enumerated in 1860 entered the mining region in that year.¹²

By 1860 the real building of what was to become the territory of Colorado had begun. Years later historians attempted to determine the meaning of the turbulent gold rush years. Secondary historical literature on the subject became extensive but largely repetitive. Treatment of the causes of the movement was cursory. Even those authors who attempted to outline what personal motivations might have led thousands of men to emigrate did so without any supporting evidence. Most writers credited the phenomenon of the gold rush to a mysterious hysteria known as "gold fever" which robbed men of their rationality. At the same time they made vague allusions to a propaganda effort made by those who would profit from the rush and to the depressed economic state of the country.

But the causes behind the gold rush gave it its character and broader historical significance. The causes stemmed from isolated acts

by individuals or by small groups of men and from national economic conditions beyond the control of anyone. Three interwoven threads drew the gold rush into being. First there was a tiny spark of excitement aroused when Green Russell and a dozen other men found "color" in a stream in the foothills. Then there was a massive propaganda effort initiated by people who stood to benefit from a gold rush, which amplified and publicized the story of the gold strike. Finally there was the country's economic condition at the time, which was so depressed that it reduced many men to desperation. These factors determined whence the fifty-niners would come, how many of them there would be and of what character they would be. In the following year economic conditions changed and opportunities in the goldfields were of a new nature. Consequently the mode of emigration changed. This evolving nature of the emigration determined the character of the early population of Colorado; altered the geo-political features of the American West in the midst of a sectional struggle for its mastery; and illustrated basic truths about the nature of the entire westward movement. The story of the Pike's Peak gold rush was much more than an incidence of the gold fever.

FOOTNOTES

- ¹Nebraska City News, September 4, 1858, p. 2.
- ²Hannibal (Missouri) Messenger, March 22, 1859, p. 3; LeRoy R. Hafen, ed., Colorado Gold Rush: Contemporary Letters and Reports, 1858-1859 (Glendale, California: Arthur H. Clark Co., 1941), p. 25.
- ³Hafen, Colorado Gold Rush, pp. 26-33.
- ⁴Hafen, Colorado Gold Rush, pp. 33-37.
- ⁵Daniel Ellis Connor, A Confederate in the Colorado Gold Fields (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1970), pp. 3-5.
- ⁶For the sake of consistency and conformity to usage of the gold rush period, the words "emigrant" and "emigration" will be used universally to apply to those who went to the goldfields, even when "immigrant" might technically be more correct.
- ⁷Leavenworth Weekly Times, March 5, 1859, p. 1.
- ⁸(Lawrence) Kansas Herald of Freedom, November 18, 1858, p. 2.
- ⁹Lawrence (Kansas) Republican, November 18, 1858, p. 2.
- ¹⁰Henry Villard, The Past and Present of the Pike's Peak Gold Regions (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1932), p. 20.
- ¹¹Horace Greeley, An Overland Journey from New York to San Francisco in the Summer of 1859 (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1964); Villard, The Past and Present of the Pike's Peak Gold Regions; Albert D. Richardson, Beyond the Richardson (Hartford, Connecticut: American Publishing Company, 1885).
- ¹²Population of the United States in 1860; compiled from the original returns of the Eighth Census (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1864), pp. 546-547; Louise Barry, ed., "Albert D. Richardson's Letters on the Pike's Peak Gold Region," Kansas Historical Quarterly, XII, No. 1 (February, 1943), p. 55.

CHAPTER II

THE GOLD STRIKE AS CAUSE

The Pike's Peak gold rush began all wrong if it was to conform to the stereotyped image of a gold rush as a sudden, wild convulsion. News of the Russell strike should have come like a bolt from the blue, and the rush been off in a cloud of dust. But the real situation was different, for 1858 was by no means the first year in which the inhabitants of the western frontier heard reports of gold discoveries in the Rockies. Starting with Zebulon Pike in 1806 and increasing after the 1830's, gold reports sifted back to the western frontier so often as to become commonplace. Through all those years they attracted little attention. Yet for some reason when in 1858 word came of another alleged discovery, the Russell strike, it created a sensation and set off a rush to the Rockies. Considering the prospecting activities of 1858 and the dearth of real wealth discovered, the strikes of 1858 were unimportant, especially in the light of years of similar rumors. Consequently there must have been additional factors operating at the same time to set off the gold rush in the next year.

The earliest Spanish explorers to approach the region that eventually became Colorado Territory came in search of gold. Spaniards and Mexicans later mined extensively in the northern provinces of New Mexico, but with a few exceptions confined their efforts to the south

of the region that became Colorado. Mexican prospectors, however, sometimes ranged as far north as the valley of the South Platte.

Discovery of gold in the Rockies by United States citizens began about the time of Major Zebulon Pike's expedition to the Rockies in 1806-1807. Pike trespassed on Spanish territory while seeking the headwaters of the Arkansas. Spanish troops captured his party in camp near the source of that river and took him to Santa Fe. While detained there Pike met a Kentuckian named James Pursley or Purcell. Pursley had been trading with the Indians in the mountains in 1803-1804 and had become lost. He wandered about until he regained his bearings and reached Santa Fe, where he settled and became a carpenter. Pursley confided to Pike that he had found gold on the headwaters of the South Platte River before he had become lost. He had carried a quantity of the precious mineral in his shot pouch for months, but in the period when he was lost had thrown away the pouch. After having arrived in Santa Fe he unwisely told citizens there of his find. They were eager to go north and investigate, but Pursley refused to guide them because he believed that the location of the riches was within American territory. The frustrated Mexicans whipped him, but he refused to yield.¹

After Pike's return to the United States in 1807 and the publication of his report in 1810, there was a hiatus in gold reports from the mountains until the 1830's, but thereafter they came with increasing frequency. The first emanated from a party of trappers and traders in 1833. In the spring of that year some seventy men including William Poe, John Sollars, Antoine Roubidoux and Peter and Joel Estes, for whom Estes Park was later named, left Independence, Missouri for the mountains. Some intended to trap in the mountains and some to trade in

Santa Fe. Those who went to Santa Fe there heard of placer gold deposits being worked only twenty-seven miles from the city, causing excitement and something of a stampede among the Mexicans. Several of the Americans had mined gold in Georgia and decided to avail themselves of this new opportunity. They worked successfully in the diggings despite a claim-jumping dispute involving Joel Estes with a Mexican antagonist, and washed out several thousand dollars worth of gold before the available water at the site dried up. Then they joined with some other Americans to form a prospecting party of twenty-five, stole some Mexican ponies to avenge Estes' earlier claim difficulties, and headed north to winter at mining camps in the northern part of the province. The following spring they prospected north along the base of the mountains to the headwaters of the South Platte. On Vasquez Fork (Clear Creek) of that stream the prospectors made their first paying strike and marked the spot with boulders at regular intervals. They washed dirt from the creek until melting snows raised the water too high for further work, then moved north again.

The adventurers next prospected their way into the Black Hills and spent the winter of 1834-1835 there.² They found the best diggings thus far but also met hostile Indians; in the spring they returned home to Missouri. There they apparently made no secret of their findings, for when Marshal Cook, prominent pioneer of the gold rush period, wrote a manuscript history of the settlement of Colorado, he recalled that he had heard the Estes story from numerous sources, as well as from the participants themselves. In 1859 Cook even was able to locate the stone markers placed by the Estes party on what became known as Arapaho Bar of the Vasquez Fork.³

In the same year that the Estes party brought back word of their expedition another mountain man was making a gold discovery. Eustace Carriere was a French trapper associated with the Choteau trading interests who in 1835 became lost in the Rockies and wandered bewildered for several weeks. During this time he picked up numerous rock specimens containing gold and later carried them with him into New Mexico. Mexicans formed a prospecting party to go back with Carriere and search for the samples' place of origin. But Carriere was unable to relocate the spot, though the Mexicans whipped him to try to force him to remember what he could not.⁴

Other men also discovered gold in the Rockies in the late 1830's. The Delaware Indians frequently ranged from their reservation on the Missouri River in what was to become Kansas Territory across the plains and into the mountains on hunting and trapping expeditions. Probably in the winter of 1837-1838 a Delaware trapper named Cohon was running his traps on a tributary of the Platte. After noticing gold flecks in the sand clinging to the bottoms of his moccasins he began prospecting the area for gold and found it in several other places nearby. Cohon returned to the Missouri River area and told a close friend, a white man named Dr. J. Lykins, of his discovery. Lykins doubted the story at first, but his knowledge of the reliable character of the Indian and the vehemence of Cohon's assertions convinced the doctor that the story was true. At about the same time another trapper returned from the mountains and showed Lykins a half-ounce of gold washed from the upper South Platte's sands. Lykins later wrote that he could recall many similar instances in ensuing years.⁵

Gold reports came not only to the Missouri frontier but also to trading establishments in the far West. In the middle thirties A. Pike Vasquez was engaged in the Indian trade with his uncle, Louis Vasquez, at Fort Vasquez on the upper South Platte. Vasquez stated that during this time Indians and Mexicans frequently brought gold dust into the fort for sale.⁶

During the 1840's numerous reports of gold came from trappers, traders and explorers on the plains and in the mountains. Josiah Gregg, historian of the Santa Fe trade, was active in that enterprise from 1831 to 1839 and published his Commerce of the Prairies in 1844. In it Gregg said that trappers asserted there was "an extensive gold region about the sources of the South Platte; yet, although recent search has been made, it has not been discovered."⁷ This statement indicated that not only were reports of gold circulating in the late thirties but that at least one party had gone to the South Platte area specifically to search for gold. Gregg also reported that Mexicans had mined gold in the Sangre de Christo Mountains in Northern New Mexico.⁸

Two famous mountain men who brought back word of gold were "Parson" Bill Williams and Rufus B. Sage. In 1841 or 1842 Williams came out of the mountains to visit his family in Missouri. Among his "possibles" he carried gold nuggets from the Rockies which he displayed to his brother John. The mountaineer suggested that they raise a party to prospect in the mountains, but his brother refused. Williams had the hard evidence of gold but at that time no one was interested.⁹

Sage made mention of gold several times in his Scenes in the Rocky Mountains, published in 1846. He said that he himself had found "certain indications of gold" on the headwaters of the Kansas River, and

added that "it is said also, that gold has been found in these parts."¹⁰ Sage also told a fanciful story which demonstrated that gold rumors of the Rockies were familiar enough to have passed into folklore. "Some twenty years since," he wrote, a group of Arapaho braves were on a war expedition against the Pawnees. The Arapahos, forced into retreat, had only three guns and were out of bullets. Then they found several pieces of a yellow metallic substance and pounded them into bullets. In a subsequent fight with the Pawnees the "medicine doings" of the yellow balls were such that each ball found its mark and the Arapahos prevailed.¹¹

Finally and more credibly Sage told the story of a French hunter named Du Shay or Du Shet. Around 1840 Du Shay found some gold-flecked rocks in the bed of Horse Creek, a tributary of the Platte, and deposited them in a pouch. Later he discarded the specimens because of their weight. In Santa Fe in the presence of some Mexicans he happened to empty the pouch in which he had carried the samples and out rained a few yellow flecks. The Mexicans recognized the substance as gold and told Du Shay of it. But upon returning to the area of the original discovery the Frenchman was unable to locate the fork of river on which he had found the specimens.¹²

By 1849 more reports were in and prospectors were in the field. In July of that year a Mr. Ward arrived in Missouri, having returned from Santa Fe by going north to the Platte and down that river to the Missouri and catching a steamer to the settlements. With him he carried about \$2,000 in gold dust which he had purchased from an Arapaho Indian at Ash Hollow near the head of the Kansas River.¹³

Oliver P. Goodwin, a teamster for Russell, Majors and Waddell, was at Fort Laramie in 1849 when he heard stories of gold in the Rockies and embarked on a prospecting tour, working south through the mountains as far as the Spanish Peaks. He found good prospects at several places, the best on the St. Vrain Fork of the South Platte, where from one pan of earth he extracted \$4.50 in gold.¹⁴

Other prospectors were out at the same time for in 1858 David Kellogg met in the goldfields an old-timer who said that he had been at Pike's Peak ten years before. At one place he and a Mexican companion had taken \$28.50 in gold from a creek in three hours. The man with him was a survivor of an earlier party of Mexicans who had worked at the same place but were attacked and driven off by Ute Indians. Since 1849 the old prospector had been trying to raise a party to return to the area, but no one was interested until 1858.¹⁵

By 1849 William Gilpin, later the first territorial governor of Colorado, had become a prophet of the mineral wealth of the Rockies. Gilpin had crossed the Rockies in 1843 with Lt. John C. Fremont's Oregon expedition and explored widely in the West on several other military expeditions. On one of his jaunts he found gold in a mountain stream flowing through the region of which he was later to be governor. Combining this personal experience with knowledge of the natural sciences and with other reports he had heard, Gilpin concluded that the Rocky Mountains abounded with mineral wealth. In 1849 he made an address in Independence, Missouri in which he asserted that the mountains bore gold, silver and precious stones. His listeners were uninspired. But for the next ten years Gilpin continued to speak of precious metals in the mountains to whomever would listen.¹⁶

Gilpin became known along the frontier for his views. Suddenly in the fall of 1858, as excitement spread over recent gold strikes, Gilpin became the man whom everyone wanted to hear. On November 15 he complied with a request from the Kansas City Chamber of Commerce to address a public meeting in that city on the subject, "Pike's Peak and the Sierra San Juan." If they wanted optimism, he gave that in abundance. Gilpin asserted his "absolute conviction" that when prospecting began in earnest the miners would discover that the gold dust which they had been finding was only the indicator of "gold in mass and in position and infinite in quantity"--literally a mountain of gold!¹⁷ This wild prediction made Gilpin the butt of humorous satire in the goldfields, but at the same time frontier residents respectfully recalled the way in which his earlier prophecies of mineral wealth had come true.¹⁸

Gilpin was far from alone in telling of gold in the mountains during the 1850's; in fact gold reports became ever more frequent. In 1850 the town of Cane Hill, Arkansas, was the scene of a spate of gold excitement. Arkansas resident B. F. Johnson wrote to the Van Buren Intelligencer that prospectors had found gold along a seventy-mile stretch of the upper Arkansas River, starting two hundred miles above Fort Gibson, Indian Territory. The discoverers had returned with gold samples to procure mining equipment. A party of Cherokee Indians left for the new diggings, and a group of men from Cane Hill planned to depart in August.¹⁹

In the same year other gold discoveries took place in the area of the South Platte. In 1850 another group of Cherokees traveled up the Arkansas bound for the goldfields of California. Captain Clement Van

McNair led this party from the site of present Stillwell, Oklahoma on April 20. They ascended the Arkansas, then left it at the base of the mountains and pushed north to the future site of Denver. In an unnamed creek Lewis Ralston, a white man connected to the Cherokees by marriage, panned out a bit of gold on June 21. Naming the stream Ralston Creek, most of the party, including a Cherokee named John Beck, tarried for a few days to investigate the discovery and found gold also in Cherry Creek. But the amount was insufficient to detain them longer from pushing on for California. Also in 1850 Antoine Pichard, an employee of the Choteaus, found gold in Clear Creek. He reported his find to a company camp at the mouth of the Platte River Canyon.²⁰

In 1852 news again came from the Delaware reservation of a gold strike in the mountains. Excitement reigned briefly in Parkville, Missouri, across the river from the reservation, following the return on January 29 of a band of Delawares from a hunting expedition. With them they carried a quantity of fine gold dust. One Parkville citizen purchased a bit of the dust from one of the Indians who told him that he had obtained it on the eastern side of the mountains, some seven hundred miles west of the Missouri River. Another man offered the Indian a thousand dollars to show him the place, but the Indian refused.²¹

Colonel Stimson of Tecumseh, Kansas, later remembered a similar incident in about the same year. He was keeping a store at the time, when a party of Indians entered and purchased some goods with gold "in its native state." They refused to tell where they had found it, even after one man offered them five hundred dollars to reveal the location.

Stimson's story was probably related to the incident recorded in Parkville.²²

There were two other incidents of gold discovery in 1852. William N. Byers, the future editor of the Rocky Mountain News, followed the Overland Trail to Oregon in that year. At Fort Laramie he heard that hunters and trappers from the fort had found gold at Pike's Peak. Byers also later wrote that General Thomas Taylor of Kentucky told him that in 1852 Taylor was on an Indian campaign at the mouth of Cherry Creek. While there Taylor panned gold from the stream.²³

The following year, 1853, was a year of controversy in the United States Congress over the route of a proposed transcontinental railroad. William Claude Jones, later prominent in Arizona territorial politics, had crossed the central Rockies in 1848. When asked in 1853 about the best route for the railroad he recommended that Congress choose a central route so as to exploit the wealth of the South Platte and South Park regions, "a region of country beautiful and rich, and possessing abundant gold fields."²⁴ Jones may have had partisan motives for the statement, but at least he believed that his claim was plausible enough to be a good argument.

Another gold report circulated in 1853 at Fort Laramie, which by that time had become a veritable clearing-house for such rumors. A man named Norton had traveled toward California on the Cherokee Trail, the route followed earlier by McNair's party of Cherokees. When he arrived at the fort he announced that he had found gold at Pike's Peak and exhibited samples to his listeners.²⁵

Neither had the residents of Arkansas forgotten the gold in the mountains. On January 28, 1854, the Southwest Independent (Fayetteville)

printed news of a gold strike on the Gila River in Arizona. But the editor advised his readers to forget about the Gila and prospect in the Rockies instead. He recommended the Pueblo region and the Grand Canon of the Arkansas River. A party of Arkansas residents, probably from Cane Hill, had gone out in the previous year and found gold east of the mountains. The editor urged the Cane Hill people to take the initiative in organizing a new prospecting party and advised them to get an early start in the spring.²⁶

Interest in the mountains' gold also swelled in Missouri in the following year. Throughout the Southwest various people reported rich new gold diggings on the upper Arkansas River. Some observers endorsed the tales while others called them a fraud. Residents of Newton County, Missouri related that an Osage Indian named Civil John had found gold bubbling up in a spring while he was buffalo hunting. This supposedly took place 480 miles west of the most westward border settlements, on the Pawnee Fork of the Arkansas.

Civil John however generated enthusiasm in Missouri for prospecting. He brought gold samples back to Newton County and then returned to the site of his discovery with a few companions, one of them named Pool. These men again returned to Missouri, whereupon Pool led another party which included a Cherokee named Coody, Coorby or Coodey. But either Pool had lied when he claimed to have visited the diggings or he became lost on this trip, for he was unable again to locate the mines. Rather he led the group on a fruitless jaunt through the "Ouchita Mountains," after which the party broke up when confronted by hostile Comanches. Some of the men went north and prospected as far as the South Platte River, while others returned to Missouri. The returning

parties met and turned back parties coming to the supposed diggings from Kansas, but found on their arrival home that Civil John had led yet another expedition of twenty-five men west. Coody and others spread disbelief in Missouri and made the whole affair appear to have been a farce. But the incident failed to dispel all thoughts of gold, for by 1857 Coody himself again wrote of gold regions on the South Platte River. Perhaps Pool met with success after all in his search there in 1855.²⁷

Prospecting continued in 1856. A group of mountain men including John Simpson Smith, William McGaa (alias Jack Jones) and Nicholas Jannesse prospected the tributaries of the South Platte, camping finally at the mouth of Clear Creek. They remained in the area for two years and still were there when the Russell party arrived in 1858. In fact after Russell's men tried mining in the South Platte area and decided to move north in search of better diggings the mountain men preempted the diggings opened by the Georgians.²⁸

Another separate party of six or eight prospectors from Missouri was in the area at the same time. Through the entire winter of 1856-1857 the Missourians prospected in the upper South Platte area and found "plenty of gold." They intended to keep the discovery a secret, but when Indians ran off their draft animals they decided to go back to Missouri to procure new stock and to raise enough companions to be secure against the Indians. The prospectors yoked their only remaining pair of oxen to a wagon, stashed their gold in bottles and pouches and departed, only to be delayed when one of the number accidentally shot himself while pulling his gun out of the wagon. Fortunately, they encountered on Cherry Creek an army force under Major John Sedgwick that had

come to punish warring Indians. The Missourians left their wounded friend in the care of army doctors and headed for home.²⁹

Prospecting continued in 1857, the year before the Russell strike. In that year John Beck, a veteran of the 1850 Cherokee expedition which had found gold in Ralston and Cherry Creeks on the way to California, and his son accompanied a group of white men from Indian Territory onto the high plains with the intention of prospecting in the foothills of the Rockies. Beck had talked freely about the gold he had found in 1850 but until this time had been unable to arouse any interest in investigating his story. In this search the Becks prospected unsuccessfully, only locating slight traces of gold prior to fleeing the area out of fear of hostile Arapahos.³⁰

One other man made a gold discovery at about the same time. In the summer of 1857 Captain Randolph B. Marcy, veteran of many years' outstanding service in the West, stopped a military wagon train he was commanding at the edge of the swollen South Platte River to wait for the water to lower. He was near the mouth of Cherry Creek. A civilian employee of Marcy took the opportunity to try panning the creek for gold and raised a cry when he discovered bits of the metal in his pan. This teamster soon returned east, and thereafter Marcy believed that it was this strike which set off the rush of 1859.³¹

The effect of these years of rumors and reports of gold in the mountains was evident in comments by many residents of the frontier when in 1858 they heard of the Russell strike. Mountain men and plainsmen immediately said "I told you so" and asserted that they always had known there was gold in the Rockies. Newspapers printed their smug statements. George S. Simpson, a mountain man of eighteen years'

residence in the Rockies, stated that he had known for years that there was gold on the Platte, Arkansas, and Green or Colorado Rivers. He advised prospectors to try the region south of the Arkansas. The prominent trader William Bent said that the Indians had known of the gold ever since he had been among them. He especially had made inquiry of them at the time of the rush to California. The Indians, he said, withheld their knowledge from all other whites because they feared that a gold rush to the mountains would take from them their favorite hunting grounds and wintering areas, the high plains and the Rockies, their "last and best home."³²

Newspapermen of the border towns and participants in the rush themselves took for granted the earlier reports. Van Horn of the Journal of Commerce, in addition to other disclosures, stated that Indians and trappers long had known of gold in the mountains and that Catholic missionaries frequently had found gold specimens among the Kansa Indians. The Nebraska City News and the Omaha Nebraskan also discussed the earlier strikes, as did the Lawrence, Kansas Herald of Freedom. The fact that the newsmen were trying to create a gold rush at the time did not explain their publication of the earlier reports. If anything the journalists would have wanted to silence the earlier stories if they credibly could have done so. Considering the older reports, people in 1858 would have been inclined to be suspicious of why the editors suddenly were making so much of the gold in the mountains if they had known about it all along.³³

All these earlier strikes meant that unless the Russell strike of 1858 was really of major importance it should have counted as just another rumor. Instead, it became the touchstone for a major gold rush.

If the new gold discoveries clearly had been rich and extensive, then the cause of the ensuing gold rush would have been plain. But the new strikes really were insignificant; moreover a haze of misinformation surrounded them. The efforts and findings of the prospectors of 1858 were little justification for the gold rush that began in the following year.

The series of events that brought about the prospecting of 1858 began with the discovery of gold in California in 1848. Among the thousands who traveled the Northern Overland Route to California in 1849 was the Georgian Green Russell, a veteran gold miner of the Georgia gold rush of the 1830's. He reached his California destination only to return to Georgia in 1850 via the Isthmus of Panama. His brother Levi, also an experienced miner, then joined him for a return trip to California. But it was on the first trip west that Green Russell panned some gravel from the Sweetwater River in the Black Hills. He found a bit of gold but not enough to dissuade him from his eventual destination. Russell however mentally filed the incident for future reference.³⁴

Meanwhile other California-bound travelers were having similar experiences. These were Captain McNair's Cherokees, who on the way to California in 1850, found gold in Ralston and Cherry Creeks. One of their number, John Beck, a Baptist preacher and Cherokee national legislator, took special note of the incident.

The wealth of California claimed neither Beck nor the Russells permanently. In 1852 the Russells returned to Georgia. Coincidence then played a great role, for it happened that Green Russell had married a Cherokee woman. This gave him friends and relatives among the

Cherokees both in Georgia and in Indian Territory. Through these family connections Russell heard of the McNair party's discovery of gold in 1850. Some Cherokees in Indian Territory suggested that Russell join them for a prospecting expedition to the upper South Platte, but such plans failed to materialize. However, at an undetermined time in the 1850's, Beck arrived back in the Cherokee country from California. Beck had more enthusiasm than anyone else for a prospecting effort and began trying to organize one.³⁵

Beck found it difficult to recruit prospectors because of fears of hostile Indians in the area to be prospected, but in 1857 he and his son made their brief tour of the gold region. They camped on the South Platte within sixty miles of Ralston Creek before turning back. But a sample of gravel the younger Beck carried home bore fifty cents worth of gold dust and kept their curiosity alive.³⁶

In the same year Green Russell and his brother J. Oliver Russell and several other Georgians visited eastern Kansas. On Rock Creek in Pottawatomie County near Fort Riley the southerners took up land claims. They also planned a prospecting expedition farther to the west, and Green Russell made offers among Kansans to finance such a venture in return for half of any gold extracted. But because of the anti-slavery controversy's violence in Kansas at the time the Russells returned to Georgia for the winter, leaving two of their friends, James H. and R. H. Pierce, to care for their Kansas claims.³⁷

Organization of a prospecting party then began in earnest. Beck roused the Cherokees in Indian Territory and they planned an expedition for the following spring. They also wrote to fellow Cherokees in Georgia and invited them to join the expedition. The Russells heard

about this through the Georgia Cherokees and contacted Beck to propose a joint venture. This was desirable to all parties because of the still-present Indian danger, thus in further correspondence Beck and Russell arranged to merge their parties the following spring. Beck also wrote to Cherokees living in southwest Missouri and western Arkansas about the venture and submitted to the area press for publication a letter inviting anyone interested to join the gold-seekers.³⁸

As spring approached the prospectors assembled. On February 17 the three Russell brothers, Lewis Ralston and five other men left Auraria, Georgia, toward a planned rendezvous with the Cherokees of Indian Territory. But when they arrived at the arranged meeting place in Maysville, Arkansas, on the border of Indian Territory, they found the Cherokees unready to move. The Georgians decided not to wait but proceeded north to the Rock Creek claims taken by the Russells and Pierces in the previous year. There the Pierces and some Kansans joined them. Their party numbered twenty-one or perhaps a few more by the time they had broken camp at Rock Creek and proceeded to Manhattan for supplies. On May 20 they left Manhattan bound for the point where the Santa Fe Trail struck the Arkansas River, where they had promised to meet the Cherokees.³⁹

When they reached the Arkansas Russell found the Cherokees already gone ahead of him, but they made contact through messengers. Forty miles west of Pawnee Fork he caught up with the Cherokees, forty-nine in number and including the two Becks, captained by George Hicks. United, they followed the route of the Old Cherokee Trail. On June 22 they reached Cherry Creek and on the following day the South Platte. On one of those two days they received further reenforcements when a

group of twenty-seven Missourians overtook them. Seventeen of these, led by Captain William Doke, came from Bates County, Missouri. The rest, led by William B. Smedley, came from Ray County, Missouri, and had joined the Bates County party en route. The Missourians had heard of the prospecting expedition through the publicity efforts of Beck, but had left too late to catch up to the main party until this time. Somewhere in western Kansas a few other men joined the party from undetermined origin, and the party finally numbered 104.⁴⁰

The gold-hunters soon commenced prospecting but found little reward for their efforts. They first crossed the South Platte to the initial goal of their journey, Ralston Creek, where Beck had assured them they could make five dollars to the pan. All the men spent June 26 in prospecting the creek but found only scant fine particles of gold, and most of them were disappointed greatly. In the next week parties fanned out over the area as far into the mountains as Boulder Creek but met with similar failure. Even with sluice boxes constructed from boards from the beds of their wagons the prospectors were unable to save enough of the fine gold which they found to make it pay. They had not found "anything of value;" the best diggings so far failed to yield twenty-five cents per day per man. Faces were long when on the third of July the company assembled for a consultation. The fruit of the meeting was that on the following day most of the men departed for home, leaving about thirty to prospect further.⁴¹

Prospects then went from bad to worse. The remaining thirty returned to the crossing of the South Platte and lost a wagon in the river. On July 4 they held another dissension-filled council, in which the men disagreed on where they should prospect next. Moreover, with

their number decreased as it was, many of them feared Indian attack. Some even wanted to build a stockade for protection. A minority wanted to prospect the South Platte into the mountains; the majority wanted to go home. "Gentlemen, you can all go, but I will stay if two men will stay with me," Green Russell proclaimed.⁴² The company again split and most of the members went home, leaving the three Russell brothers and ten companions to carry on.⁴³

The stalwart thirteen, seven Georgians and six Kansans, received quick reward for their perseverance. They pushed up the South Platte on the day the company split and camped after traveling eight miles. There James H. Pierce or Green Russell made the first paying strike of the expedition, and there also the party made its first serious efforts at mining. They worked their new diggings for eight or ten days. Despite later statements by some of the prospectors that they made from five to ten dollars per day per man there, the mines could not have been too rich, for the prospectors were reluctant to stay there and work steadily. Instead they sought better diggings. On Dry Creek about three miles south of the first strike Green Russell and a companion found a new gold deposit, which some of the men worked for a few days while others prospected. They soon uncovered a third deposit on the same creek which yielded about the same as the other two and worked it also for eight or ten days.⁴⁴

On one of the days when they were working the Dry Creek diggings a mountain trader and former California miner named John Cantrell drove up alone in his wagon. Having hauled a load of whiskey to Fort Laramie and heard of the activities of the Russell party, he had detoured by the South Platte on his way back to Missouri. He tarried with the

prospectors a few days, then filled a sack with the best "pay dirt" that the diggings contained and proceeded toward Kansas City.⁴⁵

Russell's men next prospected for eighty miles up the South Platte into the mountains seeking the source of the placer gold that they already had found, but unearthed only a little more float gold. Consequently, they returned to Cherry Creek and found Smith, McGaa, Jannesse and the rest of the mountaineers who had begun prospecting the area in 1856 camped with their Indian wives and a few other Indians. They probably were awaiting the return of the Russell party to see how they had done. Then they all joined in prospecting Cherry Creek and found some drift gold, but too little to satisfy Russell's men. As a result on August 25 they rode off to the north and left the motley group of mountain men in possession of the Cherry Creek diggings.⁴⁶

The object of Russell's new investigation was the Black Hills 150 miles north of the South Platte, where he had found gold in 1849. He and his men prospected that entire area but again only found small pockets of drift gold. A fall snowstorm persuaded them to seek a more southern clime for the winter, and they started back for the South Platte. En route the prospectors met a detachment of government troops on their way back to the states. On September 20 the wanderers arrived back at the confluence of the South Platte and Cherry Creek, where they had found their best diggings thus far, the only mines "of any account. . . . Things looked somewhat discouraging" at that point, James H. Pierce later wrote.⁴⁷

But on their return to the South Platte Russell's men found that the situation there had changed radically. During their absence a new company of prospectors, in addition to the mountain men, had arrived at

the Cherry Creek diggings and made themselves at home by working the mines and laying out a townsite called Montana. Most of the new arrivals were members of a prospecting party that had started from Lawrence for the mountains during the previous spring. The story of the Lawrence company, though it was contemporary in time with the Russell party, was separate from the latter in origin and operations.⁴⁸

The series of events that led to the formation of the Lawrence party began in 1857. That summer Colonel E. V. Sumner led a military expedition onto the plains to fight the Cheyennes. His command split on the upper Arkansas River as Major John Sedgwick took four companies of the First Cavalry toward the South Platte. On Cherry Creek he encountered the half-dozen Missouriians who had prospected through the previous winter and were journeying home with their wounded comrade and their bottles and pouches of gold. With Sedgwick on the march was a detachment of Delaware scouts under the leadership of an Indian named Fall Leaf. During the expedition Fall Leaf somewhere obtained some gold samples; probably he got them from the Missouri prospectors. He returned with these in the fall to Lawrence, Kansas and there exhibited the gold. John Easter, a meat dealer in the city, was most interested in the specimens. He began raising men to prospect in the mountains in the following spring and Fall Leaf, claiming himself to have made the gold discovery, agreed to act as their guide.⁴⁹

On May 24, 1858, the first detachment of the Lawrence company left that city for the mountains via the Santa Fe Trail with about twenty or a few more men in their party. Another group was to follow and overtake them bringing their guide, Fall Leaf. But when Easter and the second group were ready to go, Fall Leaf refused to accompany them.

The reason for this may have been that the Delaware feared hostile Indians; or that he was beaten up in a brawl the night before; or that he was beaten by other Delawares who wanted to protect the secret of the gold because of superstitions. But most probably it was because Fall Leaf had been boasting that he had found the gold himself and knew where to find more, whereas in reality he had obtained his gold samples from the Missourians. He would have exposed his own deceit if he had tried to act as a guide.⁵⁰

Nevertheless the expedition pushed on without a guide. Easter and seven more men followed two days after the first detachment and joined them at 110 Creek. As additional recruits straggled in from Lawrence and other parts of eastern Kansas, the number of argonauts swelled to forty-eight men, two women and one child. They ascended the Arkansas to the mountain region and camped on July 4 on Huerfano (Fountain) Creek.⁵¹

The activities of the Lawrence party in the period that followed assumed the appearance more of a pleasure trip than of a serious prospecting effort. The members scouted halfheartedly for gold, hunted, climbed Pike's Peak and lolled in camp. On July 5 two wagon-loads of Cherokees who had left the Russell company passed through camp on their way home, announcing that they had found less than ten dollars worth of gold altogether. The Lawrence company spent another week in the Pike's Peak area, then struck for Cherry Creek despite the Cherokees' bleak warnings, for they had nothing better to do.⁵²

On the same day that they started north their prospecting efforts entered another phase. A dozen Cherokees overtook the Lawrence men from the south and told them that the main body of those who had left

the Russell party just had passed to the south. The two parties, the Lawrence company and fifty-six Cherokees, Missourians and Georgians, agreed to join forces for new prospecting efforts. As the united parties lay encamped six Mexican traders from Taos camped nearby. One of the Mexicans answered an inquiry from the prospectors by insisting that he could lead them to rich gold diggings. Consequently Captain Doke of the Missourians led about thirty-six of the gold-hunters to the western side of Pike's Peak, guided by the Mexican, named Nicholas Archulata. This fruitless chase lasted for eight days and extended as far as the canyon of the South Platte, wholly without success. Most of the Cherokee-Missourian group then went home on July 25, leaving only a few of their number with the Lawrence party. Three of the Lawrence men next accompanied Archulata on another jaunt, this time for fifteen days, with the same result as the first. The company then was ready to give up prospecting, at least for that year.⁵³

The weary gold-hunters decided to go south into New Mexico to obtain supplies and perhaps to spend the winter. They started on August 19 and proceeded to Spanish Peaks, then encamped a few miles from Fort Garland, New Mexico. A few Iowans who had come out with the Lawrence party and a few Missourians from the Russell party left them en route for the states. While the group rested in camp a party of mounted men rode through on their way to Fort Garland. They came from the South Platte diggings and had come south for supplies, and informed the Lawrence men that the Russell party was working rich deposits on the South Platte. This persuaded the weary Kansans to try prospecting once more and they started north for the reported diggings, except for a few who stayed in New Mexico for the winter.⁵⁴

On September 6 the Lawrence men arrived at the confluence of Cherry Creek and the South Platte, but they showed little mettle as miners. They found the Russell party gone on its northern prospecting swing and the mountain men working the diggings sporadically if at all. The Lawrence men also tried mining, but found that their efforts failed to repay their time. Consequently, they turned their efforts to an art at which they were more skilled--real estate promotion. Five miles below the mouth of Cherry Creek on the South Platte the former prospectors surveyed and laid out a town site which they christened "Montana." Such was the state of affairs when the Russell party arrived back on the South Platte on September 20. On the same day four members of the Lawrence party rode off for the states.⁵⁵

For all practical purposes prospecting for 1858 had ended. The Lawrence men and mountain men were content to prepare winter quarters and lay out another town site. A few outsiders wandered into the diggings, having heard of the gold discoveries. Russell's party broke up. Green and J. Oliver Russell and another Georgian named Valerius Young left for Leavenworth via the Arkansas River route, planning to return to Georgia for the winter and to come back to the mountains for further prospecting in the spring. Four more of the thirteen who had made up the final Russell party traveled to Fort Garland for supplies, prospecting a bit en route. By late October, when they returned to camp on the South Platte, an influx of new adventurers had arrived, the harbingers of the rush to come.⁵⁶

The sum of the prospecting efforts of 1858 hardly warranted the gold rush that ensued in 1859. The Russell party, shrunken to thirteen members from an original hundred-odd, prospected extensively and

knowledgeably, but found no diggings rich enough that they cared to stop and work them for any length of time. The fruit of all the mining that they did was less than six hundred dollars, too little even to pay expenses. Levi Russell had to sell his pocket watch at Fort Garland in order to buy supplies for the winter. Russell's men were experienced miners, and their lack of success was due to no dearth of enterprise or expertise on their part. The Lawrence party accomplished much less as far as the actual finding of gold. They neither prospected nor mined seriously anywhere. In fact, no one extracted significant profits from the mines in 1858.⁵⁷

Green Russell knew that the results of the 1858 prospecting were far from conclusive. On his way to Leavenworth he met a party of Kansans about fifty miles east of Bent's Fort. Led by real estate speculator General William H. Larimer, they were on their way to the mines. Russell told Larimer the results of the year's efforts in a manner "cautious but evidently candid and truthful in what he stated." He warned that "nothing very encouraging had as yet been discovered, and a large emigration was hardly warranted."⁵⁸ He added that he would have told them to stay home had he caught them before they started, but having come that far they might as well see for themselves. When Russell reached Leavenworth he cautioned those who were getting excited over the gold and "stated everywhere that I had as yet failed to obtain evidence of the existence of gold in large quantities."⁵⁹

The rush of 1859 could not have been based on the facts of the strikes of 1858, for the facts were inconclusive. Another possibility might have been that the heavy emigration was sparked by strikes which came somewhat later. Indeed prospecting that took place in the winter

of 1858-1859 did have a great bearing on the progress of emigration the next spring.

Two important gold discoveries took place in the winter of 1858-1859. Among the brave or foolhardy souls who floundered through mountain snows to seek the yellow metal was George A. Jackson. Jackson was a native of Missouri who had gone to California in 1853 and mined there until 1857. In that year he returned to Missouri, only to cross the plains again in 1858. Prior to the time when the Russell party prospected the Black Hills, Jackson had heard from mountain men that there was gold on the Laramie and Sweetwater Forks. He visited Fort Laramie, prospected the Laramie River and returned to the fort, where he heard of the discovery of gold at Cherry Creek. He and a small party immediately prospected Clear Creek, then went down onto the South Platte into winter camp. But on December 26 Jackson again left for the mountains and Clear Creek. There he made a promising strike on January 7, 1859, digging into a frozen bar with his hunting knife. Though he had a good indication, it was futile to try to work before spring. Jackson marked the site with charcoal and a blazed tree and returned to camp on the South Platte, intending to come back in the spring.⁶⁰

Another prospector also braved the snow. John H. Gregory, a Georgia native, had decided in 1857 to join the rush to Fraser River in British Columbia. He worked his way as far as Leavenworth, signed on to drive a government team to Fort Laramie and arrived there in late fall, 1858. Winter then prevented him from proceeding to Fraser River, but at the fort he heard of the new gold diggings on the South Platte. Perhaps as early as January, 1859, he started a prospecting tour that took him south along the base of the mountains. He then entered the

mountains alone and prospected Clear Creek. He left and went to the mining camp of Arapahoe, but came back to Clear Creek in April, then went again to Arapahoe. There he met a group of Indiana Hoosiers who agreed to "grubstake" him in return for a share in the bonanza to which Gregory promised to lead them. One of the Indianans, Wilkes Defrees, accompanied Gregory back into the mountains. Gregory led him up Clear Creek to a hill overlooking what was to become known as Gregory Gulch. They dug into an outcropping of decomposed quartz, filled a pan with dirt and quartz, washed it out in the creek and found four dollars in gold in the pan. The Hoosiers immediately commenced mining operations in this the first productive diggings to be opened.⁶¹

News of the Gregory strike struck new life into languishing Denver. On May 8 a group of journalists were sitting around the office of J. M. Fox, Denver express agent, discussing the poor outlook of the mining situation. In walked a short, slight man with a full beard who told them of having been with Gregory on Clear Creek; he showed them forty dollars in gold dust. Most of the population of Denver packed and left for the new diggings. Soon after word arrived that Jackson had led a party of Chicagoans to the site of his winter discovery where they uncovered more rich placer diggings. As miners then fanned out over the mountains more strikes followed, among them one by Green Russell, who had returned from Georgia, in early June below Gregory Gulch.⁶²

These new strikes were important in checking the outward tide of emigrants who had been leaving the diggings in disgust. They also encouraged other emigrants who heard of them while on the way to the mines to push on and turned some of those who had started for home back toward the west. The new strikes kept the rush from becoming a

complete fiasco. But they had nothing to do with giving the initial impetus to emigration to the mines in 1859. News of the Gregory and Jackson strikes circulated in the mining region itself only as late as mid-May. Word arrived in Leavenworth on June 10. By then nearly all those who contemplated going to the mines already had left. Moreover, reports of the new strikes mingled with the stories of returned Pike's Peakers who called the whole affair a humbug. This brought about a temporary net result of confusion about the worth of the mines. A few emigrants may have gone in the late summer or early fall, but they were an insignificant number. Though the new strikes laid the groundwork for the emigration to come in 1860, their effect on the emigration of 1859 came only after the movement had set its course.⁶³

Discoveries and reports of gold had become more and more numerous throughout the 1830's, 1840's and 1850's. They circulated widely through personal communications and newspapers. In the forties and fifties parties went out from the western frontier on numerous occasions to search for gold, but in all this time no gold rush occurred. The rush came instead in 1859, a year seemingly no more auspicious than other years; in fact, it was probably less so, for in that year Indian hostilities were worse than ever on the plains, despite expeditions such as Sumner's in 1857. The ostensible basis for the rush of 1859 was the Russell strike of 1858. But this strike justified no such rush, and in the light of constant earlier reports was of little intrinsic significance. Thus the actual gold strike was hardly the sole or even principle cause of the gold rush, but only a signal for more profound forces to be released.

FOOTNOTES

¹Donald Jackson, ed., The Journals of Zebulon Montgomery Pike (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1966).

²The term "Black Hills" had a different meaning in the gold rush era than it does today. Then it referred to the portion of the Rockies running from the Boulder Creek area north to the Laramie Mountains in present Wyoming, not the Black Hills of southwest South Dakota.

³Marshal Cook, "On the Early History of Colorado," Manuscript in Colorado State Historical Society Library, Denver, pp. 1-5.

⁴Kansas City Daily Western Journal of Commerce and Agriculture, January 27, 1859, p. 2.

⁵Kansas City Weekly Western Journal of Commerce and Agriculture, November 20, 1858, page unknown.

⁶LeRoy R. Hafen, ed., Pike's Peak Gold Rush Guidebooks of 1859 (Glendale, California: Arthur H. Clark Co., 1941), p. 32.

⁷Josiah Gregg, Commerce of the Prairies (Dallas: Southwest Press, 1933), p. 351.

⁸Ibid., p. 123.

⁹Alpheus H. Favour, Old Bill Williams, Mountain Man (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1962), p. 131.

¹⁰Rufus B. Sage, Letters and Scenes in the Rocky Mountains (Glendale, California: Arthur H. Clark Co., 1956), p. 261-262.

¹¹Ibid., pp. 262-264.

¹²Ibid., p. 217.

¹³Missouri Statesman (St. Louis), July 20, 1849, p. 1.

¹⁴Hannibal (Missouri) Messenger, March 22, 1849, p. 3.

¹⁵Daily Journal of Commerce, February 23, 1859, p. 4.

¹⁶Albert D. Richardson, Beyond the Mississippi (Hartford, Connecticut: American Publishing Co., 1885), p. 136.

- ¹⁷Daily Journal of Commerce, December 21, 1858, p. 2.
- ¹⁸Daily Journal of Commerce, December 21, 1858, p. 2; Kansas Herald of Freedom, March 12, 1859, p. 2; Nebraska City News, January 1, 1859, p. 2.
- ¹⁹Arkansas Gazette (Little Rock), June 14, 1850, p. 2.
- ²⁰LeRoy R. Hafen, "Cherokee Gold-Seekers in Colorado, 1849-1860," Colorado Magazine, XV, No. 3 (May, 1938), pp. 106-108; Muriel Wright, ed., "The Journal of John Lowery Brown, of the Cherokee Nation en Route to California in 1850," Chronicles of Oklahoma, XII, No. 2 (June, 1934), p. 190; Arkansas Gazette (Little Rock), June 14, 1850, p. 2.
- ²¹Louise Barry, ed., The Beginning of the West: Annals of the Kansas Gateway to the American West, 1540-1854 (Topeka: Kansas State Historical Society, 1972), p. 1063.
- ²²Kansas Herald of Freedom, July 3, 1858, p. 1.
- ²³Hafen, Gold Rush Guidebooks, p. 39.
- ²⁴Ibid., pp. 37-38.
- ²⁵Ibid., p. 39.
- ²⁶Southwest Independent (Fayetteville, Arkansas), January 28, 1854, page unknown.
- ²⁷Hafen, Gold Rush Guidebooks, pp. 40-42; Kansas Herald of Freedom, January 1, 1859, p. 1.
- ²⁸Rocky Mountain News, January 26, 1881, p. 4.
- ²⁹Robert M. Peck, "Recollections of Early Times in Kansas Territory," Kansas State Historical Society Publications, VIII (1903-1904), pp. 484-507.
- ³⁰Kansas Herald of Freedom, January 1, 1859, p. 1.
- ³¹Randolph B. Marcy, Thirty Years of Army Life on the Border (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1963), p. 47.
- ³²Hafen, Gold Rush Guidebooks, pp. 30-31.
- ³³Weekly Journal of Commerce, March 6, 1858, p. 2; Daily Journal of Commerce, January 27, 1859, p. 2; Nebraska City News, September 4, 1858, p. 2; Kansas Herald of Freedom, October 9, 1858, p. 1; ibid., June 5, 1858, p. 2.
- ³⁴Hafen, Gold Rush Guidebooks, pp. 51-52; James H. Pierce, "The First Prospecting of Colorado: Who Did It and What Lead to It," The Trail, VII, No. 5 (October, 1914), p. 5; Agnes Wright Spring, "Rush to

the Rockies, 1859," Colorado Magazine, XXXVI, No. 1 (January, 1959), p. 88.

³⁵Hafen, Gold Rush Guidebooks, pp. 52, 299; Kansas Herald of Freedom, January 1, 1859, p. 1.

³⁶Ibid., January 1, 1859, p. 1.

³⁷Hafen, Gold Rush Guidebooks, pp. 52-55; Lawrence Republican, December 2, 1858, p. 2; Spring, "Rush to the Rockies," p. 88.

³⁸Hafen, Gold Rush Guidebooks, pp. 55, 300, 309.

³⁹Ibid., pp. 95-96, 297-298; William McKimens, "Letters from Auraria, 1858-59," Colorado Magazine, XIII, No. 4 (July, 1936), p. 168.

⁴⁰Hafen, Gold Rush Guidebooks, pp. 99-107, 300-303, 309-310; McKimens, "Letters from Auraria, 1858-59," p. 168.

⁴¹Hafen, Gold Rush Guidebooks, pp. 106-109; J. D. Miller, "Early Day Experiences of Col. T. C. Dickson," The Trail, III, No. 10 (March, 1911), p. 7; Pierce, "The First Prospecting of Colorado," p. 7.

⁴²Hafen, Gold Rush Guidebooks, pp. 109-110.

⁴³J. D. Miller, "Reminiscences of Early Days," The Trail, VII, No. 1 (June, 1914), p. 8; Pierce, "The First Prospecting of Colorado," p. 7.

⁴⁴Hafen, Gold Rush Guidebooks, pp. 110-112; Pierce, "The First Prospecting of Colorado," p. 8; McKimens, "Letters from Auraria, 1858-59," p. 169.

⁴⁵Pierce, "The First Prospecting of Colorado," p. 8.

⁴⁶Hafen, Gold Rush Guidebooks, pp. 112-114; Pierce, "The First Prospecting of Colorado," pp. 8-9; McKimens, "Letters from Auraria, 1858-59," p. 169.

⁴⁷Hafen, Gold Rush Guidebooks, pp. 114-116; McKimens, "Letters from Auraria, 1858-59," p. 169; Pierce, "The First Prospecting of Colorado," p. 9.

⁴⁸Hafen, Gold Rush Guidebooks, pp. 116-117; Pierce, "The First Prospecting of Colorado," pp. 9-10; McKimens, "Letters from Auraria, 1858-59," p. 169.

⁴⁹Peck, "Recollections of Early Times in Kansas Territory," pp. 490-492; Eugene Parsons, "John Easter and the Lawrence Party," The Trail, VII, No. 7 (December, 1914), p. 7; Miller, "Reminiscences of Early Days," p. 17.

⁵⁰Kansas Herald of Freedom, May 29, 1858, p. 2; *ibid.*, January 3, 1858, p. 1; William B. Parsons, "Pike's Peak Fourteen Years Ago," The Kansas Magazine, I (June, 1872), p. 553; Miller, "Reminiscences of Early Days," p. 17.

⁵¹Lawrence Republican, June 3, 1858, p. 2; LeRoy R. Hafen, ed., "The Voorhees Diary of the Lawrence Party's Trip to Pike's Peak, 1858," Colorado Magazine, XII, No. 2 (March, 1935), pp. 42-48.

⁵²Lawrence Republican, September 9, 1858, p. 1; Hafen, "The Voorhees Diary," pp. 49-50.

⁵³Lawrence Republican, October 28, 1858, p. 1; Jason T. Younker, "The Early Pioneer: Reminiscences of 1858-59," The Trail, II, No. 8 (January, 1910), p. 9; Hafen, "The Voorhees Diary," p. 50; Lawrence Republican, September 9, 1858, p. 1.

⁵⁴*Ibid.*, October 28, 1858, p. 1; William B. Parsons, "Report on the Gold Mines of Colorado, 1858," Colorado Magazine, XIII, No. 6 (November, 1936), p. 217; Miller, "Reminiscences of Early Days," p. 10; Younker, "The Early Pioneer," p. 10; Spring, "Rush to the Rockies, 1859," p. 46; Atchison Freedom's Champion, October 23, 1858, p. 2.

⁵⁵Atchison Freedom's Champion, October 23, 1858, p. 2; Lawrence Republican, October 28, 1858, p. 1; Miller, "Reminiscences of Early Days," p. 10. Younker, "The Early Pioneer," p. 11.

⁵⁶Hafen, Gold Rush Guidebooks, pp. 117-119; Pierce, "The First Prospecting of Colorado," p. 10; Miller, "Reminiscences of Early Days," p. 10.

⁵⁷Charles W. Henderson, "Mining in Colorado: A History of Discovery, Development, and Production," United States Geological Survey Professional Paper 138 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1926), p. 3; Pierce, "The First Prospecting of Colorado," p. 10; Spring, "Rush to the Rockies, 1859," p. 59.

⁵⁸Villard, The Past and Present of the Pike's Peak Gold Region, p. 10.

⁵⁹Spring, "Rush to the Rockies, 1859," p. 89.

⁶⁰LeRoy R. Hafen, ed., "George A. Jackson's Diary, 1858-1859," Colorado Magazine, XII, No. 6 (November, 1935), pp. 201-205.

⁶¹Spring, "Rush to the Rockies, 1859," p. 107; Ovando J. Hollister, The Mines of Colorado (New York: Promotory Press, 1974), pp. 60-63.

⁶²Villard, The Past and Present of the Pike's Peak Gold Region, p. 356; Hafen, "George A. Jackson's Diary, 1858-1859," p. 213.

⁶³Hafen, Colorado Gold Rush, p. 326.

CHAPTER III

PROPAGANDA AS CAUSE

D. C. Oakes was a nervous man in April of 1859 as he sat quietly on his pony, "Rube," between two hillocks along the South Platte River in western Nebraska Territory. He had reason to be so, for hundreds of men had threatened to lynch him on sight. In the fall of 1858 Oakes had made a quick trip to the South Platte mining region and immediately returned home to Iowa with a set of notes compiled by Luke Tierney, a member of the Russell prospecting company. He then combined the notes with an essay of his own and published them as the History of the Gold Discoveries on the South Platte River, which thousands of fifty-niners bought as a guidebook to the goldfields. When they found that the mines fell short of their expectations, the Pike's Peakers left for home proclaiming recriminations and threats against the deceivers who had led them astray. Especially they cursed D. C. Oakes, the man who wrote the guidebook.

Meanwhile Oakes had bought a sawmill and was carting it to the mines. At first miners who encountered him regarded him with respect, but as disillusionment set in they met his name with angry epithets and threats of physical violence. Oakes, riding ahead of his wagons with two companions, had to avoid angry, discouraged prospectors for fear of his life. In the little valley in western Nebraska he was waiting for

a company of returning emigrants to move off down the road so that he could pass safely.

When the coast was clear Oakes' two friends rode ahead, then stopped and dismounted to examine some peculiar markings at the side of the trail. Oakes also rode up, dismounted and approached what appeared to be a grave strewn with buffalo bones. He stopped to read the words inscribed on one of the bones and blanched when he realized that he was reading his own epitaph:

"Here lie the remains of D. C. Oakes,
Who was the starter of this damned hoax!"¹

Disillusioned Pike's Peakers had buried Oakes in effigy, but their anger was real and their complaints were valid, though Oakes hardly was the only legitimate object of their wrath. The fifty-niners had indeed been dupes of a massive campaign of distorted and deceitful literature intended artificially to stimulate a gold rush. The rush had its beginning in the designs of men who stood to exploit not mineral but mercantile and speculative wealth. They presented the insignificant gold discoveries of 1858 as a major gold strike. The chief propagandists were town-lot speculators, border town businessmen and newspapermen, all of whom for one reason or another would profit from a gold rush. Their efforts were more coincidentally complementary than coordinated, but nevertheless were successful beyond the fondest dreams of the executors. The very magnitude of the gold rush of 1859 testified to their effectiveness. Propaganda was the midwife of the Pike's Peak gold rush.

The effort to create a gold rush had its effective beginning in early September of 1858 on the banks of the upper South Platte. After

their trip to Fort Garland, the Lawrence party arrived at the South Platte diggings in the first week of September, probably on September 6. There they found Smith and the mountain men mining in a desultory fashion. The Lawrence men also tried their hands at working the deposits, but they soon found out why the mountain men were working only half-heartedly and the Russell party had moved on. The mines were poor producers. Some of the Lawrence men persisted long enough that they were able to realize from ten to twenty-five cents in gold per pan of "pay dirt," that is, dirt that lay on the bedrock, accessible only by digging through several feet of surface dirt. Such diggings paid only at most a couple of dollars per day and required heavy, determined effort to make even that much. Most of the Lawrence men found that sort of labor unsuited to their taste and abandoned the effort after but a few hours. As William Parsons, who became one of the most well-known members of the company and the author of a guidebook to the goldfields, wrote fourteen years later, "We had done all the mining we wanted. We solemnly pledged each other never to do the like again; and for my part, I have kept my pledge."²

The Lawrence men were in a quandary, but they found a solution. They had spent an entire summer prospecting and extracted less than half a dozen turkey quills of gold. They had given up and gone to New Mexico for the winter, but decided to make a final try on the South Platte after hearing reports of rich diggings there. But again they failed. Winter was approaching and they were discouraged. The Lawrence men had little relish even to go back home to their hometown, for there was no reason to believe that conditions there were any better than when they had left the city in economic stagnation. But

though the Lawrence men were poor miners, they were rich in an equally speculative talent--real estate promotion.

At least a portion of the company's members had experience in town formation and promotion in eastern Kansas. There was even a civil engineer named William Hartley in the party. Since mining efforts had been a failure, it was quite in character for them to make the best of a bad situation by founding a town. The men were in camp, probably on September 7, on the South Platte about four miles above Cherry Creek when one man made such a suggestion. The rest agreed to the idea and in democratic fashion appointed a committee to reconnoiter the area and recommend a town site to the group. On the following evening the three committeemen reported. One favored the mouth of Cherry Creek as a site, but the other two said that the location of their camp was as good a site as any. The majority report prevailed in spite of objections to the effect that the normal avenue of north-south travel ran along Cherry Creek and missed the new town site completely. Most of the men thought it too inconvenient to move their camp for such a detail. They then laid out the town at the site and called it "Montana City." Hartley surveyed the streets and lots, and the rest of the men began building log cabins for the winter.³

These were not the type of men to sit around and wait for fortune to smile on them. Mining, at least in the diggings which had been discovered up to that time, was scarcely remunerative; but the rest of the world was ignorant of that fact. The Lawrence men had the opportunity to shape their own destiny, and they seized upon the moment. In order to salvage some gain from an otherwise fruitless expedition, they would persuade the world that they had found plenty of gold, and the world

would beat a pathway to their door--and to the Montana town site. As Parsons later wrote with tongue firmly in cheek, "after a few days it became perfectly evident to every experienced miner in the camp, (and there were several), that the whole mountain region drained by the waters of the Platte was immensely rich in the precious metals. They knew it as well as if the whole thing was opened out before them."⁴ Parsons quit mining himself because it failed to pay; he wrote the above lines in smug irony. The entrepreneurs were aware of the lack of gold, but they saw golden opportunity "as well as if the whole thing was opened out before them," as Parsons put it.

The town-makers began their task of creating a gold boom on September 20. On that date four of their number--F. H. Brittan, George W. Smith, Jr., Robert Peebles and Parsons--set out for Lawrence via the Platte River route. Their comrades had selected them to return east and report the "facts." On October 17 they arrived in Lawrence and immediately began a propaganda effort. The four emissaries had met hundreds of men already en route for the mines on the basis of earlier reports borne by men such as the trader Cantrell. But these migrants hardly represented a real gold rush, for many of them were simply opportunistic land speculators who themselves smelled a good opportunity. The mission of the four heralds from the South Platte was to attract a larger emigration in the coming spring.⁵

The four messengers played their roles perfectly to achieve the desired result. Rather than spreading sensational stories which would have been suspect, they modestly asserted that the mines were paying "very respectable wages."⁶ With pans, Brittan said, a man could make from two to five dollars per day, while proper mining implements would

yield from five to fifteen dollars per day. The gold deposits spread over a large extent of the country, said Parsons, but had yet to be worked seriously owing to a shortage of tools. On the night of their arrival in Lawrence the four men from the mines addressed a public meeting in the street, and their statement that miners were making from ten to fifteen dollars per man-day aroused the crowd to great enthusiasm. Bald deceit by the four messengers would have overplayed their hand, for they had only about three dollars in gold dust to back up their claims. But a set of half-truths, exaggerations and tactical omissions accomplished the purpose.⁷

The emissaries had no wish to attract a large emigration to the mines in the fall, for such newcomers might be competitors in the real estate business. Moreover some indiscrete individual might reveal the truth about the mines. The four men advised no one to go to the mines in the fall, but to wait until the following spring. Mountain snows were to come soon, Brittan warned, and a fall departure would be "the height of folly."⁸

One other aspect of these men's errand of enlightenment was suspicious. On the same day, September 20, on which the four left the South Platte diggings for Lawrence, Green Russell and his twelve comrades arrived back at the South Platte from their northern prospecting tour. No one recorded the time of departure of the four Lawrence party men, but the Russell party arrived at ten o'clock in the evening. The four messengers may have left prior to the arrival of the Russell party, or their departure might have been after and unrelated to the latter party's arrival. But the four would have had special reason to go as soon as Russell got there. Russell was seeking gold by working the

ground rather than preempting it for purposes of speculation. He had failed to find worthwhile diggings in 1858, but the float gold he had found had convinced him that somewhere in the mountains there was a real bonanza whence the gold had drifted. Russell planned to winter in Georgia, recruit a few more experienced miners and return to the Pike's Peak country and prospect further in 1859. Consequently he was apprehensive of greenhorns overrunning the country in the following spring. His plans thus conflicted with those of the Lawrence company. When Russell went east he would spread the word that no significant gold discoveries yet had been made and thus discourage emigration. The Lawrence men on the other hand wanted to encourage emigrants. It was highly in the interest of the Lawrence men to see that their messengers reached the border towns and told their story before Russell could tell his. This may well have been the reason for the timely departure of the four messengers and their hasty trip to Lawrence. It would also explain why the four left with insufficient provisions, causing them much hardship, when they easily could have gone south to Fort Garland, obtained supplies and returned east by way of the Santa Fe Trail.⁹

It was not until October 15 that Russell and two companions left the South Platte. They traveled the Arkansas River Route and reached Leavenworth on December 3, where Russell soon found that few people would listen to his comparatively pessimistic report. Instead they accused him of trying to discourage emigration in order to keep all the gold for himself, which had a slight element of truth in it. The Lawrence men had outmaneuvered Russell.¹⁰

The initial statements by the four Lawrence party men in their hometown were only the beginning of their publicity effort. Parsons

was the most active of the four in disseminating their propaganda. First he wrote to the Missouri Republican (St. Louis) in a manner designed to seem entirely candid. He advised that tales of daily wages in the mines of over ten dollars were extravagant, but that proper sluices would bring fifteen dollars per day. Parsons said he had seen as high as a dollar and a half taken from a single pan, and hardly ever less than eight or ten cents per pan. This assured that his story would circulate in Missouri. In the same letter Parsons mentioned pessimistic reports that had been spread by William B. Smedley, who had gone out in 1858 with the group of prospectors from Ray County, Missouri. Smedley had written to the Junction City (Kansas) Sentinel that he had prospected widely and failed to find any paying deposits. He accused overstuffed border town merchants of fabricating gold reports and said that it was "absolutely wicked for them to deceive the people so. . . . My opinion is that it will turn out nothing but a humbug."¹¹ Parsons replied heatedly to Smedley and to "the very sapient editor of the [Kansas] Herald of Freedom," who had reprinted the letter, "to exhibit his stupidity."¹² Parsons pointed out that Smedley and the Ray County men had deserted Russell prior to the discovery of the South Platte diggings.¹³

During this time the prospectors left on the South Platte also were active. A minority in the Lawrence company which disapproved of the location of Montana selected a new town site. Charles Nichols, M. Adnah French, William Hartley, Frank M. Cobb, William M. Smith and John A. Churchill of the Lawrence party took in T. C. Dickson of the Russell party and two of the mountain men, William McGaa and Jack Smith, as partners in the new venture. They went down to the bank of

the South Platte running east from Cherry Creek and on September 24 staked out the town of St. Charles. Four days later they organized their town company officially.¹⁴

On October 1 nine more men left the diggings on another publicity mission. They were French, Smith, Hartley, Churchill, Dickson and Nichols of the St. Charles town company and Augustus Voorhees, J. D. Miller and J. Bradt of the Montana company. As they traveled east up the South Platte they met the first of the emigrants of 1858 en route for the mines. Nichols then turned back to make sure that no one "jumped" the town sites, while the others pressed on eastward.¹⁵

In the second week of November the eight reached Lawrence and, like the four who had preceded them, spread optimistic but not wild stories about the mines. French said that the miners were making from ten cents up to an occasional dollar and a half per pan. On Dry Creek, a few miles above Cherry Creek, they were averaging thirty-seven and one-half cents per pan. Hartley gave a similar report. Miller carried the news on into Leavenworth, followed shortly by Bradt and Dickson. Miller spread the word that miners were averaging five dollars per day with rockers. "The gold is deposited over a large area of the country," was his report. "It is everywhere abundant."¹⁶ The striking aspect of the reports was that they conveyed the impression that mining was going on at a flourishing rate when in reality it had practically ceased.

Another party came in from the diggings at about the same time as these eight, arriving in Topeka, Kansas early in November. They were fifteen men led by J. W. Edmunston, who had gone out with the Bates County company in the previous spring, abandoned the Russell party and

joined the Lawrence company, and thus become interested in the Montana town site. He told Topekans that miners were washing out three to eight dollars of fine gold per day.¹⁷

The final promotion agent of the original prospectors-turned-promoters was Nichols. After going back to the diggings he had become involved in a dispute with newcomers over rights to the St. Charles location, resolved it by compromise and come east to add his report to those already extant. In December Nichols reported in Lawrence in a manner similar to those ahead of him, exaggerating moderately but not incredulously. He gave no hard figures as to the production of the mines, but said that old California miners had told him that the prospects were better than they had been in California in 1849. He advised emigrants to wait until the following spring to go out.¹⁸

Nichols' report was the last to be delivered in person by the original prospectors. All stories from the various emissaries had been similar in that they gave exaggerated but believable tales of mining wealth while advising emigrants to wait until the following spring to go out. Such unanimity indicated that the conspirers probably had consulted and agreed upon the policy which they would follow.

By the time the French party had reached Lawrence the process of town speculation and its accompanying propaganda effort had entered a new phase and incorporated a new group of participants. During the month of November new arrivals had moved into the Cherry Creek-South Platte area, most of them from eastern Kansas and Nebraska. These men made the earlier town-makers look like amateurs, for they were indeed professionals in the art. They gave new impetus to already-raging speculation in real estate.

The newcomers had learned their vocation in the best school for their trade available at the time, the frontier area along the Missouri River in Kansas and Nebraska. In the mid-eighteen-fifties that area was a speculators' heaven. It was a time of great paper fortunes in real estate instantaneously created, when men in rags fancied themselves rich on the basis of their speculative holdings. Millionaires in tatters accosted any stranger in their locality and tried to peddle to him at inflated prices great buff envelopes full of town stock certificates. If refused, one of the salesmen might ask to borrow enough cash to pay his week's board. Wits proposed that Congress pass an act to reserve some of the land in Kansas for farming purposes before it all was covered with towns. The promoters could have sold out and come out ahead, but with typical frontier optimism they retained their holdings. Then came the Panic of 1857 with its credit collapse and end to expansion, "and the princes of the hour were beggars again," as a contemporary journalist phrased it.¹⁹

When rumors of gold reached the Missouri River border in the fall of 1858 the habitual speculators were off like racehorses for the South Platte, for they knew an opportunity when they saw it. In the new goldfields the opportunists hoped to regain the old magic and create ephemeral empires of real estate. They never considered digging in the ground for gold, for "They desired not to pitch into, but onto the land," as one journalist said, and "They cared less for good placers than for promising places."²⁰ Only a minority of those who came to the diggings in the fall of 1858 came with the specific intention of speculation in real estate; but few of them were averse to it, and with professionals showing the way most of them entered that pursuit.

Early in October the first of the fifty-eighters arrived, and the trickle swelled until a winter's population of about a thousand had scattered along the South Platte and its tributaries. They quickly took up the business of town-making. In October those who already had arrived joined with elements of the Lawrence company who had founded Montana and a half-dozen Russell party veterans who had remained on the South Platte to found another new town. On November 1 they adopted a constitution for the Auraria town company, with one hundred shareholders. William H. Foster laid out the town in the angle formed by the west bank of Cherry Creek and the south bank of the South Platte.²¹

Emigrants arrived at a faster pace in November and soon turned to similar speculative activities. Among them were over a hundred former residents of eastern Nebraska, most prominent among whom was Elisha P. Stout from De Soto, who had arrived with a small vanguard on October 26. The Nebraskans camped in a body along the South Platte east of Cherry Creek in the area of the St. Charles town site. They spent about two weeks there, until an ambitious Kansan arrived and stirred them to speculative activity. The Kansan was General (of militia) William H. Larimer, Jr.²²

In a world of speculators Larimer was the speculator-king. He was a veteran of an ill-fated promotion venture in Nebraska called LaPlatte City, which had faded away in a credit contraction in 1855. Since then Larimer had been looking for a new opportunity and in 1858 was in Leavenworth when gold reports began to fly. Here was the chance he had been waiting for. With four other men and his son Larimer embarked on the Santa Fe Trail for the mines. He never considered taking up mining, for his skills were organizational, not manual. He

traveled hurriedly in order to get to the diggings before all the good town sites were taken. Crossing the divide between the Arkansas and the Platte waters he came across another party of Kansans also on their way to the mines. They were from Lecompton and held commissions from Governor Denver of Kansas to organize the gold region as Arapahoe County, Kansas. Their apparent leader was Edward W. "Ned" Wyncoop, who held a commission as county sheriff. Larimer decided that these men would be valuable allies, and they thought the same of him, so the two parties joined forces and at Larimer's insistence hurried on to the goldfields.²³

When on November 16 this group of Kansans rode up Cherry Creek to the South Platte, Larimer encountered a hitch in his speculative plans but soon resolved it. The Auraria company was in firm possession of the west bank of Cherry Creek, so Larimer set his sights on the east bank, which was a roomier site anyway. He had two problems to deal with: the St. Charles company, which had already claimed the site he wanted, and the Nebraskans, who were squatting on it. Most of the St. Charles men already had left for the east, and Larimer used persuasion and a bit of strong-arm tactics to induce the remainder to agree to relinquish their title. He also took in the Nebraskans as partners. In fact, Stout became the first president of the Denver town company, formed on November 22 with 64 members. Denver and Auraria became rival towns facing each other across Cherry Creek.²⁴

That was but the start of a wave of town-making which took place as more opportunists poured in during the fall and winter of 1858. Eager promoters laid out at least twenty-five towns and probably more. Most of their creations never really existed except on paper and in

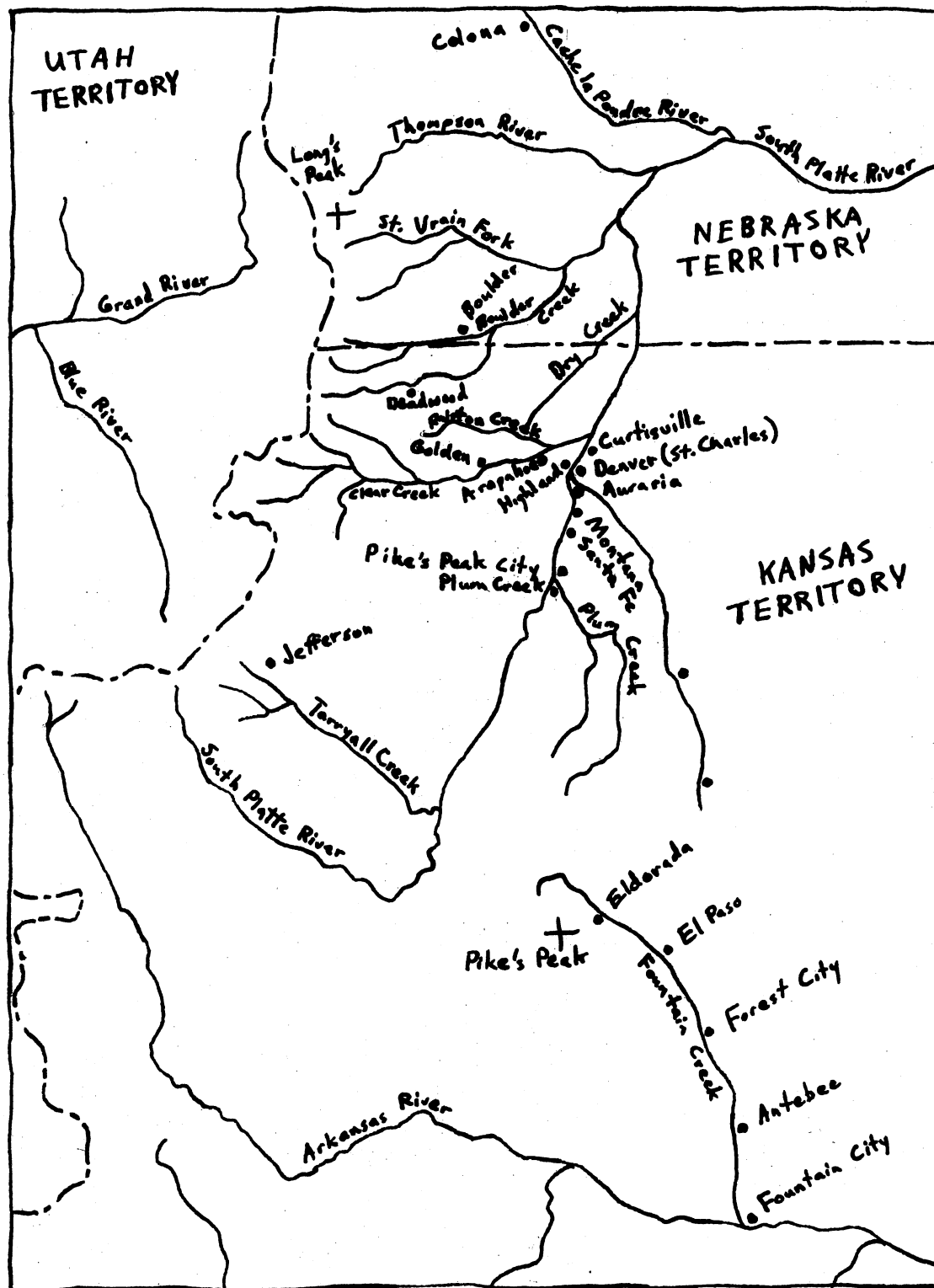


Figure 2. Speculative Towns in the Pike's Peak Region, Winter, 1858-1859 (Unlocated: Nonpareil City, Columbus, Junction City, Clear Creek, Cache la Poudre)

their creators' hopes. Others were occupied briefly and then abandoned, while a few such as Denver, Boulder City and Colorado City (Colorado Springs) endured. With this many speculative cities extant, probably the majority of the men who came out in 1858 became in some way interested in at least one of them. Auraria had one hundred original stockholders, Denver sixty-four. At such a rate there would have been plenty of town shares to go around for nearly everyone, had they been distributed evenly. Moreover there was great trading in town lots, which was a way for additional investors to get involved. Each of the sixty-four members of the Denver town company had 144 lots to dispose of as he saw fit. "All had their pockets full of town papers," Pierce later wrote.²⁵

The significance of all this activity for the rush which followed was that it spawned a whole new propaganda effort on the part of the new town promoters. This was in the form of a deluge of enthusiastic letters which the speculators wrote to newspapers in the border towns and to friends who placed them in the newspapers. The object of the letters was to generate a large migration in the spring and make the speculative towns real successes.

As king of the speculators Larimer was also king of the letter-writers, at least in quantity. En route to and in Denver he wrote at least eight letters to the Leavenworth Times, all uniformly optimistic. Larimer called the trip out a "pleasure trip." From Denver he wrote that miners were making from twenty-five to fifty cents per pan, and he enclosed a map of Denver to make sure that no one missed the point. The Indians of the area, he said, were harmless. He claimed repeatedly that rich gold discoveries were coming to light, and that anyone who

would work could make from four to five dollars per day. Even when the rush reversed and disillusioned miners filled the trails east in the late spring of 1859, Larimer still insisted that "all I have written in regard to this country is true."²⁶

Even more enthusiastic about prospects in Denver was John Scudder, another of the city's founders. The gold was everywhere, he wrote, "You can find it any and every place; on the plains, in the river bottoms; on the mountains, and in the 'gulches' and 'spurs' of the mountains--the sand of the river glistens with the shining dust; the dark earth of the rich valleys is teeming with untold wealth."²⁷

McGaa (Jack Jones), another original stockholder in Denver, added further testimony as to the richness and hospitability of the country. He claimed that the weather was so mild that on January 7 the ground had yet to freeze. The miners, he said, were extracting from six to ten dollars per day, despite the fact they had to carry their pay dirt five hundred yards to water. Besides gold, he continued, the land possessed coal, iron, silver, sandstone, limestone, marble, and plaster of Paris. He also asserted that every river and creek bottom had been taken up for farms.²⁸

The citizens of Auraria also did their part to boost the gold mines and their town. A man who signed himself A. G. B. arrived with a party on November 11 in Auraria, whereupon he and his fellows each purchased four town lots. By November 19 he had yet to prospect seriously, but he wrote home that he was "perfectly satisfied" as to the richness of the mines, and that miners made from eight to ten dollars per day with pans. To a friend he wrote, "You may tell Van Horn [the editor of the Journal of Commerce], of Kansas City, that he cannot say too much

about the richness of these diggings."²⁹ Another writer who withheld his name from the press said that he had "joined forces" with the group that was "building" Auraria. His exhortation was "There is gold, and plenty of it."³⁰

The other boom towns kept pace with Denver and Auraria in letter-writing. A company of enthusiasts from Kansas City laid out Pike's Peak City on the upper South Platte and then proceeded to publicize it. One of them, Dr. G. N. Woodward, wrote to the Kansas City Journal of Commerce that in the area of their fledgling city extensive goldfields yielded from five to fifty cents per pan. Another of them, W. W. Spaulding, said that miners were taking four to twelve dollars per day with rockers.³¹

Letters containing such misrepresentations numbered in the scores and were printed and reprinted in newspapers up and down the Missouri River, then across the nation. Even disregarding the fact that the content of the letters either was exaggerated or was fabricated, their optimistic and inviting nature proved the designing motives of the authors. The prospector who really had found a bonanza would be unwilling to publicize the fact. He rather would try to keep it a secret and thus avoid an influx of mining competition. But these letter-writers invited the world to come and share the supposed wealth.

Illustrative of this discrepancy of motive was the case of the "Nebraska City boys," who in the fall of 1858 came to the mining region from Nebraska City on the Missouri River. Among them was the former mayor of Nebraska City, A. A. Brookfield. As a municipal official he might have been expected to have entered into town site promotion with gusto, but apparently he lacked the speculative bent. In fact he had a

great distaste for the activity. The Nebraska City boys were interested more in actual gold mining than were most of the fifty-eighters. They settled in and thoroughly prospected the canyon of Boulder Creek in the Black Hills. At first the Nebraskans found nothing, and Brookfield, the most serious prospector of them all, became disgusted. He wrote to a friend in Kansas that he should abandon all ideas of coming to the mines, for "My impression of the mines is, that they are a damned humbug." He said that he was surprised to read the fantastic accounts printed in the Missouri River newspapers. "I pronounce them a pack of lies," he fumed, "written and reported back by a set of petty one-horse town speculators. . ."32

But in the meantime other members of the group had different ideas on how to make a fortune. If prospecting failed, they would turn to speculation like everyone else. Several men set out for Nebraska City to spread the word of rich mines yet unfound. They reached home on February 11 and one of them, E. A. Muir, gave a statement to the local newspaper editor. "It is difficult to find a shovelfull of dirt that does not contain more or less of the precious stuff" was his verdict.³³ The miners claimed to have found "shot gold," or tiny pebbles of gold, as opposed to the usual fine float gold discovered in the Rockies' deposits. If they had done so the amount found had been too little to pay, for Brookfield noted their departure for Nebraska City in his "humbug" letter and knew that their prospecting efforts had failed.

The Nebraska City boys founded the town of Boulder City on the creek of the same name as the beneficiary of their promotional efforts. But in addition they also actually found shot gold diggings that promised to pay, at least in Brookfield's opinion. At this point, some

time in February, a difference in attitude between Brookfield and the rest of the Nebraska City boys became apparent. Although Brookfield was a member of the new Boulder town company, it was only a secondary consideration for him. He had found diggings paying five dollars per day and only wanted to be left alone to work them. But the rest of the company continued their promotion efforts by writing enthusiastic letters back east. Brookfield also spoke optimistically in letters to his wife, but he never intended them for publication. Nevertheless they found their way into the Nebraska City News, and when the bust came in the next spring the go-backs blamed Brookfield for luring them to the mines and even reported him hung. Brookfield was furious with Milton Reynolds, the editor who had printed his letters and made him an unwitting party to the promotion effort. The story of the Nebraska City boys illustrated that the speculative urge was powerful enough to rival the urge to dig for gold, even when there was gold to be had. In most cases the fifty-eighters had no such choice, for they failed to find any paying gold deposits.³⁴

Two letters published in the St. Joseph West exposed how brazen the town speculators could be. J. W. Reed, who participated in the founding of Auraria and then returned to eastern Kansas, wrote to a real estate firm in St. Louis to ask them to try to sell his four Auraria town lots at \$1,000 apiece for a twenty-five percent commission. With the letter he enclosed a second missive also in his own hand, but purporting to be from a man in Auraria who wanted to buy the lots at as much as \$1,500 each. He intended the second letter to be shown to prospective buyers in order to stimulate interest.³⁵

The success of the letter-writing propaganda effort depended on publication of the letters in border town newspapers. Frontier editors were only too willing to comply, for they themselves were doing their best to create a gold rush of the largest possible magnitude. For several reasons the journalists had both the inclination and the motive to do so.

In the first place the frontier newspaperman was traditionally a "booster," and nowhere more so than in Kansas. The editor considered it his job to serve as his town's optimistic spokesman and promote its interests to the outside world, even if times were hard. The newsman who refused to whistle in the dark was a rarity and something of an outcast in his community. Journalistic boosterism in Kansas began with the founding of the territory's first newspaper, the Kansas Weekly Herald of Leavenworth, on September 15, 1854. At that time the city of Leavenworth had neither a single house nor a resident citizen, nor any other sign of settlement. The Herald began publication on a bare town site, but its editor's hopes stretched as high as the elm tree which shaded him as he worked. Since then that pioneer journalist's colleagues had carried on in the same spirit.³⁶

The years 1858-1859 found the border towns in need of boosting as they never had known before in their short lives. The Panic of 1857 struck first in the East but spread its woes westward in 1858. Business stagnated and credit dried up. Most frontier editors tried to keep up a brave front, but a few braved the derision of their peers and editorialized on the hard times. G. W. Brown of the Lawrence, Kansas Herald of Freedom was one of these. Brown moaned that interest rates on local loans were as high as ten to twenty percent per month, or

three to five percent with airtight security. "Hardly any branch of industry is sustaining itself," he said and heard the same sort of complaints from all parts of the territory.³⁷ Moreover, as he quoted one of the few area editors still friendly to him after his admission of the hard times in Kansas, "there does not appear to be much prospect of their getting easier soon."³⁸

This was a time for editors to come to the aid of their towns, but the opportunity to do so was absent because times were hard everywhere. Then came the gold reports of 1858, and the journalists saw an opportunity. A gold rush would stimulate commerce for the border towns as supply and outfitting points for the goldfields. Moreover settlement of the mountain region would give impetus to the movement for the greatest economic boon of them all, the transcontinental railroad. The editors listened to the gold reports, published and amplified them, even fabricated a few of their own, and waxed eloquent on the future of the gold region. More to the point, each writer claimed that his town sat squarely athwart the shortest and/or best route to the goldfields and was the place where emigrants could get the cheapest and best outfits. The editors became allies in promoting emigration to the mines; but they were rivals in directing the emigration through their respective towns.

The journalists' behavior derived from more than just civic spirit. Each of them faced the hard facts of the times in the form of declining circulation figures. Scores of newspapers had sprung up along the Missouri River to serve as many boom towns, but demand for the papers was down in 1858. Eastern patrons who had taken subscriptions of Kansas newspapers in order to get the news of the struggle over slavery during

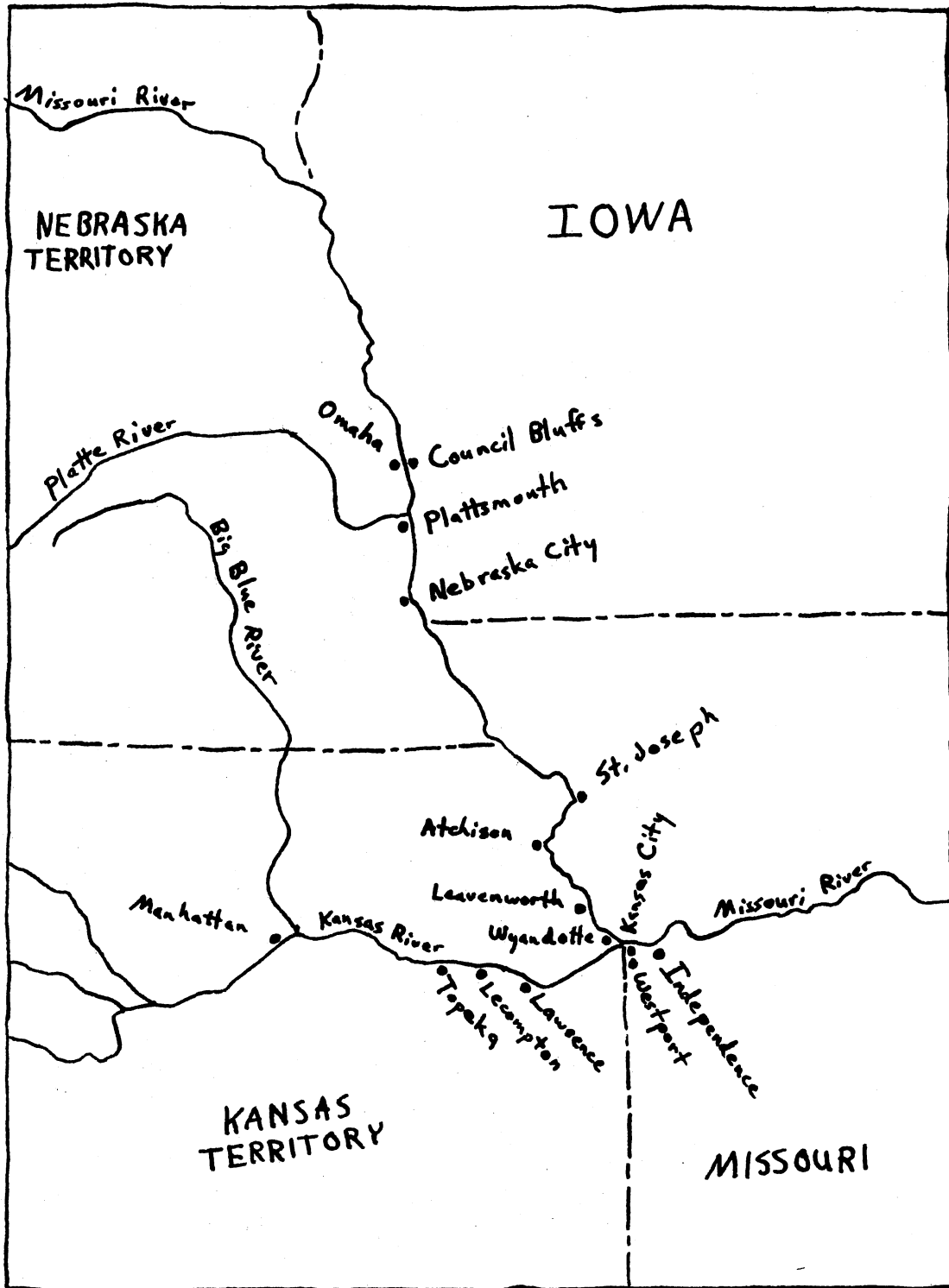


Figure 3. The Border Towns of the Missouri Valley, 1859

the 1850's found that conflict dying down at the same time that they were becoming less able to afford the luxury of many newspapers. Local readers were too poor to subscribe, for cash money was almost nonexistent on the frontier. The resulting squeeze on the newspaper profession was severe.

Again G. W. Brown, editor of the Herald of Freedom, was more candid than most of his colleagues. He noted that since 1854 twenty-five newspapers in Kansas Territory had failed and that only one besides the Herald of Freedom had survived the year 1857. The editor of the Atchison (Kansas) Freedom's Champion spoke in a similar vein, noting the recent failures of seven newspapers in the territory and the impending demise of another. The journalists' backs were against the wall.³⁹

One other factor affected the motives of the frontier editors. The slavery controversy still lingered in Kansas, and most of the newspapers in the territory were free-state oriented. Thus in 1858-1859 the two questions which most concerned Kansas' newsmen were slavery and the gold rush, and the two issues sometimes clouded together. At the first reports of gold Brown exclaimed that they were one more reason why Kansas should become a free state. Near the end of the year he and some other editors reprinted from the Missouri Democrat an editorial lauding the coming Pike's Peakers as "the tramp of free labor, as it marches to the new Ophir. . .heard above the din of politics. . ."40

When during 1859 and 1860 the mining region sought statehood separate from Kansas, Kansas editors firmly supported their bid, not only because of the vast distance between eastern Kansas and the gold region of western Kansas but because they hoped that splitting the territory would accomplish the admission of two free states instead of one.

The slavery question really was only a background issue in regard to the gold rush, but it was one more reason for the editors to hope for an influx of miners.⁴¹

As the journalists began their campaign to promote a gold rush, they worked under the handicap of gross ignorance of the country about which they were writing. The Nebraska City News placed the Cherry Creek mines 500 miles straight west of Nebraska City and on the Arkansas River rather than the South Platte. The Leavenworth Times said that the gold region extended from the Platte to the headwaters of the Missouri River. The Kansas City Journal of Commerce placed Cherry Creek exactly three miles north of an air line west from Kansas City. Obviously, lack of knowledge made it easy for the editors to move landmarks around to suit their preferences, thus turning disadvantage to advantage.⁴²

Of all the newspapers one of the greatest boosters of the gold rush was the Kansas City Western Journal of Commerce, the very name of which implied that it would see the economic benefits to accrue from the rush. Editor R. T. Van Horn created a sensation when on August 26 he printed under enthusiastic headlines the story of the arrival of a group of mountain traders with gold samples from the mines. Van Horn immediately showed that he was willing to speculate beyond his evidence when he said that the Platte and Arkansas Rivers "no doubt partake of the same auriferous character."⁴³ He followed up with two detailed stories on one of the traders, John Cantrell, who probably was the only one of the group really to have visited the mines. Local citizens washed out a sample of dirt carried by Cantrell and exhibited the gold extracted from it. Van Horn stated that Cantrell was well-known and

that his word was "undoubted," but omitted the fact that he was a whiskey-trader. Either Cantrell or Van Horn added the entirely false detail that Cantrell had visited the mines with a traveling party and left his companions working there. Cantrell had traveled alone to the mines.⁴⁴

In the next several months Van Horn gave place in his columns to the wildest reports. He printed stories of gold nuggets being brought in, although gold in that form was unknown in the diggings. John Huston, for instance, claimed to have seen a twenty-three-ounce nugget, according to the Journal of Commerce. Van Horn also featured the stories of men who never had been in the mines but claimed to have been, such as Elmore King. King had gone out with the Cherokee prospectors in 1858 and returned with them when they failed to find gold. But Van Horn cited King as his source for a statement that the mines paid ten dollars per day. Most of Van Horn's reports came from citizens of Kansas City or Westport, local people who would have found it hard to deceive the editor if he had been concerned about discerning the truth. When a report came that was less than entirely optimistic, Van Horn twisted it to make it sound hopeful. Louis Vasquez, the prominent mountain trader, declined to endorse the gold reports beyond an ambiguous statement that the miners were doing better than they expected, so the editor launched into two paragraphs of praise of Vasquez with the implication that the trader had verified the reports. Van Horn treated doubters with great disdain, for as he said, the richness of the mines "is no longer a matter of doubt, and he is only an ass that can shut his eyes to the fact."⁴⁵ Van Horn issued two special gold editions of his paper, one in the fall of 1858 and one in January of 1859. By

January 30 Van Horn asserted that he had printed enough evidence to establish the "fact" of gold "in great abundance," and would thereafter print mainly advice to emigrants.⁴⁶

The advice that Van Horn gave revealed what his motives were in promoting the rush. He advised emigrants to take the Santa Fe Road, the eastern terminus of which was Kansas City, to the mines. He called the trip by that route "a mere nothing." He advised emigrants to secure complete outfits and to get them in Kansas City. He warned them to stay away from Leavenworth, Kansas City's rival in trade, because stock dealers there were trying to unload broken-down army stock from Fort Leavenworth on unsuspecting emigrants. Obviously Van Horn, the business voice of a business-oriented community, had definite designs in promoting and directing the rush.⁴⁷

Like Van Horn, Jonathan A. Martin, editor of the Atchison Freedom's Champion, prided himself as a great civic booster before the time of the gold rush and projected that attitude into his response to the gold reports. Though he printed much less original news than Van Horn, Martin eagerly reprinted all the most sensational stories from other papers, including the Journal of Commerce. The most ridiculous of the reprints was one which claimed that ten thousand dollars' worth of gold dust had arrived in Kansas City in September of 1858. A small boy, it said, had a thousand dollars in gold "which he says he 'dug down and found;' and the little fellow says he 'can get all he wants. . . ." These statements are reliable."⁴⁸ Martin printed three special issues of gold reports, on January 1, January 8 and February 16 of 1859.

Martin of course boosted Atchison as the best outfitting point for the mines. He counseled emigrants to take the "Fremont route" or the

"Great Parallel Route" to the mines, with its starting point at Atchison. This proposed trail, which never came into use because its terrain was entirely unknown, followed the path of John Fremont on his 1843 expedition straight west across several forks of the Kansas River and then up the Republican Fork to its source and across a dry stretch to Cherry Creek.⁴⁹

Martin compensated for his dearth of real news with an abundance of enthusiasm. He printed only optimistic stories about the mines, and his editorials rang with assurance. But when in April of 1859 the great wave of go-backs made a shambles of optimistic predictions, Martin was among the few editors who admitted that he had made a mistake. He denied, however, any intention of deception and claimed to have been the innocent dupe of other promoters. Martin's earlier policies made his claim ring hollowly.⁵⁰

Unlike Van Horn and Martin, Champion Vaughan and J. K. Bartlett of the Leavenworth Times greeted initial gold rumors with skepticism. Their doubts were short-lived, however, for by September 11 they completely reversed their attitudes and endorsed the reports. The shaky character of evidence upon which the Times' editors based their newfound faith was proof that they based their change in policy not so much on change of heart as on a realization of the economic benefits to accrue from a gold rush. They ostensibly based their conversion on the report of the mendacious Elmore King, the Cherokee company member who never had been in the mines but claimed that they were five to ten dollar diggings for miners with pans, meaning fifty dollars per day with proper tools. On the basis of these "STABLE FACTS" they asserted that "There is no mistake about the gold."⁵¹

The Times then took the lead in promoting the rush and directing it through Leavenworth, which eventually received the bulk of the gold business. The editors called for a public meeting to promote Leavenworth as an outfitting point and displayed great faith in the truth of the gold reports and in the volume of the rush to come. "Aim first for LEAVENWORTH, then for PIKE'S PEAK" was their advice to emigrants.⁵² With a fervent "God bless them" they cheered the argonauts on: "Come on, gold seekers."⁵³ No story was too unlikely to gain credence in the Times. For instance there was the tale of James Blackstone, a Russell, Majors and Waddell wagonmaster, who the Times said brought several nuggets into Leavenworth. The story explained that Blackstone had been chasing buffalo near a fork of the Platte and paused to get a drink in the river. As he stooped to drink he discovered nuggets before his nose. Or there was the yarn of the Times' special correspondent, signed "E. R. C.," who wrote that "Nature would seem to have turned into a most successful alchemist by converting the very sands of the streams into gold," and claimed to be understating the wealth of the country.⁵⁴

Vaughan and Bartlett did their best to silence doubters and promote the rush but at the same time were well aware of the mendacious nature of the stories they printed. They patronizingly mixed in a few adverse reports in order to avoid accusations of being "the means of creating a false impression, or of misleading the public."⁵⁵ Then they heaped scorn upon the bearers of ill news and said "We presume, after the correspondence published by the Times, that no person will be foolish enough to deny that the Kansas gold mines exceed any discoveries yet made of the precious mineral in the world," for the evidence "gives

the lie to croakers. . ."⁵⁶ But aware that they were walking a tight-rope of deception, the editors occasionally retreated into comical ambiguity, as in the statement that "gold is being discovered everywhere--more or less."⁵⁷

Vaughan and Bartlett championed the interests of Leavenworth throughout the rush. They recommended that emigrants proceed up one of the forks of the Kansas River to the mines, generally the Smoky Hill Fork. Leavenworth they said was closer to the mines than any other city on the Missouri River. These assertions led Vaughan and Bartlett into a running battle with Van Horn of the Journal of Commerce in which both sides traded insults freely. Van Horn, said the Times, headed his paper "City of Kansas" with no state in order to make emigrants of free-state proclivities believe that Kansas City was in Kansas and not in Missouri. The Times added that Kansas City, "better known by the name of Gully Town," was no proper place for an emigrant to patronize.⁵⁸

The Times' commentary on the rush while it was in progress was equally indicative of the editors' economic motivations. Vaughan and Bartlett decried the ways of the multitude who chose to go to the mines on foot, saying "This is all wrong." A proper outfit, they maintained, would make the journey a "pleasure trip."⁵⁹ They might also have added that the purchase of such outfits was good for business in Leavenworth. What good was a gold rush if it failed to turn a profit? Vaughan and Bartlett certainly were among the most transparent of the rush's promoters. They also were among the most shameless, for the same men who exclaimed "Come on, gold seekers" later protested in the midst of swarming go-backs that "we have little to say. We have never urged it [emigration] on by special advice and never shall."⁶⁰

Despite their two or three-facedness, Vaughan and Bartlett reaped rewards for their policies. Leavenworth did receive the bulk of the outfitting trade. Moreover in October of 1859 the editors noted that during the previous few months they had added nearly a thousand new subscribers to their rolls, and subscriptions were still coming in.⁶¹

The Lawrence Republican's editors, brothers T. D. and Solon Thacher, though they were less brazen than Van Horn, Martin, Vaughan and Bartlett, still definitely fell into the booster category. No sooner had the first gold reports been published than they began advertising Lawrence as the most favorable point for outfitting, predicting a great rush and asserting their belief that gold was present in large quantities all along the eastern slope of the Rockies. Naturally they gave extensive coverage to the hometown "Lawrence boys" when they returned from the diggings. The Thachers devoted a great amount of space to gold news and even once printed a question-and-answer column to reply to queries from emigrants about the mines.

The real goal of the Thachers was not so much to generate a gold rush as to direct it through Lawrence, which was inland some fifty miles from the Missouri River. They recommended that emigrants keep an open mind about which route to take to the goldfields. Come to Lawrence first, they said, from which the Smoky Hill, Santa Fe and Platte River routes were all easily accessible. Then while making up their minds about the route emigrants could buy their outfits at reasonable prices in Lawrence. Before spring the editors came to favor the Smoky Hill Route over the others.⁶²

The Republican well illustrated the dual motives of newspapermen in promoting the rush, for publicizing the mines was the Thachers'

method of boosting sagging circulation figures. In fact they arranged to give each new subscriber to their paper a free copy of the Parsons guidebook to the gold region. At the same time they rubbed their hands over the boon to business that would accrue to Lawrence's businessmen with a gold rush. They estimated that there would be one hundred thousand participants in the rush, who would spend "the snug little sum of \$2,000,000" for outfits.⁶³ Still the Thachers were less inextricably bound to the success of the gold rush than were some of their fellow editors, and when the bust came in the late spring of 1859 they backed off from earlier optimistic statements with less loss of face than their less reserved colleagues.

The editor of the Lawrence, Kansas Herald of Freedom, G. W. Brown, reacted to the first gold reports in a manner strikingly different from most of his fellow editors. For the space of four months, until the end of 1858, Brown treated the reports with inveterate skepticism. He told his readers to take the money that they might spend on an outfit for the mines and instead invest it in farmland in eastern Kansas. He predicted hardship and suffering for those who ventured into the high country in the winter. Brown's opinion was that even if gold did abound in the mountains, Kansas would be the poorer for it because its citizens would be drained off to the mining region. In order "not to mislead our readers," he said, "we choose to go slow."⁶⁴ The climax of this policy came at the end of 1858 when Brown sneered that "a very large company of rats were found in the street the other morning, forming a lengthy procession with their heads directed towards the gold mines. The leader bore a little flag on which was inscribed 'For Pike's Peak.'"⁶⁵

Brown had good reason for taking this stand. In the first place he claimed to publish a paper that was the organ of all Kansas Territory, not just of Lawrence. Therefore it would have been improper for him to indulge in undignified promotion of Lawrence as a gold rush route terminus. Brown's mottoes, printed at the top of each paper he printed, were "Independent on All Subjects" and "Truth Crushed to Earth Shall Rise Again." This made it rather hypocritical for him to join in the propaganda campaign. Moreover Brown's strident rival was the crosstown Republican, and since the Republican endorsed the gold reports the Herald naturally would oppose them.

Ideals were fine things, but Brown was caught in the same circulation squeeze as were the rest of the frontier journalists. In late August he remarked that "we sold one newspaper last week, and would have obtained a subscriber for six-months if we would have taken a two-dollar bill on the broken bank of Tekama, Nebraska Ter., in payment."⁶⁶ Brown's solution to his problem was a sudden and complete conversion experience, after which he devoted much space to gold reports and urged emigration on.

Brown inaugurated his new policy just one week after the rat column embarked for Pike's Peak, with a special "golden" issue on January 1, 1859. Brown claimed to have had a real change of heart and justified his course with the epigram, "Be sure you are right, then go ahead!" He poured out a gush of prose and poetry on behalf of the mines, but a paragraph on the second page revealed his true motives. He noted that many people who ordinarily never saw his paper would see this one and urged them all to subscribe for regular intelligence from

the mines. At the same time his agents launched a drive to swell subscription lists.

Brown persisted in his new policy and even joined the Republican in booming the "Great Central Route" from Lawrence as "the route" to the mines.⁶⁷ By early March the policy had begun to bear fruit, as every mail brought remittances for subscriptions from agents all over the territory. Several weeks later Brown noted even more rapid increases, and with tongue in cheek chalked up these gains to his stand on the slavery issue. When the bust came in the late spring Brown again demonstrated his editorial agility by reverting to his original pessimistic position. The kindest label for Brown's flexible policies is that they were expedient.⁶⁸

To the north in Nebraska City, Nebraska Territory was Milton Reynolds of the Nebraska City News. When gold rumors began to circulate early in September of 1858 he was torn between two courses. He saw how fantastic the stories were and so disclaimed any responsibility for their truthfulness. At the same time Reynolds prided himself on being a civic booster and saw the benefits that a gold rush might bring to his town. So he reprinted the major gold stories from other papers, supplemented them with reports brought in off the Overland Trail, claimed Nebraska City as the terminus of the best and most direct route to the mines and boasted of the fair prices of local merchants.

Within a month Reynolds' opportunistic tendencies had gotten the better of him. He devoted extensive space to the mines, myopically asserted that there were no negative reports at all and exclaimed, "Let the emigration come."⁶⁹ He urged emigrants to travel the "military" or "great CENTRAL ROUTE" to the mines, which ran on high ground south of

the Platte River to Fort Kearney, then along the South Platte to the mines. On February 22, 1859, he published a gold extra, after which he intensified his campaign to promote the military route.

When the bust came Reynolds was thoroughly unrepentant of his boosterism and turned to recriminations, countercharges and deceit in the face of charges that he had led emigrants astray. "Facts sustain us--sustain western editors--" he protested, "remove the malicious stigma that it is all a trick. . ." ⁷⁰ In spite of the angry rush of the go-backs he continued to print only positive news from the mines and even issued another gold extra on May 17. He accused traders at Fort Laramie of conspiring to cause the bust by spreading pessimistic rumors. Their purpose, the editor said, was to cause emigrants wanting to go home to sell their extra supplies at Fort Laramie at giveaway prices and thus provide the traders with an inexpensive stock of goods. Reynolds also charged men already in the mines with sending out agents to turn back the fifty-niners and thus keep out mining competition, which was exactly the opposite of what they were really doing. The afflicted journalist pleaded innocent of any intent to deceive but admitted that he himself might have been "gulled." He followed this with the report that a Mr. Leach was in from the mines, where he had found twelve-cent-to-the-pan diggings, to remedy his shortage of provisions. But at that time provisions were abundant in the mines because returning emigrants sold off their surplus cheaply. Reynolds charged that eastern editors were the real sensationalists, for they had made up the most fantastic of the gold stories. Fancying himself a martyr, he proclaimed that "we are ready to defend every extra ever issued, though the devils be as thick as the flies on the houses of Worms." ⁷¹

The efforts of all these editors were welcome to border town merchants who stood to benefit from them. Businessmen placed advertisements in the papers designed to boost the gold rush and the particular outfitting establishment doing the advertising. "Gold! Gold! B. F. DALTON & CO. MAMMOTH OUTFITTING STORE. . ." read one.⁷² "The Shortest and Best Route to the AURIFEROUS DEPOSITS is to be found at FORD'S DRY GOODS STORE," said another.⁷³ Others urged emigrants to outfit themselves with a "Pike's Peak tent" and a "Pike's Peak saddle."⁷⁴ Such notices filled the advertisement sections.

But the merchants did not depend wholly on the newsmen to do their promotion. Often they took matters into their own hands or cooperated with the journalists. One way to promote the mines was through the device of public meetings. Various merchants' or citizens' groups would engage speakers to address the public in halls or in the streets about the mines. These meetings served a dual purpose: they gathered the public together to hear optimistic speakers and thus created enthusiasm for the rush; and they served as organizational meetings for the townspeople to consider what measures they should take to secure as much of the emigrant traffic as possible. The Chamber of Commerce of Kansas City sponsored an address by William Gilpin, long known as a believer in the mineral resources of the mountains. An earlier speaker at the same meeting pointed out that Leavenworth was outstripping Kansas City in attracting emigrants and called for an organized effort in retaliation. On motion the chairman appointed a committee of five to devise such a program, but the extent of the committee's work went unrecorded.⁷⁵

As the Kansas City men noted, the citizens of Leavenworth indeed were competing actively for the emigrant trade, as were other towns. There was a meeting in Leavenworth on September 9 at which Elmore King addressed a crowd to the full extent of his imagination, and another on the thirteenth pursuant to a call by the Times. Mayor Denman presided at the corner of Delaware and Second Streets, and a number of enthusiasts gave "glorification speeches" to a late hour of the night. The assemblage created a committee of five to draw up a paper presenting the advantages of Leavenworth as an outfitting point and to report to a meeting the following week. As in the case of Kansas City, the committee's work was lost to the record.⁷⁶

Other towns followed suit. In Lawrence on the evening of October 18, 1858, Parsons and Smith, the emissaries of the Montana town company, accepted a written request from eleven Lawrence citizens and addressed a crowd from the steps of the best hotel in town, the Elbridge House. Following their remarks the meeting considered measures to improve the road from the city toward the gold mines. A similar meeting in Overton Hall of Wyandott, Kansas on September 18 considered at length measures to be taken to win the emigration.⁷⁷

Such meetings were the start of a concentrated effort by the border towns. They placed their propaganda in the newspapers, sent out parties to scout and mark the route to the goldfields and dispatched agents east to urge emigrants boarding steamboats ascending the Missouri to stop at their towns. Most of this activity was behind the scenes and unpublicized, but an insider could see plainly the workings of the effort. Such an insider was John James Ingalls, later a prominent Kansas politician but in 1858 just beginning his legal and business

career in the territory. In November of 1858 he wrote to his father in Massachusetts that "About the last of December and January the eastern papers will begin to be flooded with letters and suggestions from the West as a stimulus to emigration. I see the workings of the machinery well here and am urged to put my shoulder to the wheel."⁷⁸ The next month he wrote that "There are some most unscrupulous efforts being made to influence the travel to the different points. How much is truth and how much is fiction it is impossible now to determine."⁷⁹

After their initial success and subsequent embarrassment in 1859 the border towns continued their promotion efforts in 1860 in a much more discreet fashion. In the early spring of that year a letter to the Leavenworth Times signed "Wide Awake" urged the city, in the light of the fiasco which took place on the Smoky Hill Route in the previous year, to send out a party to scout and mark the route so that Leavenworth's most direct link to the mines would be considered safe. This was especially important because Atchison had just made connection with the East via the Hannibal and St. Joseph Railroad and threatened to steal away Leavenworth's commerce. In response the city council voted to hire the most prominent name that they could muster to do the job--Green Russell himself. In early April Russell set out for the mines up the Smoky Hill Route with some twenty men. En route he kept a careful journal of camp sites, stream crossings and available food and water. This Russell sent back to the Leavenworth city council and to other towns along the route.⁸⁰

Russell's report sparked further action. Leavenworth's citizens raised two thousand dollars to pay for improvement of the Smoky Hill Route. They proposed to other cities on the route--Lawrence, Lecompton,

Tecumseh, Topeka and Manhattan--that they jointly sponsor a crew of thirty-five men to build bridges, fix crossings and dig wells on the route, at a total cost of \$7,500. Several of the other towns did contribute, and on June 18 a construction crew left Leavenworth. They marked the route and made some improvements but suffered from a lack of funds to do the job fully.⁸¹

Meanwhile Nebraska City had realized that if it was ever to attract its share of the emigrant trade it would have to do some promotion of its own. Consequently Mayor Goddin presided at a citizens' meeting on February 11, 1860, to consider improvements in transportation facilities. The assemblage requested the city council to appropriate five thousand dollars to improve the loading levee on the Missouri River and appointed a committee of five to publicize the city's advantages and raise private funds for levee improvement. They also requested a government survey of the road from Nebraska City to Fort Kearney, appointed another committee to raise money to improve the road and memorialized Congress for fifty thousand dollars for the same purpose. The city council soon agreed to improve the city's levee, though nothing ever came of the road improvement schemes.⁸²

Just as the newspapermen reaped immediate benefits in the form of increased circulation, the border town businessmen won the advantage of an increased trade which brought a measure of prosperity back to their towns. They also won the long-range gains of a continuing freighting business to the mines and better steamboat service on the Missouri River. And in the mind of every citizen of the frontier the conviction grew that now surely the Pacific railroad would be built.

A final aspect of Pike's Peak propoganda was gold rush guidebooks. In some ways these actually were extensions of other phases of the propoganda effort. William Parsons, for instance, served a dual purpose with the publication of his The New Gold Mines of Western Kansas. Since he was interested in the town of Montana it benefited him to promote the gold rush; and as city attorney for the city of Lawrence he directed emigrants to that town as the best point for outfitting. A handbook by Otis Berthoude Gunn was a tract for the city of Wyandotte, his hometown. The Oliver guidebook served a similar purpose for Leavenworth, as did the Pratt and Hunt guide for Atchison. These guidebooks were thus a part of the various cities' publicity efforts. Nearly all of the handbooks quoted extensively from border town newspapers, and thus had ties also to that area of the propoganda campaign. A few guidebooks appeared simply designed to sell themselves, but these fell outside of the realm of propoganda since they were intended to promote no other action by the emigrant beyond simply buying the book. Despite the widespread anger of the go-backs directed against such authors as D. C. Oakes, in the end guidebooks probably had little effect on the volume of the gold rush. The emigrant likely made the decision to buy a guidebook after he had decided already to go to the mines.⁸³

In the aggregate the propoganda effort carried out by the town-lot speculators, newspapermen and border town businessmen, all acting from their own motives, met with mixed success. It succeeded in causing the gold rush movement to snowball as it went through its various stages of personal reports from the mines, letters from the mines, newspaper propoganda, public meetings, use of promotion agents and the issuing of guidebooks. It augmented newspaper circulation and increased trade.

But the gold rush brought forth was of a nature that made it only partially useful to its instigators. The poor class of emigrants which made up a good part of the early emigration were more of a burden than a boon, and sometimes became dangerously violent. The promoters also brought mountains of recriminations and bitterness onto themselves.

The verdict of contemporaries of the propagandists toward them was one of unequivocal condemnation. Even in the winter of 1858-1859, when the town builders were writing their wild letters, a few more honest observers decried them. One of these voices of caution was H. M. Humphrey from Illinois, who warned the public to "beware of the glowing and enticing accounts sent out from such sources" as the men whom he said were laying out towns and writing letters designed to stimulate emigration.⁸⁴ Another writer, C. Mayfield, said of the propaganda letters that "you can set it all down as a damned lie, for I have scoured the mountains from Hell to Hackney and I have not found any place that will pay a man to stay. . ."⁸⁵ In retrospect James H. Pierce wrote of the zealous promoters that they "sat in their cabins writing big yarns, and many of them drawing largely on their prolific brains and writing back for truth what was nothing but a hallucination of the brain."⁸⁶ Of propagandizing editors the Kansas City Chief, which had declined to participate in the deception, said that "they can never remedy the damage they have done."⁸⁷ Wrath was also great against the border towns; angry go-backs gathered outside Plattsmouth, Nebraska Territory, and threatened to sack it in revenge until they fell apart for lack of a leader.⁸⁸

Such condemnations were in a way unjust. All the various propagandists were only doing what was normal and accepted in the West at the

time. Real estate promoters traditionally used any tactic they could to make a gain, and he was foolish who took their stories seriously. Frontier businessmen always asserted the supremacy of their particular town, and their local newspapers always were boosters, gold rush or not. But the fault of the gold rush propagandists was that they did their job too well. There was no conspiracy on the part of all the various propagandists in cooperation to create a gold rush, but their separate actions were enough to bring that effect. People took them seriously when they should have known better. As one busted fifty-niner wrote, "The bubble has burst, and its explosion has brought ruin and desolation to many a hearthstone, and destroyed the hopes of many a hard working man. Who can we blame more than ourselves. . ."89

FOOTNOTES

¹D. C. Oakes, "The Man Who Wrote the Guidebook," The Trail, II, No. 7 (December, 1909), p. 10.

²Miller, "Early Day Experiences of Col. T. C. Dickson," p. 10; Younker, "The Early Pioneer," p. 11; Atchison Freedom's Champion, October 23, 1858, p. 2; Parsons, "Pike's Peak Fourteen Years Ago," pp. 558-559.

³Younker, "The Early Pioneer," pp. 11-12; Miller, "Early Day Experiences of Col. T. C. Dickson," p. 10.

⁴Parsons, "Pike's Peak Fourteen Years Ago," p. 559.

⁵Nebraska City News, October 30, 1859, p. 2; Atchison Freedom's Champion, October 23, 1859, p. 2.

⁶Lawrence Republican, October 28, 1858, p. 1.

⁷Atchison Freedom's Champion, October 23, 1858, p. 2; Lawrence Republican, October 28, 1858, p. 1; Nebraska City News, October 30, 1858, p. 2.

⁸Atchison Freedom's Champion, October 23, 1858, p. 2; Nebraska City News, October 30, 1858, p. 2.

⁹Hafen, Gold Rush Guidebooks, p. 116; Atchison Freedom's Champion, October 28, 1858, p. 2; Parsons, "Pike's Peak Fourteen Years Ago," p. 559.

¹⁰Spring, "Rush to the Rockies, 1859," p. 89; Pierce, "The Early Prospecting of Colorado," p. 10; Henderson, "Mining in Colorado," p. 3; Villard, The Past and Present of the Pike's Peak Gold Region, p. 20.

¹¹Kansas Herald of Freedom, November 13, 1858, p. 2.

¹²Lawrence Republican, November 18, 1858, p. 2.

¹³Parsons, "Report on the Gold Mines of Colorado, 1858," pp. 215-219.

¹⁴Miller, "Early Day Experiences of Col. T. C. Dickson," p. 10; Younker, "The Early Pioneer," p. 12; Hafen, Gold Rush Guidebooks, p. 47.

¹⁵Hafen, Gold Rush Guidebooks, pp. 74-75; Lawrence Republican, November 11, 1858, p. 1.

¹⁶Lawrence Republican, November 11, 1858, p. 1; *ibid.*, November 25, 1858, p. 2; Leavenworth Weekly Times, November 13, 1858, p. 2; Hafen, Colorado Gold Rush, pp. 118-119.

¹⁷Atchison Freedom's Champion, November 27, 1858, p. 1; Leavenworth Weekly Times, November 13, 1858, p. 2.

¹⁸Kansas Herald of Freedom, January 1, 1859, p. 1.

¹⁹Richardson, Beyond the Mississippi, pp. 57-60; Villard, The Past and Present of the Pike's Peak Gold Region, p. 11.

²⁰Greeley, An Overland Journey, p. 124; Villard, The Past and Present of the Pike's Peak Gold Region, pp. 11-12.

²¹Hafen, Gold Rush Guidebooks, p. 77.

²²Villard, Past and Present of the Pike's Peak Gold Region, p. 11; Hafen, Colorado Gold Rush, pp. 140-143; Kansas Herald of Freedom, January 1, 1859, p. 4.

²³Phyllis Flanders Dorset, The New Eldorado: The Story of Colorado's Gold and Silver Rushes (New York: MacMillan Co., 1970), pp. 41-44; George F. Willison, Here They Dug the Gold (New York: Reynal and Hitchcock, 1946), pp. 12-16.

²⁴Hafen, Gold Rush Guidebooks, pp. 77-78; Dorset, The New Eldorado, pp. 45-46.

²⁵Miller, "Reminiscences of Early Days," p. 10; Henderson, "Mining in Colorado," p. 4.

²⁶Leavenworth Weekly Times of following dates: November 6, 1858; p. 1; November 20, 1858, p. 1; December 25, 1858, p. 2; February 5, 1859, p. 1; March 5, 1859, p. 1; April 2, 1859, p. 1; April 23, 1859, p. 1.

²⁷Atchison Freedom's Champion, February 26, 1859, p. 1.

²⁸Hafen, Colorado Gold Rush, pp. 206-207.

²⁹Daily Journal of Commerce, June 4, 1859, p. 2.

³⁰*Ibid.*, December 28, 1858, p. 2.

³¹*Ibid.*, December 25, 1858, p. 2; *ibid.*, June 14, 1859, p. 2.

³²*Ibid.*, March 16, 1859, p. 2.

³³Nebraska City News, February 12, 1859, p. 2.

³⁴Ibid., of following dates: February 12, 1859, p. 2; March 19, 1859, p. 1; April 9, 1859, p. 2; July 23, 1859, p. 2; Hafen, Colorado Gold Rush, p. 248.

³⁵Kansas Herald of Freedom, April 2, 1859, p. 4.

³⁶William E. Connelley, History of Kansas Newspapers (Topeka: Kansas State Historical Society and Department of Archives, 1916) p. 9.

³⁷Kansas Herald of Freedom, June 5, 1858, p. 2; ibid., July 10, 1858, p. 2.

³⁸Ibid., August 21, 1858, p. 1.

³⁹Ibid., October 30, 1858, p. 1; Atchison Freedom's Champion, April 16, 1859, p. 1.

⁴⁰Kansas Herald of Freedom, July 3, 1858, p. 1; ibid., December 18, 1858, p. 1; Atchison Freedom's Champion, January 1, 1859, p. 1.

⁴¹Kansas Herald of Freedom, December 25, 1858, p. 2; Leavenworth Weekly Times, January 7, 1859, p. 2; Lawrence Republican, February 16, 1860, p. 2.

⁴²Nebraska City News, September 25, 1858, p. 2; Leavenworth Weekly Times, September 11, 1858, p. 2; Daily Journal of Commerce, March 16, 1859, p. 2.

⁴³Hafen, Colorado Gold Rush, pp. 30-32.

⁴⁴Ibid., pp. 33-37.

⁴⁵Nebraska City News, October 23, 1858, p. 2.

⁴⁶Hafen, Colorado Gold Rush, pp. 67-68, 50-51; Daily Journal of Commerce, December 30, 1858, p. 2; ibid., January 30, 1859, p. 2.

⁴⁷Daily Journal of Commerce of following dates: December 25, 1858, p. 2; January 30, 1859, p. 2; February 13, 1859, p. 2; March 18, 1859, p. 1.

⁴⁸Atchison Freedom's Champion, September 26, 1858, p. 1.

⁴⁹See for instance ibid., February 26, 1859, p. 1.

⁵⁰Ibid., April 30, 1859, p. 2.

⁵¹Leavenworth Weekly Times, September 11, 1858, p. 2.

⁵²Ibid., September 18, 1858, p. 1.

⁵³Ibid., September 25, 1858, p. 1.

- ⁵⁴Ibid., January 1, 1859, p. 1; *ibid.*, December 25, 1858, p. 2.
- ⁵⁵Ibid., October 2, 1858, p. 1.
- ⁵⁶Ibid., December 25, 1858, p. 2; *ibid.*, March 12, 1859, p. 1.
- ⁵⁷Ibid., February 26, 1859, p. 2.
- ⁵⁸Ibid., February 26, 1859, p. 1.
- ⁵⁹Ibid., March 19, 1859, p. 1.
- ⁶⁰Ibid., March 19, 1859, p. 1.
- ⁶¹Leavenworth Daily Times, October 31, 1859, p. 2.
- ⁶²Lawrence Republican, October 7, 1858, p. 2; *ibid.*, December 16, 1858, p. 2.
- ⁶³Ibid., March 31, 1859, p. 1.
- ⁶⁴Kansas Herald of Freedom, December 18, 1858, p. 2.
- ⁶⁵Ibid., September 25, 1858, p. 3; *ibid.*, October 30, 1858, p. 1; quote in *ibid.*, December 25, 1858, p. 1.
- ⁶⁶Ibid., August 28, 1858, p. 3.
- ⁶⁷Ibid., February 5, 1859, p. 1; *ibid.*, February 26, 1859, p. 1.
- ⁶⁸Ibid., March 5, 1859, p. 2; *ibid.*, March 26, 1859, p. 2.
- ⁶⁹Nebraska City News, October 23, 1858, p. 2; *ibid.*, October 9, 1858, p. 2.
- ⁷⁰Ibid., April 9, 1859, p. 2.
- ⁷¹Nebraska City News of following dates: May 14, 1859, p. 3; May 21, 1859, p. 1; June 4, 1859, p. 2; quote in June 18, 1859, p. 2.
- ⁷²Kansas Herald of Freedom, January 1, 1859, p. 3.
- ⁷³Lawrence Republican, January 6, 1859, p. 2.
- ⁷⁴Nebraska City News, April 16, 1859, p. 2; Lawrence Republican, January 6, 1859, p. 2.
- ⁷⁵Daily Journal of Commerce, December 21, 1858, p. 2; *ibid.*, February 18, 1859, p. 2.
- ⁷⁶Leavenworth Weekly Times, September 11, 1858, p. 2; September 18, 1858, p. 1; Hafen, Colorado Gold Rush, p. 54.

⁷⁷Lawrence Republican, October 21, 1858, p. 2; Hafen, Colorado Gold Rush, pp. 69-70

⁷⁸John James Ingalls, "Some Ingalls Letters," Kansas State Historical Society Collections, XIV (1915-1918), p. 108.

⁷⁹Ingalls, "Some Ingalls Letters," p. 108.

⁸⁰Leavenworth Daily Times, March 1, 1860, p. 2; *ibid.*, April 4, 1860, p. 2; Lawrence Republican, April 5, 1860, p. 2; *ibid.*, May 24, 1860, p. 2.

⁸¹Lawrence Republican of following dates: May 24, 1860, p. 1-2; May 31, 1860, p. 2; June 21, 1860, p. 1.

⁸²Nebraska City News, February 18, 1860, p. 2.

⁸³Hafen, Gold Rush Guidebooks, pp. 147-205, 235-240, 254-260.

⁸⁴Kansas Herald of Freedom, April 2, 1859, p. 2.

⁸⁵Lawrence Republican, May 19, 1859, p. 1.

⁸⁶Henderson, "Mining in Colorado," p. 3.

⁸⁷Kansas Herald of Freedom, June 4, 1859, p. 2.

⁸⁸A. L. Child, "Gold at Pike's Peak," Nebraska State Historical Society Publications, I (1885), pp. 177-178.

⁸⁹Nebraska City News, June 4, 1859, p. 2.

CHAPTER IV

ECONOMICS AND THE GOLD RUSH EMIGRATION

On an April morning in 1859 a half-dozen footmen drawing handcarts behind them hitched up their loads and prepared to board the Missouri River ferry at St. Joseph, Missouri. Beyond the river to the west stretched six hundred miles of plains they would have to cross to reach the touted mines of Pike's Peak. As the emigrants approached the ferry they heard a "Halloa! Hold on there" from behind and turned to see a poker-faced Missourian walking up. "Are you going to Pike's Peak?" was his question. "Yes," impatiently replied one of the emigrants. "Well, why don't you wait for the grass?" the curious stranger persisted. "Grass!" one of the six exclaimed, "What do we want of grass? We haven't any cattle." "Very true," admitted the questioner, "but you are making asses of yourselves, and you ought to look out for provender!"¹

That apochryphal story made the rounds in the border towns in the spring of 1859. The hasty actions of many of the Pike's Peakers in the gold rush appeared foolish to non-participants, who made the hapless emigrants the butt of many an anecdote. But humor disguised a grimmer side of the movement that gave laughter a nervous tone, for thinking observers realized that the actions of the Pike's Peakers were often the reckless actions of desperate men.

The actions of the propagandists who promoted the gold rush were understandable. They resulted from a combination of frontier

boosterism and hard times economically. Strange to say, however, thousands of men accepted the boosters' reports and acted upon them. The reason for this and for the fifty-niners' rash behavior lay in the state of the economy at the time. The goldfields were yet unproven, but the Pike's Peakers willingly accepted a slim chance in the goldfields because economic chances were even slimmer at home. Moreover the bulk of the participants in the gold rush came from those areas of the country in which economic times were hardest. It was an economic depression that made the gold rush possible, not a case of "gold fever;" in fact from beginning to end, from 1858 through 1860, the events of the gold rush reflected the economic state of the country. In those three years the nation felt the advent of a depression, survived its low point and began to make a comeback. Emigration to the goldfields of the Rockies in those same years underwent a process of change that was the result of the larger economic cycle.

In 1857 the United States fell victim to a monetary contraction that was worldwide in scope. Globally the 1850's had been a time of economic boom fed by the discovery of gold in California and Australia, which provided a specie base for speculative expansion. But the boom of the fifties went beyond the capacity of the increase in specie to sustain it. Largely because of surreptitious buying practices by France, there was a serious drain of specie from the Bank of England in 1855 and 1856, which caused a hike in interest rates in Britain.²

The effect of England's credit contraction on affairs in the United States was serious. The United States also had been enjoying an unprecedented business boom, fired largely by unrestrained speculation in land and western railroads and by unconcerned borrowing in a

get-rich-quick attitude. The credit structure of the United States was dependent on British capital. American railroad stocks were especially favorite investments for English capitalists in the early 1850's. But when interest rates climbed in Britain, that country's investors saw that English notes were both a more lucrative and a more safe investment than American railroad stocks. The flow of capital across the Atlantic waned, while in August of 1857 the United States' overextended credit structure strained to sustain a greater quantity of loans than ever before.³

On August 24 the Ohio Life Insurance and Trust Company, which never sold any insurance but was one of the country's biggest lenders, suspended specie payments. This was the signal for a sharp panic as bankers called in loans to meet depositors' demands. The credit contraction was sharp and intense, for bankers discovered that almost none of the capital they had tied up in railroad stocks and western land investments was quickly recoverable. On September 25 the banks of Philadelphia suspended specie payments, followed by banks across the country. In the fall and winter of 1857 the nation's commerce came to a virtual standstill.⁴

Fortunately this state of stagnation was short-lived as far as the commercial centers of the country were concerned, but other areas were less lucky. Some sections nearly were recovered from the panic's effects by the beginning of 1858. Indeed the South suffered comparatively little from the panic's havoc, and its residents bragged that their section had shown the strength of a cotton economy, despite localized hardships. But the West suffered severely. In the Ohio, Missouri and upper Mississippi Valleys money was scarce throughout 1858 and 1859,

and in the most western areas recovery began only in 1860. These hard-hit valleys yielded the greatest share of the participants in the Pike's Peak gold rush.⁵

In 1858, somewhat later than in the eastern part of the country, the Panic affected the West in the form of an almost complete drying up of credit and a calling in of extant loans. This situation would have eased as the country as a whole pulled out of the depression except for three reasons. For one, the West had immersed itself too deeply in land speculation. For another, the West in 1857 and 1858 suffered from crop failures that prevented its agricultural economy from returning to prosperity. Finally, farm prices were depressed at the same time. These combined woes made times hard for all classes in the West.⁶

At the time of the gold rush in the spring of 1859 the Ohio Valley states were in universally bad straits. Crops in 1858 had been a complete failure, due primarily to excessive rains, unseasonal frosts, wheat rust and chinch bugs. Thousands of cattle died during the winter of 1858-1859 for lack of feed, and in many areas the people themselves faced starvation and eviction from their homes. Horace Greeley passed through the region on his way to the gold mines in the spring of 1859 and reported "whole neighborhoods destitute alike of bread and of the wherewithal to buy it," and "making a final stand against the sheriff."⁷ A part-time schoolteacher and farmer from Illinois named William Tebbets wrote to his parents as early as December of 1857 that money was tight, hard to get at thirty-three percent. The price of wheat went down from eighty to thirty-five cents. Over half of the businesses in his locale had failed by May of 1858, "and a dead silence

seems to rain [sic] above and around us. . ."⁸ Tebbets earlier had saved \$1600, but after the recession he was broke.⁹

Urban areas of the Ohio Valley states also suffered in the hard winter of 1858-1859. For instance "Freedom Shrieker," a Lawrence Republican correspondent in Chicago, wrote that suffering and privation were severe in that city. Starvation stalked unemployed mechanics. Moreover it was of no use to flee to the countryside because rural areas were stricken equally. Consequently "Pike's Peak," he wrote, "is on the tongue of scores and hundreds."¹⁰

Conditions were much the same in the Missouri Valley. In 1858 heavy summer rains wiped out the wheat and oats crops, and money was beyond scarce--it was almost nonexistent. John Ingalls, the young lawyer, wrote from Kansas in the fall of 1858 that trade had ceased completely. "There seems to be almost no currency at all," he mourned, "and how people live is a mystery to me."¹¹ The situation was just as grave in Iowa. A tenant farmer named Ephraim Gard Fairchild wrote in December of 1857 that although he had raised respectable crops in that year, depressed prices made his wheat "not hardely worth carting off at present."¹² Instead of selling his wheat, Fairchild survived the winter by bartering his grain for supplies and lumber for a house. In the following spring he said "it is the hardist times here that I ever saw before in my life. It is impossible for me to get a cent of money any more."¹³ Conditions only got worse as heavy rains washed out all the year's crops in the area, and what little was harvested was unfit to eat because of wheat rust. Another farmer, John Kenyon, concurred that "money is out of the question here. . . . I have not had a dime of my

own for the last six months and do not expect to have one for the next six to come."¹⁴ Then a frost on June 4 "killed everything dead as a doornail."¹⁵

Such conditions were enough to drive many men to seize upon a feeble chance for gain in the goldfields. Whether the mines were real or not, hopeful argonauts could do little worse than at home. With the exhausted state of credit in the West, a gold mine was the only source of capital for a new start. Tebbets of Illinois wrote that he lost the \$1600 he had saved "by men running away who owed me."¹⁶ If the run-aways actually did not go to Pike's Peak, they at least captured the spirit of the movement with their flight. Kenyon of Iowa noted that "hundreds have gone from around here" to the goldfields, and he considered going himself.¹⁷ Such references suggested a direct connection between the depressed economic state of the country and the exodus to Pike's Peak. The place of origin of the emigrants to the gold mines made the connection even clearer.

Contemporaries never set down the total number of fifty-niners with any certainty, and estimates varied widely. The journalist Henry Villard estimated that as many as 100,000 started for the mines in 1859, of which not more than 40,000 reached the Cherry Creek area. Only 25,000 of these penetrated the mountain mining area, and there were never more than 15,000 in the mountains at any one time. The 100,000 figure probably was high, but some other observers made similar claims. Brown of the Kansas Herald of Freedom vaguely set the number at somewhere between 50,000 and 150,000. He cited traffic totals from certain Missouri River ferries in support of his estimate. At Des Moines 450 wagons crossed in one day, which would have been close to

two thousand men. At one of three St. Joseph ferries twelve thousand emigrants crossed in a ten-day period.¹⁸

Other estimates reduced Villard's 100,000 figure, though not radically. Horace Greeley estimated the number of go-backs at forty thousand, compared to the sixty thousand Villard claimed. This would have lowered the total figure at least to 80,000. But reporter Albert Richardson quoted figures that agreed closely with some of Villard's other estimates. He said that ten thousand men wintered in the mines in 1859-1860, and that in the preceding fall there had been nearly twice that many there, but about half went home for the winter. The total number of fifty-niners was probably below Villard's estimate, perhaps sixty to eighty thousand. Villard's statement of the number in the mines at any one time, 15,000, was fairly accurate.¹⁹

Numerous contemporaries registered opinions as to the places of origin of the many emigrants, though no one kept a systematic record. Villard said that most came from the Missouri and Mississippi Valleys. According to him Missouri, Kansas and Nebraska sent the largest delegations "comparatively speaking," meaning according to population size, while Georgia sent more than any other southern state. Greeley said the emigrants came from all parts of the country, including all the major cities. Of any twelve men in the goldfields, he stated, three had been to California at some time; two or three had taken claims in eastern Kansas; and one had lived in Texas. Brown of the Herald of Freedom thought that of all states Iowa sent the greatest proportion of its citizens, while Indiana, Illinois and Ohio each sent over ten thousand and Missouri almost that many. The consensus of these opinions

was that emigrants came from all over the country, but that most came from the Ohio and upper-Mississippi Valleys.²⁰

The only real sample of the emigrants' places of origin compiled was done in an incidental way by William Byers, editor of the (Denver) Rocky Mountain News. Byers printed in some of his 1859 editions an "Emigrants Register," whereby incoming emigrants could record their names and notify their friends and families at home of their safe arrival. The register usually recorded the emigrants' hometowns or counties and states. Though Byers himself admitted that only a small proportion of incoming emigrants registered their names, the register recorded a sizeable sample of 848 names with their places of origin, coming from eighteen different states.²¹

TABLE I

PLACES OF ORIGIN OF EMIGRANTS TO THE
PIKE'S PEAK REGION IN 1859, LISTED
IN ROCKY MOUNTAIN NEWS

Place of Origin	Number of Emigrants	Place of Origin	Number of Emigrants
Georgia	22	Missouri	201+
Illinois	201	Nebraska Territory	27+
Indiana	35	New York	64
Iowa	35	Ohio	87
Kansas Territory	36	Pennsylvania	19
Kentucky	6	Tennessee	26
Louisiana	2	Texas	26
Massachusetts	1	Vermont	1
Michigan	67	Wisconsin	16
		Total	848

Missouri led all states in the sample with a total of over 201 emigrants.²² Illinois was close behind with an even 201, followed by Ohio with 87, Michigan with 67 and New York with 64. The compiled figures from the register, because the sample was small and because of the fact that parties of emigrants registered in groups, were to some extent an untrue sample. Several sizeable parties from any one state could have thrown the balance off widely. But the register did show that the bulk of the emigrants originated just from where contemporary observers said they did. They came from the valleys of the Ohio, Missouri and upper Mississippi Rivers, where the effects of the economic depression still were most severe. All the states of that area sent sizeable contingents of emigrants in 1859. The delegations from Kansas and Nebraska might have been small compared to some of the older states, but they were large in proportion to population. New England sent almost no emigrants. The only eastern state to send a large delegation was New York, which was understandable considering that state's large population. The South also sent few emigrants. The only two southern states which totaled significant numbers in the sample were Georgia and Texas, and in both of those states special conditions were operating. Texas was still a frontier area with a fluid population and was suffering from depression like the rest of the West. Georgia had a large body of residents who had previous gold mining experience in their home state.

The register showed that three factors determined the number of emigrants sent by any one state or territory in 1859: the size of the population of the state; the closeness of the state to the mines; and the economic conditions prevailing there. More populous states such as New York naturally were likely to send larger delegations than less

populated states. A state that was closer to the mines, such as Missouri, obviously would send a disproportionately large group because of easier accessibility to the mines. But neither of those two factors wholly explained the emigrant totals. Arkansas, for instance, was in a position quite accessible to the Santa Fe Route to the mines, but placed no emigrants on the register. Accessibility and population also should have dictated larger representation from Kentucky and Tennessee. Thus the economic state at home was an important factor in determining whether a man went to the mines or not.

TABLE II

PLACES OF ORIGIN OF EMIGRANTS TO THE
PIKE'S PEAK REGION IN 1860, LISTED
IN ROCKY MOUNTAIN NEWS

Place of Origin	Number of Emigrants	Place of Origin	Number of Emigrants
Alabama	1	Michigan	6
Arkansas	1	Minnesota	18
Canada	1	Missouri	66+
England	1	Nebraska Territory	91+
Georgia	12	New Hampshire	2
Illinois	343+	New York	7
Indiana	86	Ohio	32
Iowa	132+	Pennsylvania	14
Kansas Territory	64	South Carolina	1
Kentucky	3	Virginia	1
Massachusetts	3	Wisconsin	46+
		Total	931

The emigrants of 1860 came from much the same general area as that of the preceding year. The Rocky Mountain News again kept an "Emigrant Arrivals" column and registered 931 emigrants with places of origin in 22 states, territories and foreign countries. In 1860 Illinois contributed by far the greatest number of emigrants with more than 343, followed by Iowa with 132-plus, Nebraska with 91-plus and Indiana with 86. Again the Missouri, Ohio and upper Mississippi Valleys contributed the most emigrants, according to the register.²³

Census figures for 1860 shed faint light on the question of the origin of the emigrants, for the census reported place of nativity and not place of previous residence. As place of origin figures, the census place of nativity figures leaned a little to the east of reality because of the general westward movement. But with allowance for this trend, the census totals lent support to the trends indicated by the totals from the Rocky Mountain News register. Ohio had the greatest number of natives in the goldfields with 4,125; New York followed with 3,942; Illinois had 3,620; Missouri had 3,312; Indiana had 2,587; and other states with over 1,000 were Kentucky, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, Wisconsin and Connecticut. The large totals for Missouri and Illinois, comparatively recently settled states, probably reflected actual residents of those states in the goldfields. But a large proportion of those with nativities listed in New York, Pennsylvania and Ohio no doubt came from states farther west in the Ohio Valley. Likewise many of those with Kentucky or Tennessee nativities probably had been living in Missouri or Illinois prior to the gold rush. Kansas and Nebraska were too recently settled to show many natives in the goldfields.²⁴

TABLE III

PLACES OF NATIVITY OF RESIDENTS OF THE
PIKE'S PEAK REGION IN 1860
(EXCLUDING FOREIGN-BORN)

Place of Nativity	Number of Emigrants	Place of Nativity	Number of Emigrants
Alabama	70	Missouri	3,312
Arkansas	264	New Hampshire	235
California	39	New Jersey	143
Connecticut	980	New York	3,942
Delaware	14	North Carolina	130
Florida	2	Ohio	4,125
Georgia	389	Oregon	4
Illinois	3,620	Pennsylvania	1,405
Indiana	2,587	Rhode Island	43
Iowa	797	South Carolina	42
Kansas Territory	197	Tennessee	813
Kentucky	1,861	Texas	87
Louisiana	150	Vermont	375
Maine	611	Virginia	868
Maryland	461	Wisconsin	1,204
Massachusetts	1,400	District of Columbia	10
Michigan	806	Other Territories	107
Minnesota	132	At sea	1
Mississippi	88	Not stated	297
		Total	31,611

Even though the emigrations of 1859 and 1860 came from generally the same area of the country, the two movements were greatly dissimilar in their types of participants. This was because of the different motivations behind the two emigrations. Though the rush of 1859 was at first a fiasco, later in 1859 rich gold strikes vindicated it. Naturally the region which became most excited about the new, confirmed wealth was the region which had participated in the original rush. The people of that area already had their attention drawn to the mountains.

Then in the fall of 1859 crowds of fifty-niners returned home for the winter and spread hopeful news among their acquaintances. Because the promoters of the 1859 rush declined to repeat their propaganda effort in 1860, most of the country received little exposure to mining news. Consequently the emigration of 1860 came from about the same locales as in 1859. Still there was a major difference between the two emigrations. By 1860 economic conditions had eased. Credit again was available and crops were better, though there still were local failures. Under these conditions emigrants went to the mining region not as an act of economic desperation but as a more deliberate choice in hope of finding better opportunity than was available at home, though at home chances no longer were all that bad.

Contemporary observers and participants in the gold rush clearly revealed in their writings the comparative motives and natures of the two emigrations, as well as of the pioneer prospectors of 1858. The sources revealed that the waves of men which broke upon the mountains in 1858, 1859 and 1860, though they had much in common, differed substantially in character. Each year's movement grew out of somewhat different motives and had a different sort of participant. In three years the emigration underwent a process of maturation.

Three kinds of people came to the goldfields in 1858. The first kind came with the early prospecting parties, either with the groups affiliated with the Russells or with the Lawrence company. The motives of the early prospectors were mixed, but they shared certain common attitudes that were an outgrowth of the times.

The various contingents that made up the Russell party came to the goldfields for several reasons. The leaders had personal memories to

spur them on to a prospecting expedition. Beck had found gold in 1850 on Cherry Creek, and Russell had had a similar experience in 1849 on the Sweetwater River. Thus both long had believed in the existence of gold in the Rockies. But the fact that they could not or would not raise a prospecting party to return to the mountains until 1858 was significant. They had known of the gold for years, but either they were too little interested to seek it out or no one else gave their stories credence until 1858. The fact that Beck, Russell and their friends waited until the economically distressed year of 1858 to become prospectors suggested that poor economic conditions at home drove them to seek relief in the goldfields. Hysteria was conspicuously absent from the motives of the party's prospectors. Coming directly from Georgia or being Cherokees originally from there, many of them had experience in that earlier gold mining region. They departed well-prepared over an established route, the Santa Fe Road. In short, they were not victims of any sort of gold fever; rather they were taking a logical step to remedy conditions of economic hardship.

The motives of the members of the Lawrence company had definite economic overtones. Parsons later wrote that dull times in the city of Lawrence gave impetus to the prospecting effort. Border warfare in Kansas had temporarily died down, and "the boys" idly were frequenting the town's saloons, wishing for some excitement "to satisfy their craving appetite for vagabondry and adventure."²⁵ Parsons also stated that the reports upon which they based their prospecting hopes came from questionable Indian sources; yet the rumors succeeded in provoking investigation. Such idleness and quickness to seize upon shaky

evidence indicated dearth of economic opportunity in Lawrence, beyond a simple lack of excitement.

Two other members of the Lawrence company who left records of their travels were Augustus Voorhees, a farmer of German-Dutch stock who had lived in eastern Kansas for two years, and Julia Anna Archibald Holmes, who became the first woman to climb Pike's Peak. Voorhees kept a diary and Mrs. Holmes wrote letters to the Sybil, a magazine of women's rights. Mrs. Holmes and her husband, James H. Holmes, were newlyweds and had established a farm near Emporia, Kansas. Both Voorhees and the Holmes's faced an uphill fight, because for the past two years crops in Kansas had been poor. Mrs. Holmes wrote that she and James joined the gold-seekers more from a desire to see the mountains than from hopes of enrichment; but circumstances indicated that neither they nor Voorhees had much to keep them at home.²⁶

Each prospecting party of 1858 had economic rationale for going. Yet apparently neither suffered from any serious lack of provisions or from hurried or careless preparations. In 1858 economic straits were less than desperate; but they were beginning to suffer and responded more easily to gold reports than they had in the past. Thus from the beginning the events of the Pike's Peak gold rush had relation to their economic context.

A large portion of the emigrants going to the mines in the fall of 1858 went mainly for reasons of speculation--not so much to mine gold as to mine the gold rush they knew was coming. These made up the second class of men who went in 1858. Without explicit statement their letters betrayed the purposes of these promoters, for the material content made intent clear. These were the optimistic propaganda letters

of the winter of 1858-1859 which boomed the Pike's Peak mines, written by holders of shares and lots in speculative towns. As in the case of the earlier prospectors, the presence of these opportunists in the mining region was due to the economic conditions of the time. During the 1850's they had benefited from a rise in western land values, but the Panic of 1857 had ruined their paper empires on the plains. With the depression in their former haven along the Missouri River, the promoters sought out a new land of opportunity at Pike's Peak.

Probably the majority of the perhaps 1,000 men who went to the mines in the fall of 1858 came without definite intentions to join in real estate speculation, though most of them soon were drawn into it. This third class which came in 1858 came in real hope of finding gold, a desperate hope spawned by hard times at home. In this respect they were more like the emigrants who were to come in the following spring than the speculators who strode alongside them. One such sincere emigrant signed himself "L. B. D." in a letter to his family in late 1858. He had yet to begin mining and really knew nothing about it, but knowing how times were at home he wrote that "You can tell anybody that asks you about this country, that they can do better here than there, especially if times are as hard as they were when I left."²⁷

The great rush which followed in the spring of 1859 possessed traits that made it appear as pure lunacy. Hordes of miners set out despite the fact that as yet no paying diggings had come to light. The majority of the hasty argonauts had no experience in mining and went without proper preparation. En route to the diggings most suffered from a shortage of provisions, and upon arrival at the mines were unable to work because they lacked proper tools. Many observers branded

this phenomenon as an occurrence of the reign of gold fever, an instance of mass irrationality. But such statements projected an unmerited quality on the rush. Journalistic propagandists proclaimed the gold fever in an effort to generate enthusiasm; those who opposed the promoters applied the same term in derision to show that the rush made no sense. In reality the rush was a spasmodic, pathetically futile reaction to prevailing economic conditions. There was less of fever in it than desperation.

If they truly had the gold fever, the fifty-niners omitted such emotions from their diaries, for most wrote of pragmatic concerns. Generally sober, the documents occasionally revealed the true motivations of the authors and their fellows. Darius Chapman of Illinois, traveling over the Platte River Route, was concerned more with noting the price he paid for feed for his stock than with thoughts of gold. Dr. George M. Willing, heading west on the Arkansas River Route, kept a keen and discerning eye for detail throughout and quite sensibly noted that he seemed to be the only physician en route to the mines and could expect a good practice. David F. Spain, a twenty-one-year-old native of Indiana, kept a calm-toned diary punctuated with dry humor as he journeyed along the bank of the Platte. He became exuberant only when he actually struck a paying claim in Gregory Gulch. Other journals were similarly sober, for seldom did they even mention the word "gold."²⁸

Only a few wayfarers allowed enthusiasm to overcome rationality. The letters of David Spain sang more lightheartedly than did his diary. A young man named Matthew H. Dale began his trek without due prior consideration and ended up writing home from Arapahoe for money to see him

through. E. H. N. Patterson of Illinois also wrote of his journey in a light vein. Yet in such cases generally there were extenuating circumstances. Spain thought often of his wife and hoped to assure her of his safety, which fact created the discrepancy between his calm diary and his jolly letters. Patterson was a former editor and wrote for publication in his hometown newspaper. Reminiscences of Pike's Peakers also tended to be romanticized, but by the time they were written the authors had had time to gilt-edge memories with gold never found. In the aggregate the writings of the fifty-niners showed little trace of any gold fever.²⁹

But their writings and the comments of other observers did give clues to the real motives of the Pike's Peakers of 1859. Most important was the oft-noted observation that the emigrants of 1859 were poverty-stricken. Hundreds of men inadequately provisioned embarked for the mines afoot, perhaps trundling handcarts or wheelbarrows. They left too early in the spring following what they thought to be the fastest route, the Smoky Hill Trail. These acts highlighted an element of desperation in the rush--desperation borne of the depressed economic state of the times. Had they been financially well-off, none would have attempted the hazardous journey ill-supplied.

The emigrants themselves recognized that they were an impecunious lot. One Pike's Peaker described his comrades as "the poorest in creation. . .there are hundreds now starting on foot, with nothing but a cotton sack and a few pounds of crackers and meat."³⁰ Another wrote that "the poorest, and, I fear, the most numerous take it on foot."³¹ "Ezel," still another writer, concurred in this and added that most were completely out of money, having spent their last dollars on meager

outfits. Along with the footmen came a class only slightly better off, struggling with handcarts and wheelbarrows. Even many of those traveling with wagon trains were destitute, as Dr. Willing observed. Miners who failed to raise the price of a team and wagon paid their last dollars to someone more fortunate, who hauled the pedestrian's baggage while he walked alongside.³²

The pauperous Pike's Peaker became the butt of mocking humor, such as in the story of the footmen who needed no grass, but also the object of predictions of disaster. Vaughan and Bartlett of the Leavenworth Times saw little humor in the situation. They shook their heads over a party of sixteen gold-seekers whom they saw depart with blankets, picks and pans on their backs. Their total supply of foodstuffs amounted to forty pounds of crackers and some salt. There was good reason to be concerned for such travelers.³³

The great amount of suffering among the Pike's Peakers en route testified to their condition of poverty. For instance a party of footmen with whom A. Cutler traveled on the Smoky Hill Trail ran short on supplies in mid-journey. Leaving the Smoky Route, they struck southwest for Bent's Fort on the Arkansas River, meanwhile rationing themselves to two ounces of pork, one ounce of bread and one-quarter pint extract of potato per man per day. Still they ran out of food and barely managed to struggle into the fort with their last strength. A man named Thompson from another party lived for twelve days on prickly pear and wild onions, while others were reduced to eating rattlesnakes. J. S. W. *****, as he signed himself, lived on the same sort of diet for two weeks, bolstered by an occasional crow. A few Peakers started too early in the spring and froze to death, and some frontier residents

feared that masses of the emigrants would perish. One emigrant in Denver at the end of his journey reflected with certainty that "many are doomed never to see their homes again. . . . the bones of thousands lie bleaching on the prairie."³⁴

The classic example of the impoverished and suffering emigrant was Daniel Blue of Illinois. On March 6 with his two brothers and eleven other men, all on foot, Blue began his trek westward over the Smoky Hill Route. They had only one packhorse to carry provisions, and the party lost its way and ran out of food. Some of the men collapsed and had to be left while others pushed ahead. Eventually the Blues were among those left. Two months after they had left the Missouri River a kindly Arapaho picked up a nearly-dead Daniel Blue and carried him to a stage station. Blue and his brothers had resorted to cannibalism in order to survive, but only Daniel had lived, having fed upon his brothers for two weeks.³⁵

In addition to the way in which the emigrants suffered, the attitudes of the residents of the border towns toward them in the midst of the rush of the go-backs was indicative of the fifty-niners' condition. Border town residents knew the desperate character of the Pike's Peakers. They had gone to the mines because they had no other choice, and their only hope had proven futile. What the frustrated argonauts would do became the object of speculation and some dread. A rumor circulated that disappointed gold-seekers would form a great filibustering expedition and invade northern Mexico. The border townsmen hoped for such a release, for they feared that instead Pike's Peakers would organize to wreak vengeance on the promoters who had propagandized the rush and to seize the provisions which they needed. Brown of the Kansas

Herald of Freedom hoped that they would go to Mexico, for "it is apprehended that they will not be as regardful of the law of mine and thine as the decalogue demands."³⁶ All along the Missouri River rumors flew that Pike's Peakers had hung the guidebook authors and propaganda letter-writers and were returning to sack the outfitting towns. Van Horn of the Journal of Commerce urged Kansas City municipal authorities to put a special police force on duty to repulse the "lawless characters," saying that "too much vigilance cannot be exercised. . ."³⁷

The border town fears were justified in a measure, but on the whole exaggerated. There were some instances of real or attempted brigandage by returning Pike's Peakers. One such incident occurred at the Marysville, Kansas crossing of the Big Blue River when a ferryman refused a party of go-backs passage because they had no money. The ferryman and the Pike's Peakers all pulled revolvers, and in the exchange that followed the ferryman and several of his assailants fell mortally wounded. Even more serious was the situation at Plattsmouth, Nebraska Territory, an outfitting town on the Missouri River. A disorganized but surly mob of two or three thousand go-backs camped several miles from the city and held meetings to decide how the town should be chastised. Some wanted to sack and burn the town, while others merely wanted to force repayment of their losses. The go-backs failed to agree on a leader or plan of action and broke up wrangling among themselves. A few of them did march on Plattsmouth to obtain redress, but well-armed citizens turned them away. Though the anger of the go-backs was intense, it also was undirected. Moreover a companion feeling of despair and hopelessness made any serious campaign of vengeance impossible. Such was the wretched state of the fifty-niners.³⁸

All these conditions indicated that it was the poor who became Pike's Peakers in 1859. Moreover some of them explicitly wrote that they went because the Panic of 1857 had ruined them. Isa Hunt Stearns wrote that her father, later territorial governor of Colorado, had gone to California as a teenager and returned home a wealthy man, but in the Panic he had lost his fortune. In 1858 he toured the mines of western Kansas and returned in the fall to Freeport, Illinois. In 1859 he transported his family to the mountains. Another fifty-niner, E. Dunsha Steele of Wisconsin, clearly stated that he had little faith in talk of gold, but went only because of the lack of any other economic opportunity. "I have little faith in the adventure, so far as obtaining gold is concerned," he confided, "but hope to find some new field of enterprise in which to mend my broken fortunes."³⁹ Twenty-year-old Daniel Ellis Connor had attended college in Indiana but found no opportunity for employment there. Consequently he came to Missouri hoping to find railroad work. He was unsuccessful and therefore joined the rush to Cherry Creek. Libeas Barney, a gold-hunter en route from Vermont to the goldfields, captured clearly their motivations when he punned that the argonauts came "apparently determined to recruit their panic-stricken fortunes."⁴⁰

Journalists stated the reasons behind the emigration even more clearly. Early in 1859 the New York Tribune announced that a great emigration to the goldfields was coming, owing to "the extensive failure of crops in 1858, the universal pressure of debt, the low prices realized or promised for the fruits of the husbandman's labors, the deadness of enterprise, the absence of thrift. . ."⁴¹ The Leavenworth Times greeted the rush with an assertion that "The way for this very

state of things was wonderfully opened by the financial revulsion of '57 and '58. Thousands, who before would never have dreamed of the venture, now, with broken fortunes, turn eagerly to the mines as a means of regaining their wealth. . . ."⁴² The Nebraska City News chimed in that "The laboring poor are not to be debarred the privilege of digging from the ground an independence and a fortune."⁴³ When the bust came, the Herald of Freedom blamed the rashness of the rush on the fact that "The recent financial pressure. . . had just prepared the country for a grand gold fever. Men were anxious to obtain or regain a fortune suddenly."⁴⁴ Villard credited the size of the rush to the large number of workers without jobs and the failure of farmers' crops.⁴⁵

Horace Greeley reveled in the sight of the financially downtrodden grasping a new opportunity in the West. "The next man you meet driving an ox team, and white as a miller with dust, is probably an ex-banker or doctor, a broken merchant or manufacturer from the old states," he said, "who has scraped together the candle ends charitably or contemptuously allowed him by his creditors or settlement, and risked them on a last desperate cast of the dice by coming hither."⁴⁶ On one occasion Greeley met a man and his wife who had recently come west. He was an ex-lawyer from Cincinnati and she an ex-actress in the Bowery Theater in New York. Greeley found them tending Leavenworth and Pike's Peak Express Station Number 15.

Since it was financial exigencies which forced them onto the trail west, the Pike's Peakers were less enamored with the gold of the South Platte than simply searching for any sort of opportunity to deliver them from the hard times. Some, though determined to mine, yet were flexible as to where they would do it. They revealed this when they

met parties returning from the mines with discouraging reports. In such cases, while many went home, others chose to continue westward to California. Darius Chapman wrote of a conference which his traveling group held in which some members decided to go home, while the rest resolved to go to California. He also met other men who were California-bound and sold his spare supplies to them. Mrs. A. C. Hunt wrote that upon receiving adverse news from the mines everyone in her train began to examine maps and talk of California. More encouraging reports convinced them to try their luck in the Rockies. When E. Dunsha Steele's companions met go-backs who called Pike's Peak a humbug, they discussed the possibility of going on to California, and one wagon-full did so. Before the others could decide whether to follow, more hopeful news arrived and persuaded them to give the Peak a chance to prove good. Obviously these people were not running so much to the South Platte mines as away from where they had been.⁴⁷

Another option for the fifty-niner was to take up farming. Writers of promotional letters from the mines in the winter of 1858-1859 often made reference to agricultural possibilities at the feet of the mountains. Generally they pointed out prospects for growing vegetables with irrigation in the bottomlands of the South Platte and Arkansas Rivers. The most enthusiastic claimed that the uplands would produce cereals. Indeed some of the emigrants who followed in 1859 enthused more about farming than about mining. A man who signed himself "Observer" wrote that the country was a garden spot with "the fairest show for agricultural and horticultural prosperity that I know of anywhere."⁴⁸ A. M. Cass of Texas had similar thoughts as he noted the black, sandy soil of the Arkansas River bottom above Bent's Fort, as

well as timber stands and coal deposits. Rather than being in the grip of a gold mania, this brand of emigrant discerned more options than just mining.⁴⁹

Though some considered farming and others thought it possible, few of the fifty-niners left home with the intention of following that avocation. Of course promoters of the region, such as A. C. Smith of Denver, championed the agricultural worth of the country. He wrote that "A large number of farms are being opened, and gardens are being started in every direction. . ."⁵⁰ The Leavenworth Times, at the other end of the emigration, felt that many eastern farmers would go to the mining region to farm. But most emigrants came to dig gold, not vegetables, and because they left their farming tools at home were unable to farm even after they learned that there was little gold. One emigrant, Jesse L. Pritchard, recalled that during his stay in the mining region Horace Greeley urged the miners to turn to agriculture, but that they received the advice "with a quiet smile. Perhaps there was not a man in his audience who believed that grain or vegetables of any kind could be grown anywhere in that desert country."⁵¹

The real extent of the role of agriculture in the rush of 1859 was that it made a start that proved its feasibility in the area of the goldfields. A few pioneers turned their efforts to husbandry and generally did well. John McBroom, formerly a civilian teamster with the army, started one of the first farms and raised corn and grain, vegetables, fruits and strawberries. He also kept poultry and bees. However there was no agriculture on a large basis. Irrigation proved necessary even for cereals. The biggest truck farm in the Denver region in 1859 was that of David Wall, who only cultivated several

acres. Though near Fountain City in the Arkansas River Valley several hundred acres came under cultivation, and around Denver sixty or seventy acres, there was far too little produce for self-sufficiency. But the success of the few who tried farming impressed others. They marveled at the "monster vegetables" produced by a man named Ross, who they said raised corn ten feet high, twenty-five-inch parsnips and four-inch radishes. By the end of the year hundreds of converts had taken farming claims along the river bottoms to try in the next year.⁵²

A secondary agricultural effect of the gold rush was that it provided settlers for eastern Kansas and Nebraska. Greeley found that returning Pike's Peakers were settling areas of eastern Kansas, especially in the southeast. Hundreds of go-backs also took claims all along the valley of the Platte in Nebraska. This was additional evidence that the fifty-niners had little to go home to.⁵³

The fact that the fifty-niners refrained from inflexibly adhering to the idea of mining in the Pike's Peak region, or even to the idea of mining at all, indicated the conditions which they left behind. They were willing to try almost anything. Had opportunities awaited them at home, then upon the receipt of bad news from the mines they would simply have returned home, as so many others did. Certainly fewer would have gone back than did if they had possessed sufficient provisions to stay in the field. Most had inadequate supplies to last them through a trip to California or while they broke ground for a farm.

The emigration of 1860 differed in nature from that of 1859. The emigrants of the two years came from about the same part of the country, but out of two different economic environments. In 1859 the depression was severe; in 1860 it had eased, and the outlook for the

future was hopeful. This changed condition brought a changed type of emigrant. In December of 1859 "Observer" wrote from Denver that those who emigrated thither in the next year should bring tools to practice their trades if they were mechanics, and plows to break ground if they were farmers. In short, he discouraged get-rich-quick opportunists but appealed to stable men who were willing to develop the country. In so appealing he presaged a change in the type of emigrant that was to come in 1860 from those of 1859. Some yet came in 1860 who hoped to pan out a pile and return home with a fortune. But these found only disappointment in the mines, for by 1860 it was plain that the golden wealth of the Rockies lay outside of easily-exploited placer deposits, in the more stubborn veins of quartz. Those who came with grand hopes soon headed home, richer only in experience. But the rest stayed and became the builders of a new commonwealth. These were the resolute men who heeded the advice of Observer.⁵⁴

The most striking difference between the emigrants of 1860 and those of 1859 was in their degree of wealth. As a class those who came in 1860 felt none of the desperate poverty that had plagued their predecessors of the year before. The handcart men who had departed too hastily with too few provisions and too little money gave way to trains of wagons bulging with supplies for the journey and bearing men with cash in their pockets. Consequently there was little of the suffering that had characterized the rush of 1859. George T. Clark, a twenty-three-year-old native of Massachusetts living in Wisconsin, made the trip in 1860 and had so many supplies that he spent an entire day in Council Bluffs, Iowa packing his wagon. Edward J. Lewis of Illinois

had \$470 in his pocket at the start of his journey, and his traveling companion had over \$300.⁵⁵

Despite the fact that this wave of emigrants possessed ample provisions, some arrived at the mining areas only to make a brief tour and then return the way they had come. Nearly all emigrants, as they traveled toward the mountains, reported meeting parties going in the opposite direction, though many of the eastbound would have been returning fifty-niners. Edward J. Lewis, however, came out in the spring of 1860 from Bloomington, Illinois with sixteen companions. On September 28 of the same year he arrived back in his hometown \$465.95 poorer, having spent most of his time in the diggings just wandering here and there and never settling down to any serious endeavor. Most of his friends also had come home. What motivated such listless prospectors was obscure. Lewis, a sometime-journalist, might have gone just to "see the elephant," but curiosity was slim reason for embarking on such a journey. Such ne'er-do-wells were uncharacteristic of the emigrants of 1860.⁵⁶

More typical in attitude, if not in his fantastic degree of success, was George T. Clark. Clark entered Denver on May 31, 1860, but he neglected prospecting. Instead by June 8 he had taken a job in an express office doing its correspondence. From there he went on to become mayor of Denver and a prominent banker. A similar case was that of H. J. Hawley of Argyle, Wisconsin. Not quite twenty, in 1860 he saw little opportunity for a young man in Wisconsin. "I am getting tired of this staying at home and not making anything," the youth wrote.⁵⁷ So he resolved to join a group that his uncle, a veteran California miner, was raising to go to the goldfields. Hawley made gradual

preparations that spring while still trying to find employment at home. On April 4 he began his journey in a well-stocked wagon. He arrived on May 18 in Denver and began a period of rather aimless prospecting. Though others in his company wearied and departed in the fall for home, Hawley chose to stay. By the end of the year he had tried quartz mining without profit, but still he remained, remarking on the way in which he was learning the ways of the world by experience. Perseverance paid off after he entered the mercantile world by keeping books for local firms. Some years later he bought half interest in a grocery store; the partnership prospered, and by 1878 Hawley headed his own merchandising firm in Central City.⁵⁸

Other emigrants, though they declined to stay indefinitely in the mining region, came with determined attitudes and worked in a steady way. Hiram A. Johnson, a lawyer from Illinois, came in 1860 to Nevada City at the urging of his law partner, Henry M. Teller, who had preceded him there. Johnson was perfectly aware that the day of fortunes to be made by individual miners was gone. But he knew that growing quartz-mining and processing concerns would give ample employment to his legal talents. He practiced with Teller for several years in Central City, then went to New York and finally to London to deal in Colorado mining stocks.⁵⁹

The experience of Jonah Girard Cisne, twenty-five, was more humble. He had bought a farm in Illinois, and left in April of 1860 for the mining region with hopes of paying off the mortgage and building a home. Through hard work and shrewd claim-trading he managed over the course of the next three years to accumulate enough money to accomplish his purposes. Cisne thereupon left in the fall of 1863 for home and in

the next few years married and settled down on the farm which he had bought.⁶⁰

The changed nature of the emigration suited the requirements of the mining region in 1860. Indeed the needs of the mining region as to the nature of its citizens was a second major reason, along with the restoration of a degree of prosperity to the country, that the nature of emigration changed in 1860 to a more stable and wealthy element. By late summer of 1859 it had become plain that the gold of the mining region was present mostly in quartz veins, not in placer deposits. Placer deposits were workable by individual miners with little capital, but quartz mining was much more difficult. Some of the quartz was partially decomposed, and the gold in it had loosened and collected in the dirt around the rock. This decomposed quartz the fifty-niners exploited as much as they could. But most of the gold was in hard, undecomposed quartz or in iron pyrites. This was much harder to extract. Just getting the rock ore out of the ground required tunneling and often blasting. Then the ore had to be crushed with a quartz mill to loosen the gold, and perhaps put through a chemical extraction process. Such extensive operations were beyond the capability of the individual miner. Consequently the era of the capitalist began in 1860, as eastern capital flowed in to establish great quartz mining and crushing concerns.

Those who came to the goldfields in 1860 were either capitalists themselves or were willing to fit into the changing order by working for or providing services for the capitalists. They knew exactly what they were getting into, for newspapers had spread the facts of the situation abroad in 1859. A letter of Dr. George Willing, who had

become a prominent citizen and politician in the gold region, urged those who were thinking of coming as independent miners to stay at home. "My object," he said, "is to convince capitalists to send out their agents to work these mines, as it will require capital to work them."⁶¹ Jason Broadwell, who returned from the mines in August, 1859 to purchase goods for sale, expressed similar sympathies. According to him, "not much can be realized by persons who do not have some machinery; a company with quartz crushing apparatus, can do well at any time."⁶² To those who still thought that gold mining was a poor man's vocation, a correspondent of the St. Louis Democrat assured them that "the reverse is the fact. To mine successfully here, requires a very large capital. . ."⁶³ The only opportunity for the laboring man was to go to work for the capitalists. Jason H. Decker, a former speaker of the Nebraska territorial legislature who went to the mines, wrote that the mining region needed five hundred quartz mills and 500,000 workers.⁶⁴

Capital responded to the need. From the Missouri River area came nascent tycoons who pooled their resources to buy machinery. Such a company in Nebraska City ordered their machinery brought up the Missouri by steamer, then transferred it to nine wagons to cross the plains. A similar group in Leavenworth raised twenty thousand dollars and invested it in machinery, including a quartz crusher with an engine, saws, lathes, a shingle-making machine and other carpentering and building tools. But they were small operators compared to others who were entering the market. As a Denver correspondent wrote, "A great many gentlemen are here from Chicago, some to invest in property, others to loan

money at twenty per cent per month. Wall Street, New York, has already got capital invested here."⁶⁵

Agriculture played a minor role in the new order. Though a writer in the Rocky Mountain News calculated that the state of Jefferson, a provisional state set up prior to territorial organization, encompassed 7,300 square miles of arable land, settlers filled little of it in 1860. There were enough farmers however in March of 1860 to form a Farmers' Claim Organization to guarantee their property rights. Vegetables still were the main crop grown. By far most of the emigrants of 1860 came to practice trades connected with mining or commerce.⁶⁶

Again journalists commented on the nature of the emigration, and compared it to that of the year before. As early as January of 1860 Vaughan and Bartlett of the Leavenworth Times noted that the depression was giving way. Consequently they expected a heavy emigration, but not of a "reckless character." Rather "men of means and intelligence--of capital and liesure--will seek the New Eldorado. . ."⁶⁷ Reynolds of the Nebraska City News also hailed "A Different Class of Emigration," with "no such tom foolry" as in the last season. "A far different class" was coming, "Solid men of business, possessed of sagacious skill and prudent judgement, with machinery and capital, earnest hearts and force of character. . ."⁶⁸ The Thachers in the Lawrence Republican agreed that "The rush is not so impetuous or foolhardy as it was last year. . ."⁶⁹

Reporter A. D. Richardson was in a particularly good position to see the differences between the two emigrations, for he traveled to the mines in the spring of both years, 1859 and 1860. He thought the difference "obvious to the most casual observer." Replacing the footmen

were "men of intelligence, character, and ample means."⁷⁰ Richardson saw the signs of permanence moving toward the mountains--great stocks of merchants' goods and men transporting their families. The journalist stood in awe of the great exodus. "The westward emigration continues enormous," he wrote, "far surpassing anything ever before witnessed on the plains. . . . There is something very impressive about this uncontrollable movement westward. . . founding a new empire at the base of the Rocky Mountains."⁷¹ It was no wonder that Richardson was impressed. In 1859 he had witnessed a black comedy played by despairing men, an aberration in the American westward movement. In 1860 he saw the advancing frontier at its finest, moving forward with confidence and initiative.

The changing natures of the emigration of 1858-1860 were both apparent and logical when placed against the backdrop of the economic conditions of the time. The prospectors of 1858, having among them veteran miners with personal knowledge of gold in the Rockies prior to 1858, turned to that quarter when economic times got hard following the Panic of 1857. Following them came clusters of town promoters, speculators determined to be first on the new scene of speculative action as they had been the first ones ruined when their financial bubbles popped in 1857. They helped to engineer the rush of 1859. Originating upon evidence of gold inadequate to sustain it, the rush was understandable only through consideration of adverse economic exigencies that made people desperate for financial salvation. Men grasped at straws, but the grasps were not the irrational reaches of men gripped by a gold mania. Chances in the goldfields, slim as they were, were better than chances at home, where everyone was broke and credit was unavailable.

for a new start. But by 1860 the drastic effects of the depression had faded somewhat. Consequently a new sort of emigrant came, more prosperous and more settled in purpose. He participated in the advancement of the frontier in a more traditional sense. His intention was to develop the country, not to strip it of a few paltry pebbles and then depart. He left his mark.

FOOTNOTES

- ¹Hafen, Colorado Gold Rush, p. 296.
- ²George W. Van Vleck, The Panic of 1857: An Analytical Study (New York: AMS Press, Inc., 1967), pp. 38-58.
- ³Ibid., pp. 58-63.
- ⁴Ibid., pp. 64-75; New York Times of following dates: August 27, 1857, p. 4; September 26, 1857, p. 8; September 28, 1857, p. 1; September 29, 1857, p. 1.
- ⁵Van Vleck, The Panic of 1857, pp. 78-83; Samuel Rezneck, Business Depressions and Financial Panics: Essays in American Business and Economic History (New York: Greenwood Publishing Co., 1968), p. 106.
- ⁶Van Vleck, The Panic of 1857, pp. 83-86; New York Times, August 8, 1859, p. 4; ibid., August 1, 1860, p. 4.
- ⁷Greeley, An Overland Journey, p. 6.
- ⁸Paul M. Angle, ed., "The Story of An Ordinary Man," Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society, XXXIII, No. 2 (June, 1940), p. 226.
- ⁹Paul Wallace Gates, "The Promotion of Agriculture by the Illinois Central Railroad, 1855-1870," Agricultural History, V, No. 2 (April, 1931), p. 60; Angle, "The Story of An Ordinary Man," pp. 224-226.
- ¹⁰Lawrence Republican, December 10, 1858, p. 1.
- ¹¹Ingalls, "Some Ingalls Letters," pp. 100-101.
- ¹²Mildred Throne, ed., "Iowa Farm Letters, 1856-1865," Iowa Journal of History, LVIII, No. 1 (January, 1960), p. 51.
- ¹³Ibid., p. 54.
- ¹⁴Ibid., pp. 67-68.
- ¹⁵Ibid., p. 70.
- ¹⁶Angle, "The Story of An Ordinary Man," p. 226.

- ¹⁷Throne, "Iowa Farm Letters, 1856-1865," p. 69.
- ¹⁸Villard, The Past and Present of the Pike's Peak Gold Region, p. 116; Kansas Herald of Freedom, May 21, 1859, p. 2.
- ¹⁹Greeley, An Overland Journey, p. 126; Lawrence Republican, March 29, 1860, p. 2.
- ²⁰Villard, The Past and Present of the Pike's Peak Gold Region, pp. 117-118; Greeley, An Overland Journey, pp. 131-132; Kansas Herald of Freedom, May 21, 1859, p. 2.
- ²¹Figures compiled from Rocky Mountain News of following dates, all in 1859: May 7, p. 3; May 14, p. 2; May 28, p. 2; June 11, p. 2; June 18, p. 1.
- ²²"Over 201" meaning at least that number, and above that an unknown number listed as "and party" in the register.
- ²³Figures compiled from Rocky Mountain News of the following dates, all in 1860: May 16, p. 1; May 23, p. 2; May 30, p. 1; June 6, p. 1, 2; Supplement May 30, p. 2.
- ²⁴Population of the United States in 1860; compiled from the original returns of the Eighth Census (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1864), p. 549.
- ²⁵Parsons, "Pike's Peak Fourteen Years Ago," pp. 552-553.
- ²⁶Hafen, "The Voorhees Diary," pp. 42-43; Agnes Wright Spring, ed., A Bloomer Girl on Pike's Peak--1858 (Denver: Denver Public Library, 1949), pp. 13-14.
- ²⁷Kansas Herald of Freedom, January 15, 1859, p. 1.
- ²⁸Darius Chapman, "Diary of a Trip to Pike's Peak, 1859," type-script in Nebraska State Historical Society Library, Lincoln, pp. 1-10; Ralph P. Bieber, ed., "Diary of a Journey to the Pike's Peak Gold Mines in 1859," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, XIV, No. 3 (December, 1927), p. 368; John D. Morrison, ed., "The Diary of David F. Spain; Gregory's Grubstakers at the Diggings," Colorado Magazine, XXXV, No. 1 (January, 1958), pp. 12-25.
- ²⁹John D. Morrison, ed., "The Letters of David F. Spain," Colorado Magazine, XXXV, No. 2 (April, 1958), pp. 82-113; Robert G. Athearn, ed., "Life in the Pike's Peak Region: The Letters of Matthew H. Dale," Colorado Magazine, XXXII, No. 2 (April, 1955), pp. 82-87; LeRoy R. Hafen, ed., Overland Routes to the Gold Fields, 1859, From Contemporary Diaries (Glendale, California: Arthur H. Clark Co., 1942), pp. 65-197.
- ³⁰Hafen, Colorado Gold Rush, p. 279.

- ³¹Hafen, Colorado Gold Rush, pp. 282-283.
- ³²Hafen, Colorado Gold Rush, pp. 286-287; Bieber, "Diary of a Journey to the Pike's Peak Gold Mines in 1859," p. 368.
- ³³Leavenworth Weekly Times, March 19, 1859, p. 1.
- ³⁴Lawrence Republican, May 26, 1859, p. 1; Kansas Herald of Freedom, May 28, 1859, p. 1; quote in Nebraska City News, June 25, 1859, p. 2.
- ³⁵Henry Villard, "To the Pike's Peak Country in 1859 and Cannibalism on the Smoky Hill Route," Colorado Magazine, VIII, No. 6 (November, 1931), pp. 232-233; Leavenworth Weekly Times, May 28, 1859, p. 1.
- ³⁶Kansas Herald of Freedom, May 14, 1859, p. 2.
- ³⁷Kansas Herald of Freedom, June 4, 1859, p. 2.
- ³⁸Child, "Gold at Pike's Peak," pp. 177-178.
- ³⁹Isa Stearns Gregg, ed., "Reminiscences of Isa Hunt Stearns," Colorado Magazine, XXVI, No. 3 (July, 1949), p. 183; E. Dunsha Steele, "In the Pike's Peak Gold Rush of 1859," Colorado Magazine, XXIX, No. 4 (October, 1952), p. 299.
- ⁴⁰Connor, A Confederate in the Colorado Gold Fields, pp. vii, 6; Libeas Barney, Letters of the Pike's Peak Gold Rush: Early Day Letters From Auraria, 1859-1860 (San Jose, California: Talisman Press, 1959), p. 17.
- ⁴¹Atchison Freedom's Champion, June 29, 1859, p. 1.
- ⁴²Leavenworth Weekly Times, February 5, 1859, p. 1.
- ⁴³Nebraska City News, April 19, 1859, p. 2.
- ⁴⁴Kansas Herald of Freedom, May 21, 1859, p. 2.
- ⁴⁵Villard, The Past and Present of the Pike's Peak Gold Region, p. 20.
- ⁴⁶Greeley, An Overland Journey, p. 132.
- ⁴⁷Chapman, "Diary of a Trip to Pike's Peak, 1859," pp. 15-17; LeRoy R. Hafen, ed., "Diary of Mrs. A. C. Hunt, 1859," Colorado Magazine, XXI, No. 5 (September, 1944), pp. 166-168; Steele, "In the Pike's Peak Gold Rush of 1859," pp. 303-304.
- ⁴⁸LeRoy R. Hafen and Ann W. Hafen, eds., Reports from Colorado: The Wildman Letters, 1859-1865, With Other Related Letters and Newspaper Reports, 1859 (Glendale, California: Arthur H. Clark Co., 1961), p. 209.

- ⁴⁹Hafen, Overland Routes, pp. 227-230.
- ⁵⁰Leavenworth Weekly Times, May 7, 1859, p. 1.
- ⁵¹Ibid., March 12, 1859, p. 2; ibid., March 26, 1859, p. 1.
- ⁵²Albert B. Sanford, "A Colorado Pioneer and His Cabin, John McBroom," Colorado Magazine, III, No. 2 (May, 1926), p. 51; Villard, The Past and Present of the Pike's Peak Gold Region, pp. 111-114; Lawrence Republican, July 7, 1859, p. 2; Nebraska City News, October 15, 1859, p. 2.
- ⁵³Greeley, An Overland Journey, pp. 44-45; Nebraska City News, June 4, 1859, p. 2.
- ⁵⁴Hafen, Reports from Colorado, p. 229.
- ⁵⁵George T. Clark, "Across the Plains and in Denver, 1860," Colorado Magazine, VI, No. 4 (July, 1929), p. 131; Harry E. Pratt, ed., "Diary of a Pike's Peak Gold Seeker in 1860," Colorado Magazine, XIV, No. 6 (November, 1937), p. 204.
- ⁵⁶Pratt, "Diary of a Pike's Peak Gold Seeker in 1860," pp. 204-219; ibid., Colorado Magazine, XV, No. 1 (January, 1938), pp. 20-33.
- ⁵⁷Lynn I. Perrigo, ed., "Hawley's Diary of His Trip Across the Plains in 1860," Wisconsin Magazine of History, XIX, No. 3 (March, 1936), p. 321.
- ⁵⁸Clark, "Across the Plains and in Denver, 1860," pp. 131-140; Perrigo, "Hawley's Diary of His Trip Across the Plains in 1860," pp. 319-342; Lynn I. Perrigo, ed., "H. J. Hawley's Diary, Russell Gulch in 1860," Colorado Magazine, XXX, No. 2 (April, 1953), pp. 133-149.
- ⁵⁹Hiram A. Johnson, "A Letter from a Colorado Mining Camp in 1860," Colorado Magazine, VII, No. 5 (September, 1930), pp. 192-195.
- ⁶⁰Jonah Girard Cisne, "Across the Plains and in Nevada City: Journal of Jonah Girard Cisne," Colorado Magazine, XXVII, No. 1 (January, 1950), pp. 49-57.
- ⁶¹Daily Journal of Commerce, July 14, 1859, p. 2.
- ⁶²Ibid., August 4, 1859, p. 2.
- ⁶³Kansas Herald of Freedom, August 13, 1859, p. 2.
- ⁶⁴Nebraska City News, March 3, 1860, p. 2.
- ⁶⁵Ibid., June 16, 1860, p. 2; Atchison Freedom's Champion, May 12, 1860, p. 2; Daily Journal of Commerce, July 7, 1860, p. 2.

⁶⁶Rocky Mountain News, October 8, 1859, p. 2; *ibid.*, March 28, 1860, p. 1.

⁶⁷Leavenworth Daily Times, January 25, 1860, p. 2.

⁶⁸Nebraska City News, April 14, 1860, p. 2.

⁶⁹Lawrence Republican, April 19, 1860, p. 2.

⁷⁰Louise Barry, ed., "Albert D. Richardson's Letters on the Pike's Peak Gold Region," Kansas Historical Quarterly, XII, No. 1 (February, 1943), pp. 16-17.

⁷¹*Ibid.*, pp. 17, 22.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND POSTSCRIPTS: THE MEANING OF THE GOLD RUSH

And the GOLD that buyeth all things,
And abateth every ill,
O'er her lap is strewn profusely,
The adventurer's purse to fill;
There's a glory and a beauty
And a promise in the West,
Luring pilgrims onward, onward
Toward where day lays down to rest.¹

The Pike's Peak gold rush was a prairie fire. The spark of a new gold strike fell into the dry tinder of a depressed economy and burst into flame under the hot winds of propoganda. The nature of the gold rush that ensued had profound effect on the settlement of Colorado and the central plains and repercussions on the disposition of the entire American West. Moreover the Pike's Peak gold rush was a page in the history of the westward movement with great implications for modern historiography of the West.

The Pike's Peak gold rush was a mass movement based on seemingly insufficient stimulus to support it. There had been reports of gold in the Rockies for decades, but never a gold rush there. Then in 1858 came word of the Russell strike, evidence entirely too shaky to show the existence of worthwhile mining opportunities in the mountains, and a gold rush ensued. That was the enigma of the gold rush--that it seemed to be an instance of mass irrationality, a direct repudiation of the frontiersman's usual hardheaded, practical philosophy.

The propaganda factor partially explained the phenomenon. In the vast expanse of the American West, once in a while a few men found themselves in a position of immense opportunity, realized what the opportunity was and seized it, and in so doing altered the course of the westward movement. Just such a case was that of the town-creators, journalists and border town promoters involved in the Pike's Peak gold rush. They seized upon a moment and turned it to their advantage. In one sense they were unscrupulous scoundrels who were willing to risk ruining others for their own gain. In another sense they were the outstanding men of their time, for at what they did they were the best. Town-making was a frontier specialty, and the Pike's Peak town-makers exceeded all others in initiative and success. The most prominent of the town-makers went on to become civic leaders in Colorado Territory and Civil War heroes. Boosterism was characteristic of frontier merchants and journalists, and the border town gold rush promoters made their greatest effort at the very time when optimism elsewhere was at low ebb, showing that they too were the best at their art. No doubt there was a large measure of simple jealousy in the protests of contemporaries who condemned the promoters.

Actually the gold rush was nobody's "fault." Rather it was the result of economic conditions beyond the control of any small group of westerners. Had it not been for the depression prevailing at the time, response to the Russell strike would have been insignificant. Propagandists never would have made the attempt to create a gold rush, or if they had would have found it a vain effort. Indeed the prospecting parties of 1858 never would have been in the field had it not been for economic pressures.

The gold rush began as a paupers' parade, but as the economic situation in the Ohio, Missouri and upper Mississippi Valleys eased, the tide of emigration changed in character. The depression caused an interruption in the normal smoother flow of the westward movement and replaced it with a sudden surge to Pike's Peak. The difference between the Pike's Peakers of 1859 and more traditional pioneers were obvious. For one thing the Pike's Peakers aimed to concentrate themselves in a relatively small region of mining activity, rather than to spread out over farming country. To do this they accomplished a six hundred-mile skip of the frontier across the plains. Moreover they were a different type of emigrant. The agricultural pioneer considered farm-making costs and had to accumulate some capital before he made a new start farther west. The Pike's Peaker of 1859 had no capital. The new mines, he thought, because of their richness, workability and easy accessibility were "poor men's diggings." In 1860 the tide of emigration to Pike's Peak retained its destination and purpose of the year before; it still was bound for the Rockies and for mining pursuits. But the emigrants themselves were more like traditional pioneers of the West than the fifty-niners. They came not out of desperation but out of ambition and industry.

The true nature of the Pike's Peak gold rush belied casual stereotypes such as "gold fever." Men chose to go to the goldfields in 1859 because there was no other escape from hard economic conditions. Theirs was a choice eminently logical, if at the same time desperate. If they went in what seemed a careless manner, without proper preparation or provisions, it was because they were too poor to outfit themselves properly, not because they had no wish to do so. If the gold

fever really was a viable virus, it struck only when men's resistance was lowest anyway.

In a broader sense the nature of the Pike's Peak gold rush cast an even larger shadow, for the nature of its origins well might have been indicative of the origins of other mining rushes in the West. The gold rush to the Black Hills of Dakota in the mid-1870's took place in the midst of a severe depression, despite the fact that the existence of gold in the locale was a well-known fact much earlier. Westerners never placed great pressure on the government to open the Black Hills to prospectors until 1874, after the Panic of 1873 had brought depression in its wake. The gold rush to the Klondike also occurred during the hard times of the 1890's, despite longstanding reports of gold there. These examples pointed to the possibility of more complex motivating forces behind the mining frontier in the West than hunger for gold or simple adventuring.

Besides providing Kansas and Nebraska with new pioneers in the form of go-backs who took up farms, the nature of the Pike's Peak gold rush had direct effect on the type of settlement that took place in what became the Territory of Colorado and secondary effect on the fate of the entire West in the Civil War era. It was the poor man's rush of 1859 that assured that Colorado would be settled before its time. But it was the more steady emigration of 1860 that insured the region of a continued influx of industrious and prosperous citizens. The place of origin of the emigrants also was important. Most of them came from the northern states, because the South's cotton economy stayed relatively stable during the depression. Consequently there was no attempt to bring slavery into the area. Moreover when the Civil War came the

Union was assured of a solid body of loyalist support in the Rockies, a region flanked by less loyal areas of New Mexico and Utah. Colorado's support was crucial in holding the West for the Union. Other citizens of the far West were lukewarm or apathetic in the conflict; some even favored the Confederacy or the formation of an independent western confederacy. But Coloradans, despite the fact that prior to the war they had been hostile to anyone who tried to arouse them one way or the other on the issue of slavery, adhered to the Union in the great majority and proved their loyalty on the battlefield. It was volunteers from Colorado who called themselves the Pike's Peakers, with leaders largely drawn from the ranks of those who had gained prominence as promoters of the gold rush, who turned back a nearly-successful Confederate invasion of New Mexico under General Henry Hopkins Sibley at Glorietta Pass.

Perhaps the greatest significance of the Pike's Peak gold rush was the way it illustrated basic economic motives behind the westward movement. It showed that the westward movement flowed in both flush and hard times, but in different ways. This fact was a neglected guidepost on a major American historiographical controversy--the debate over the "safety valve" doctrine.

Historians often have laid credit or blame for the safety valve concept on Frederick Jackson Turner, though he was scarcely its originator. The doctrine, if it ever was one, stated that the frontier in America was a place of escape for those whom the economic system of the East trod underfoot. When wages dropped or unemployment rose in the East, then eastern workers came west and took up farms. The effect of this was to ease worker discontent in the east by removing excess

labor. This prevented the growth of a true class consciousness among American workers.

Debate over the safety valve raged through the entire twentieth century to present. The controversy produced a dearth of research-based argument on either side, the sound and fury mainly emanating from preconceived ideas and abstract reasoning. The safety valve idea, however, emerged thoroughly discredited simply because of the fact that no one could produce hard evidence to support it, while its detractors showed that eastern laborers could never raise enough capital to make a farming start in the West. But the entire battle took place with blinders on, being limited to discussion of the farming frontier and blind to the presence of a mining frontier in the West. The case of Pike's Peak could have shed light on the subject.

The safety valve doctrine really consisted of two parts. The first was a statement of what motivated emigrants to come West, that is, economic pressures. The second was the effect of such emigration on industrial labor in the East. This second consideration was of little importance from the point of view of the West, but the first was vital. If it was the bottom of the economic scale that went west then the West was settled by the losers of the eastern economic system. If the West was out of reach for the most pauperish, then of the eastern laboring classes the West received only the most thrifty and industrious. Thus a judgement on the validity of the safety valve doctrine was a judgement on the caliber of men who populated the West. The Pike's Peak gold rush illustrated that when the most poverty-stricken people made up the westward-emigrating class, it was because of special conditions which produced an aberration in the emigration process. When the

special conditions ended emigration returned to its normal character, with more stable and prosperous elements predominating.

The special conditions present in 1859 were gold rush propaganda and economic depression. The result was that while more prosperous elements in the population resisted temptations to go to the goldfields, the poor succumbed. Indeed promoters phrased much of their propaganda to appeal to the impecunious by citing the easy journey to the mines and the small amount of capital needed to begin mining, though they were somewhat abashed when the fifty-niners took them at their word and left for the mines on foot and unsupplied. The depression at the time stifled emigration in the traditional sense, for times were too hard for undesperate men to think about trying to make a new start. But at the same time the depression produced the gold rush, a movement of men who had no choice but to try and start anew, even if they had no capital.

In 1860 the special conditions were gone. The economy had swung upward and the propaganda effort had ended. Consequently emigration fell into a more regular pattern, made up of men with means enough to develop the country. The emigration of 1860 was much like emigration of any other non-depression year, except in that it went to a mining rather than an agricultural area. It was a movement in accordance with traditional patterns. But the rush of the year before had proven that there were exceptions to the pattern. In fact the nature of emigration to the mining frontier of the West in general might force a broad revision of the concepts of pro- and anti-safety valivism.

The history of the Pike's Peak gold rush was a story of contradictions. Its origin was an adventure in which a few speculators had a

chance to make history; it was also a monstrous fraud. The rush represented opportunity for the hopeless poor; then it was the ultimate disappointment. The emigration was first a tragically futile onslaught of paupers; then it was a triumphant march of capitalists. But the very diversity of its elements, factors derived from the economic facts of the times, testified to the vitality of the movement and of the commonwealth that it founded.

FOOTNOTES

¹Kansas Herald of Freedom, January 1, 1859, p. 1.

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VITA

Thomas Dean Isern

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Arts

Thesis: THE MAKING OF A GOLD RUSH: PIKE'S PEAK, 1858-1860

Major Field: History

Biographical:

Personal Data: Native of Ellinwood, Kansas, born May 7, 1952;
son of Mr. and Mrs. Orville Isern; married, one child.

Education: Graduated from Ellinwood High School in May, 1970;
received Bachelor of Arts degree from Bethany College,
Lindsborg, Kansas, in May, 1974; completed requirements for
Master of Arts degree at Oklahoma State University in
December, 1975.

Professional Experience: Graduate teaching assistant, Oklahoma
State University, Department of History, 1974-75; member
Phi Alpha Theta, Western History Association, Institute of
the Plains.