

# **The California National Guard and the McCloud River Lumber Company Strike 1909**

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ACTIVITIES OF THE COMPANIES  
OF THE  
CALIFORNIA NATIONAL GUARD  
DURING THE

MC CLOUD RIVER LUMBER COMPANY STRIKE , 1909

Second Infantry Regiment,  
Company B, Sacramento,  
California

Called for active duty  
June 1, 1909  
Released from active duty  
June 10, 1909

Adjutant General Report  
1909-1910 page 56.  
Adjutant General Report  
1909-1910 page 61.

CALIFORNIA  
LEGISLATURE  
1909

THE CALIFORNIA NATIONAL GUARD

AND THE

McCLOUD RIVER LUMBER COMPANY STRIKE, 1909

Toward the end of May 1909 in the little town of McCloud, Siskiyou County, a dispute concerning labor conditions arose between a large number of the employees of the McCloud River Lumber Company and the management of the Company. By May thirty-first the controversy had developed into a strike which threatened to become serious. The strikers, numbering about seven hundred and nearly all of whom were Italians, refused to perform their usual duties and also threatened to prevent others from working in their stead unless the company acceded to their demands. This the company refused to do and on the last day of May appealed to Charles B. Howard, Sheriff of Siskiyou County, for protection from the strikers.

Sheriff Howard responded immediately and appointed about sixty special deputies to assist him in maintaining order in and about the Lumber Company's plant. He and his posse entered the box factory belonging to the company for the purpose of preventing the strikers from interfering with the operations there, but instead a body of strikers surrounded the officials and ordered them to leave the factory. The strikers also told the sheriff that any person or persons who attempted to work in the plant would be killed. The sheriff believing that if he resisted and attempted to arrest the strike leaders, the plant would be destroyed and bloodshed would ensue, withdrew with his men.\*

The sheriff then wired Governor J. N. Gillett stating that the situation at McCloud was serious; that he with his available force was unable to control the strikers and requested the Governor to send a company of soldiers to assist in the protection of life and property. The Governor thereupon requested further information concerning the situation, and advised the sheriff that the State would not send troops until it was definitely shown that the sheriff's office could not cope with the situation.\*\*

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\*Adjutant General Report 1909-1910, page 46.

\*\*Telegram from Governor J. N. Gillett to Charles B. Howard, Sheriff, June 1, 1909, Adjutant General's Office.

Adjutant-General J. B. Lauck then instructed his assistant Colonel A. W. Bradbury to proceed to McCloud and make a thorough investigation of conditions there. Colonel Bradbury was instructed to confer with the sheriff and with the officials of the McCloud River Lumber Company and inform the Adjutant-General as to the real necessity for ordering troops to be sent there. Colonel Bradbury reached McCloud on the afternoon of June first and immediately begun his investigation. The officials of the Lumber Company informed Colonel Bradbury that the strikers had seized the mail train running from McCloud to Bartle over the McCloud River Railroad, and had also seized a logging train of the same railroad. That the strikers had made threats to destroy the mills, the store, the ships, and to blow up the homes of certain of the officials of the Lumber Company if their demands were not complied with by a certain time.

They also claimed that the strikers had driven men from their work and had by threats of violence prevented men from working in the mills and box factory and had beaten two watchmen who had opposed the strikers entering the box factory. The company officials stated further that the strikers had attempted to break into the powderhouse in which were stored dynamite and black powder and had prevented the hauling of wood for the use of the lighting plant. The sheriff stated that he was powerless to cope with the situation, and both he and the officials of the lumber company implored Colonel Bradbury to recommend to Governor Gillett that troops be sent to McCloud at once.

Colonel Bradbury replied that he was not satisfied as to the necessity of the presence of troops and that until there was further evidence of acts of violence on the part of the strikers he would not recommend that troops be sent. Colonel Bradbury also told the sheriff that in his opinion the sheriff had not properly performed his official duties, the Colonel contending that if the sheriff had made an attempt in the beginning of the trouble to arrest the leaders, the strike would have ended then and there.\* After making further investigations and talking with some of the workmen around the plant, who in the main corroborated the sheriff's statements Colonel Bradbury wired the Adjutant-General that in his opinion, the presence of troops would be necessary before operation of the plant could be resumed, and perhaps necessary to prevent bloodshed.

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\*Adjutant General Report 1909-1910, page 54.

On the following day June second, Colonel Bradbury obtained information which led him to believe that many of the sheriff's deputies could not be relied upon in case a riot or disturbance broke out among the strikers and resistance by force became necessary. The Colonel urged the sheriff and the assistant manager of the Lumber Company to attempt to load a few cars so as to determine what the strikers might do. Both the sheriff and the assistant manager refused to act upon that suggestion, giving as their reasons that such action would cause a riot that would mean the destruction of the plant and perhaps bloodshed. The assistant manager stated further that no attempt would be made to operate the plant under the then existing conditions.\*

Following this interview, Colonel Bradbury secured the services of an interpreter and made an attempt to get in touch with the leaders of the strike movement. He was informed, however, that these leaders would not meet or confer with him. Later that same day the Colonel made another effort to contact the leaders but without success.

On June second the strikers sent word to Colonel Bradbury, through his interpreter, that they intended to make a demonstration at two o'clock that afternoon, and that they proposed to prevent operation of the lighting plant that night. The leaders stated, according to the interpreter's message, that regardless of the wishes of the Governor or any other person, they would do as they pleased.

The meeting or demonstration, took place as scheduled at about 2:00 P.M. July second, with an attendance of about six hundred men. At the meeting threats were openly made to destroy the mills and factories, and to close the lighting and power plant at 5:00 o'clock that evening, if their demands were not complied with. After the meeting was over the strikers advanced towards the machine shop where they forced the men who had been working there to cease work, threatening them with violence if they did not quit immediately. The strikers then advanced to the car shop where they enforced a similar order, then to the lighting and pumping plant where they forced in the doors and compelled the engineer and firemen to draw the fires under the boilers.\*\*

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\*Adjutant General Report 1909-1910, page 55.

\*\*Adjutant General Report 1909-1910, pages 56, 57.

By those overt acts on the part of the strikers the town of McCloud was deprived of light and fire protection and the striking employees' threats indicated further that they would do other and perhaps greater violence. The sheriff seemed unable or unwilling to cope with the strikers. After considering these facts, Colonel Bradbury deemed the situation sufficiently serious to recommend that troops be sent to McCloud to prevent further violence and to assist the civil authorities in preserving order. Accordingly he sent a telegram to Adjutant-General Lauck describing the situation and recommending that four or five companies of the National Guard be rushed to McCloud.\*

Companies A, E, and G of the Second Infantry Regiment and Troop B Cavalry, National Guard of California had been held in readiness for active service since June first. Upon receipt of Colonel Bradbury's telegram, Adjutant-General Lauck directed these troops, together with the field and staff and a detachment of the Medical Department, Second Infantry to proceed at once to McCloud under the Adjutant-General's command.

Colonel H. I. Seymour, commanding the Second Infantry with his staff, the detachment of the hospital corps, and companies E and G, Second Infantry; and Troop B Cavalry, consisting in all of 185 officers and enlisted men under command of Brigadier-General Joseph B. Lauck, left Sacramento by special train over the Southern Pacific Railway at 8:20 P.M., June second. Company A Second Infantry was picked up at Chico.\*\* The troop train was met at Sisson by Colonel Bradbury who reported to General Lauck and outlined to the General and to Colonel Seymour the situation at McCloud.

Precautions were taken to guard the train from possible violence. At a point several miles before reaching McCloud, three flat cars were placed in front of the locomotive and ten sharpshooters from Companies A and E under command of Captain John F. Sherburn, Regimental Commissary, were posted thereon for the purpose of protecting the train.\*\*\*

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\*Adjutant General Report 1909-1910, page 59.

\*\*Adjutant General Report 1909-1910, page 49.

\*\*\*Adjutant General Report 1909-1910, page 59.

A soldier with a loaded gun was placed at each window and on the platforms of the several coaches. Both these and the detachment of sharpshooters on the flat cars ahead of the locomotive, were instructed to fire upon anyone seen tampering with the track or train during the remainder of the journey. The train bearing the National Guardsmen reached McCloud at 12:15 P.M., June third.

As the train pulled up to the station, fifty or sixty strikers were observed making their way toward the rear of the train and Company A, Second Infantry, was instructed to drive them back. A line of troops was thrown across the track and proceeded to carry out the order. One of the strikers failed to fall back when ordered to do so and was slightly bayoneted by a soldier. However, the striker was not seriously injured. The troops immediately detrained and established camp.\* Adjutant-General J. B. Lauck established his headquarters in a house belonging to President Queale of the McCloud River Lumber Company. A few days later, Governor Gillette questioned the Adjutant-General concerning the propriety of occupying a building belonging to the Lumber Company as military headquarters and expressed the hope that the report to that effect was untrue. General Lauck replied that he had established headquarters in the company's house because of telegraph and telephone communications and because he desired a place where he could hold conferences in private when necessary.\*\*

On the afternoon of June third the sheriff requested a permanent guard for the pipe line conveying water into the town and also a guard for the powderhouse, located at the edge of town to the south. These guards, consisting of one non-commissioned officer and four privates for the pipe line and one non-commissioned officer and three privates for the powderhouse.

On the morning of June fifth the troops were advised that the sheriff would make an attempt to arrest the leaders of the strikers. A line of troops was secretly established around the camp of the strikers to prevent their escape and also to prevent any attempt on the part of the strikers to bring in reinforcements from another Italian camp south of town. When all was in readiness the sheriff was notified by signal, whereupon he entered the camp of the strikers with his posse for the purpose of making the arrests. The arrests of three strike leaders were made without resistance on the part of the strikers, after which recall was sounded and the troops returned to camp.\*\*\*

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\*Adjutant General Report 1909-1910, page 60.

\*\*Courier Free Press, Redding, July 8, 1909, page 1, column 2.

\*\*\*Adjutant General Report 1909-1910, page 60.

The entire movement was accomplished without arousing the suspicion of the strikers until a complete cordon had been established around them. The three strike leaders arrested by the sheriff were taken to jail and at a hearing held the following day, were held for trial under \$1,000 bail.\*

With the leaders in the strike movement under arrest, everything seemed quiet in the town. July seventh and eighth passed without incident. Operation of the Lumber Company's plant had been resumed gradually. General Lauck on June ninth decided to withdraw the troops of the National Guard.

The sheriff, however, requested that the departure of the troops be postponed until Thursday morning June tenth, his reason for the request being that a majority of the strikers had promised to leave McCloud June ninth and he thought it best for the troops to be there until most of the strikers had gone. After that he believed that he and his deputies could control the situation.

About half the Italian laborers at McCloud owned or had built the cabins in which they lived and demanded pay from the Lumber Company for at least part of the value of these structures before they would depart. Appraisers satisfactory to both the company and the laborers were appointed. Values of the shacks were quickly determined and as fast as possible the men were paid off. As soon as the workmen received the money due them under the agreement they left the camp for good. President Queale of the Lumber Company stated that the cabins would be torn down as the company did not intend to employ Italians again.\*\*

Pursuant to Special Order No. 4, dated June 9, 1909, the troops of the National Guard left McCloud for their home stations at 6:20 A. M. June tenth.

In the performance of their duties at McCloud, no opportunity was afforded the members of the National Guard to distinguish themselves particularly. The strikers made no show of resistance to either civil or military authority after the arrival of the troops on the scene. The moral effect produced by the

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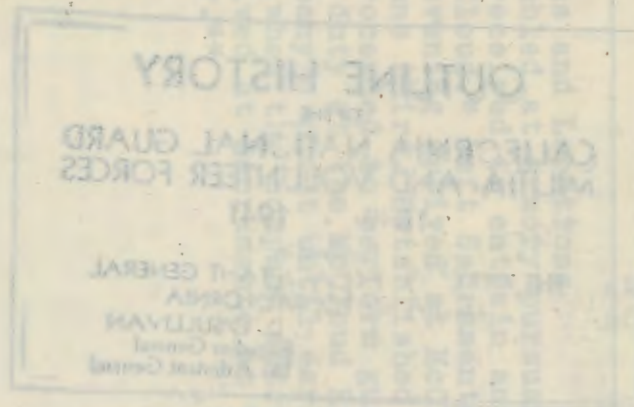
\*Adjutant General Report 1909-1910, pages 51, 60.

\*\*Courier Free Press, Redding, June 8, 1909, page 1, columns 2, 3.



presence of the Guardsmen was most salutary and the strikers suddenly became a quiet, peaceful body instead of the threatening defiant group that Sheriff Howard had faced.

The National Guard of California was sent into a mountainous part of the State to protect property and prevent rioting and bloodshed. The quiet behavior of the National Guardsmen, their careful and prompt attention to duty while on that mission, earned for them the highest praise from their commanding officers and from the people of the entire State of California.



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Record  
Company  
Call

John H. Williams  
Captain

Relieved from active duty  
June 1, 1900  
June 10, 1900

Adjutant General  
1900-1910  
1900-1910

Adjutant General  
1900-1910  
1900-1910

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STATIONS AND LOCATIONS OF COMPANIES A, E, AND G, SECOND INFANTRY REGIMENT

NATIONAL GUARD OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE McCLOUD RIVER LUMBER COMPANY STRIKE, 1909

(The following named officers were designated in command of the troops ordered to active duty during this period.)

Brigadier-General Joseph B. Lauck  
Colonel H. I. Seymour  
Major Lon Bond

Company A, Second  
Infantry Regiment,  
Chico, California

H. R. Downing  
-  
First Lieutenant

Called for active duty  
June 1, 1909

Relieved from active duty  
June 10, 1909

Stations and Locations

June 1 ordered to assemble at armory.\*  
Held in quarters in readiness to entrain.  
June second entrained at Chico. Arrived  
at McCloud June third at 12:15 P.M. De-  
tailed to guard train, and patrol entrance  
to strikers' camp. One striker slightly  
wounded. Established camp. Performed guard  
and picket duty at McCloud, guarding mills,  
powerhouse, powderhouse, yards and buildings  
of McCloud River Lumber Company until June  
tenth when Company entrained for home. Arri-  
ved at Chico at four P.M. June tenth.\*\*

\*Adjutant General Report  
1909 - 1910 - Page 58.

\*\*Adjutant General Report  
1909 - 1910 - Page 61.

STATIONS AND LOCATIONS OF COMPANIES A, E, AND G, SECOND INFANTRY REGIMENT

NATIONAL GUARD OF CALIFORNIA

Second Infantry Regiment,  
Company E, Sacramento,  
California

Frank F. Canon  
-  
Captain

Called for active duty  
June 1, 1909

Relieved from active duty  
June 10, 1909

Stations and Locations

June 1 assembled at armory under orders to be readiness to entrain at a moments notice for McCloud.\* June second left Sacramento at 8:15 P.M. Detrained and made camp. No demonstration on the part of strikers. Detailed to guard pipe line and powderhouse at McCloud River Lumber Company's plant. Performed guard and patrol duty at the plant until June tenth, when company entrained for home at 6:15 A.M. that day. Arrived at Sacramento same evening. 7:45 P.M. company dismissed.\*\*

\* Adjutant General Report  
1909-1910 page 58.

\*\* Adjutant General Report  
1909-1910 page 61.

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STATIONS AND LOCATIONS OF COMPANIES A, E, and G, SECOND INFANTRY REGIMENT

NATIONAL GUARD OF CALIFORNIA

Second Infantry Regiment  
Company G, Sacramento,  
California

John M. Milliken

Captain

Called for active duty  
June 1, 1909

Relieved from active duty  
June 10, 1909

Stations and Locations

June 1, assembled at armory pursuant to orders received to entrain and proceed to McCloud.\* Left Sacramento at 8:15 that evening arrived at McCloud at 12:15. June third. Established camp and proceeded to perform guard and patrol duty at the McCloud River Lumber Company's plant until early morning June tenth, when the company entrained for home. Arrived at Sacramento at 7:45 P.M. of that day.\*\*

\* Adjutant General Report  
1909-1910 page 58.

\*\* Adjutant General Report  
1909-1910 page 61.

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STATIONS AND LOCATIONS OF TROOP B CAVALRY

NATIONAL GUARD OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE McCLOUD RIVER LUMBER COMPANY STRIKE, 1909

(The following named officers were designated in command of the troops ordered to active duty during this period.)

Brigadier-General Joseph B. Lauck  
Colonel H. I. Seymour  
Major Lon Bond

Troop B Cavalry Sacramento, California	O. J. Boden - Captain	Called for active duty June 1, 1909 - Relieved from active duty June 10, 1909
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Stations and Locations

June 1, troop assembled at their armory under orders.\* Held in readiness to leave for McCloud. June second, troop ordered to entrain. Left Sacramento at 8:15 P.M. Arrived at McCloud June third at 12:15 P.M. Made camp at McCloud. Detailed for guard and patrol duty at pipe line, powderhouse and other buildings and property of the McCloud River Lumber Company until early morning June tenth. June tenth entrained for home and arrived at Sacramento at 7:45 same day.\*\* Troop relieved from further duty.

\*Adjutant General Report  
1909 - 1910 - Page 58.

\*\*Adjutant General Report  
1909 - 1910 - Page 61.

STATEMENT OF EXPENSES OF TROOPS CALLED INTO ACTIVE SERVICE IN

AID OF CIVIL AUTHORITIES AT McCLOUD, SISKIYOU COUNTY,

JUNE 1-10, 1909

The following is a statement of expenses incurred and paid in connection with the calling of the troops of the California National Guard into active service of the State in aid of the Civil Authorities at McCloud, Siskiyou County, California, June 1-10, 1909.

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To appropriation (under act of Legislature, approved April 12, 1909, providing for the expenses of the National Guard in case of insurrection, invasion, tumult, riot, or imminent danger thereof). . . . .	\$100,000.00	
By pay of officers and men. . . . .		\$ 4,793.25
By transportation. . . . .		3,090.60
By subsistence . . . . .		711.28
By telegraph and telephone service. . . . .		26.34
By miscellaneous expenses. . . . .		85.30
By unexpended balance. . . . .		91,293.25
Totals . . . . .	\$100,000.00	\$100,000.00

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