

## The Flannerys

The Flannery family represented what life was like for working-class Irish families in Leadville. Mary Agnes Flannery and Thomas F. Flannery had a total of 15 children. By 1880, the Flannery family consisted of a family of ten yet depended on the earnings of only two breadwinners: Thomas Flannery and his 18-year-old son Daniel. Both men were miners, making less than three dollars each per day.

The family moved frequently, which was indicative of their poverty. Between 1862 and 1880, the family had moved six times between different states. In Leadville alone, they lived at thirteen different addresses. Their homes were often located in shanties and on the outskirts of town. Irish-Americans like the Flannerys were extremely transient and typically did not have the privilege of laying down roots in a single home or location. These individuals had no choice but to move to wherever work was available.

High levels of mortality were a prominent feature of life among the Leadville Irish. Health complications associated with miners' pneumonia, childbirth, and disease were constant threats to Leadville's inhabitants. Mary and Thomas Flannery outlived eight of their fifteen children, most of them dying in infancy and childhood. Five of the Flannery children died within less than a month of each other during Leadville's smallpox epidemic of 1883. On top of Leadville's high altitude and harsh winters, poor living conditions—such as cramped quarters and malnutrition—made miners and their families vulnerable to illness.