

June 12th 1915, Daily Sentinel



Sept 16th 1917, Daily Sentinel

WWI and the End of an Era

World War One was opposed by the socialists, and was largely unpopular leading up to the war. The passage of the Espionage and Sedition Acts gave the the government the tools to suppress the socialists and other radicals nationally, in Grand Junction the Home Guard and the Loyalty League led this wave of suppression. Political suppression coupled with a rise in war-time patriotism and propaganda spelled the end. Many socialist, locally, would take refuge in the "Non-Partisan League." There would again be a brief resurgence of the socialist party in the 1920s and again in the 1930's. FDR's New Deal borrowed heavily from populist and socialist ideas and platforms. Their movements faded, but many of their ideas live on today.

A Jacob Richards Zine

A Lasting Legacy

Many of the things we take for-granted today were hard won victories of the progressive era. Child labor laws, free-speech rights, eight-hour workday, basic food and drug safety laws, minimum wage, social security and all social safety nets, have their roots in these movements. The "Progressive Era" also saw a level of racial tolerance not seen in following decades.

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Redux No. 1

THE REVOLUTIONIST.

"Revolution is simply the culminating point of Evolution."

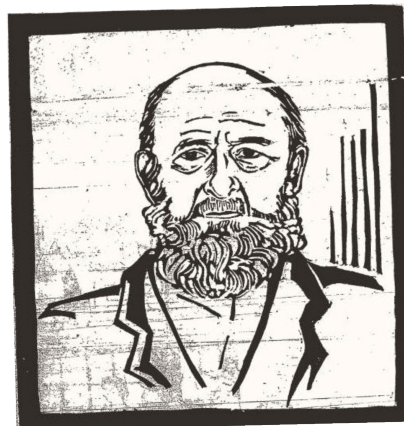
Free

GRAND JUNCTION, COLORADO, APRIL 10, 1903.

Lithic Books 4/2022

Knights of Labor & Farmers' Alliance Bring Class Consciousness and Solidarity to the Early Grand Valley

Many of the early white settlers of the Grand Valley were dreamers; people who saw in the wide-open vistas of red rock canyons and snow-capped mountains a blank canvas in which to create a new and better world. In early 1885, the Knights of Labor began organizing. By late 1885, the K. of L. had 95 members, while Grand Junction had a population of around 370 people. A large strike on the D. G. & R railroad in 1885 was supported by the K. of L., and nine local men were arrested by U.S Marshals and sent to Denver in the middle of the night. Scabs replaced most of the strikers, yet the Knights survived this defeat and went on to created GJ's first library. 1885 also saw the organization of a local Farmers' Alliance, followed shortly by an Alliance being organized in Delta. The Farmers' Alliance was progressive minded and collective in nature. The national Farmers' Alliance would merge and transform into the People's Party in the late 1880s, also known as the Populist.



Carl Gleeser, Labor Organizer

Some Early Unions:

Knights of Labor #3524
 Typographical Union #159
 Industrial Workers of the World Local #35
 American Federation of Musicians #164
 Barbers' Local Union #1
 American Railway Union
 Brotherhood of Boilermakers and Helpers #335
 Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers #488
 Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen #594
 Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen #349
 Brotherhood of Railway Carmen #121
 International Assn of Machinists #592
 Order of Railway Conductors #325
 United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America #244
 Grand Junction Trades and Labor Assembly

HUNDREDS QUIT WORK

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Coxeyites Go Viral

In 1893, the economy fell off a cliff. At the time there was no safety net. Radical ideas like socialism and anarchism were gain ground as capitalism seemed to be collapsing. Into this volatile mix Jacob Coxey lead a protest march, in the spring of 1894 from his home in Ohio to Washington D.C. He was championing a "Good Roads Bill" that would put unemployed workers to work fixing and building roads. This idea was radical at the time. The press dubbed the marchers "Coxey's Army," and rather than discredit the movement it made it go viral. Soon 'armies' of coxeyites began forming up around the nation. In the west these 'armies' often stole trains in a mad dash east. Grand Junction worried about 'General' Kelly's 2000+ strong 'army' coming thru town but they passed thru Wyoming.

Grand Junction how ever played host to and fed a number of smaller armies and saved 'Lt. General' F. Denning Smith's 'army' from starvation in the desert between GJ and Salt Lake City. City & county government, local populists, humanitarians and even a reluctant Daily Sentinel chipped in to help save Smith's 'army.'

By late June, Smith and company had rested and reassembled enough to march thru the streets of GJ, make speeches and continue their march east. Only a few days after the Coxeyites left GJ, the valley and the nation would be rocked by the Pullman strike and boycott. Over the coming decades GJ would play host to a number of cross-country protest marches on the Capitol.

Populist in 1894:

- Colorado Governor Davis Waite
- Mesa County State Representative James W. Bucklin
- Grand Junction Mayor M. L. Allison
- Grand Valley Star-Times
- Labor and Suffragist as allies
- Leftist in nature
- Anti-Immigrant

Dying in the Desert.



'Lt. General' Dr. F. Denning Smith

SOCIALISTS RULE GRAND JUNCTION?

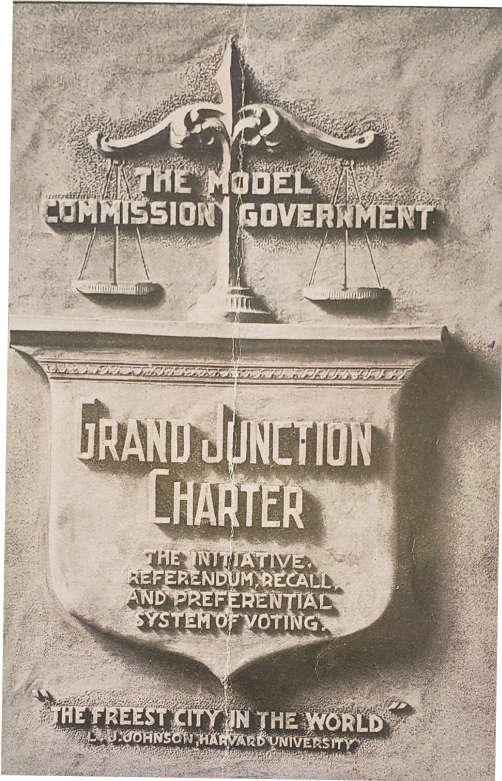
The 1909 election was the first election under the new city charter. Thomas Todd, a socialist, was elected to mayor of Grand Junction, he didn't not get the most 1st choice votes nor 2nd, but when 3rd choice votes were counted he held the majority. The city under his leadership would attempt many progressive reforms. Reforms fought every-step-of-the way by City and News Editor of the Daily Sentinel, Walter Walker. Mayor Todd established a wood-lot where hobos and hungry folks could split wood for room and board. Main street was finally paved and horse water fountain installed in the middle of 5th and Rood. Todd and his allies pushed for a city owned ice-house, coal-mine, street car, gas, electricity, and water-systems. The coal mine was envisioned as a place where anyone could go and earn a days pay. The coal not being sold at a profit would make be cheaper for families that used it to heat their houses. The local coal mines were not happy.

The progressive town charter, a socialist mayor and Chief of Police made headlines, and Grand Junction was gaining a national reputation as a socialist town from "mayor to dog-catcher." It also almost landed Mayor Todd a place as Vice President on Eugene Debs' Socialist ticket in 1912.

In spring of 1913, a contingent of 140-200 Wobblies (IWW), came to town, the city-council and the Chief of Police Hutchinson agreed to feed the mob. They soon out-stayed their welcome. Walter Walker, saw his chance and placed the blame squarely on the shoulders of Mayor Todd and Chief Hutchinson. Todd would survived the ensuing recall, but Hutchinson would be forced to resign. Todd did not seek reelection in November of 1913. In 1915, he would be elected President of the Grand Junction Chamber of Commerce. A brief period of socialist rule had come to an end but the movement continued.

Local Socialist Mayor Might Have
Been Nominee of Party for Vice
President.—Held a Place on
an Important Committee.

May 29, 1912. Daily Sentinel

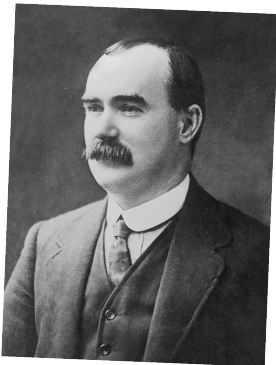


1909 "The Freest City in the World"

1909 Town Charter

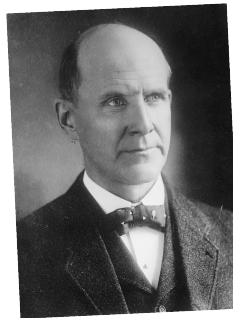
Grand Junction made national headlines in 1909, with the voter approval of a new progressive form of charter government. It was designed to break the municipal political machine that didn't seem to change whether Republicans or Democrats were elected. Ranked choice voting allowed voters to chose a first, second and third choice in crowded races. The charter also contained radical provisions that allowed for the City ownership of vital industries. The adoption of the charter also prohibited sale, possession and manufacture of alcohol. This charter was a partnership between the Municipal Ownership League, Socialists, and Prohibitionists. Harvard University Political Scientist L.J. Johnson declared Junction "The freest city in the world." The Daily Sentinel bitterly opposed these reforms.

Socialist Bring in Revolutionary Big Guns



James Connolly, Irish Socialist

One of the organizing tactics the socialist used was bringing in big name speakers. The biggest names were James Connolly, the famed Irish revolutionary, and Eugene Debs, 4x presidential candidate for the Socialist Party. In 1902, Connolly spoke to a full house and rallied against 'wage -slavery.' In 1908, Debs 'flayed capitalism' for 1000 attendees.



Eugene Debs, Socialist and Labor Agitator

Pullman Strike and Boycott

The Pullman Company manufactured luxury sleeper railroad cars in a company town just outside of Chicago. In response to the worsening economy the company cut wages for its workers by 25% without also lowering rents in the company owned housing. May 11, 1894 workers at Pullman walked off the job in a wildcat (not authorized by the union) strike.

On June 26th, Eugene Debs' American Railway Union, began a boycott of Pullman cars by refusing to work any train with a Pullman car on it. The Boycott spread, soon rail-lines across the nation were tied up. In late June, local railroad employees joined the boycott. Mass meetings were held with the Populist and town citizens, the city was in solidarity with the strikers.

On July 4th, a train staffed by an army of recently deputized U.S. Marshals arrived, and for the next two weeks Grand Junction was under martial law, eventually federal troops would help occupy Grand Junction, New Castle and Glenwood Springs, to keep the trains moving. ARU lost the strike and Debs was imprisoned. President Grover Cleveland just six days after the end of the bloody strike created Labor Day as a national holiday, in an act of performative justice.

Pullman Strike by the Numbers

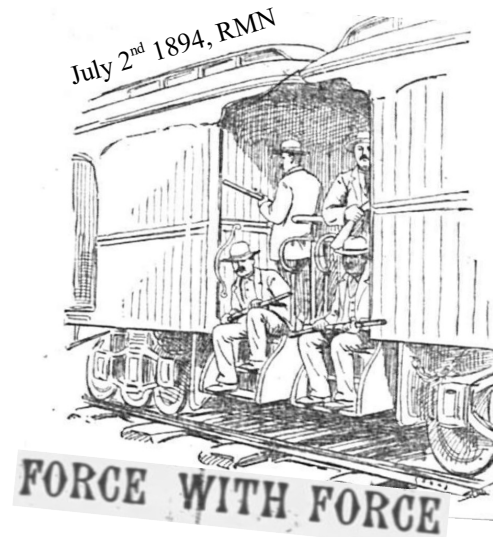
Pullman Strikers killed in Chicago and Nationally:
30/70

Estimated Property Damage Nationally:
80 Million (not adjusted)

Number of Local Strikers Arrested:
9

Dates of the Pullman Strike and Boycott
5/11-7/20/1894

Number of Workers Involved in the Strike Nationally:
250,000~



"The condition of affairs at Grand Junction were extraordinary, my deputies were met not only by the strikers at that point but by the citizens who met in a public hall prior to their arrival and resolved to not only resist the entry of the deputies to the town, but also to give no quarters or sell them anything to eat."

—Joseph A. Small U.S Marshal—

The Socialists are quite active in this county and have stolen a large part of the platform of the people's party. Well, the latter are about done with it anyway.

The Bucklin Era

September 2, 1899, GJ News

James W. Bucklin's contribution to the Grand Valley's Progressive Era cannot be overstated. He was an original member of the Town Company which founded Grand Junction. A practicing attorney, he was committed to the idea that everyone deserves a fair shake. In 1883, he successfully defended a Native American falsely accused of a crime; free of charge. He was involved in the Knights of Labor in the 1880's, the Populist in the 1890s, and was a fellow traveler with the Socialist in the 1900s and 1910s, he organized the Municipal Ownership League which in partnership with the Socialist pushed for the socialization of essential industries, such as the city water system (thank you). Thrice elected to the State Senate, his efforts in the state house paved the way for the 1909 home-rule town charter. The first four decades of GJ's history were heavily shaped by Bucklin's dreams of justice and progress.



James W. Bucklin

Mr. Bucklin and His Charter

"The dictionary tells us that a pioneer is one who goes before to prepare the way for others. In this sense, all progressive people are pioneers."

—James W. Bucklin—

Some Grand Valley Socialist Papers:

The Cause 1899-?
The Revolutionist 1901-??
The Enterprise 1908-??
The Critic 1910-??
The New Critic 19??-1917

George N. Falconer

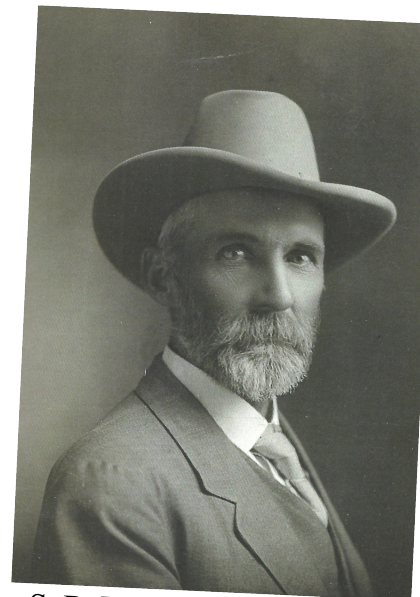
As boy in Edinburgh, Falconer's mom told him to always "stand up for the poor man or women." Falconer was only in GJ for about 10 years, but in that time he did just as his mother asked him. He owned a progressive bookstore, was an early officer in the Grand Junction Chamber of Commerce, he gave public lectures, wrote and published nationally, ran for office as a socialist, co-founded the IWW #35, and he was instrumental in bringing socialist labor organizer Eugene Debs to Grand Junction in 1908, where he spoke to record crowds. Falconer left Grand Junction around 1911, he then pops up all over the west fighting for justice and equality.



George N Falconer

S.B. Hutchinson

S. B. Hutchinson was a founding member of the Socialist Labor Party in 1898, first local Socialist elected to local office in 1901 as an Alderman. He was the publisher of "The Revolutionist" in the early 1900s, and later was involved in the publication of "The Critic" and "The New Critic." He was also the architect for the "Grand Junction Scheme" which unified the Socialist Labor Party & the Socialist Party. Hutchinson was also a founding member of the local Industrial Workers of the World #35 in 1905. In 1911, after the socialist and their allies were swept into power, Hutchinson was appointed Chief of Police. His appointment as the first Socialist Chief of Police in America made national headlines.



S. B. Hutchinson