

Kelly and His Men

Harper's Weekly of May 5, 1894, reported as follows on Kelly's appearance and background:

The head of the crusade was called "General" Kelly, who turned out to be simply a small, pale, intellectual-appearing, and rather pensive-looking man. Fortunately, his authority over the rabble, which was made up by him in a few days, and which was without any other restraint than that imposed by his word of command, was excellent. . . .

In San Francisco he was a printer and student of sociology. When the army, which was enlisted in a few days, wanted a leader, it chose him. He was merely a creature of circumstances and of the moment, but the caravan ought to be grateful for the luck which sent it a man of such cool judgment. He counselled moderation and throughout his army maintained the utmost tranquility.

Frank Leslie's Illustrated Weekly of May 3, 1894, quoting from the *Cheyenne Leader*, said:

Kelly is a mild-mannered young man of thirty-two years, a printer by trade, who has been for a long time out of employment. His hair and mustache are brown, and his complexion as fresh as a school girl's. His vices apparently are few. He declined a drink of Bourbon with a gesture when proffered by a wicked citizen. He said he used no tobacco when offered a cigar. He is evidently a man of considerable refinement and culture.

Leslie's Weekly also noted Kelly's Army, saying it was much better organized and disciplined than Coxey's detachment from Massillon, Ohio:

Besides General Kelly there are two colonels, an aide-de-camp, sergeant-major, twenty-two captains, the same number of sergeants and lieutenants, a chief of commissary with twenty-five aides, a hospital steward with six aides. The men take no obligation upon joining the army except to obey their officers and the laws of the States through which they may pass.

It must have been reassuring to many Iowans to read the pledge taken by each member of Kelly's Army before they were permitted to join the widely advertised "Industrial" group. This pledge stands in sharp contrast to the actions of many of the protest groups of the 1960's that disrupted campuses, killed policemen, set fire to property, and in general pillaged, robbed, and destroyed goods and property of every kind and description. It was reported by *The Weekly Gate City* (Keokuk) of May 24, 1894:

The Pledge.

Every member of the army carries a blue pasteboard card folded once, which contains a description of the holder and the pledge he signs. One was shown the reporter of which the following is a description. On the front appears the following: "United States Industrial Army; Regiment, First; Company, Pioneer; Captain, Harry Hart." There is a picture of an eagle in the center of the page. The inside has the following: "No. 8; name, Park Meredith, occupation, broom maker; Description—

Hat $7\frac{3}{8}$, weight 158, height $5:11\frac{1}{2}$, leg 34, waist 33, enlisted at Ogden, Utah, April 11, 1894." On the back is the following: "Remember Your Obligation Pledge! I hereby swear to support the constitution of the United States and of the Industrial Army; to obey all the orders that may be said, sent or handed me by those authorized so to do; to render cheerful support and assistance to all officers and comrades of the army; to not intentionally violate any law of the United States or any state or territory in which I may be, or aid or abet any riotous conduct; to respect the right of property and law and order; to never act in any manner to bring discredit upon the Industrial Army of the United States."

The Make-Up Of Kelly's Army

Even before President B. O. Aylesworth of Drake University appeared on the scene in Council Bluffs, efforts had been made at various points along the way to analyze the make-up of Kelly's Army. In Utah, for example, it was found that a majority of the Army was composed of native-born Americans—contrary to the general expectation. The average age of the men was 24 and the total number at Ogden was 968.

These figures differ from the census taken by Drake students, working under President Aylesworth. The political make-up of the Army when it reached Des Moines was found to be 196 Democrats and 218 Republicans. No mention was made of Populists. They further found that 206 of 863 men interviewed were foreign-born. President Aylesworth and his students obviously were

unable to interview all of the 1,500 men said to have come from Council Bluffs to Des Moines. In another sampling of 425 men interviewed, they found 83 different trades represented as follows:

Miners	43	Day laborers	43
Farmers, farmhands	31	Cooks	19
Painters	17	Railroad men	18
Carpenters	15	Ironworkers	13
Clerks	11	Machinists	10
Engineers	10	Bakers	8
Blacksmiths	8	Shoemakers	9
Barbers	7	Teamsters	7
Waiters	6	Porters	6
Bricklayers	6	Butchers	5
Sailors	4	Bookkeepers	5
Stone cutters	4	Stone masons	4
Boiler makers	5	Firemen	3
Quarrymen	3	Grocers	3
Electric engineers	3	Harness	3
Tinners	4	Brass workers	3
Steam fitters	3	Bridge builders	3
Wood Choppers	3	Stenographers	2
Slate workers	2	Stove mounters	2
Plumbers	2	Bookbinders	2
Merchants	3	Conductors	2
Telegraph operators	2	No trade	2
Upholsterers	2	Printer	1
Horse trainers	2	Gun smith	1
Tailors	2	Bottler	1
Gardners	2	Decorator	1
Lumbermen	2	Engraver	1
Ditchers	2	Miller	1
Coopers	2	Jockey	1
Coachmen	2	Hostler	1

Laundryman	1	Fish marketman	1
Roofer	2	Engine wiper	1
Paper maker	1	Dairyman	1
Wood carver	1	Confectioner	1
Brick burners	2	Carriage maker	1
Hustlers	2	Saddler	1
Mineralogists	2	Ranchman	1
Comb maker	1	Sheep herder	1
Plasterer	1	Surveyor	1
Rope walker	1		

Eighty-three trades in a total of 425 men examined.

Although President Aylesworth received much publicity because of his reactions to Kelly's Army his ideas were not shared by all professors. Dr. Stetson of Des Moines College held decidedly different views, according to the *Iowa State Register* of May 4:

Dr. Stetson gave a chapel talk to the students of Des Moines College yesterday on the industrial army movement. He defined the objects for which the united "armies" are moving toward Washington, and said that there is undoubtedly something in their argument for a living petition, since written ones are usually cast aside. "The Kelly Army," he said, "is a fair type of the others, but the near view of them does not help their cause. Undoubtedly some of them are worthy, but I venture to say that if you go there you will have the impression that these men are poor and needy, but are not animated by any high moral purpose. The bad disposition made of the camp refuse and the filthiness of the cooks are a strong picture against the army. No men with a determination animated by high moral purposes will live like swine. Any man in

charge who permits this is a long way from a hero. I say these things because so much has been said on the other side. Their demand for free food and transportation is upon a principle utterly false. The business of the government is not to furnish employment to all at \$2.50 per day. The very hour that the United States agrees so to do, that hour it goes out of existence. There is no more dangerous doctrine preached in America to-day than to say that these men are heroes. Our treatment of them ought not to be on that basis. I pity them but I do not respect them. No man can join this army without having stamped upon him 'the tramp.' We have no right, however, to deal with them in a spirit of harshness, but rather in sorrow for men who present such a sad plight as do these 6,000. The movement is due largely to the dangerous doctrine of paternalism in government which has been preached of late by Edward Bellamy and others. If you sympathize with these men, do so from right reasons."

The 6,000 figure quoted above is obviously wrong. Although 1,500 men are said to have left California the number interviewed at Ogden, Utah, was only 968. At Council Bluffs-Neola the "Army" was placed at 1,800 while 1,250 were chronicled in the line of march at Stuart. The total interviewed by Drake students was 863—which should be fairly correct because of the long sojourn in Des Moines. It was estimated that 1,400 started down the Des Moines River. The actual figures for Kelly's Army in Iowa probably ranged from 900 to 1,100.