

June Walker Crandall (1878-1910)

One of the early labor and socialist party leaders in Bloomington, June Crandall, was deeply concerned about the exploitation of the American working class by those owning the means of production. A coal miner by trade, he fought hard on various platforms, including politics, to improve life for his fellow workers and their families. Crandall's first-hand observations of the drudgery and dangers of mining helped provide an impetus for workplace safety in early 20th century McLean County. However, his untimely death at the age of 31 cut short the life of a labor activist and champion of social equality.

June Walker Crandall was born on December 1, 1878, in Richmond, Madison County, Kentucky, the fifth of Jerome Bonepart and Juliana (Rice) Crandall's eight children, (all of whom survived to adulthood). Jerome was born in Cortland County, New York; Juliana, in Clark, Kentucky.¹ According to the 1880 *U.S. Census*, Jerome was a farmer and a butcher by trade.²

June Crandall had little, if any, formal schooling. He was largely self-taught, it appears. His *Pantagraph* obituary stated that he was "a student of economics and devoted all his leisure time to enlarging his own information on the questions of the day. With few advantages of early education, he acquired his information by his own efforts while following his daily toil in one of the hardest kinds of labor."³

In 1896, Crandall moved to Atlanta, Illinois. Although little is known of his time in Atlanta, he may have joined his older brother, Clark, (who was living there at the time) and worked for the Atlanta Coal Mining Company, (which was in operation from 1879 to about 1919), or another mine nearby.⁴ Logan County had, at that time, five active coal mines, the nearest to Atlanta being the Union Coal Mine, in Union, Illinois, some eight miles away.⁵

Sometime in early 1898, June Crandall made his way to Bloomington. He sought mining work again and signed on with the McLean County Coal Company, his employer for the next dozen years.⁶

Shortly after his arrival in Bloomington, Crandall met Mary Lovisa Carlson and they were married in her parents' home at 1006 W. Taylor Street in Bloomington, on December 10, 1898.⁷ Mary was born in Chicago, Illinois, on August 12, 1879. Her parents were John August and Mathilda Charlotta (Jonsdotter) Carlson, both natives of Sweden.⁸ According to the 1880 *U.S.*

¹ June Walker Crandall family tree, (Provo, UT: Ancestry.com), Accessed February 7, 2024; Kentucky, U.S. Birth Records, 1847-1911 for June Crandall, Ancestry.com, Accessed February 19, 2024.

² 1880 *United States Federal Census* for Jerome Crandoll, Ancestry.com, Accessed February 19, 2024.

³ "Funeral of June Crandall," *Weekly Pantagraph*, September 2, 1910.

⁴ June Walker Crandall family tree, (Provo, UT: Ancestry.com), Accessed February 7, 2024; Atlanta Coal Mine Exhibit Open House May 13, *Herald News*, May 3, 2023; "June Crandall is Killed by a Cave-in," *The Pantagraph*, August 30, 1910.

⁵ Directory of Coal Mines in Illinois (Logan County), *Illinois State Geological Survey*, 2023.

⁶ "June Crandall is Killed by a Cave-in."

⁷ "Recent Weddings," *The Pantagraph*, December 12, 1898; *McLean County Marriages 1860-1920*, record number 13345.

⁸ June Walker Crandall family tree, (Provo, UT: Ancestry.com), Accessed February 7, 2024; *McLean County Marriages 1860-1920*, record number 13345; Mary L. Carlson in Anderson Family Tree, (Provo, UT: Ancestry.com), Accessed February 19, 2024.

Census, John was a carpenter.⁹ June and Mary had one child, a daughter they named Beulah Leora Crandall, on July 4, 1899.¹⁰

The Crandalls lived at several addresses during their life in Bloomington. Among them, 1311 W. Chestnut Street (1898-1904); 705 W. Jackson Street (1904-05); 811 W. Olive Street (1905-07); 610 W. Jackson Street (1907-09); 1301 W. Elm Street (1909-1910); and 1112 W. Grove Street having moved there shortly before his death.¹¹ Mary maintained the Grove Street residence until shortly before her death in 1958.¹² All of the Crandall residences were on Bloomington's West Side, not far from Crandall's employer, the McLean County Coal Company, (which was located just north of West Washington Street and near the Chicago and Alton Railroad mainline).¹³

The McLean County Coal Company operated from 1867 to 1929. Financially backed by the Stevenson brothers—James B., William, and Adlai E. (U.S. vice-president, 1893-97)—the company generated 700 tons of coal per day, accounting for nearly 70% of the coal shipped out of the county. Coal was the principal way to heat homes, create steam for locomotives, and operate industrial plants. The company employed roughly 350 people at any given time during its operation. The company did not, apparently, discriminate when hiring. It accepted English, French, Irish, Italian, Polish, Russian, Swedish, and African American miners. Of course, that didn't mean they all enjoyed the same duties or compensation.¹⁴

Work in coal mines, in the latter 19th and early 20th Century, was a dark, dirty, and treacherous operation. Ten-to-16-hour workdays were the norm, with men being expected to work six or seven days per week with “virtually no holidays.” And in an age when no child-labor laws existed, young boys could often be found working in coal mines. Alexander G. Erickson recalled dropping out of school at the age of 13 to begin working in the McLean County Coal Company mine with his father. Erickson stated that “It was custom for the oldest boy in the family to begin early to help his father earn a living for the family.” Erickson worked in the mines for nine years before becoming a clerk in a grocery store.¹⁵

Miners worked in cramped, dimly lit spaces several hundred feet below the ground, used crude hand tools—such as pickaxes and shovels—and toiled under the constant, but far from unreasonable, fear of cave-ins, fires, and the asphyxiating “black damp.” And any accident meant time off work without pay, not to mention the risk of serious injury or death.¹⁶ At least 20 fatal incidents occurred in McLean County mines between 1883 to 1909.¹⁷ Miners did not receive a set wage, rather they were paid based on the coal they produced. Pay was low, often issued in scrip to be redeemed at the company store. In 1893, for example, miners at the Mclean County Coal Company received between \$1.50 to \$2.25 per day (which would be between \$416.00 and \$616.00 in 2022).¹⁸

⁹ *United States Federal Census* for John Carlson, Ancestry.com.

¹⁰ “The Birth Record,” *The Pantagraph*, July 8, 1899.

¹¹ *Bloomington and Normal City Directories, 1902-1909; 1910 United States Federal Census* for June Crandall, (Provo, UT: Ancestry.com), Accessed February 19, 2024.

¹² “Mrs. Mary Crandall,” *The Pantagraph*, August 17, 1958.

¹³ *McLean County Coal Company Collection*, (Bloomington, Illinois: McLean County Historical Society, McLean County Museum of History).

¹⁴ *Ibid*; Mme. Annette, “Down in a Coal Mine,” *The Daily Bulletin*, May 12, 1899.

¹⁵ “A.G. Erickson, 82 Years Young, Recalls Days as Miner, Mayor,” *The Pantagraph*, June 18, 1945.

¹⁶ Lethbridge, Isabella, “Alexander G. Erickson,” www.mchistory.org, 2022.

¹⁷ Kemp, Bill, “Coal Miners Toiled in Dangerous, Often Deadly Environment,” *The Pantagraph*, September 6, 2009.

¹⁸ “A Little Strike,” *The Pantagraph*, November 29, 1893; MeasuringWorth.com, Accessed February 19, 2024.

The long-term effects of mining were, perhaps, of greater concern. Poor ventilation, coupled with the mine's incessant belching of coal dust and toxic gases, made for not only unpleasant working conditions but chronic respiratory ailments and, as a result, abbreviated lives.¹⁹ Personal stories documenting the conditions have been passed down through the generations. Carl Ekstam, a Bloomington resident, told one such story: "My uncle (a miner) always said if it was cloudy on Sunday and rainy, they didn't see the sun for two weeks because they'd go in the mine in the morning before the sun come up, and they'd come up after it went down."²⁰ By the end of the 19th century, miners' lives reached a tipping point of misery. Under dynamic leadership, mine workers moved politically toward democratic socialism to foment dramatic change in the industry and their lives. As they headed to the "left," they began to see unions as a means to balance power between the owning and working classes.

While the United Mine Workers national union was gaining power and influence, workers at the McLean County Coal Company organized the Bloomington Miners Union, which eventually became the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) Local #753. Crandall became active in the local almost immediately after his arrival in Bloomington, and was elected to various leadership roles, including as a delegate to national miners conventions and, in 1905 at the tender age of 25, president of the local UMWA.²¹ He was not only an avid supporter of his union, and a tireless worker for the people it represented, but he saw the importance of extolling its accomplishments whenever possible. For instance, he volunteered to organize annual celebrations of Labor Day and labor's achievement of the eight-hour workday.²² His efforts went anything but unnoticed. "In the affairs of organized labor in Bloomington," opined *Pantagraph* editors following his death, "probably no man has been so prominent for so many years as Mr. Crandall."²³

Organized mine labor had, for some time, not gone unnoticed either. The UMWA sponsored several strikes in hopes of crippling the industry into conceding better wages, hours, and working conditions. Before Crandall arrived on the scene, members of the Bloomington Local #753 joined 200,000 of their UMWA comrades in a nationwide bituminous coal strike—known as the "Great Coal Strike"—from April to June 1894. While the strike did not produce the desired outcome for miners, it did affirm the UMWA, with its hundreds of locals and thousands of miners, as a force to be reckoned with.²⁴ By 1897, the union's leverage became apparent when the UMWA persuaded owners to agree to the aforementioned eight-hour work day nationwide.²⁵ The nation's leaders began to acknowledge the numerical strength and resolve of mining unions, their influence in the production of the growing industrial nation's most important commodity, and, of course, their potential to swing an election. President Theodore Roosevelt assumed the

¹⁹ "The Lives of Coal Miners in the Early 20th Century," Britannica.com, Accessed February 8, 2024.

²⁰ Cima, Greg. "Mining the Past," *The Pantagraph*, January 19, 2006.

²¹ "Miners Elect," *The Pantagraph*, December 17, 1904; "June Crandall Killed," *Weekly Pantagraph*, September 2, 1910.

²² "Labor Day Celebrated," *The Pantagraph*, September 7, 1906; "Miners in Annual Eight-Hour Day Celebration," *The Pantagraph*, April 2, 1909.

²³ "June Crandall Killed."

²⁴ "Gigantic Miners' Strike Ordered - Over 200,000 Men in Eleven States May Quit Work April 21," *New York Times*, April 12, 1894.

²⁵ "Miners in Annual Eight-Hour Day Celebration," *The Pantagraph*, September 6, 1907; 2 Apr 1909, pg. 8.

role of arbiter in a 1902 UMWA strike against the anthracite coal companies of Eastern Pennsylvania.²⁶

The UMWA Local #753 was also a member of the Bloomington Trades & Labor Assembly. Of the two dozen unions in the amalgamation at any given time, the UMWA Local #753 was the largest. Along with the coal miners, the member rolls included (not an exhaustive list) bartenders, brewery workers, bricklayers, brick hod carriers, butchers, carpenters, cigarmakers, clerks, decorators, electricians, iron molders, laundry workers, leatherworkers, painters, plasterers, plumbers, printers, teamsters, and tailors.²⁷ Crandall was an active participant in this organization as well, elected secretary-treasurer in 1904 and serving until 1908, when he resigned over the Assembly's stance against the Local Option Law. Crandall was in favor of the law, which would allow residents to decide whether or not liquor sales would be allowed within the boundaries of individual counties and townships.²⁸ One must marvel at his endurance, even for one so youthful. The mine workday was long and taxing, yet he maintained the energy and willingness—with a wife and child at home—to devote evenings and weekends to the service of the community's laborers.

In the early 20th century, socialism was an evolving ideology which placed the blame for the world's social and economic inequalities squarely on the shoulders of capitalism and industrialization. Avowed socialists made it known that they deplored exploitation of labor and worked toward "leveling the playing field." As Crandall entered Bloomington's labor milieu, the exploitation of the European working class by the bourgeoisie fulfilled the prophesy of German philosophers Karl Marx and Frederick Engles. Their mantra, "Workers of the world unite," and their call for the redistribution of wealth and power, was not only resonated with the proletariat, but moved it to decisive action, such as the Russian Revolution of 1905, which signaled the beginning of the end of tsarist Russia. Those with a socialist bent in America saw the organization and empowerment of labor as a means to achieve a more equitable relationship between workers and company owners.²⁹

Those owning the means of production enjoyed the fruits of free enterprise and tended to view socialists as a threat. With much to lose, should labor gain political power and wealth be reapportioned, they used their considerable influence to demonize socialists as dangerous and radical, even subversive, conspiring to dismantle the American way of life. Crandall had no intention of subverting anything, rather was simply a young man with high ideals trying to right the glaring wrongs in the working world. He held offices in union organizations, and, by all accounts, performed his duties with due diligence and integrity, and served his fellow workers well. However, the change he had in mind needed a wider gaze that could only be gained by venturing into the political realm. As he embraced the tenets of the Socialist Party, he carried its standard in seeking public office—not once, but on numerous occasions.

June Crandall never succeeded in his quest for public office (running on the Socialist ticket), although his persistence was the stuff of legends. He evidently had no qualms about placing himself, over and over again, on the altar of public scrutiny. In 1903, he ran for Bloomington city

²⁶ Robert J. Cornell, *The Anthracite Coal Strike of 1902*, (1957), pg. 45; Edmund Morris, *Theodore Rex*, (New York: Random House, 2002), pg. 133.

²⁷ "Another Union Affiliates," *The Pantagraph*, January 18, 1900.

²⁸ "Trades Assembly," *The Pantagraph*, January 8, 1904; "Trades Assembly in Favor of Saloons," *Freeport Journal-Standard*, March 20, 1908.

²⁹ Karl Marx and Frederick Engles, *The Communist Manifesto* (London, UK: Penguin Books, 2015).

treasurer.³⁰ In 1905, 1907, and 1909, he ran for mayor of Bloomington.³¹ In 1906 he entered the race for Illinois state representative and, two years later, for Illinois state senator.³² He never received more than a handful of votes in his various races. In his bid for the house and the senate, he received 1.1% and 1.3% of the vote, respectively.³³ Undeterred, he pursued office – quite literally—to the bitter end. He threw his hat in the ring for McLean County Clerk but died before the primary election.³⁴

In April 1910 the McLean County Coal Company closed its shafts temporarily.³⁵ Crandall was able to find work at the Bloomington Water Works and worked there the entire summer.³⁶ However, on August 29 of that year, at the age 31, his life ended tragically in a preventable accident. On that fateful day he was one of four men working to fortify a wall in a “deep 13-foot trench just back of the pumphouse.” At about 4:00 p.m., the four were “putting up some supports for the big timbers on which rested the railroad tracks running just north of the coal sheds.” Crandall and his gang were caught by a “caving bank” of dirt. His three colleagues—Thomas Lamb, John Finn, and Emil Moline—escaped with minor injuries, but Crandall was “crushed about the chest” by the “falling mass of earth” and had to be extracted, unconscious, from several tons of dirt.³⁷ Witnesses testified at the coroner’s inquest that, before the collapse, Crandall had shouted “look out” to warn the others, and they managed to dodge the worst of the avalanche. He was not so fortunate. Crandall had just enough time to turn away from the massive wave and it hit his back, bending him over. Doctors were summoned and Crandall was transported to Brokaw Hospital “in the city ambulance.” It was reported that “skilled physicians and medical science” did everything they could “in his behalf,” but he succumbed to his injuries at 11:30 p.m., having never regained consciousness.³⁸ It was also revealed at the inquest that Crandall and his team had been warned that the “bank was in a dangerous condition” and advised to “use care in the work.” He was heard to say, “Oh, I guess it will hold alright.”³⁹ Some may call such a response, “famous last words.”

The event that claimed his life was not Crandall’s first scrape with the dangers of the waterworks job. Two weeks earlier, “he was injured in a less serious manner,” according to the *Pantagraph*, “one of his fingers being nearly torn off.”⁴⁰ His injury and death were clear testaments to the perils of manual labor in the early 20th century, something of which unions would take notice and work to change.

Following a brief service in his home, Crandall’s formal funeral was held at the Park Methodist Episcopal Church on the afternoon of September 1, 1910. The service was,

³⁰ “First in the Field,” *The Pantagraph*, February 2, 1903.

³¹ “Socialists Name Ticket,” *The Pantagraph*, March 6, 1905; “How Time Flies: 100 years ago,” *The Pantagraph*, April 2, 2007; “How Time Flies: 100 years ago,” *The Pantagraph*, April 21, 2009.

³² “Socialists Nominate,” *The Pantagraph*, August 17, 1906; “Over Three-Hundred Names on the Ballot,” *The Pantagraph*, October 12, 1908.

³³ “Official Figures on County Totals,” *The Pantagraph*, November 7, 1908.

³⁴ “June Crandall Killed,” *Weekly Pantagraph*, September 6, 1910; “Name of Dead Man on Primary Ballot,” *The Pantagraph*, September 6, 1910.

³⁵ “June Crandall is Killed by Cave-in.”

³⁶ *McLean County Coal Company Collection*, (Bloomington, Illinois: McLean County Historical Society, McLean County Museum of History); “June Crandall is Killed by a Cave-In.”

³⁷ “June Crandall is Killed by a Cave-In.”

³⁸ “June Crandall Died Last Night,” *The Daily Bulletin*, August 30, 1910.

³⁹ “Had Been Warned of Dangers in Trench,” *The Pantagraph*, August 31, 1910.

⁴⁰ “June Crandall is Killed by a Cave-In.”

predictably, well attended. The organizations of which he was a proud member –UMWA Local #753, the Improved Order of Red Men (a fraternal organization comprised of descendants of the Sons of Liberty), and the Knights of the Maccabees (a fraternal benefit organization)—were represented and provided pall bearers.⁴¹ June Crandall was buried at Evergreen Memorial Cemetery in Bloomington.

The celebration of his life did not end with his funeral. Frank Albert Walker of Normal (writer and fellow Temperance advocate), offered a poignant eulogy in the form of a poem entitled “Fulfillment,” which was published in *The Pantagraph* newspaper.⁴² Several newspaper articles honored him, describing him as a self-made man, natural leader, well-balanced in temperament, intelligent, sound in reasoning and judgment, fair minded, an exemplary citizen, and fiscally conservative.⁴³ Members of the Socialists of Bloomington (which Crandall was a member of), passed resolutions stating “Comrade Crandall was a fearless champion of the toilers cause, a tireless promulgator of the right in human affairs, and that he believed in, and fervently advocated the Socialist doctrine of equal opportunity and even justice for all in the struggle of life.” The Socialists’ cause lost a “zealous advocate” with the death of June Crandall.⁴⁴ Those who knew him also regarded him as a man of the highest moral and ethical standards, true to his convictions, and a peacemaker. Both labor and management relied upon him to help resolve labor disputes. Crandall was also endowed with the rare gift of saying the right thing at the right time. He was asked to speak at various gatherings, and the press often sought him out for comments on important events.

This poem, written by Edwin Oliver Ropp, a self-described “Fellow Workman,” appeared in the *Pantagraph* on September 5, 1910, three days after Crandall’s funeral:

“JUNE W. CRANDALL

(Who perished in a cave-in while at work in a Bloomington trench)

Mine eyes have never seen thy face,
Nor have I clasped thy hand,
Yet ours is the self-same race,
And ours one native land.
Thy love of justice was intense,
Didst love thy native soil,
Thou Patriot in the highest sense,
Thou martyred son of toil.
How are those brothers loved by all,
And loved by far the most,
Who bravely face a hero’s fall –
The falling at one’s post.
Who knows but we shall meet above,
Then shall I clasp thy hand,
And say to thee: Lo, tears and love

⁴¹ “Funeral of June Crandall,” *The Pantagraph*, September 2, 1910; “June Crandall Laid To Rest,” *The Daily Bulletin*, September 1, 1910.

⁴² Walker, Frank Albert, “Fulfillment,” in June Crandall vertical file, McLean County Museum of History Library and Archives.

⁴³ “June Crandall is Killed by a Cave-In.”

⁴⁴ “Crandall Death Mourned By All,” *Chicago Daily Socialist*, September 15, 1910.

Pursued thee to this land.

EDWIN OLIVER ROPP,
A Fellow Workman.”⁴⁵

Ropp’s ode was based, to some extent, on personal experience. Although he did not work in the mines, he studied the conditions. In 1903, he received permission from the McLean County Coal Company to shadow miners in the shafts on a typical workday. He recorded in his diary the dangers and grim lives of the workers.⁴⁶

Two incidents may help to illustrate June Crandall’s character: Crandall was well aware of the dangers associated with coal mining, noting that when things went wrong in a cramped space hundreds of feet below the ground, they often went catastrophically wrong . . . and left mourning loved ones. His union work, in part, was devoted to safer working conditions and disaster relief.

On November 13, 1909, a fire broke out in the Cherry Mine, Cherry, Illinois, a mining town located about eight miles from Peru, Illinois. Like most fires, it had simple origins. A load of hay, intended for the mule stables at the bottom of the mine, was apparently ignited by burning oil dripping from a kerosene torch. Attempts were made to put out the fire, but it spread to the wooden shaft infrastructure.⁴⁷ It was often the case that, in crisis situations such as these, the most earnest efforts to help were poorly conceived and made matters worse. Would-be rescuers reversed the large shaft fan in hopes of blowing out the fire; but this only fanned and spread the flames. The crew sealed off the shafts in an attempt to smother the fire, but this carried the unintended consequence of cutting off the miners’ oxygen supply and introducing toxic fumes referred to as “black damp” (a fatal mixture of carbon dioxide and nitrogen), into the mine shafts. All total, approximately 259 miners—men and boys—were killed, the vast majority due to asphyxiation.⁴⁸ The Cherry Mine disaster ranks as the third most deadly mine disaster in the history of coal mining in the United States.⁴⁹ The disaster prompted the Illinois State Legislature to establish stricter regulations for mine safety, and to pass a Workmen’s Compensation Act in 1911.⁵⁰

Crandall was devastated by the events in Cherry, and he had more than one reason to visit the site (located 75 miles from Bloomington), in the days following the tragedy. Some of the deceased were his wife Mary’s relatives, and he went to offer condolences. His other reason was out of a deep concern for the surviving families and how, given the sudden loss of income, they would survive the approaching winter. Crandall told the *Pantagraph*, “If ever there was a place

⁴⁵ June W. Crandall, “*The Pantagraph*,” September 5, 1910.

⁴⁶ Kemp, Bill. “Industrial Age’s Lifeblood Was Mined on the West Side,” *The Pantagraph*, December 9, 2007.

⁴⁷ Groves, Adam, “Significant Illinois Fires: Cherry Mine Disaster,” *guides.library.illinois.edu*, Retrieved October 26, 2023.

⁴⁸ “Cherry Mine Disaster,” Zinn Education Project, <https://www.zinnedproject.org/news/tdih/cherry-mine-disaster/>, Accessed February 20, 2024; Illinois State Historical Society Historic Marker for Cherry Mine Disaster, <https://www.historyillinois.org/FindAMarker/MarkerDetails.aspx?MarkerID=11#:~:text=On%20Saturday%2C%20November%2013%2C%201909,were%20trapped%20in%20the%20mine.>, Accessed February 20, 2024.

⁴⁹ Tintori, Karen. *Trapped, The 1909 Cherry Mine Disaster*, 1st Hardcover ed., (New York, NY: Atria Books, 2002), p. 27.

⁵⁰ Illinois State Historical Society Historic Marker for Cherry Mine Disaster; “First Workers’ Compensation Law in Illinois (1911), *100 Most Valuable Documents at the Illinois State Archives* online exhibit, https://www.ilsos.gov/departments/archives/online_exhibits/100_documents/1911-worker-comp-law.html#:~:text=The%20bill%20created%20the%20state's,and%20what%20actions%20required%20compensation., Accessed February 20, 2024.

where sorrow and suffering reigns, it is in the town of Cherry, Illinois, at the present time. I never witnessed so depressing and heartrending scenes as those which I have seen the past two days.” He stressed the need for “financial relief.” He said, “No one with a speck of human kindness in his heart could look on the scene as there enacted and withhold what he could give to the relief of the sufferers.”⁵¹

He took the opportunity, also, to underscore Temperance. In Crandall’s opinion, had the miners not been lured into taverns and spent their hard-earned money, he reasoned, they would have left a better legacy for their loved ones.⁵² The Bloomington Trades and Labor Assembly resolved to donate \$50.00 to Cherry relief (the equivalent of about \$1,750 today).⁵³

Due to June Crandall’s decade-long observation and periodic commentary on McLean County Coal Company mine conditions, several fatal incidents in mines around McLean County, the horrific scene at Cherry, the increase in the power and influence of the local union and Trades Assembly, and his own untimely death (albeit not in a coal mine but in similar work), the needed attention was gradually lent to mine safety. Illinois was the first state to pass legislation providing for mine firefighting and rescue stations in coal mining centers.⁵⁴ “Progressive Era state legislation,” wrote McLean County historian, Bill Kemp, “mandated safe zones between mine walls and coal car tracks.” As for the destitute survivors of mine disasters, a “mother’s pension” was created to “reduce the likelihood that widows would send their children to state or charitable homes.”⁵⁵

As per the aforementioned, Temperance was, it appears, one of Crandall’s sore subjects. So comes another example of his character, more specifically his moral/ethical standards and his conviction. Although there is no evidence that he was part of an established movement, he favored Temperance, the moderation of or abstinence with respect to intoxicating liquors. Crandall addressed the subject when the opportunity availed itself, but never with more of an exclamation point than when the matter of Temperance came before the Trades Assembly. On March 19, 1908, the Assembly (two dozen unions strong) was presented with a resolution to endorse the closing of taverns in McLean County (per the Local Option Law). One can only imagine the war within him as his fervent union advocacy crashed headlong into his strong feelings about alcohol. After protracted debate, the Assembly approved a counter resolution claiming Temperance to be “a detriment to the progress and business interests of the city.” A predictable response for an amalgamation which included as members not only the guilds of brewing and bartending, but associated ones such as cigar-making. In the eyes of the majority, closing bars and taverns would lead to “wiping out of existence” all three. The question, some argued, was “in no way a moral” one . . . but one of “bread and butter, of continued means of making a livelihood.” The Assembly was suspicious that enemies of organized labor saw Temperance as a way to make a couple of unions disappear. The Assembly not only thought the brewers, bartenders, and cigarmakers were in jeopardy, but that a number of other unions (blacksmiths, brass workers, coopers, engravers, glassblowers, horseshoers, metal polishers, miners, plumbers, printers, teamsters, tanners, wagonmakers, and others) would tumble like

⁵¹ “Saw Scenes of Sorrow at Cherry,” *The Pantagraph*, November 17, 1909.

⁵² “June Crandall Tells of Visit,” *The Weekly Pantagraph*, November 19, 1909.

⁵³ “Trades Assembly Gives to Relief Fund,” *The Pantagraph*, November 19, 1909; Measuringworth.com, Accessed February 20, 2024.

⁵⁴ “Chronology of Illinois History,” Illinois Secretary of State, https://www.ilsos.gov/publications/illinois_bluebook/chronology.pdf, Accessed February 20, 2024.

⁵⁵ Kemp, “Coal Miners Toiled in Dangerous, Often Deadly Environment.”

dominoes “and throw thousands upon thousands of trade unionists out of employment.”⁵⁶ Hyperbole aside, June Crandall thought the matter was, indeed, a moral issue and that maintaining drinking establishments would have destructive repercussions. He resigned his office as secretary-treasurer in protest. James Rader, vice-president, sided with him and also resigned.⁵⁷

June’s wife, Mary, and their daughter, Beulah, continued to live in their home at 1112 W. Grove Street after his death. Mary outlived her husband by nearly a half century, passing away on August 16, 1958, at age 79, having never remarried. She is interred with her husband at Evergreen Memorial Cemetery.⁵⁸

June and Mary’s daughter, Beulah, married James Elliot Arnold on December 25, 1929.⁵⁹ On March 22, 1939, Beulah gave birth to a son, Robert Elliot Arnold, who lived only for a day.⁶⁰ James died on October 20, 1978, at the age of 78.⁶¹ Beulah, on August 3, 1985, at the age of 86. Shortly before her death, Beulah had moved to the recently developed Westminster Village at 2025 Lincoln Street, Bloomington.⁶² Thus ended the Crandall family. James and Beulah are interred at Park Hill Cemetery.⁶³ Robert is buried between June and Mary in Evergreen Memorial Cemetery.⁶⁴ One may wonder why the child’s remains are with those of his grandparents and not his parents. Since James and Beulah lived several decades after their infant son’s death, it is likely they didn’t want the child to be buried alone. They placed him beside his grandfather, who had died some three decades earlier.

Even posthumously, June Crandall was there for someone.

By: John Capasso, 2024

⁵⁶ “Not a Moral Question,” *Freeport Daily Bulletin*, March 20, 1908.

⁵⁷ “Not a Moral Question;” “Rev Jesse Dancy Talks of Local Option,” *The Pantagraph*, March 17, 1908.

⁵⁸ “Mrs. Mary Crandall.”

⁵⁹ “Beulah L. Arnold,” *The Pantagraph*, August 5, 1985.

⁶⁰ June Walker Crandall family tree, (Provo, UT: Ancestry.com), Accessed February 7, 2024.

⁶¹ “James E. Arnold,” *The Pantagraph*, October 22, 1978.

⁶² “Beulah L. Arnold.”

⁶³ James E. and Beulah L. Arnold, https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/54370982/james_elliott-arnold: Accessed February 16, 2024.

⁶⁴ Robert Elliot Arnold, Grave Search, Evergreen Memorial Cemetery, Bloomington, Illinois.