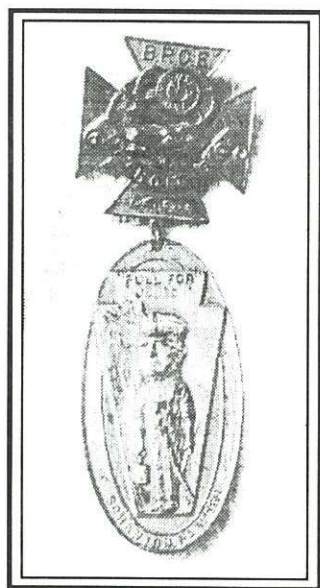


Mother Jones and Fraternity

by Deric English

An Elk Grand Lodge Reunion badge from the 1910 Benevolent Order of the Elks convention in Detroit was presented in issue number twenty-two of the *Mining Artifact Collector*. This badge, (shown below) from the Scranton, Pennsylvania lodge, depicted a coal miner with his pick, lunch bucket, and oilwick lamp. Above the miner was the phrase, "PULL FOR JONES." Readers were urged to offer their ideas on the significance of this phrase and Mr. Robert Williams of Gretna, Louisiana responded. He suggested that this phrase might be referring to the Scranton lodge's support of the legendary Mother Jones.

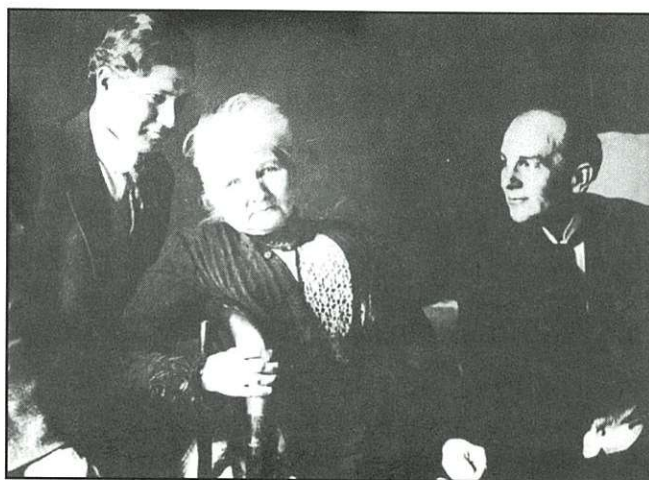


Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks badge from the Detroit Grand Lodge Session, 1910. Scranton lodge, number 123.

Mary Harris Jones was born May 1, 1830 in Cork, Ireland. Her father emigrated to America in 1835 and worked as a railroad construction laborer. His work took him to Toronto, Canada where Mary was raised. In 1861 Mary married a member of the Iron Molders' Union. In 1867 her husband and four children died in a yellow-fever epidemic and in 1871 she lost her possessions in the Chicago fire. Following these tragedies, she began attending Knights of Labor meetings

and her involvement in labor struggles continued for half a century.

She was known to friends as Mother Jones and to her enemies as the most dangerous woman in America. She was one of the most gifted and independent labor organizers in American history. Expressive of her fearless commitment to improving the lives of the working class is a phrase from her speech delivered at the 1911 United Mine Workers convention: "No man, no set of men will ever have owned me except the working class." This maternalism endeared her to many and it followed her throughout her career.



John Lawson, President of District 15 U.M.W. of A., Mother Jones, and Horace Hawkins, member of the Denver Bar and U.M.W. of A. attorney.

Often Mother Jones' labor organizing efforts came at great expense. Her defiance of America's mine operators and political cronies led to her being harassed, jailed, deported, and even labeled a prostitute. Sleeping in tent colonies and facing the end of a guard's rifle barrel was not an uncommon experience. One of her more memorable moments of defiance was when she gained national attention by organizing striking United Mine Workers' wives in marches, armed with mops and brooms. In

Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Colorado, and many places between, Mother Jones fearlessly marched side by side with miners of Miners and United Mine Workers of America.

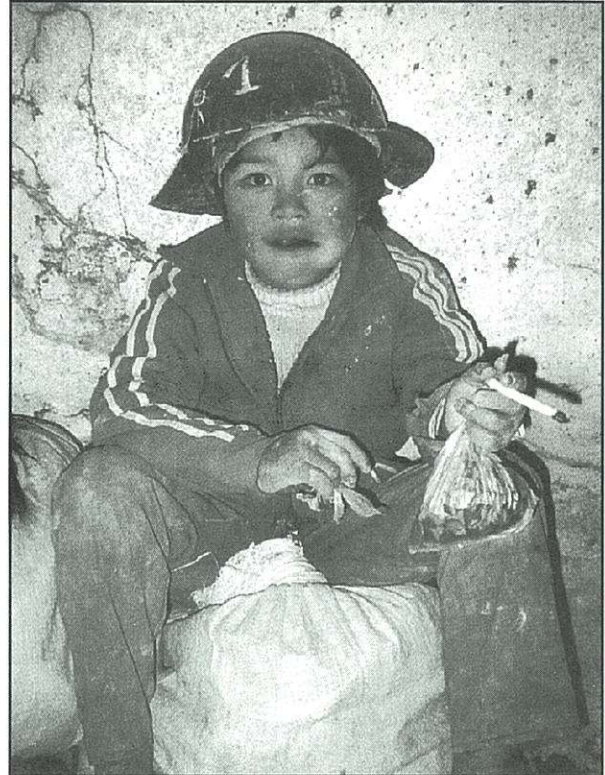
On May 1, 1930, hundreds of friends celebrated Mother Jones' hundredth birthday, and on November 30, 1930, she died peacefully. As she requested, she was buried along with her "boys" in the cemetery of the United Mine Workers at Mount Olive, Illinois.

References:

Atkinson, Linda, Mother Jones, The Most Dangerous Woman in America, New York: Crown Publishers, 1978.

Foner, Philip S., Mother Jones Speaks, Collected Writings and Speeches, Monad Press/New York, 1983.

Steel, Edward M., The Correspondence of Mother Jones, University of Pittsburgh Press, 1985. ✕

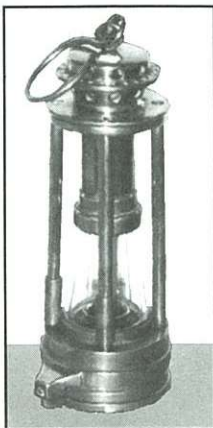


Six year old Bolivian miner subsisting on a steady diet of cigarets and coca leaves. Mineralien-Welt, 7.Jg., Heft 6, Nov.-Dez. '96, page 39

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