Although Doheny came to be identified with California and the West, he grew up in Fond du Lac, Wisconsin. His father, Patrick, had been born in Ireland in 1808. His mother, Ellen, was an Irish-Canadian born in St. John’s, Newfoundland, in 1818. As a young man, Patrick emigrated to Canada and worked as a seal fisherman before he married Ellen, a schoolteacher, in the mid-1840s. Sometime later, the couple moved to New York State, where Edward’s older brothers were born in the early 1850s. Patrick’s occupation during these years is unknown, but for lack of better prospects he moved his family to Wisconsin around 1855. Edward was born the next year, on August 10, 1856, followed by a sister and one more brother.

Most of the Irish families who migrated to Wisconsin during this period were searching for cheap farm land. Patrick, on the other hand, chose to settle in Fond du Lac, an industrial city at the southern end of Lake Winnebago and about thirty miles inland from Lake Michigan. Apparently, he did not have any agricultural experience and looked to the sawmills or the railroads for employment. The census records for 1860 and 1870 listed him simply as a laborer, but whatever he did, it provided enough to support a modest home and a growing family.

From what he later remembered, Doheny had a relatively normal childhood, with a few exceptions. Most notable was his education, which started sooner and lasted longer than was usual for the time. With his mother’s blessing, no doubt, Doheny begged for permission to start school at the age of four. His father relented, as much to keep him “out of the way at home” as anything else, but Edward proved to be an adept student who
moved easily through his courses. As a teenager, Doheny stayed in school when most others dropped out to take jobs, although he worked part-time at one of the local sawmills for a time before he almost lopped off a couple of his fingers running a knot saw. Such accidents were common, and Doheny bore the scars on his right hand with pride as a permanent reminder of his working-class roots.

He proved far more skillful in the classroom and finished high school in 1872 at the age of fifteen. His education, however weak by the standards of the established eastern schools, was still a rarity in the late nineteenth century and included instruction in geography, geology, chemistry, and university-level algebra. As one of only two graduating seniors for the year, Doheny delivered an honorary speech at the convocation. According to a local reporter, Doheny’s talk on the subject of success impressed the audience with “bold assertions, solid facts and good sense.” Mr. Doheny, the reporter concluded, was “no ordinary thinker; . . . he don’t search through libraries to see if his thoughts—his ideas, conflict with those of great men, but gives them expression in plain, unmistakable language. Mr. D will be a leader—not a follower. We need more such. Some of his sentences were not as smooth as oil, but the meaning was there, and need not be misunderstood . . . that man will make a creditable mark.”

Living in Wisconsin’s “second city,” a place with a business college, a growing economy, and a population of over thirteen thousand, Doheny could surely have found a route to success at home. Instead, he left town the day after his graduation, intending to join a federal surveying party leaving from Atchison, Kansas. This plan no doubt came out of the pages of the Fond du Lac newspapers, which at the time featured articles on the geological surveys, published items on lost Aztec gold mines in Arizona, and ran advertisements from the Burlington Railroad offering information on “How to go West.”

Overcome by the lure of the frontier, Doheny departed on July 2, 1872, still a month shy of his sixteenth birthday. An older brother bet him that he would get so homesick that he would never make it on his own. And when he got to Kansas and discovered that the survey party had already been gone for several weeks, he almost turned back. Over fifty years later, Doheny remembered this incident as one of the greatest disappointments of his life. But he stuck it out, doing everything from selling books door-to-door to working in a hotel—just to keep from returning home and proving his brother right. Ultimately, his perseverance paid off, and he found new opportunities that took him into the mining regions of the Rocky Mountains where, by the mid-1870s, he was hunting for silver and gold.
In 1880, after a long period of wandering throughout the West, Doheny arrived in New Mexico at the age of twenty-four. During this time, he truly lived up to B. C. Forbes's romantic claim that “rarely did Prospector Doheny sleep under other ceiling than the wide heavens. Each night he lay down with his faithful rifle at his side, his six-shooter ready for action and a hunter's knife at his belt.” Based at the silver camp at Lake Valley, in the southwestern corner of the territory, Doheny continued his search for wealth.

And there were opportunities to make money, especially when Doheny was among the first contingent of miners to head into the Black Range Mountains north of Lake Valley. As early as November 1880, he and four other men located two of the most promising mines in the area: the Mountain Chief and the Miner's Dream. These properties sat alongside the Iron King mine, located about a week earlier by H. W. Elliott, from which the Kingston mining camp got its name. In the beginning, Doheny made a respectable profit, but hardly a fortune, from his efforts, giving his mining claims names that epitomized the dreams of the prospector: the Brilliant, the Old Reliable, and the Phoenix. At this point Doheny was strictly a prospector, not a miner, and his goal was to sell the locations for profit, not work them for ore. But when the average claim sold for about $100, local prospectors rarely covered the cost of their operations and needed to keep churning up properties just to stay alive.

Finally, though, Doheny had two good years, in 1882 and 1883, when he located and sold several mining claims for a substantial sum of money. His run of luck began in May 1882, when he and a partner located the Phoenix and the Old Reliable. Two months later he bought out his partner's share for $150, held the claims for almost a year, perhaps doing a little development work to improve their value, and sold them for $6,000. Doheny also filed claims on the Brilliant and the Maud Muller mines in August 1882 and sold a two-thirds' interest in both mines for $1,000 a few weeks later. The buyer returned shortly and bought out Doheny's remaining interest for another $4,000. In a promotional brochure published by the *Kingston Tribune* in 1883, the editor wrote that the ground around the Brilliant was covered with large chunks of silver-bearing ore and speculated that, if it was “intelligently developed,” it would prove equal to its name.

That Doheny would immediately sell out his share of such a potentially profitable investment illustrated the psychology of the prospector who was always searching for the elusive bonanza. In these early years, especially, Doheny repeatedly sold good properties for an initial payoff and rarely settled down to work any of them for a steady income. Just a week after
sells the Brilliant, Doheny also sold the house and lot he owned in Lake Valley for $600 to the local blacksmith. He made another quick profit by purchasing two more town lots for $125 and selling them four days later for twice what he had paid. Between July 1882 and July 1883, then, Doheny earned a total of $12,575 from the sale of his various properties.

In the fall of 1883, Doheny moved to Kingston, which had become the center of activity for the region. At the time, as one of his friends later recalled, Doheny was a good-looking man with "regular features, ruddy complexion, and blue eyes." He was obviously well educated and supposedly even took a job for a while teaching school in the area. Since the forty-dollar-a-month salary was nothing in comparison to his income from prospecting, taking a regular job must have been an attempt to settle down for a while. Perhaps he needed the stability while he courted Carrie Lou Ella Wilkins, one of the few eligible young women in town.

Doheny and Carrie became acquainted when he stayed at the Occidental Hotel, an informal gathering place for Irish-American miners where her mother, Mariah Brophy, worked. As a well-known leader among that group, Doheny was probably a frequent boarder, if not a permanent resident. Apparently, Mariah and Carrie had been among the first inhabitants of the camp back when, as one observer noted, "the brush on Main street was so thick that no person could ride through it." How, or why, they ended up in Kingston is unknown. Carrie's father, Dr. Wilkins, had been an Army surgeon who was killed during the Civil War. Presumably, Mariah's maiden name was Brophy, or she must have later married a Mr. Brophy, but nothing much is known about her before she came to Kingston. According to the Territorial Census, compiled in 1885, Mariah was forty-three, was originally from Ohio, and had lived for a time in Kansas, where Carrie was born. Carrie was twenty years old and Doheny was just shy of twenty-seven when they were married on August 7, 1883, at the Catholic Church in Silver City.

An interesting side issue to his marriage concerned Doheny's relationship with his family in Wisconsin. Apparently, he had not written to his parents during the eleven years since he left home. Tragically, when he finally did write home to tell them about Carrie, there was no one there to receive the letter. His father, who would have been sixty-four, had died a few months after Doheny left home. His mother and sister passed away several years later. As for his brothers, the oldest one was unaccounted for, and the youngest had died while Doheny was still at home. His one remaining brother was living in Chicago and either did not receive the forwarded letter or chose not to answer it. In any case, when he did not hear
CHAPTER 1

Occidental Hotel, Kingston, ca. 1885. Carrie Doheny, holding her daughter, Eileen, is sitting on the balcony rail. Mariah Brophy, Carrie's mother, is sitting in the chair. Photo by J. C. Burge, courtesy of the Museum of New Mexico.

back from anyone in Fond du Lac, Doheny waited another thirteen years before Carrie persuaded him to go back and see what had happened to his family. Doheny's lack of interest in his Wisconsin roots indicates the possibility that, rather than succumbing to wanderlust in 1872, he may have been running away from a difficult life at home.  

When he and Carrie headed back to Kingston to begin their own fam-
ily, Doheny was forced to reconsider a number of things about his life. In particular, it seemed that his days as a footloose prospector had come to an end. Few prospectors were married, and even fewer brought their families to the mining frontier. Almost by definition, family responsibilities and the demands of a mining career pulled men in opposite directions, and Doheny suffered under the strain during his remaining years in New Mexico. His predicament paralleled that of his future oil partner, Charles Canfield, who arrived in the Black Range in the early 1880s with his family in tow and moved his wife and child into the camp at Chloride, in the northern end of the district. When his plans failed, Canfield sent his wife back to Nebraska to live with her relatives while he returned to prospecting. Although Canfield eventually became a local legend when he made a major strike on the Comstock mine in Kingston, he endured several years of lonely deprivation before his circumstances changed. And he was one of few prospectors who actually succeeded in making a small fortune from his labor. Most just hung on until debt and depression forced them back home or on to the next mining area.11

As one of a handful of family men in Kingston, Doheny did not have to endure the extended periods of loneliness and isolation so common to a miner’s life, but he still had to deal with the frustration of mining, itself. And during the worst times, with Carrie and baby Eileen (born in 1884) beside him, Doheny faced the immediate consequences that Canfield avoided when he sent his family back home. With such an obvious motivation to succeed, Doheny worked diligently over the years, but he never struck it rich. Most of the time, he barely made any money at all.

During the Dohenys’ early years of marriage, Kingston was a classic western boomtown. According to its 1883 promotional pamphlet, Kingston “grew as by magic.” But like all the boom towns that preceded it, Kingston rose out of the wilderness on the collective dreams of its new inhabitants. A reporter for the Mining and Scientific Press described the camp in its heyday: “The town extends about a mile and a half along the creek; contains about 1,500 people and over 200 houses, principally board houses covered with canvas. The dust is about a foot deep. There are no churches, but about 30 saloons. Restaurants by the dozen. I noticed 2 hardware stores, 3 assay offices, 5 real estate offices, house and sign painter, contractor and builders.”12

Another writer later asserted that it was from this location that “the prospector sallied forth a poor man in the morning, returning a millionaire in the afternoon for he had ‘struck it rich.’ Here fortunes grew in a single day to vanish as quickly by games of chance, under the shadow of
pines, at night.” B. C. Forbes observed that stories claiming that silver could be effortlessly scooped up off the ground “spread like wildfire” and brought thousands of people, “mostly daring gentlemen of fortune,” into the camp. Hoping to equate his subject with that adventurous breed, Forbes falsely reported that “riches poured into Doheny’s lap by the tens of thousands of dollars.”

Despite all the excitement Kingston generated, a reporter for the Silver City Enterprise concluded that, in actuality, “there are a few of what can be called good mines around Kingston, although the value of most of them cannot be determined until more work has been done.” While this appraisal was probably intended to deflate the hopes of Silver City’s latest rival, it proved accurate in portraying the situation in Kingston over its short life as a mining center. There were always good properties to be found in the area; the problems were filtering out the hyperbole and securing the financial backing to make the mines pay.

As the history of western mining has shown, profits came only with intensive capital investment. The individual prospector sometimes worked a mine for himself, hoping for that one-in-a-million chance to strike it rich, but could go only so far without money from outside investors despite years of backbreaking labor. Unfortunately, this meant that someone other than the original locator very likely would be the one to reap any reward. The result for the mining camp as a whole was a constant battle between the local journalists and merchants, who tried to lure in outside capital through extensive advertisement, and the miners, who hesitated to invite in another set of fortune hunters.

Replaying a scene common to the mining regions of the West, the management of Hillsboro’s Sierra County Advocate stated that its aim was to “bring our resources prominently before the country at large” and to “boom the town and develop the country.” But the local mining papers usually descended to the level of shameless huckstering that has made the reality of mining camps so hard to discover. Along these lines, the Kingston Tribune stated that papers “crowded to the margin with spicy locals and well-timed editorials” were “equal to two 40-stamp mills in the way of developing the mines around them.” Unfortunately, the spice was almost always intended to make up for a lack of other ingredients.

Kingston, then, was a camp where prosperity was always within sight but just out of reach. The local press celebrated each successive boom and lamented the equally frequent depressions, up one month down the next, in a constant search for signs of hope. In reality, Kingston remained a poor man’s mining camp, a place where the mines “pay from the grass roots.”
After surviving the frenzy of a mining boom in 1882 and 1883, Kingston settled into an existence as a quasi-stable community. Although the initial boom did not thrust the camp into the ranks of the major mining towns, it was clear that the area had the mineral potential to attain some stability. To that end, Kingston pinned its hopes on the arrival of two forces, the Santa Fe Railroad and the eastern capitalist, and on the elimination of a third, the Apache Indians. The Apaches harassed the local population for a time before they were driven out, and a few capitalists, mostly from Britain, eventually found their way to the camp. But the railroad never did arrive, thus depriving the camp of an essential element of success. Early in 1880, the Santa Fe Railroad had moved southward from Colorado into New Mexico, under the energetic direction of A. A. Robinson. Thereafter, it continued south into the Rio Grande Valley and turned west to make a connection with the Southern Pacific at Deming. Investors from Silver City, the only stable mining town in the area, banded together and built their own connection to the line as early as 1883. The next year, in Sierra County, the Santa Fe made a spur to Lake Valley, thirty miles shy of Kingston.  

Throughout this period, the miners at Kingston pleaded for a rail connection, either at their camp or at nearby Hillsboro, as their only salvation. Although the initial strikes that put Kingston on the map occurred in rare pockets of high-grade silver, the local mines produced large quantities of refractory ore that had to be transported to smelters as far away as Denver. But that required a long wagon trip to Deming or Silver City, and consequently the ore piled up unprofitably alongside the mines because it cost more to haul out than it returned in silver. Several companies built processing plants in both Kingston and Hillsboro to relieve the burden temporarily, but a lack of funds and local mismanagement kept these smelters from operating steadily enough to eliminate the problem. Over time, the growing piles of low-grade ore sat as visible reminders of a bright future cut short for lack of a railroad. Eventually, the Santa Fe sent an engineer out to investigate the Kingston area in the early 1890s, but by then it was too late; the combination of widespread economic depression and the saturation of the silver market had put the camp out of its misery. As one of Kingston’s long-time residents, Doheny saw this process through almost to the end.

When he and Carrie settled into married life in Kingston in 1883, the camp had already evolved from the raucous boom town it had been at its founding. While the population fluctuated with the fortunes of the camp, the Dohenys were among the 300 to 400 residents who lived there year
round. In June 1885, according to the Territorial Census, they were living with Carrie's mother at the Occidental Hotel, among the other families and small businesses at the center of town. Along the periphery, only a few blocks away, this core group of a dozen or so families gave way to a less stable population of single miners, and this section quickly faded into the isolated prospector's cabin or rancher's house only a few miles out. Because most of the major mines lay within a mile or two of the camp, the miners were able to commute from town each day, while the prospectors still spent a good deal of time away from home.

Mostly, Edward tried to stay put and develop his existing claims. He also tried to extend himself by working as a manager for several mining outfits, a job that required some degree of administrative skill and organizational ability. He also joined a group, fronted by St. Louis investors, that started a new mining company. By 1886, Edward and Carrie had purchased two lots and a house for themselves on the south side of Main Street, and in March of that year, Doheny also purchased the Occidental Hotel, complete with furnishings, for $650. Two stories, roughly ten to fifteen feet across the front, and probably no more than thirty feet deep, the hotel mirrored the ramshackle appearance of the camp itself. Three months later, Edward sold the hotel back to his mother-in-law for $350, apparently absorbing a $300 loss on the property. If these were the flush times, they were short-lived, since Doheny was soon strapped for cash.

County records reveal that, from the fall of 1886 until December 1889, when they left Kingston, Carrie and Edward's resources continued to dwindle. Several times over this period, circumstances forced them into debt. These were not the strategic business loans of someone with the resources to sustain them, but the recurring small loans of people living on the edge. This process began in September 1886, when Doheny mortgaged a quarter interest in the Mountain Chief claim to the Percha bank for $200 on a ninety-day note. The next month he and Carrie deeded over their house in Kingston to the local banker for $500. In December, Doheny borrowed another $272.50, secured by the quarter interest in the Mountain Chief plus a quarter interest in the Mammoth claim, located the month before. By the next July, Doheny was able to pay back the house loan and cancel the debts on his mining claims. But in late August, he again turned the house and lots over to the bank for $300 in gold coin. This time the bank kept the note for over two years. The day he and Carrie left Kingston in December 1889, they sold their house for $750.

Considering his windfall from Lake Valley, an obvious question is, how did Doheny go through the $12,000 he started with in such a short time?
The answer touches on the major obstacle for prospectors like himself. Mining, even on the smallest scale, took an inordinate amount of money. In 1882, for example, one mining expert, using a New Mexico mine as a hypothetical case, estimated the cost of locating and developing a mine for a one-year period at $10,000. This sum included the time and labor of the prospector, food and supplies for the year, recording fees, and the extraneous expenses necessary to promote the property. Given these development costs, it was no wonder the prospector could not exist for long without financial support. An 1885 article in the Kingston newspaper described the pathetic circumstances that led many a "starved miner" to spend his last cent developing his claim.21

The prospectors who were most likely to make money were those who worked their claims when they could afford it and labored for somebody else when they were broke. Under the best circumstances, such a prospector might be able to sustain this process by selling the ore from his diggings, as many Kingston miners tried to do. Unfortunately, except for the rare pockets of rich material, most of the low-grade ore from the Kingston mines was simply too costly to handle. From all indications, Doheny followed this same path. Although he located and sold a number of mines in his early days at Lake Valley, he spent years working on the Miner's Dream and the Mountain Chief to no avail. His was the typical case of hard work and sacrifice meaning nothing without a large measure of good luck. On this score, one Kingston correspondent wrote, in April 1885, that the Miner's Dream was particularly "unfortunate" because, even though the mine had one of the best showings in camp, neither Doheny nor any of his lessees ever seemed to "get on to the pockets." At the time, the mine was being worked on a lease, and the commentator was unintentionally prophetic when he noted that the bond holders had reluctantly "quit work on the Dream."22

While it took Doheny a few more years before he gave up on his dream, he had been carrying the seeds of doubt and depression for a long time. He expressed these thoughts clearly in a letter written to a former mining associate in July 1886. His tone of resignation speaks volumes about the prospector's life: "You know I lost on every partner I had, that I could have sold time and again without them. But there is no use of complaining about what we have missed. The Comstock claim which we gave to Johnnie Roach and Dan Ferguson has turned out $400,000 in three months, but it is petered out now and neither the Miner's Dream or Mountain Chief have produced a dollar, such is luck."23

The next year started off better when Doheny joined with three other
Kingston men to form the Satisfaction Mining Company. Like many of the mining operations in the district, the company depended on its St. Louis office to promote the property and generate the necessary investment income. The Kingston representatives who filled the administrative positions at the mine were R. C. Troeger, a druggist and mine operator, who put up the largest share of local money; F. A. Urban, the owner of a hardware store in Kingston, who became the president of the company; and Doheny, who served as the mining superintendent.24

Initially, the mine produced well, and by early March the local paper reported on a strike in a "magnificent" body of ore three feet wide. Mysteriously, little more than a week later, the Satisfaction shut down operations. No public information was forthcoming to explain what had gone wrong, except for a report that thirteen local miners had lost their jobs and were owed three months' back pay. It was possible that the story about the new strike had been a last-ditch effort to secure funds from local investors and, failing that, the Satisfaction Mining Company collapsed.25

Although the Kingston newspaper added nothing more, the mining investors' section of the St. Louis Globe-Democrat followed Kingston properties in some detail. While the Satisfaction Mining Company was either too small or too new to receive direct attention, an adjacent mine, the Lochiel, had its story played out for St. Louis investors, and that account sheds some light on Doheny's situation. The Lochiel, the Satisfaction, and two other producing properties sat along an independent vein of high-grade ore. When the Lochiel company collapsed in early April, the stockholders blamed their losses on gross mismanagement by the mine superintendent, but responsibility lay further up the management hierarchy. The properties were being mined for stock investors rather than minerals. In particular, one of the Lochiel's directors, a St. Louis mining investor named Charles Greene, staged a fight among the members of the board, which drove the stock price down from sixty cents to twelve-and-a-half cents per share. Neither Greene nor his principal opponents on the board had any of their own money in the mine, having received their stock free of charge when the company was organized. After they boomed the property and sucked in the unsuspecting stockholders, they either wasted the funds on unproductive development or simply pocketed the cash. Either way, when the company ran out of money, they walked away unharmed, free to reopen the mine once the original investors pulled out. Since Charles Greene was one of the seven directors of the Satisfaction Mining Company, he probably employed the same scheme with that operation. And as superintendent, Doheny was probably blamed for the disaster just like his counterpart was at the Lochiel.26
While Doheny had little invested in the business besides a few months of his own labor, the experience took its toll on his outlook. For the next two years, Kingston continued to experience the false booms and harsh depressions that had plagued it from the beginning. The local reporters still saw capitalists getting off every stagecoach, ready to turn fortune around, even though this always seemed to result in the best mining properties ending up in the hands of English investors. None of that made much of a difference to the camp as a whole. The decline in the profitability of silver and the high cost of shipping ore to the smelter kept Kingston at a standstill, while each successive downturn in the local economy let loose another handful of miners who could not hang on any longer.

A few large companies provided jobs for the miners who stuck it out, and Doheny might have traded in a chance to make a big strike for a steady income, since working for wages in between prospecting trips was a common practice. For example, when Albert Fall, the future secretary of the interior and Doheny associate, came to Kingston in 1886, he spent a good deal of time working “on the hammer” for someone else. Doheny was still prospecting on a lease when he and Fall first met, and he later recalled that Fall had the better deal because he was at least getting paid. Still, Doheny could not hold out forever, and his situation continued to deteriorate. Certainly, times were desperate during the summer of 1889, when he was forced to paint the new drug store in Hillsboro just to make ends meet—perhaps the final indignity that led him to pack up and leave in December.27

Having made that decision, however, and perhaps to stay close to Carrie’s mother, he and Carrie went only as far as Silver City. The Kingston paper reported that “Mr. Doheny will study law under Mr. Pickett, a well known lawyer of this district.” Whether Doheny was really serious about this or was looking for any reason to move on is unclear. Silver City had several times Kingston’s population, sat at the center of a well-developed mining region, and was a logical place to search for greater opportunity. Following his stated plans, Doheny went to work for H. L. Pickett as a mining consultant and presumably hoped to study law as he worked.28

There are few references to Doheny’s efforts on behalf of Pickett’s clients, which consisted primarily of making diagrams and models of mining claims for evidence at trial. As for his study of the law, there is no other information. What is certain is that Doheny did not stay with Pickett very long, and contrary to one of the cherished myths about his life, he never passed the territorial bar, never became a partner in a Silver City law firm, and never practiced law in the same judicial district as Albert Fall. Neither did he, as one story claimed, undertake his legal studies from a hospital bed after falling down an open mine shaft and breaking both legs.29
While Fall became a noted attorney in the region before he went on to Washington as a New Mexico senator, Doheny secured a commission as a notary public and set up an office in May 1890 to file mining claims and patents. He advertised his services and the extent of his legal training in the Silver City Enterprise with the following notice: “Edward L. Doheny, Reports on Mines and Mining titles. To Mine Owners: The undersigned is prepared to examine and report on mining propositions and titles to mining claims, and to do the necessary legal and clerical work connected with obtaining United States Patents for mining locations, guaranteeing the greatest possible dispatch, and giving advice in regard to the most economical and expeditious manner of procuring patents to mineral lands. Call on or address, Edward L. Doheny, Silver City, N.M., Office over Crawford’s store.” Doheny ran this notice for almost a year, even though he never concentrated on the notary business.

Besides the difficulties of earning a living, mounting concern over Carrie’s health was also troubling Doheny at this time. Apparently, she had been suffering from some unnamed malady for several years. On at least one occasion in Kingston, Doheny had to borrow money to take her to El Paso for treatment. Described by a longtime resident as “excitable” but deserving of help, Carrie received the reluctant support of Doheny’s friends. Several generations later, there are rumors in the family that Carrie might have been an alcoholic.

As reported in the press, however, Carrie suffered from the altitude of the mining camps and had been seriously ill for most of October and November. In March 1891, Edward took her to El Paso for treatment once again, and she was contemplating a convalescent trip to San Diego. In the meantime, Mariah made repeated trips to Silver City see her and to take care of Eileen. Perhaps because of Carrie’s weakened condition, Mariah held her marriage to Martin Barber, another Kingston miner, at the Doheny home in Silver City in January 1891. Although Mariah continued to live in Kingston, she was able to relieve Edward of some of the responsibility of caring for his wife and daughter.

Worried about his financial circumstances and the need to provide for his family, Doheny let the notary business fall by the wayside and plunged back into the mining business in November 1890, when he joined up with J. C. Carrera, another part-time consultant for Pickett. Carrera was one of the best-known mineralogists in the Southwest and was a professor at the Agricultural and Mechanics College at Mesilla Park, New Mexico. Carrera had acquired an interest in some lead mines in the Pinos Altos mountains at the end of October and offered Doheny a partnership in the operation.
Initially named Carrera & Co., the outfit was recognized as Carrera & Doheny by December. The exact business relationship between the two men is unclear, but their collaboration brought compliments from one mining reporter who saw new fortunes on the rise:

The skill employed in the opening up of the Alpha and Omega mine, belonging to Huston & Thomas, west of Pinos Altos is meeting with unprecedented success. The Messrs. Carrera & Doheny since the inception of their management have uncovered lead riches which hitherto have had an existence only in the imagination of the owners. The daily tonnage keeps a dozen or more ox teams employed, and the transportational facilities of the Silver Branch of the A. T. & S. F. railroad are at the moment, inadequate to move the accumulations of a single weeks product from this wonderful property.34

The Alpha and Omega Mine was one of the oldest properties in the area and one of the best lead-bearing mines in the district. It had fallen victim to the poorly written tariff provision of 1873, which imperiled the lead mines of the western states by allowing direct competition with similar ore from Mexico. Under pressure from lead miners, Congress eventually included a duty on Mexican lead ore in the McKinley Tariff of 1890. Doheny and Carrera, in taking advantage of the new situation, made the Alpha and Omega an enviable possession once again.35

For several months, Carrera controlled the lease on the mine, and Doheny served as manager of the property. This arrangement fell apart in February 1891, when a disagreement between the men forced them to close down and stop production. Speculation about a change in the management of the mine in early March was confirmed when Doheny bought out Carrera’s share and became a one-third owner of the lease. At that point, the mine was still productive, and Doheny was shipping out a carload of ore a day. By July, everything seemed to be going so well, a local reporter wrote, that Doheny and the owners of the property were clearly “in bonanza.”36

For eight months before July 1891, the Enterprise printed no fewer than a dozen notices on the mine, beginning with one that claimed that the immense quantities of ore contained in the Alpha and Omega would “soon give New Mexico a good name abroad, and will greatly assist in restoring confidence in this county with the mining world.” Suddenly, however, there was no further mention of the mine or Doheny’s connection to it. Apparently, Carrera left Pinos Altos in May to become the purchasing
agent for the International Smelter of El Paso, the same processing plant
to which Doheny delivered his ore. But in late June, the smelter was
"knocked out by floods" and taken over by its creditors. Although Doheny
was still shipping out large quantities of ore in July, the lack of smelting
capacity forced him to abandon his work on the mine by the end of the
summer.\textsuperscript{37}

Given this latest predicament, Doheny decided it was time to make a
bigger move than the one that had brought him to Silver City. He decided
to head to California, where a number of his old friends and partners had
already started in again. Despite his repeated failures, or perhaps because
of them, Doheny left New Mexico with some invaluable skills that were
readily transferrable to the oil business. His knowledge of geology and his
understanding of mining claims, leases, and land titles were obvious assets.
The hard lessons learned about corporate finance, stock investments, and
business relations were more subtle but no less important credentials.\textsuperscript{38}

Beyond all that, Doheny’s experience as a prospector and miner cer­
tainly entitled him to call himself a western pioneer. But the reality of his
life was nothing like the fanciful stories written about him in his later years,
and the need to substantiate his frontier character did not make it neces­
sary for him to dredge up the painful details of his past. In fact, given what
his life had really been like, Doheny told Albert Fall at one point later on
that he was glad there was no actual record of their years in New Mex­
ico. Without a doubt, if one had been available, it would have shaken him
out of his nostalgia for what he recalled as a time “when all the world
seemed bright, and the future held nothing in store that seemed to be
unconquerable.”\textsuperscript{39}