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“There is No Law Here”:
Vigilantism, Militarism, and Metropolitanism in Coos County, Oregon 1912-1913

By

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The Coos Bay region on the southern Oregon coast has long been known for its rural landscape, pitting a lush river valley against a backdrop of old growth forests that have proved to be a lucrative enterprise for those interested and daring enough to harvest them.¹ Beyond its abundance of rich resources, the region is also situated on the deepest natural harbor on the Oregon coast, making it a prime location for the exportation of its valuable natural resources. This modest timber region grew from its humble origins as a shelter for the castaway sailors of the military ship *Captain Lincoln*² to its coming of age at the end of World War II as the purported “lumber capital of the world.”³ In between this nearly hundred year period (1851-1946) the Coos Bay region experienced the pains of being blessed with abundant natural resources, in addition to succumbing to the corporate capitalist greed that surrounded and exploited every thriving timber village that aspired to be more than simply the dependents of profit-hungry investors.

Beyond its abundant natural resources and exceptional geography, the Coos Bay region as with any peripheral society, is first and foremost an important topic of discussion because of its people. From the workers that toiled in the logging camps, coal mines, and a multiplicity of other industries, to those that hailed from the commercial class as well as the capitalists, timber barons and other controllers of Coos Bay society, all played integral roles in shaping and fostering community identity. Within the industries of Coos Bay, these capitalist enterprises were often controlled by far-away empires such as Chicago and San Francisco. These centers of capital created a vibrant sense of community life that had the same hopes and dreams of many other

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- 1 For the purposes of this paper, “Coos Bay” and the “Coos Bay region” refer to the communities that inhabited the bay area during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and are not related to the city of Coos Bay that was formed out of Marshfield, Oregon in 1944.
 - 2 Orville Dodge, *Pioneer History of Coos and Curry Counties, Or.: Heroic Deeds and Thrilling Adventures of the Early Settlers*, (Salem, Oregon: Capital Printing Co, 1898), 114-125.
 - 3 William G. Robbins, *Hard Times in Paradise: Coos Bay, Oregon, 1850-1986*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1988)., 107-121.

small pioneer towns—to become the next center of empire, the next great metropolis.

While Coos Bay still held on to its pioneer traditions, it also aspired for the modernizing influences that had transformed the nation throughout the Progressive Era.⁴ For the citizens of Coos Bay and many resource-rich regions across the Pacific coast, questions over how community identity would be shaped by progressive ideals manifested itself in the class fragmentation of society. The working class desired unions, better pay, a forty-hour work week, and had their interests represented in such organizations as the Socialist Party of America and the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) or “Wobblies.” These organizations often conflicted with the vested interests many capitalists and other community elites had in controlling the labor force at their behest.⁵

Coos Bay elites desired a homogenized community identity represented by the push towards the metropole ideal.⁶ With its desire for urbanity and with a foundation on elite notions of lawfulness, civil order, and obedience to patriarchal monied authority, the metropole vision of community identity often conflicted with the interests of the working class in Coos County. With the election year of 1912, the Socialist candidate Eugene Debs received nearly a third of the vote in Coos County and the radical portions of the Coos citizenry began to vocalize their views on working conditions in logging camps across the region. The elite vision of community

4 For a study of the working class during the Progressive Era, see Maureen Flanagan, *America Reformed: Progressives and Progressivisms: 1890s-1920s*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007); For a study of issues regarding citizenship during the Progressive Era, see Kimberly Jensen, *Oregon's Doctor to the World: Esther Pohl Lovejoy & a Life in Activism*, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2012); For a study of issues regarding land use during the Progressive Era, see Lawrence Lipin, *Workers and the Wild: Conservation, Consumerism, and Labor in Oregon, 1910-1930*, (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2007).

5 Robbins, 143.

6 For the purposes of this paper, the terms “metropole” and “metropolitanism” find their roots in the Canadian historiographic school of metropolitan studies that surfaced in the latter half of the twentieth century. Metropolitanism in the context of this paper moves away from the earlier positivist definition of this term and expands on its implication for subaltern groups within the Coos Bay region.

homogeneity was broken. Wobblies threatened to strike throughout the winter of 1913 and tensions came to a boiling point in the summer as elite businessmen in the Coos region deported Socialist and Wobbly agitators from the region in June and July.

Under the cloak of justified and lawful vigilance, elites within Coos Bay used vigilance committees to incite “mob rule” that became a signal of social militarization. That elites could deport anyone at their choosing and have governing institutions at the local, state, and nation be complicit in these acts under the cloak of “duty to country” demonstrated how deeply militarization had been embedded within Coos Bay's sense of identity.⁷

Using a three-tiered system of analysis, the lenses of vigilantism, militarism, metropolitanism provide a way to analyze the deportations within Coos Bay. At the base, vigilance committees policed community morals, ideas, and actions. Community policing spurred a process of militarization that needed an "other" or subaltern menace to marginalize. Metropolitanism became the end product: a recasting of the community norms and the use of elitist boosterism (a rhetoric of community aggrandizement) as a way to move closer to the metropole ideal. However, this was not simply a Coos Bay phenomenon; it was a process of metropolitanization that was happening across the nation.⁸

It is with this context that this paper argues that the 1913 deportations of Wobblies and Socialists in Coos County were part of a national crusade of vigilante violence that used extralegal force as a mechanism for implementing a program of social militarization that combatted the perceived threats of socialism, anarchism, and communism embodied in “the radical other.” The First World War saw the creation of government programs such as the

7 Christopher Capozzola, *Uncle Sam Wants You: World War I and the Making of the Modern American Citizen*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

8 Capozzola, 42.

American Protective League (APL) that emphasized “100 percent Americanism”⁹ and counteracted these perceived threats by shaping the nation into a cohesive and homogenous whole.

The history of the Coos Bay region, as a subject of historical analysis by scholars of various generations and schools of thought, has enjoyed a relatively broad scope of examination throughout the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In his monograph, *Pioneer History of Coos and Curry Counties, Or.: Heroic Deeds and Thrilling Adventures of the Early Settlers*, Orville Dodge wrote the first scholarly account of the Coos Bay region, framing his analysis as a classic euro-centric narrative that pitted civilizing and heroic settlers against the “lazy” and “indolent natives” that had but “little ambition or energy” to make the land they inhabited productive.¹⁰ As Dodge was a contemporary to the historical actors that inhabit this current study, it is no surprise that Dodge marginalized the accomplishments of Native Americans and emphasized the civility of early white settlers. His scholarship is representative of a proclivity for early Coos Bayans to otherize and marginalize subaltern groups of people.

In 1981, Nathan Douthit wrote his monograph *The Coos Bay Region 1890-1944: Life on a Coastal Frontier*. Using a framework that analyzed traditionally marginalized groups (women, the foreign-born, and members of the working class) Douthit sought to create a comprehensive analysis of the early years of the Coos Bay region that moved away from a consensus or progressive narrative. To Douthit, the frontier was not simply a geographic boundary: it was “a field of human activity which is still undeveloped.”¹¹ Douthit's narrative failed to address how the implications of subalternity in an “undeveloped” region aided in

9 Capozzola, 126-128 illustrates the widespread usage of the APL during the First World War.

10 Dodge, 5-7.

11 Nathan Douthit, *The Coos Bay Region: 1890-1944*, (Coos Bay, Oregon: River West Books, 1981), Introduction.

creating community identity. With an even-keeled analysis of elite members of the Coos Bay region, Douthit says little of the power dynamics and social hierarchies that dominated the region.

Recent scholarship on Coos Bay such as William Robbins' *Hard Times in Paradise: Coos Bay, Oregon* printed in 1988, with a second edition in 2006, examine the labor history of the Coos Bay region in order to understand how market forces, capitalist corruption, and a single-resource economy propelled the region from timber town to retirement community in the matter of a few decades. Robbins' work offers a striking portrait of working class struggle and its influence on how land is valued and used within coastal timber communities during the early twentieth century. While his narrative addresses issues of working class identity formation in Coos Bay, his work does not address how elite hegemony in the region restricted the political agency of subaltern groups.¹²

Other historians such as Lawrence Lipin have broadened the discussion on working class identity formation in the Progressive Era Oregon.¹³ In analyzing nature and working class perceptions of nature, Lipin's scholarship has demonstrated how the Progressive Era influenced and changed the worker's relationship to nature. Scholars have also examined radicalism in the Pacific Northwest during the early twentieth century. Jeffrey A. Johnson's work on the influence of Socialism in the Pacific Northwest has propelled this discussion forward by noting that resource extraction communities were particularly susceptible to radical ideologies such as socialism.¹⁴ Johnson's framework analyzes a broad regional scope and his analysis has not accounted for radicalism in Coos Bay and southern Oregon in general.

Vigilantism has also received much scholarly attention. Christopher Capozzola and his analysis of the rhetoric of political obligation during the First World War has demonstrated how

¹² Robbins, *Hard Times in Paradise*.

¹³ Lipin, 5.

¹⁴ Jeffrey A. Johnson, "*They are all Red Out Here: Socialist Politics in the Pacific Northwest 1895-1925* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2008), 7.

the obligation to nation and state was formed during this time period. The obligation to police one's community is where this paper intersects with Capozzola's and questions how political obligation from peripheral regions such as Coos Bay fit within this context.¹⁵

Metropolitan studies have also aided in understanding how communities develop over time. Originally a Canadian historiographic tradition, the scholarship of Gilbert Stelter and Alan F. J. Artibis have been instrumental in providing a challenge to the Turnerian school of thought that emphasized the virtue of rural agrarianism.¹⁶ American historian William Cronon has added to this scholarship by problematizing our understanding of marginalized people groups and the limits that are imposed upon them by social and regional hierarchies set in place by community elites.¹⁷ William Robbins' work *Landscapes of Promise* has brought this discussion into the Oregon context.¹⁸ Using a framework built around a “hierarchy of places” from metropolis to the smallest of resource-rich communities, Robbins has demonstrated how geography and economy played critical roles in where particular communities developed in the Oregon landscape.

In building off of these sources and historiographic traditions, I seek to provide new insight and introduce new sources into the historical debate over the history of Coos Bay. Issues of race, class, and gender within a working class context have often been left out of the discussion of the region's history until very recently. While this study is by no means a complete analysis of working class identity in Coos Bay, it does examine a pivotal moment in the history of Coos Bay during a period of transition before the First World War. By framing my analysis chronologically from 1912 to 1913, I seek to understand why the democratic successes of 1912 in Coos Bay were

15 Capozzola, 2008.

16 Gilbert A. Stetler and Alan F.J. Artibise, *Canadian City: Essays in Urban and Social History*, (McGill-Queen's University Press: 1984).

17 William Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West*, (New York: W.W. Norton, 1992).

18 William Robbins, *Landscapes of Promise: The Oregon Story: 1800-1940*. (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997).

reversed and reacted against in 1913 with the deportations of Socialists and IWW organizers. These sources provide a context by which further analysis will be merited as well as demonstrate how the reactionary year of 1913 was more than simply a process of institutional militarization in a coastal lumber community. It was in essence an attempt to become a more metropolitan community.

In order to understand this process of metropolitanization that occurred in the Coos Bay region during the early twentieth century, primary source analysis provide key insights into the thoughts, lives, and values of many citizens within the region. Newspapers, letters from deportation protesters, and the senior thesis of a University of Oregon student in 1913 will create a narrative gives a voice to subaltern members of the Coos Bay region.

The *Coos Bay Times*, the region's daily newspaper, is one of the most important primary sources this paper will utilize as it provides a daily chronicle of the events of the region. Edited by veteran newspaperman M.C. Maloney along with his partner and brother Dan Maloney, this conservative newspaper provides insights into national issues such as the election of 1912, many Progressive Era reform issues, as well as local issues. The *Coos Bay Times'* comments on these national, state, and local issues are important because they are analyzed within the context of the Coos Bay region and its unique circumstances.¹⁹ Other newspapers that will be used include the weekly *Coos Bay News*, and the community of North Bend's weekly *Coos Bay Harbor*.

Another important source that will be examined is the weekly socialist newspaper from 1913 edited by Bailey K. Leach titled, *Justice*.²⁰ His position as the chair of the Coos County

¹⁹ These unique circumstances include the Coos Bay region's isolation from the rest of the state of Oregon during this time period. Coos Bay did not connect to the Willamette Valley via railroad until the completion of the Southern Pacific line in 1916. In addition, the region's status as the largest deep-draft port between San Francisco Bay and Puget Sound is also another circumstance to take into consideration.

²⁰ Bailey Kay Leach, *Justice*, Attorney General Case Files, No. 88A-34, Oregon State Archives (Salem, Oregon).

Socialist Party, as well as his radical political ideas made Leach an extremely viable target to be deported forcefully from the Coos Bay region during July of 1913. His newspaper *Justice* provides key insight into his thoughts, feelings, and ideas on a plethora of community, state and national issues.²¹ These range from the militarization of the Boy Scouts, to his comments on the deportations of IWW from the Coos Bay region. Through *Justice* we will see how Leach's agency as a socialist in the Coos Bay region caused him to be ostracized from this community.

In addition to Leach's Socialist journal, the Oregon Attorney General's case file on the “mob rule” that occurred in 1913 reveals a plethora of rich letters from working class members of the Coos Bay community.²² In focusing on the agency of loggers, millworkers, and other laborers that experienced the deportations of Socialists and members of the IWW, these sources will demonstrate that the “mob rule” within Coos Bay was not a process of community building. Instead, it was an example of social militarization coupled together with an obligation to police community behavior.

The senior thesis of Marjorie Cowan, a 1913 graduate of the University of Oregon and a resident of Coos Bay is also an excellent source as it gives a “historical sketch” of the region.²³ Cowan analyzes the numerous industries within Coos Bay, while also analyzing the demographics of the region. Cowan's analysis also informs us of the divide between “old settlers” and “new faces” within the community. Her work reflects the elite values that many members of the commercial held within the Coos Bay region during this era.

21 Leach, a native of San Francisco, moved to Bandon, Oregon nearly a year before his deportation on July 11, 1913. His newspaper specifically targeted what he believed were capitalistic injustices done again laborers within the region, specifically those affiliated with the IWW.

22 Attorney General Case Files, “Attack against I.W.W. Member at Bandon 1913,” Box 9, A., No. 88A-34, Oregon State Archives (Salem, Oregon).

23 Marjorie Cowan, “A Historical Sketch of the Coos Region,” BA Thesis, University of Oregon Archives, 1913.

Prelude

Anthony J. Landeker wanted what many members of the working class in the second decade of the twentieth century desired: land of his own and a place to call home. Landeker, a farm hand on a ranch at Coos Bay had decided to toil no longer and committed suicide on October 14, 1912 with a gunshot to the head. According to the *Coos Bay Times*, he was 46 years of age and had lived in the region for nearly two years. It was believed that he was from Michigan and it was also noted that he may have left his family there. But beyond these few life details, little is known about the life Landeker lived, or his reasons for moving to the Coos Bay region. Perhaps he enjoyed the novelty of a turn-of-the century coastal community, or more probable, like so many workers before him, Landeker joined the ranks of what Douthit has called the “floating population” of the region that moved from job to job and logging camp to logging camp in search of work.²⁴ But all context aside, Landeker was more than simply a workingman trying to make ends meet; he was a person with thoughts, feelings, and emotions. Thankfully, he articulated some of his thoughts in his suicide note published in the *Coos Bay Times* on October 15, 1912:

I am tired, tired of living, being nothing but a block in the road, I have decided to move out, out of the same, out of existence. Ever since I can remember I have been what I am now, in the way. Why was I ever born, why ever in existence. Nature has never had any happiness in store *for* me. Brought up in exile as I might term it, for my mother died while I was quite young, and I do but slightly remember my father. Homeless and friendless I am staring at this world and everything seems a blank to me. What is the use of existing. It is very true that nature has provided a place for every one and it has provided one for me, and that is wherever I will slumber the everlasting sleep. I have tried to lead an honest life, and have as far as my knowledge goes. If I should have wronged anyone I did not do it intentionally and I beg him or her to forgive me. So farewell and may everybody enjoy a better life than I ever did.²⁵

24 Douthit, 56.

25 “Suicide Believed that Nature Provided Him only a Grave,” *Coos Bay Times*, October 15, 1912, 5.

The words Landeker uses to describe his life, his experience with nature, and his lack of interpersonal relationships demonstrates the degree of desolation and despair that must have gripped him as he penned this note.²⁶ But what would have caused him to desire death over life? Surely Landeker was not the first laborer to have a feud with his boss, or find his working conditions unfair or even unbearable. Why choose such a violent ending when community boosters loudly proclaimed that: “Coos county is a paradise?”²⁷

Though we have little biographical information to glean from, Landeker's suicide note is a telling portrait of angst and dreams left unfulfilled in an early twentieth century logging community. From the text of his note, it is clear that Landeker struggled with issues of identity and understanding his place within the social hierarchy that existed within Coos Bay. As Landeker notes, he had always been “in the way;” and it is quite possible that he had failed to conform to the norms of Coos Bay society before the First World War. The monopolization of timber lands in Coos County by the C.A. Smith, Weyerhaeuser and Menasha interests, assured that management and extraction decisions would be made in offices far from the Coos region.²⁸ Because of this, community identity was often shaped by notions of paternalism that many detached absentee landlords associated with their business interests. And in many instances, the absentee status of timber barons left them unprepared to make decisions that would benefit the community as a whole. A letter that the timber baron C.A. Smith sent to North Bend community booster L.J. Simpson in 1917 regarding a potential gubernatorial run, illustrates this lack of association. Smith wrote: “I am not sufficiently acquainted with the conditions in Oregon to give

26 It is uncertain whether Landeker wrote this note. There are no census records for Landeker; however, there is a record of his burial in the Marshfield Pioneer Cemetery. See https://sites.google.com/site/cbcmemetery/burials/burialsK_N.

27 “Coos County is a Paradise,” *Coos Bay Times*, March 23, 1912, 16.

28 Robbins, *Hard Times in Paradise*, 31-32.

any advice which would be at all reliable and consequently valuable.”²⁹ Smith had no personal investment in the Coos Bay community.

Whether or not Anthony J. Landeker knew that absentee capitalists had very little personal investment in local communities that they held land in is difficult to discern. But many members of the working class as well as progressive labor activists understood that the capitalist construct of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was broken and in need of repair. The corrupt politics between business and government, opaque land deals and the manipulation of the marketplace were just some of the manifestations of a form of “politics as usual” that would come to be known in the Progressive Era as the “Corrupt Bargain.”³⁰

In Coos Bay, the Corrupt Bargain was manifested in the railroad, coal, and timber barons that owned much of the land in the county. For example, Coos Bay's timber economy was shaped during the early twentieth century by the timber land purchases of the Weyerhaeuser Timber Company, C.A. Smith Lumber Company, and Menasha Wooden Ware Company.³¹ Each company purchased timber land in the Coos region at the same time and much of the land had been originally granted by the federal government to be used to pay for construction of the Oregon and California Railroad as well the Coos Bay Wagon Road. And as was the case with many timber companies throughout the Pacific Northwest during the first decade of the twentieth century, much of the land accumulated for their timber holdings was acquired through fraudulent land grabbing practices. Timber barons such as C.A. Smith would pay “dummy” entry-men to file on homestead claims and once ownership had been established, transfer said claims over to timber companies. For \$600 plus \$5.50 an acre, Smith could buy up 160 acre blocks of pristine

29 C.A. Smith to L.J. Simpson, December 10, 1917, copy housed in Coos Historical & Maritime Museum; originally quoted in Judith and Richard, *LJ: The Uncommon Life of Louis Jerome Simpson*, (North Bend, Oregon: Bygones, 2003), 226.

30 Flanagan, 77-78.

31 Nathan Douthit, *The Coos Bay Region 1890-1944: Life on a Coastal Frontier*, (Coos Bay, Oregon River West Books, 1981), 98-99; Robbins, *Hard Times in Paradise*, 31.

old growth stands and as numerous entry-men claimed adjoining lots, Smith shored-up timber holdings into conglomerated blocks. By the time this process was completed, C.A. Smith owned upwards of 40,000 acres of Coos County timber land, Weyerhaeuser 27,075 acres, and Menasha owned over 100,000 acres.³² To put this in perspective, the combined holdings between the three timber corporations in 1908 totaled 167,075 acres. Of the 1,155,840 acres of land within Coos County, the three major timber corporations held nearly 15 percent of that land.

How could men such as Landeker find their place within the Coos Bay social hierarchy if they had no land of their own? If workers such as Landeker could not find self-sufficiency in nature, if they continually had to move from job to job, and had to conform to elite notions of civility and obedience to authority, where then could they exist within the ideal community that elites were creating? If they, as one day laborer described it had, “20 men sleep in a bunk house”³³ while working in the logging camps, how could they assert their sense of self in a community that did not identify with their needs or concerns for general welfare?

Landeker chose a violent death over a life of continual waywardness and poverty; and that is significant. That Landeker would rather die than accept the creation of the elitist metropole demonstrates that all was not well in the “paradise” of Coos Bay. There was also a darker, militarizing notion to Landeker's suicide. The violence associated with a gunshot wound to the head reflected a nascent sense within Landeker that living in a world controlled by elites was no longer worth the trouble. “I am staring at this world and everything seems a blank to me. What is the use of existing.” A gunshot to the head was not simply an exit strategy for Landeker. It reflected his own subalternity: the realization that he was the other, and that his “otherness” was

32 Douthit, 99.

33 Carl Swelgin to Gov. Oswald West, July 1913. Attorney General Case Files, Salem, Oregon: Department of Justice. “Attack against I.W.W. Member at Bandon 1913,” Box 9, A., No. 88A-34, (hereafter Attorney General Case Files).

not welcome in Coos Bay. In this light, Landecker's death foreshadowed the deportations of 1913 by defining who (and who did not) belong in Coos Bay's vision of metropolitanism.

Coos Bay: "A Metropolis in the Making."³⁴

The creation of a metropolitan identity within Coos Bay manifested itself in many ways during the period before the First World War. It was an elite-centric process that used the rhetoric of "political obligation," to use Capozzola's term, to justify the rigid social hierarchies within the region. "Obligations: to work, to be loyal to the nation, to conform to the norms of community" were essential to creating and maintaining a shared sense of community identity, writes Capozzola.³⁵ In Coos Bay, "the norms of community" were skewed by the fact that political, economic, and social decisions that impacted the region were carried out by absentee landlords in the empires of Chicago and San Francisco.³⁶ How could members of the working class within Coos Bay form their own autonomous community identity, their own "norms of community" when their norms were created and policed by community elites? As long as elites controlled the "norms of community," members of the working class would simply have to fall in line with elite notions of civility and order.

No elite in Coos County was more vocally supportive of the social hierarchy that created and policed community norms than the newspapermen M.C. Maloney. As an experienced journalist (having served stints with the *New York World* and *Chicago Daily Tribune*) Maloney, along with his business partner and brother Dan Maloney, bought the *Coos Bay Times* in 1907 and held ownership over the paper for the next two decades. It was during this period that the *Coos Bay Times* became the premier paper of Southwestern Oregon, and its only daily.

34 "Marshfield, a Metropolis in the Making," *Coos Bay Times*, March 23, 1912, 8.

35 Christopher Capozzola, *Uncle Sam Wants You: World War I and the Making of the Modern American Citizen*, (Oxford University Press, 2008), 6.

36 Robbins, *Hard Times in Paradise*, 40.

Characterized as a Republican newspaper that gave a “square deal” to “every man,”³⁷ Maloney modeled much of the political ideology of the *Coos Bay Times* off of his own political beliefs. A staunch pro-business advocate, Maloney held no bones about his belief that community development and corporate investment in the Coos community were directly linked.³⁸ Beyond the longevity of his tenure as editor of the *Coos Bay Times* and his conservative values, Maloney was known primarily for his forceful approach to journalism that often put him at odds with many of the other newspaper editors on the southern Oregon coast. It was not an uncommon sight to hear rumors of libel suits against Maloney pending in the local circuit court.³⁹

Whether the citizens of Coos Bay appreciated it or not, editing the *Coos Bay Times* gave Maloney a platform by which he could express his opinions on how community identity in the Coos Bay region should be created and maintained. In Coos Bay, this meant conforming to the social hierarchy in place within the region. As Maloney wrote in one of his famed front page “Let’s Talk it Over” sections, he argued that the citizens of Coos Bay needed to join together in this process of community development:

It is time for the citizens of Coos Bay to turn over a new leaf. It is time for the people of Coos Bay, regardless of past differences, to get together. It has been said that the history of any Nation can be read in the biographies of its great men, and equally is this true of our great cities. Such questions as harbor improvements, parks, public boulevards and the complex and involved railway situation that is now perplexing the community are questions to be settled by appeal to vox populi, but they are problems to be worked out by our business men of integrity and ability and then bequeathed to its citizens as an inheritance from the men who will make the Coos Bay of the future.⁴⁰

Maloney demonstrated both the essence of community obligation as well as the adherence to social norms in commenting that the people of Coos Bay should expect the bourgeois business

37 “Let us Talk it Over,” *Coos Bay Times*, April 6, 1912, 1.

38 There are many examples of this linkage: see “Making a Town,” *Coos Bay Times*, June 22, 1912, 4, as a prominent example of Maloney’s political ideology as well as his booster rhetoric.

39 Peterson and Powers, 244.

40 “Let us Talk it Over,” *Coos Bay Times*, April 15, 1912, 1.

class to solve the problems within the community. True citizens (those that conformed to the “norms of community”) were obligated to mimic traditional notions of republicanism by placing the interests of the community before individual interests. In Progressive Era Coos Bay, this notion of republicanism was transformed from its original community-before-individual model to a model that emphasized elite interests before all else. In the Coos Bay version of republicanism, monied men were tasked with creating the metropolis many boosters desired to have. In framing the development of the community as an “inheritance” to be “bequeathed” to all citizens of Coos Bay, Maloney's rhetoric demonstrated how the social hierarchy etched in place within the community was rooted in an expectation by elites that their interests reflected the interests of the community writ large.⁴¹

One of the most compelling examples of this trend in elite identity formation came with the building of the railroad in Coos County. As Richard White has noted, small communities during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries like the ones that lined Coos Bay were often at the mercy of railroad corporations. Where the railroad chose to build influenced more than simply route to market: it also influenced where and how communities could develop.⁴²

Community elites had been awaiting the arrival of the railroad in Coos County for decades. Many railroads had been promised in the region's history; however, none had come to fruition.⁴³ Since the 1870s, railroad companies had sprouted up and disintegrated at such a chronic rate that by 1912, any murmur of a railroad connecting Coos Bay with the rest of Oregon was often met with a bout of editorial cynicism by the local newspaper editors. As the *Coos Bay*

41 Ibid, 1.

42 Richard White. *Railroaded: The Transcontinentals and the Making of Modern America*, (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2011), 156-157.

43 To see a list of failed community railroad projects, see Steve Grief, *A Century of Coos and Curry Railroads*, (Coos Bay: Southwestern Oregon Community College Library, 1974); Emil R. Peterson and Alfred Powers. *A Century of Coos and Curry*, (Portland: Binfords & Mort Publishers, 1952), 485-488.

Harbor, a North Bend weekly newspaper put it in January 1912, “This paper has published every item of interest any railroad company headed toward this place have [*sic*] attempted to accomplish, and candidly, we have been assisting in the mystifying art of building air castles or in telling news of real railroad construction.”⁴⁴ But despite the *Harbor's* feelings of exasperation in regards to rumored railroads, on May 24, 1912 the news was no longer rumor but reality: a deal had been struck between the Southern Pacific railroad corporation and the city of North Bend for a railroad franchise.⁴⁵ How did a rumor suddenly become a reality?

In the weeks before the creation of a franchise on May 24, the Southern Pacific had been spending its time buying up land in the North Bend area. North Bend's founder, mayor and local timber baron L.J. Simpson, and his associates had been in talks with railroad men in San Francisco. After some negotiation, in February, the Simpson Lumber Co. was suddenly \$75,000 richer and the Southern Pacific held ownership over 450 unimproved lots in the North Bend community.⁴⁶

44 *Coos Bay Harbor*, January 18, 1912, 2.

45 “North Bend Franchise Railway Work is Begun,” *Coos Bay Times*, May 24, 1912, 1.

46 *Coos Bay Harbor*, February 15, 1912, 3.

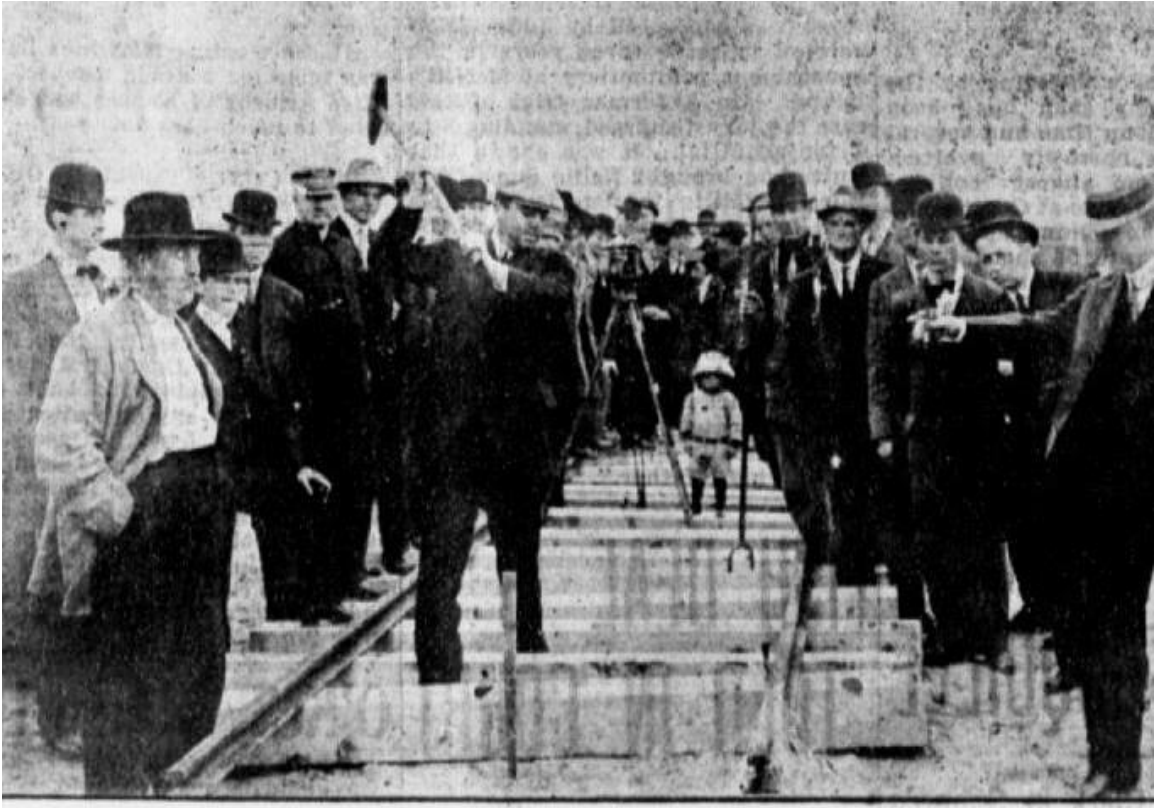


Illustration 1: L.J. Simpson (center) hammers in the first spike while C.J. Millis (right) christens the track with a bottle of Coos Bay "cream." (Coos Bay Times, June 3, 1912, 1).

A few more weeks passed and in a special session on the morning of May 24, North Bend city councilors voted to approve a franchise for the Southern Pacific railroad company for a line that would connect Coos Bay with Eugene. Community elites held a celebration to commemorate the occasion. City councilors quickly laid down railroad ties, the *Breakwater*, a local steamer, blared its horn, and the manager of the Southern Pacific, C.J. Millis christened the track with a bottle of Coos Bay's finest "cream" milk. It is only fitting that L.J. Simpson, the mastermind behind the franchise sale, was the first to drive home a spike. For as he struck in that first spike, the "ring of the hammer" symbolized how elite interests reigned supreme in Coos

Bay.⁴⁷

Creating a metropolitan identity in Coos Bay was an elite process. As we see in the photo above and throughout the history Coos Bay's flirtation with big business, no members of the working class, women, or other minorities influenced the decision of when and where to build the railroad, cut down the timber, or where to build a port. We only see the aspirations of the elite men of Coos County, who worked behind closed doors in order to, as Maloney phrased it, "bequeath" railroads, timber interests, and a host of other projects to the residents of Coos Bay.

"The trouble started [sic] with C.A. Smith...it is said that he would tame the loggers to eat out of his hand...and it seems he will keep his word."⁴⁸

Not all residents of Coos County accepted the "inheritance" that elites forced upon them. From its early days as a lumber settlement in the late nineteenth century, the working class had always outnumbered the managerial class in Coos Bay. This remains true to the present day as minimum wage jobs continue to dominate the labor force.⁴⁹ In the second decade of the twentieth century though, population increases fueled by increased timber production created a large working class majority that was a relative novelty for those who considered themselves "old settlers" of Coos Bay. The census statistics made this readily apparent as Coos county's population had jumped by nearly 75 percent from 10,324 in 1900 to 17,959 in 1910.⁵⁰

The C.A. Smith Lumber Company was a major contributor to the significant population boom that hit the region in the early twentieth century. In 1907, the corporation built its "Big Mill" that brought in workers from across the United States to work in its mill and logging camps.⁵¹

47 Ibid, 1.

48 Carl Swelgin to Gov. Oswald West, July 1913, Attorney General Case Files.

49 Robbins, *Hard Times in Paradise*, 138.

50 1900 and 1910 US Census, <http://www.census.gov/population/cencounts/or190090.txt> (date accessed May 1, 2014).

51 M.T. Calef, "The Most Modern Sawmill on the Pacific Coast," *The Oregon Manufacturer*,

C.A. Smith, a Swedish immigrant, had made his first fortune in the Minnesota timber business in the late nineteenth century. After those timber stands dried out, he moved his operation west to southwestern Oregon, where the “Big Mill” soon stood.⁵² Though many workers in the region came to work for Smith, not all of them appreciated his business practices.

In fact, in the second decade of the twentieth century, many workers became extremely critical of C.A. Smith and his tactics. As a laborer named Carl Swelgin, who worked in the C.A. Smith logging camps put it:

“This the Trouble Starded [*sic*] with C.A. Smith in 1907 when he starded [*sic*] to build his mill he Cut wages 25% and kept on Cutting it is said that he remarked that he would tame the loggers to eat out of his hand and work for a dollar a day and it seems he is going to keep his word he owns and controls everything worth while Coos Co. Franchises, News Papers, Mills, Camps, Steam boats etc., anyone not boosting for C.A. Smith finds himself a marked man.”⁵³

We get a sense from Swelgin's letter that C.A. Smith commanded tremendous influence in the Coos Bay region. From this influence though, we also see the degree to which Smith's stature in the community alienated the men who worked for him. Swelgin's choice of the word “tame” reflected his feelings of subalternity—a feeling that he was less than human, a mere pawn in Smith's Coos Bay. But there was an even darker notion hidden in the subtext of Swelgin's diatribe against Smith. If a worker did not fit within Smith's vision for the community, then he was a “marked man.” To cross C.A. Smith, or any other community elite was to incite war against oneself. Coos Bay's society was being militarized, and Swelgin had picked the wrong side, the radical side.⁵⁴

There were more radicals in Coos Bay than just Carl Swelgin. It is uncertain when the first labor unions arrived in Coos County. By 1912 though, the county had local chapters of the

April 25, 1913, copy at Coos Historical & Maritime Museum.

52 Robbins, *Hard Times in Paradise*, 70.

53 Carl Swelgin to Gov. Oswald West, July 1913, Attorney General Case Files.

54 Carl Swelgin to Gov. Oswald West, July 1913, Attorney General Case Files.

International Longshoremen, Marine and Transport Workers Association, and the Retail Clerk's International Protective Association.⁵⁵ However, it was the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) or “Wobblies” and the Socialist Party of America (SPA) that would prove to be the greatest challenge to the elite status quo within Coos Bay.

Socialism made its way into Coos Bay during the first decade of the twentieth century, with local candidates running in elections as early as 1904.⁵⁶ This was a common trend in regional and national elections as the Socialist Party continued to build its constituency throughout the first decade of the twentieth century before reaching its zenith in the regional and national elections of 1912.⁵⁷ The Wobblies arrived in Coos Bay in 1911 and set up a local office in Marshfield.⁵⁸

Socialists desired to replace the capitalist system with a more humane system that catered to and defended the needs of the working class, who felt they were not receiving their fair share of the wealth.⁵⁹ The IWW also sought to replace the capitalist system; however, their tactics differed greatly from the socialists. While Socialists spurred change in society through the political process, Wobblies sought to overthrow the capitalist system through direct confrontation. They used strikes and other belligerent tactics in order to spark their “revolution.”⁶⁰

In Coos Bay, the Socialists and “Wobblies” were extremely influential in radicalizing the working class against the evils of the capitalist system. Though there are no concrete numbers on how many Socialists and Wobblies infiltrated the Coos region during the early twentieth century, county election results are an excellent indicator of where citizens held their political

55 Douthit, 117.

56 Ibid, 117.

57 For an examination of socialism in the Pacific Northwest, see Johnson, 11-143; for an analysis the SPA's most famous leader, see Nick Salvatore, *Eugene V. Debs: Citizen and Socialist*. (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1982).

58 Douthit, 117.

59 Johnson, 51.

60 Ibid, 71.

allegiances. In the 1904 election, the socialist candidate Eugene V. Debs received the same percentage of the vote as Democratic presidential candidate Alton B. Parker; and in 1908, Debs received 11 percent of the county vote.⁶¹ The 1912 campaign would be the Socialist Party's most successful showing. With a final tally of 837, Debs and his Socialist supporters took home 23 percent of the vote out of a county total of 3,649 votes cast, a sizable increase from the previous elections. Socialists also won pluralities in the localities of North Bend, Libby, Eastside, South Slough and Bunker Hill, all communities with significant working class sentiments.⁶² This prompted *Coos Bay Times* editor M.C. Maloney to write in bold letters, "North Bend is Socialist" as a headline after the election results came in.⁶³ Maloney may have phrased it this way in jest as he was a staunch Republican supporter; however, the sentiment did ring true: the Coos Bay region had radicals, as nearly one in five voters voted the Socialist ticket.

There is no record of whether Carl Swelgin voted the Socialist ticket in 1912, although it is likely that he did. What is certain though is that when Swelgin wrote his letter, he was expressing sentiments held by many working class citizens in the Coos community. Sentiments that, in the context of Coos Bay's social hierarchy, pushed workers and elites to opposite extremes of the political spectrum. Elites wanted to keep the current hegemonic system of elite paternalist dependence in place, workers wanted the fruits of their own labor.⁶⁴ But in the months that followed the election of 1912, something changed in the Coos region. Workers went on strike, bosses turned to vigilance committees in order to hand out "justice." Coos society was fractured, caught at the intersection between dependent timber community and metropolis. It was militarized, and every resident in Coos County needed to pick a side. And if one picked the

61 Robbins, *Hard Times in Paradise*, 140.

62 *Coos Bay Times*, November 12, 1912, 1.

63 "North Bend is Socialist," *Coos Bay Times*, November 7, 1912, 1.

64 The single tax movement of the early twentieth century best represents the desire workers had to own the "fruits of one's labor." See Lipin, 17-49.

radical side like Swelgin, it was quite possible that one could face the threat of death. When R.E.L. Bedillion, owner of a wool mill in Bandon, Oregon (22 miles south of Coos Bay) threatened: “We will kill him,” in response to a recent outbreak of radicalism, his words spoke volumes about social militarization in Coos Bay—there really was a war out there.⁶⁵

“We hated most of all to see our own industries flooded with strange faces—in other words our town was taken from us.”⁶⁶

Though the IWW had been active locally in the Coos Bay region since 1911, their first general strike of notoriety did not come until December 29, 1912. It was on that date that 35 workers of the Copenhagen Bros. railroad company struck for better wages and better camp conditions while working near Gardiner, Oregon (30 miles north of Coos Bay). 22 of the men went to Coos Bay where the IWW put out a list of grievances that Copenhagen had failed to account for. Expensive food, long working hours, and poor working conditions were just a few of the grievances local IWW president F.F. McKay listed when his official strike statement was published in the local newspapers.⁶⁷

McKay referred to the foremen that monitored the workers as “slave drivers” and it is clear from McKay’s rhetoric that the Wobblies and their interests were antithetical to the interests of community elites. When 17 local businesses set up a relief fund for striking Wobblies, older loggers and members of the commercial class alike were “incensed” that such a thing could happen. Wobbly workers receiving aid “was not deserved” as the *Coos Bay Times* articulated it.⁶⁸

Often times, a citizen’s ties to the community could influence their sense of obligation to that community. As Wobblies had little social capital in the region (save the 17 businesses that set

65 Charlott Stillwell to Gov. Oswald West, July 31, 1913, Attorney General Case Files.

66 Cowan, 16.

67 “35 Men Refuse to Work in Deep Mud,” *Coos Bay Harbor*, January 2, 1913, 1; *Times*, “Labor Trouble on Railroad,” December 31, 1913, 3.

68 “Fear Trouble with I.W.W.,” *Coos Bay Times*, January 8, 1913, 2.

up a relief fund to support them), older Coos Bay residents regardless of class could rally behind the obligation to work as a means of creating and fostering a shared sense of identity.⁶⁹ As Wobblies often used the general strike as a means to initiate change, it also alienated workers who found their identities in the work they undertook.

Marjorie Cowan's analysis of Coos Bay reflected this understanding when she commented on the population growth Coos Bay had experienced in the first decade of the twentieth century:

All the old settlers if they were inclined to get into a rut and stay there, were awakened by this invasion of new people. At first there might have been just a little resentment on the part of old settlers. We had lived and ruled in our little world so long, we hated to give up to a new master. We hated most of all to see our own industries flooded with strange faces—in other words our town was taken from us. We were rather accustomed to seeing the same people, doing the same thing day after day in our own way. And we hated any innovation.⁷⁰

When Cowan writes, “we hated most of all to see our own industries flooded with strange faces,” it is uncertain who she was specifically targeting. Was she talking about immigrants, radicals, new workers, perhaps all three?⁷¹ Regardless of the lack of context, her insights rang true: new settlers and old settlers had a disconnect when it came to a shared sense of obligation to community. When the Wobblies sought to overthrow the capitalist system in Coos Bay and elsewhere, they were questioning and rebelling against a very central aspect of worker identity, the right to work.

We unfortunately may never know what kind of workers Cowan had in mind when she wrote this portion of her thesis; however, other voices in the community were more than happy to lend their voices to the IWW debate.

Writing in response to a possible strike by members of the Wobblies in the logging

69 Capozzola, 9.

70 Cowan, 16.

71 Ibid, 16.

camps of the Smith-Powers lumber company in May of 1913, *Coos Bay Times* newspapermen M.C. Maloney caustically critiqued their ideology. Writes Maloney: “Their’s [sic] is a doctrine of destruction, dynamite and deviltry... It is a doctrine of destruction that is un-American, unpatriotic and unmanly.”⁷² Within Maloney’s rhetoric one can note the emasculating tone used to represent the IWW as everything that is wholly undesirable in a citizen of the United States. By linking the IWW back to un-American values, Maloney ostracized a particular group within Coos society as undeserving of being American.

Maloney's rhetoric was also a precursor to the “100 Percent Americanism” campaigns that were common during the First World War. Loyalty oaths, vigilance committees, deportations and even executions were some of the ways “100 percent Americanism” could be displayed. Within these campaigns, “Americanism” became linked with “duty,” “loyalty,” and “citizenship.”⁷³ In creating an institutionalized demand for a cohesive adherence to nation and state, elites and policy makers dismantled any attempt at constructing America as a place where mutual respect and acceptance of difference could find credence.⁷⁴

Despite the efforts of Coos Bay elites such as Maloney to display prewar Americanism through virulent rhetoric against Wobblies and Socialists, some members of the local communities of Coos Bay were not as easily deterred by the growing air of hostility in the preceding months before June and July 1913. Bailey Kay Leach was one such member.

Leach was not your typical resident of Coos County. Born in California and raised in the Central Valley, he was the son of a minister and lived a life of political radicalism from an early age. By age 20, Leach had joined a radical sect of Protestantism known as the Holiness

72 “Let us Talk it Over,” *Coos Bay Times*, May 10, 1913, 1.

73 Capozzola, 6.

74 Flanagan, 232.

Movement in Merced, California and had become a First Lieutenant within its organization.⁷⁵ As an 1884 newspaper article noted, during a processional through Merced Leach and his “holiness band” were “pelted with stale eggs, rotten apples, decaying vegetables and other filthy missiles, the crowd following them even into their hall.”⁷⁶ A few years later, Leach would find himself again at the center of controversy in Fresno in a case in which the Fresno Loan Savings and Bank charged that he forged the signature of his wife onto a deed for a valuable tract of land. He was later absolved of wrongdoing.⁷⁷

Newspaper and census records note that Leach was married at least three times, with the *San Francisco Call* stating that his second wife divorced him for a “failure to provide.”⁷⁸ It is uncertain how Leach ended up in Bandon, Oregon; however, the *Coos Bay Times* had stated that Leach's third wife Edith Leach (née Howell) had family in the Bandon area.⁷⁹ Census records note that Leach had worked in the advertising industry,⁸⁰ although during his time in Bandon he was employed as a chiropractor.⁸¹ Beyond his checkered past, Leach possessed another quality about him that made him stand out in the Coos Bay community. He was a Socialist.

Leach was not just any Socialist. Leach was the chair of the Coos County Socialist Party and also printed a weekly Socialist journal called *Justice* that he used to express his radical opinions on local issues. Leach’s biting rhetoric could range from rants about the militarization of the Boy Scouts to reports on the welfare of workers in the logging camps. In one particular editorial, Leach responded to a speech given by a local lawyer named Robert O. Graves from the

75 For an overview of the history of the Holiness Movement, see Jim Phillips and Rosemary Gartner, *Murdering Holiness The Trials of Franz Creffield and George Mitchell*, (Vancouver, British Columbia: UBC Press, 2003).

76 “Cowardly and Disgraceful Outrage at Merced,” *Sacramento Daily Union*, July 7, 1884.

77 “Not Guilty,” *San Francisco Call*, November 10, 1891.

78 “Divorce Court Kept Busy,” *San Francisco Call*, April 20, 1905.

79 “Dr. Leach's Wife Ill,” *Coos Bay Times*, November 4, 1913, 3.

80 1910 U.S. Census.

81 Leach is referred to often as a chiropractor in the local newspapers of the Coos region; however, there are no census records that correlate with these reports.

past Decoration Day in which Graves had remarked that all Socialists were “undesirables,” unworthy to “breathe the air of America.” Leach’s response was characteristic of his editorials in that they used satire as a way to expose the hypocrisy evident in his critics. Writes Leach:

He hurls ponderous epithets at what he calls the Red Flag of Anarchy, and then extolls the virtues of the grand old emblem of the American Union; the unsullied Stars and Stripes of the glorious banner of L-i-b-e-r-t-y!...Who said patriotism was dead?...not while Bob, and the \$mith-power\$ [sic] patriots and the Straw man of Marshfield are on the job...I’ll bet with your name and what it stands for, and with your peculiar ability as a denouncer of red flags and other things that shiver the nerves of \$mith-power\$, [sic] you’ll drive the red ones away, all right.⁸²

Leach’s rhetoric criticized the entire establishment of Coos County with its analysis of the economics (the Smith-Powers Timber Company), the political (Dr. E.E. Straw, mayor of Marshfield), and Graves, the prominent lawyer (one could argue representative of the professional bourgeoisie of society). Community elites such as Mayor Straw, the Smith-Powers interests, and the lawyer Robert O. Graves and their metropolitan vision for Coos Bay did not include the likes of Leach and his “Red Flag of Anarchy.” In fact, Leach’s statement that “you’ll drive the red ones away” was practically a prophetic statement.⁸³ Community elites would certainly drive them away in the coming months.

The IWW continued to radicalize the Coos logging camps throughout the first half of 1913. In May of 1913, things truly came to a head as members of the IWW went on strike in the Smith-Powers logging camps, calling for higher wages and an eight hour work day. In addition, a May 6 edict by Mayor Straw banning orators from speaking in the streets caused nine Socialists to be arrested. Unfortunately for Socialists and Wobbly agitators, the May strike and banning of street orators would be the last straw for Coos Bay elites. Anyone in the camps suspected of being associated with the IWW would need to “roll their blankets and roll out.” Despite these

82 Bailey Kay Leach, “Graves of Marshfield,” *Justice*, June 5, 1913, 6-7, , Attorney General Case Files.

83 *Ibid*, 6.

threats though, the Wobblies succeeded in closing one logging camp and in other camps workers struck for higher wages as well. During this period between May and June of 1913, the city government also began swearing in members of the commercial class as special law enforcement officers, an act that would prove troublesome to members of the IWW.⁸⁴

The scathing editorials written by Maloney, the deputizing of local businessmen, and the inflamed tensions between striking loggers and their employers culminated on June 24, 1913 with the creation of a vigilance committee of several hundred Marshfield businessmen that deported the “undesirables” of the IWW leadership. Members of the “Mob Rule” sent them to Jarvis Landing, (8 miles from Marshfield) and forced them to walk up the beach.⁸⁵

The trouble began on June 23 when IWW Secretary W.J. Edgeworth and Organizer Wesley Everest (who would later be martyred at the Centralia Massacre in 1919) were confined in a Marshfield jail overnight on charges of vagrancy. In the morning, a vigilance committee led by Marshfield businessmen came and escorted Edgeworth and Everest out of the jail and paraded them down Market street to a dock where they were put on board the *Bonita* to be removed from the community.⁸⁶

The procession moved quickly and after Edgeworth and Everest boarded the *Bonita*, dozens of “business men” from the community boarded the ship as well, led by none other than Robert O. Graves. As the *Coos Bay Harbor* reported: “The American Flag, to which the I.W.W. in many places have given insult, proceeded the line of march and was carried by David A. Jones, a Spanish war veteran and the line was *marshaled* by Attorney R.O. Graves.” Edgeworth and Everest were gone nearly 15 minutes on the *Bonita*, when another Wobbly, Fred Roberts and an unknown man, who had been making “disparaging remarks” were obtained and placed on another

84 Robbins, 141.

85 “Citizens Oust I.W.W. From Marshfield and Vicinity,” *Coos Bay Times*, June 25, 1913, 1.

86 “Marshfield Deports Three Members of I.W.W. Order,” *Coos Bay Harbor*, June 26, 1913, 1.

boat and shipped off to Jarvis Landing to join the fate of their comrades.⁸⁷

Throughout the deportation, the Wobbly agitators were forced to kiss the flag multiple times and Roberts was particularly incensed at the treatment he received at the hands of the mob. As he would later write to Governor Oswald West, the “brutal treatment I received at the hands of the mob” necessitated that the “perpetrator of the outrage be duly punished.”⁸⁸ For Roberts and the rest of the deported Wobblies, the “mob rule” that reigned in Coos County needed to be brought to justice.



Illustration 2: The deportation of the IWW from Marshfield. (Jack L. Slattery Collection).

⁸⁷ Ibid, 1.

⁸⁸ Fred A. Roberts to Gov. Oswald West, July 21, 1913, Attorney General Case Files.

While Roberts and the Wobblies saw the deportations as unjust, M.C. Maloney and the *Coos Bay Times* viewed the events through a romanticized lens:

Coos Bay has cause today to be proud of the character of its citizenship in one of the most remarkable demonstrations ever witnessed in any American city, this community has given notice to the world that there is no retreat or refuge on its hospitable shores for the anarchist agitators of the IWW...There was no violence and no excitement. The coolness and courage of conscientious citizens who were loyal to their homes, their city and their country, marked every move.

Maloney portrayed the deportation of the mob as the epitome of Americanism. Businessmen and other elites within the community saw that there was a menace in the community and that it needed to be disposed of. When Maloney wrote of the deportations being “the most remarkable demonstrations ever witnessed in any American city,” he may have been thinking of San Diego and its Free Speech campaigns of May 1912. During the campaigns, Wobbly agitators along with anarchists such as Emma Goldman were deported en masse from the community.⁸⁹ Regardless of what Maloney thought, what the Wobblies saw as “mob rule,” community elites saw as the “coolness and courage of conscientious citizens.” These descriptions harkened back to an American tradition of vigilantism that was as old as the republic itself.⁹⁰

Vigilantism has played an extremely important role in creating an American sense of community identity. In the early republic, Americans associated vigilance with concepts of popular sovereignty. But vigilantism was also a political practice, a collective policing in the name of community defense. Throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Americans would come to view the right to police one another as a positive obligation (Maloney embodies this position with his rhetoric). But vigilantism was more than simply a stereotypical form of “frontier justice” embodied in “night riders” that rode around meting out their own brand of

89 For an analysis of the San Diego Free Speech campaigns of May 1912, see Michael Cohen, “The Ku Klux Government’: Vigilantism, Lynching, and the Repression of the IWW.” *Journal for the Study of Radicalism* 1, no. 1 (2006): 31-56.

90 Capozzola, 119-120; Michael Cohen, 31-56.

justice. As Capozzola notes, “vigilantism is fundamentally about law, and political arguments about it articulate relationships between citizens and the system of law in which they operate.”⁹¹ To be vigilant was to act outside the law, regardless of whether mobs were deputized, or merely cooperated with officials in the name of the state.⁹²

In Coos Bay, though community elites acted outside of the law when they deported the Wobblies, they were also changing the way local governance functioned in the process. Instead of protecting the rights of all citizens, local governance felt the effects of social militarization reverberate through its core. The deportation of the Wobblies was a manifestation of that. When the *Coos Bay Harbor* noted that the attorney R.O. Graves “marshaled” the businessmen into order as they marched through the streets of Marshfield, that was a militant act. When the Spanish War veteran David A. Jones led the parade with his American flag, that was militant too.⁹³ “Mob rule” and its vigilance committees had started a process of social militarization that would escalate throughout the summer of 1913.

“There is no law here.”⁹⁴

The deportations in Coos Bay did not end with the Wobblies walking up the beach and out of Coos Bay. The remaining Wobblies, Socialists, and other protesters within the Coos community abhorred the despicable acts that the “Mob Rule” had carried out. Though there was an air of hostility toward radicalism in the Coos community, it did not quell the pen of the Socialist Bailey Kay Leach, as he published a scathing editorial on the “Marshfield Mob Law” in his next edition of *Justice*. He referred to the mob as a bunch of “grafters, saloon bums and pimps, calling themselves business men, but who to the last man-jackass of them, were only a bunch of

91 Capozzola, 119.

92 Ibid, 120.

93 “Marshfield Deports Three Members of I.W.W. Order,” *Coos Bay Harbor*, June 26, 1913, 1.

94 Carl Swelgin to Gov. Oswald West, July 26, 1913, Attorney General Case Files.

guzzlegushers for \$mith-power\$.”⁹⁵ With rhetoric such as this, it was not long before Leach was also sent up Jarvis Landing, deported on July 11, 1913.

On July 9, Michael Brewer, a shoe salesman, Socialist and friend of Leach from Bandon, Oregon received an unsigned letter from Marshfield. The letter had an ominous feel, for scribbled on the inside was the threat: “the outrages which have been perpetrated on some of the people in Marshfield will repeat themselves in Bandon.”⁹⁶ Brewer knew when he received the letter that it was a threat against Leach; however, despite Brewer's urging, Leach refused to seek protection from the mayor of Bandon, as he knew there would be no help from him. On the evening of July 10, a large crowd formed near the Bandon Commercial Club Hall, where Leach had been escorted to await his fate before the town's elite businessmen. In the meeting hall, the businessmen, headed by wool plant owner J.R.L. Bedillion, told Leach that he must cease the publication of *Justice* and leave Coos County by 2 pm the next day. As Brewer recounted it, Leach left the Commercial Club Hall and pleaded with the town's night watchman Charley Hubbard to offer him some form of protection. Hubbard scoffed at the offer and “proceeded into the saloon.”⁹⁷

The next day, Leach attempted to get in communication with Sheriff Gage, the Coos County Sheriff, but had no luck. He was escorted to the Coquille River, where he was forced to row to the town of Coquille. When Leach arrived there, he was told by the mayor that he “was not welcome in that town and must leave immediately.”⁹⁸ Leach was then paraded through Coquille in a similar fashion as the Wobblies in Marshfield were. “My suitcase was seized from

95 Bailey Kay Leach, “Marshfield Mob Law,” *Justice*, July 2, 1913, Attorney General Case Files, 2.

96 Testimony of Michael Brewer to Attorney General Crawford, Attorney General Case Files, 18.

97 Ibid, 18.

98 Testimony of Bailey Kay Leach to Gov. Oswald West, July, 1913, Attorney General Case Files, 1-2.

my hand...I was grasped by two men...and escorted through the crowd.” And as was expected in light of the Wobbly procession in Marshfield, “an old soldier bearing a large American flag” led the procession. After running the gauntlet through Coquille, Leach was escorted by automobile to a dock in Marshfield where he was threatened “with tar and feather.” He was then escorted to Jarvis Landing, where “they planted the American flag in the sand and stood me up beside it and formed themselves in a circle around me and several of them made speeches at me threatening me with violence if I ever returned to Coos County.”⁹⁹ Once again, Coos Bay elites had policed the community and purged it of its undesirable members.

The mistreatment of Leach, spurred a letter writing campaign by outraged citizens within the county that wanted the progressive Democrat governor Oswald West to intervene and save the county from its “mob rule.” Many of the letters that Oswald West received detailed the mob law that sent Leach packing. Some letters also detailed conditions in the logging camps of Coos County, which provided an emotional appeal that represented many of the labor concerns within the region. Carl Swelgin, a laborer who had lived in Coos Bay for five years working a variety of jobs from logger to plumber argued that the reason for the unrest within the local community was the building of the “Big Mill” in 1907 by lumber capitalist C.A. Smith. Writes Swelgin: “There is no law here only C.A. Smith in the lumber industry.”¹⁰⁰ Another resident, C.H. McLaughlin pleaded with West to intervene for the fact that “seeing our local police powers and county affairs debauched and in very bad hands, now confronting a definite effort to reform, makes these numerous intimidations serious.”¹⁰¹ Another Bandon resident and Socialist, Geo. Hoover argued that the “the Mayor of Bandon hid so that the mob could do its dirty work and

99 Ibid, 3.

100 Carl Swelgin to Oswald West, July 26, 1913, Attorney General Case Files.

101 C.R. McLaughlin to Oswald West, August 7, 1913, Attorney General Case Files.

violate law.”¹⁰² Clearly, not all of Coos County's citizens were comfortable with the reign of mob law. Nor, did the residents feel that county and municipal officials had done their part to prevent the deportations from occurring.

West's solution was to send his attorney general, Andrew Crawford to investigate the mob rule that had occurred in Coos Bay and furnish a report on the incident. On August 2, West answered the call for direct action by sending Crawford to Coos County to investigate the deportations along with the reports of corruption and alleged IWW sabotage.¹⁰³ M.C. Maloney and the *Coos Bay Times* were not happy with the move by West. “Does Governor West think that Coos County citizens are a bunch of boobs and rubes who are to be frightened by a mannikin [*sic*] masquerading in a little brief authority?”¹⁰⁴ In the minds of the elites of Coos County, and since Oswald West was not an “old settler”¹⁰⁵ of the region and was unfamiliar with the local circumstances of Coos Bay, why should he invoke state authority and launch an investigation? In questioning West's authority, Maloney was dichotomizing spheres of authority. The local matters could be handled by the elites of Coos Bay. There was no need for state authority to intrude.

After a month of investigation, it was determined by Crawford that there was insufficient evidence for legal recourse against Coos County officials; thus, the state's case was closed on September 2.¹⁰⁶ However, West was not pleased with the decision and appointed a special prosecutor to investigate further into the Coos County deportations. As West saw it: “The Attorney General no doubt had a pleasant vacation in Coos County He interviewed a few people and secured information which already had been furnished him through communications sent to

102 Geo. Hoover to Oswald West, August 4, 1913, Attorney General Case Files.

103 Oswald West to A.M. Crawford, August 4, 1913, Attorney General Case Files.

104 “Let us Talk it Over,” *Coos Bay Times*, August 6, 1913, 1.

105 Cowan, 16.

106 “Crawford's Report Exonerates Sheriff Gage in Leach Affair,” *Coos Bay Times*, September 2, 1913, 1.

this office by the citizens of the county.”¹⁰⁷ The bickering between governor and attorney general continued as Crawford charged West and his cabinet with fraud three days later over illegal expenditures that had been taken from a revolving fund account at the state penitentiary.¹⁰⁸

M.C. Maloney and the *Coos Bay Times* saw the special investigation launched by West as a nuisance and a waste of state money. In reference to West, Maloney wrote: “He doesn't seem to want an honest investigation or an honest report. What he seems to desire is an investigation and a report that will prop his prejudices and furnish the foundation for some fancy four-flushing.”¹⁰⁹ All alliteration aside, Maloney felt that there was no need to continue the investigation or bring West's own legal troubles into the fray. “Come down to the cool and serene recesses of Coos County, a trip out to 'Shore Acres,'...Let him forget the declaiming denouncing, and the volcanics of the I.W.W., take a vow of silence and discretion and all will be forgiven.”¹¹⁰ For Maloney and many other elites in Coos County, West was blowing the investigation out of proportion. There was no need to defend the actions of Wobblies and Socialists because they were subaltern, unworthy of a place within the metropolitan vision for the region. Vigilantism had won; militarism had become the community norm—a norm that all citizens were obligated to enforce.

Governor West concluded the Leach investigation during October of 1913. There simply was not enough evidence at that juncture to charge anyone with a crime. West attempted to have A.H. Powers, a manager of the C.A. Smith Lumber Company and a rumored instigator in the “mob rule” foot the bill for the legal expenses incurred during the Grand Jury investigation. The idea only strained the already fraught relationship between Coos County and the state of

107 “West's Last Outbreak,” *Coos Bay Times*, September 5, 1913, 1.

108 “Attorney General Crawford Begins Suit Against Governor West,” *Coos Bay Times*, September 5, 1913.

109 “Let us Talk it Over,” *Coos Bay Times*, September 6, 1913, 1.

110 *Ibid*, 1.

Oregon.¹¹¹ The names of those that had been implicated in the “mob rule” scandal and subpoenaed during the Grand Jury investigation were paid their mileage fare and Coos Bay moved on from its brush with radicalism.

Conclusion

In the months and years that followed the deportations in Coos Bay, communities along the Oregon coast, across the state of Oregon, and across the nation employed vigilance committees in order to police their communities. Just a few months after Leach was deported in July, the coastal town of Florence (50 miles North of Coos Bay) deported nine Wobblies from their community in November 1913.¹¹² And in the community of Coquille (15 miles Southeast from Coos Bay), 35 Italian railroad workers were deported after residents claimed their presence took away jobs that should go to “Americans.”¹¹³

With the onset of the First World War, wartime calls for increased vigilance gave an air of legitimacy to an obligation that had once been only a practice that the private citizenry engaged in. The First World War and its social militarization, state-legitimated vigilance committees, and tense anti-radical sentiments reshaped the ways that American citizens viewed the community around them.¹¹⁴

However, as this paper has demonstrated, the Coos Bay region was experiencing many of these First World War concerns in the period prior to the war. Though the state of Oregon did not sanction the “mob law” that ruled in Coos County during the summer months of 1913, it could do little to stop it. The forces of geographic isolation, economic colonialism, and a culture of vigilantism that predated the republic made Coos Bay a prime region for “mob rule” to reign

111 “Judge Hall's Reply to West,” *Coos Bay Times*, October 17, 1913, 1.

112 “Florence Citizens Deport Nine I.W.W. Leaders Today,” *Coos Bay Times*, November 14, 1913.

113 “Italian Railroad Workers Deported,” *Coos Bay News*, July 22, 1913.

114 Capozzola, 120.

unfettered. Just as well, with a large and often discontent working class majority, Coos Bay also possessed the perfect climate for Wobbly and Socialist radicalism to flourish.

These two diverging sentiments often split along class lines. Though workers held a majority in the region; their own subalternity was reflected in their inability to promote radical change within the Coos community. The elites of the commercial class held the power and authority. Their vision for a metropolitan Coos Bay—a community that would have railroads, a large port, and corporate investors gawking at every new investment opportunity—necessitated that radical subaltern elements of the population be expunged and removed from the community. There was no room for Anthony Landeker, the worker who died of a self-inflicted gunshot wound, there was no place for the Wobblies radicalizing in the logging camps, and as the decline of the Socialist Party in later election cycles would prove: there was no room for the Socialists either.

In that respect, the metropolitan identity that elites were building within Coos Bay forced subaltern members of the Coos Bay community to mold their identities to fit characteristics that elites valued. In the era before the First World War, these values were encapsulated in the desire for “100 percent Americanism” and a devotion to the capitalist construct in Coos Bay. To question the construct meant marginalization, and ultimately, it would lead to the militarization of Coos society. The deportations became opportunities to rid the region of enemies that had no place in the community. And in doing so, elite “mob rule” split families apart, ruined the reputations and careers of outspoken radicals such as Bailey Kay Leach, and suppressed the multitude of voices that comprised Coos County's working class identity.

M.C. Maloney proclaimed when the Wobblies were deported that: “It was a good day's work and one that will ever redound to the glory of Coos Bay and its people.”¹¹⁵ Clearly, Maloney's prediction did not come true. The communities of Coos County moved forward into

¹¹⁵ “Let's Talk it Over,” *Coos Bay Times*, June 25, 1913, 1.

the war years and further into the twentieth century. Generation after generation passed by and fewer and fewer people remembered that the deportations had occurred at all. Now, in the twenty-first century, the collective social memory of the Coos community has forgotten entirely the deportations that occurred over a century ago.

It is in this line of reasoning that this narrative is so important to the creation and maintenance of a working class agency and identity. Even in the most descriptive of regional narratives, working class voices can become easily lost in the overall framework of a text. As Coos Bay moves farther and farther away from its timber town identity, the voices of loggers and other working class sentiments become murkier and less identifiable. And in that light, their stories mean less to the current generation of Coos Bay residents. Likewise, our own American culture's present-day obsession with individual rights and our collective distrust of government and other public interests has further fractured any sort of collective identity, or “social bond” that we may hold as a nation.¹¹⁶

With these two disaffecting realities: loss of community identity and loss of social bonds affecting Coos Bay, how we interpret past injustices such as community deportations reflects our own culture's nascent inability to form close and meaningful associations. The Socialists and Wobblies that sacrificed their social status and in extreme cases their lives for their causes would seem unfamiliar to Coos Bay's culture today. The ability to identify with the threats of vigilante violence, or the fears associated with militarized otherization, are foreign to our present day society. As the Coos region continues to create its own identity in its post-timber peripheral state, it is caught in the difficult place of losing its commonality with the voices and agency of its citizens of the past. The radical laborer Carl Swelgin's claim that he “would rather give up [his] life” than give up being a Socialist reflects a sense of devotion and commitment that

116 Capozzola, 213.

many Americans and citizens of Coos Bay would find foreign today.¹¹⁷

117 Carl Swelgin to Gov. Oswald West, July 26, 1913, Attorney General Case Files.

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