

# Authority, Community, and Conflict: Rioting and Aftermath in a Late-Nineteenth Century Pennsylvania Coal Town

John Davies  
*University of Delaware*

On February 3 and 4, 1888, public disorder in the Pennsylvania coal town of Shenandoah resulted in a handful of injuries and minor property damage. This violence occurred in the midst of a strike against the Philadelphia and Reading Coal and Iron Company (PRCI). Shenandoah miners were among those in the Schuylkill anthracite region who struck a month earlier when the PRCI, which controlled mining in much of the Schuylkill and adjacent anthracite fields, refused to negotiate a wage increase.

In examining the violence at Shenandoah, intersecting tensions of the period—between workers and management, immigrants and natives, order and disorder—are revealed. Shenandoah, located just west of Mahanoy City in Schuylkill County, was home to an ethnically diverse population. Many of those involved in the disorder seem to have been of eastern European origin. Contemporary accounts described the disorder as riotous. Historians such as Victor Greene, Harold W. Aurand, and Michael Barendse, examining the Schuylkill strike in detail, viewed the disorder primarily as an expression of labor militancy.

How best can the violence at Shenandoah be described? Those arrested and tried were charged with rioting and assault. Yet the events of February 3 and 4 cannot be easily categorized. The problems with language parallel the difficulties of historical representation encountered in presenting a narrative of events at Shenandoah. Yet insights into life in this late-nineteenth century anthracite town, and on the intricate relationships of work, community, and ethnicity can be drawn. This is especially true in examining the aftermath of the violence, a topic beyond the scope of previous accounts.

What motivated the violence at Shenandoah? Victor Greene viewed the events as an example of the role eastern Europeans played in the unionization process in the anthracite industry. He found that “cohesive elements of East European society, Polish, Lithuanian, Slovak, and Ruthenian, caused its members to carry on the workers’ cause resolutely and tolerate no dissension.”<sup>1</sup> Harold W. Aurand described the “rioting” in the setting of failed attempts to establish an effective labor organization. Aurand cited the difficulty of union organizers to look beyond ethnic differences as one reason behind labor’s failures. In time, the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) established a presence in the area, due in part to the recruitment of immigrant workers.<sup>2</sup>

Michael Barendse discussed the violence at Shenandoah as a reaction to “provocation” by corporate authority as well as an example of “selective violence . . . used . . . to enforce solidarity among mine workers.”<sup>3</sup> In agreement with Greene, Barendse further argued that the actions of eastern European miners served to strengthen labor organization, contrary to perceptions of fellow miners, contemporary observers, and later historians. Barendse argued that negative perceptions of eastern European laborers originated in “assumptions of cultural and racial superiority implicit” in American thought during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This lack of objectivity is evident in contemporary accounts of the events at Shenandoah, and would color later accounts of anthracite labor organization as well.<sup>4</sup>

Even if the events at Shenandoah cannot be considered “rioting” pure and simply, the tools used to analyze crowd behavior work well here. An investigation of the disorder’s aftermath reveals continued questioning of social hierarchy and the expression of popular discontent, which may be viewed in the context of the social history of rioting. This context allows for a new perspective on the violence, separate from connections between ethnicity and labor organization. In *The Crowd in History: A Study of Popular Disturbances in France and England, 1730-1848*, George Rudé described the historian’s task as that of answering these questions:

what actually happened, both as to the event itself, and as to its origins and its aftermath? . . . how large was the crowd concerned, how did it act, who (if any) were its promoters, who composed it, and who led it? . . . Next, who were the target victims of the crowd’s activities? . . . A further relevant question is: how effective were the forces of repression, or of law and order? . . . Finally: what were the consequences of the event, and what has been its historical significance? And so, having dissected the crowd and its components, its leaders and its victims, we return to the question from which we started—the nature and importance of an event in history.<sup>5</sup>

Rudé’s questions may serve as a framework for examination of the violence at Shenandoah.

Looking at rioting in an American context, Paul A. Gilje asked much the same questions. Building on Rudé’s work, Gilje defined a riot as “any group of twelve or more people attempting to assert their will immediately through the use of force outside the normal bounds of law.” Force, for Gilje, is “coercion or compulsion based upon violence, or based on the threat of violence, or based, within indefinite boundaries on the ritual and habits of mob action.”<sup>6</sup> While patterns of rioting which had developed in Europe were carried over with the colonization of America, Gilje argued that a shift in manifestations of public disorder took place in the nineteenth century. As the ideal

of a "corporate community" gave way to ethnic, racial, and class conflict, rioting became more violent. As Gilje wrote, "Americans could kill each other because they did not identify with each other."<sup>7</sup> Elements of the disorder at Shenandoah may be considered as riotous. Yet while fitting into the pattern of rioting which Gilje described as characteristic of the nineteenth century, community ideals were seemingly contested as well.

The conflict over these ideals centered on authority. Viewed as violent resistance to authority, the disorder signified a community in flux, as immigrants of eastern European origin were arriving in Shenandoah in ever-increasing numbers. The verdict passed on those arrested for the "rioting" suggests an awareness of the changing social order on the part of corporate and civic authorities. Reaction to the disorder exposed divisions within the many communities found in Shenandoah. The prosecution of alleged rioters may have attempted to paper over some of these divisions. The eastern European men arrested and tried for the disturbance that took place on February 3, 1888 were cleared of charges of rioting and assault while held liable for the damages caused by the violence. The jury's verdict evoked dissatisfaction among certain editorial writers, yet the decision appears to have closed the door on the incident. The disorder at Shenandoah, and its aftermath, signaled a change in the equations of local power. This change would be felt throughout the anthracite region in general with the passage of time.

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The anthracite coal mined at Shenandoah, and throughout northeastern Pennsylvania, literally fueled the industrialization of America in the nineteenth century. Pennsylvania's anthracite region held seventy-five percent of the world's anthracite in four distinct fields: the Northern, or Wyoming-Lackawanna field, which extends through Luzerne and Lackawanna counties; the Eastern Middle, or Lehigh, field, which lies across southern Luzerne County, reaching into eastern Carbon and northern Schuylkill counties; the Western Middle field, home to Shenandoah, stretching across the northwestern corner of Schuylkill County, across the southern tip of Columbia County, into Northumberland County; and the Southern field, which reaches from Mauch Chunk, or Jim Thorpe, in Carbon County, through Schuylkill County, southern Lebanon County, extending into Dauphin County, close to the Susquehanna River. The four fields are generally described as three, with the Western Middle and Southern fields known as the Schuylkill field.<sup>8</sup>

Incorporated as a borough in 1866, Shenandoah was one of several coal towns which grew with the expansion of the anthracite railroads in the 1860s and 1870s. Anthony Wallace suggested that Shenandoah was a locus of Irish migration after 1850, a place where the Irish "were able to control local Demo-

cratic politics.” It is not clear if this was still the case in the late 1880s.<sup>9</sup> Shenandoah was a community of roughly 14,000 in 1888, of whom, Victor Greene estimated, one fourth were eastern European immigrants. Nestled on a bluff in the hills of northern Schuylkill County, the town was bordered on its southern side by a mass of boulders, known to its residents as “The Rocks.” A public health official writing of Shenandoah in 1887 also noted the tenements along the “Rocks” which mainly housed eastern Europeans.<sup>10</sup> Usually described as “Poles and Huns” in newspaper reports, immigrant residents of the town included, Poles, Lithuanians, Ukrainians, and other ethnicities from the Austro-Hungarian empire. The town was ringed by several collieries, employing workers of various nationalities.

In the early months of 1888, many of these collieries and workers were idle. The joint committee of the Knights of Labor, the Amalgamated Association of Miners and Laborers, and the Association of Electric Engineers had struck for a wage increase of 15 percent, a demand ignored by both independent operators and larger companies in the Lehigh field. Miners there had been striking since September of 1887. In the Wyoming field, where union representation was weak, the call to strike was virtually ignored. Schuylkill miners struck against the PRCI in January 1888, after the Reading Railroad refused to extend a wage increase agreement reached that previous autumn. Smaller operators granted the extension, but their men would not mine coal that would be carried by the Reading.<sup>11</sup> By the first week in February, divisions in the joint committee over the Schuylkill strike were showing. Chairman John Lee continued to link the anthracite strike to the P&R railroad strike. Daniel Duffy and P. J. Brennan pushed for allowing men to return to work for independent operators. It was decided that miners employed at independent collieries which had acceded to the wage increase would vote on returning to work. Under these conditions, a few collieries reopened.<sup>12</sup>

Violence was rare during the 1887-88 strike, but not unknown in either the Lehigh or Schuylkill fields. Immigrant miners were often linked to this violence. Incidents in the Wyoming and Lehigh fields illustrate the willingness of immigrants to fight against their employers and against other workers brought in to break strikes. On August 8, 1887, at the Alden Coal Company, near Wilkes-Barre, eastern European men and women attacked strikebreakers, some of whom were “newly arrived Slavic immigrants.” A few weeks later, the foreman of the mine was also attacked. In September of 1887, Italian strikers at the Hollywood mine in the Lehigh field had to be restrained from attacking other Italians brought in to work.<sup>13</sup> A number of violent incidents occurred in the Schuylkill field during the first week of February 1888, most dramatically in Shenandoah.

Frustration over the course of the strike, and the anger felt at those returning to work, was expressed in the first week of February, 1888, as some

mines began operations. This anger and frustration was not only expressed by the strikers, but by female family members as well. On February 1, eleven "Hungarian" mine workers were attacked en route to the Suffolk mine, near Mahanoy City. Strikers claimed that "boys" were to blame.<sup>14</sup> Also on February 1, some 75 women gathered at the Glendower mine near Glen Carbon, and addressed the men leaving the mine, offering them bread and beseeching them to stop work. The men refused, and hurried toward their trains, as they reportedly "noticed two elderly women had guns." The crowd pursued them, screaming and throwing bread at the retreating workers. Greene, citing newspaper reports and the testimony of eyewitnesses, identified the aggressors in both cases as eastern Europeans.<sup>15</sup> On February 2 and 3, other incidents of strike-related violence were reported in the Schuylkill field as well.<sup>16</sup>

During the first week of February, mines operating around Shenandoah had more than enough men to work them. Trouble occurred as they let out for the day at about five o'clock on February 3. Strikers were reported as harassing workers, throwing rocks or snowballs. This occurred in at least two different locations, with perhaps one hundred men present. Coal and Iron officers intervened in both instances.<sup>17</sup> Officers Kreiger and Shane were reported as taking their prisoner, Joseph Wasilowski, "a stout young Polander aged 24 years," to justice of the peace William Shoemaker's office. Officers William Moyer and J. N. Deibert were set upon by the crowd while escorting their prisoner.<sup>18</sup> In the midst of the melee, the officers fired into the crowd, wounding at least three men: John Cather, Jr., Mike Heffron, and an unnamed Pole. The crowd then dispersed.<sup>19</sup>

Borough police officers James Shields and James Wheelham took the two C&I officers into custody for "shooting within the borough limits." They escorted their charges to the office of justice of the peace John J. Monaghan, with "hundreds following in their wake." Once there, Joseph Schwincufski pressed charges against the two for assault and battery. C&I Police Captain Daniel Christian arrived with two other C&I officers, advising his men to plead guilty and go to jail. Arrangements for a C&I and "special police" escort were made. By this time, a crowd, reported as primarily composed of eastern Europeans, gathered in front of the magistrate's offices.<sup>20</sup>

While bail was posted for Wasilowski, a chunk of ice was thrown through the front window of Shoemaker's office. "It was the key-note for mad work." Ice and stones began flying, subsiding as the prisoner came out. The attention of the crowd was soon directed elsewhere, presumably toward Monaghan's office. Minor damage was done to Shoemaker's office—a broken oil lamp and an iron railing which was torn off of the building.<sup>21</sup>

As the sleigh for the C&I men pulled up in front of Monaghan's, a barrage of "stones and other missiles" was launched at the magistrate's office. As the assault continued, the office was abandoned, its occupants escaping

through a trap door or window in the rear of the magistrate's private office.<sup>22</sup> Monaghan and borough officer Thomas Reilly went into the crowd, fighting. The magistrate and those who had come to his aid escaped without further harm, although "the front of the office was totally wrecked." Members of the strikers' advisory board appeared, and with their assistance, some semblance of order was restored.<sup>23</sup>

Soon after, fourteen C&I policemen, armed with revolvers, marched up the street. Before they reached the crowd, however, Reilly approached them. He "counselled them to turn and go back." Reilly was backed by Shields and special policeman Igo. A revolver was pointed in Shields's face "with the remark to 'Stand aside,' but he pluckily held his ground." The Coal and Iron men returned to the Indian Ridge colliery, and further violence was avoided in that part of town.<sup>24</sup>

Enough other violence occurred as it was. On West Coal Street at the time of the rioting, near the Kohinoor colliery, workers were attacked by the "same element that figured in the other difficulty," according to the *Evening Herald*. The *Daily Republican* reported Schuylkill County Sheriff Duffy as clearing the streets with the help of town residents by 7 PM, "except for a knot of excited Huns, who were allowed to freeze off their anger." Special officers were sworn in to keep the peace. Moyer and Deibert went to Pottsville later that night to turn themselves in, posting their bail.<sup>25</sup>

The residents of Shenandoah were described as "taking a humorous view of the affair, although expressing sorrow that it should have occurred." Many blamed the C&I police for the disturbance. The Pottsville *Daily Republican* quoted Chief Burgess Boehm as saying:

My opinion is that the Coal and Iron Police are responsible for this battle. They were not on the Philadelphia & Reading Company's property when the row happened and I believe they have no right to travel around this town with firearms. We are able to protect this town ourselves with our officers.

John Lee, chair of the joint committee, and other strike leaders also felt that the presence of Coal & Iron policemen exacerbated tensions that evening, while taking credit for helping to calm the rioters. Lee was quoted as saying, "The police have brought on this trouble, I believe in my heart, to break public sentiment against us, and give Corbin's crowd chance to pose as martyr's [sic]."<sup>26</sup>

The C&I officers involved in the melee had their own story to tell. A report based on statements by officers Moyer and Deibert stated that "the Poles and Hungarians started the riot, and the officers did not shoot until the crowd had them down when they both fired at their assailants." The rioters

were said to have shot first. Moyer was quoted as saying "Huns and Poles started and ended the fuss, there were a thousand of them at the start, and soon all the foreign scum of the neighborhood were at us. . . . The people of the town generally blame us, I know, and we had few friends, if any." The C&I police were reported as gathering weapons at their Indian Ridge headquarters after the events of the 3rd, with "a carload of carbines" being shipped in. They were also reinforced by Pinkertons, in total numbering at most 100 men. They were reported as present at various collieries around Shenandoah on Saturday February 4.<sup>27</sup> If any were looking for further trouble, it was approaching the Kehley Run colliery that afternoon.

The day had opened with a storm of rain and hail. A storm was brewing within the eastern European community as well. The February 6 *Evening Herald* described the "Poles and Huns" as:

still on the warpath. . . . The saloons which are their favorite resorts in ordinary times were made their headquarters then and were densely packed until about three o'clock. . . . Those who harangued and urged them on to unlawful attacks on the workmen of Kehley Run and especially on . . . the coal and iron officers, were men of their own race, above the masses in intelligence just sufficiently to make them dangerous leaders.<sup>28</sup>

Roughly 500 persons, described as mainly "Poles and Hungarians" acting with the support of English-speaking miners, congregated outside of the Kehley Run mine, located just outside of Shenandoah, with perhaps three thousand people looking on. An eyewitness described the crowd as composed of men, women, and boys.

The Coal and Iron Police, about 25 in number and led by Captain Christian, escorted workers from the mine. The *Times* reported that some breaker boys ran off ahead and were set upon by men carrying fence palings, with the policemen rescuing the boys. Whether true or not, the majority of workers quickly dispersed. The C&I force, bombarded by stones and ice, turned for their headquarters. Shots were fired. C&I officer Oscar Witman was hit in the groin. The police turned and fired, with most of the crowd gathered there retreating down the hill. The remnant of the crowd returned fire, but a second volley from the C&I men sent them on their way.<sup>29</sup> At this point the police completed their retreat, and Boehm's posse, with the aid of members of the joint committee's Advisory Board, cleared the crowd.<sup>30</sup>

The newspapers blamed the strikers for the shooting of Witman. Captain Christian did as well, testifying to the same before the congressional committee investigating the anthracite strike. Another witness, Shenandoah carpenter James O'Hearn, testified that he was present at Kehley Run on behalf of Chief Burgess Boehm in an effort to ease tensions and send the crowd

home. He stated that the crowd did not fire first, but that as the police "were going up on the rise to the road bridge, two of their men fell and one fellow shot himself. They went along back and they fired three or four bullets. Of course there was a few shots from the other side, too."<sup>31</sup> Regardless of which account is correct, it becomes apparent on both Friday and Saturday that the presence of Coal and Iron policemen complicated an already tense state of affairs.

On Saturday evening, Sheriff Duffy appointed deputies in preparation for further trouble. The *Times* reported that "the populace, the business and working portion outside of the unnaturalized foreigners, are quaking with fear." Yet in the very same article, a contradictory account of residents' views is given:

From every group were overheard mutterings that indicate that to-day's affray is not disapproved by the strikers of more civilized nationalities as it should be. Such remarks as these were made: "Well, the Poles is right, and I'm wid 'em." "If they'd got lick'd to-day I'd a helped 'em."<sup>32</sup>

Obviously the disorder provoked a wide range of reactions. The reporter for the *Times* was not alone in detecting approval for the violence outside of the eastern European community. The *Daily Republican*, however, stated that "the mob was composed mainly of Poles and Hungarians, the same as the previous evening, but there is no doubt one of them spoke truly, when he said, 'Englismen (meaning Irish, Welsh, etc.) head leaders, they hiss us on.'"<sup>33</sup> Given the violent history of anthracite labor organization, it seems unlikely that the disturbance was strictly an eastern European affair.

The *Evening Herald* suggested another motivation besides drunken revenge for the eastern European miners. The Millington "penitentiary," an independent coal operation, had been targeted as well on Saturday. Millington was shipping over the Reading road, "which some of the Poles said was 'against Mr. Lee's order and was to be stopped—and we'll do it.'" No one at the Millington operation was attacked, as the men left work at noon. But it was said that "resumption will not occur unless there is an assurance that law and order is to be maintained here."<sup>34</sup> As much as labor leaders would have liked to dissociate their organizations from the actions of the crowd, a link was there.

Regional newspapers such as the Pottsville *Daily Republican* and the Shenandoah *Evening Herald*, which reported and commented on the strike in an even-handed tone, condemned the violence of the 3rd and 4th, focusing blame on the eastern European community. In this, they did not differ from newspapers such as the *New York Times* which had opposed the strike from its beginning. Others blamed local government for Saturday's disorder. The



borough's council was accused of being unprepared for the day's events. It was reported that the strikers' march to the mines had been discussed all day, and that Boehm's posse was not assembled until after trouble had begun. The townspeople of Shenandoah were reported as being less amused than "alarmed at the dilatory Council and threaten that if Borough authorities don't act promptly they'll form a vigilance committee, the same as was done during 1875 strike troubles." As newspaper editors rose to the defense of Shenandoah's political leaders, both Sheriff Duffy and Reading officials prepared for further outbreaks, with collieries in and around Shenandoah idle and guarded.<sup>35</sup> Sunday passed quietly, although the *Evening Herald* reported that a group of "Poles and Huns," numbering at most two hundred, had gathered on Monday to harass workers at the William Penn mine. They were dissuaded with the arrival by train of more armed C&I police.<sup>36</sup>

Steps taken by immigrant leaders were also helpful in defusing tensions. On Monday, February 6, 1888, spokesmen for the eastern European communities of Shenandoah called a public meeting at the Robbins Opera House for 5 PM that day. Roughly 1,500 men were reported in attendance, with no women apparently invited. Among the speakers at the meeting were Jonas Sliupas, controversial editor of the Lithuanian newspaper *The Lithuanian Voice*, and Vladimir Simenovich, editor of the Ukrainian newspaper *America*. A Polish shoemaker, a "Slavonic" merchant named Wislosky, and Charles Rice (Karolis Rukas), a Lithuanian merchant and prominent figure in the immigrant community, were also noted as attending. The speakers were reported to have urged compliance with local authorities. The damage done to the strikers' cause was also emphasized. The Reverend Fathers Lenarkiewicz, of the Polish/Lithuanian church of St. Casimir's, and Ivan Volansky, of St. Michael the Archangel, the nation's first Uniate church, were also present. Volansky, the *Reading Eagle* stated, "is very popular with the men, is master workman of their assembly, the largest in town, and his words impressed the men forcibly."<sup>37</sup>

The *Daily Republican* reported the next day that "the Polanders are indignant at the whole responsibility of the riot being placed on their shoulders. They say that other nationalities were also guilty as far as the planning of the trouble was concerned and that they were in the front because their abettors were too cowardly."<sup>38</sup> The Thursday, February 9 *Republican* reported on the mood in town, stating that many were "thoroughly frightened. . . . The business men are furious over the situation. They blame Mr. Corbin for being too stubborn and are angry with themselves for allowing the Poles to blacken the fame of the town which was bad enough before but which is ever so much worse now." The perspicacity of the reporter is called into question by the following paragraph which began, "Anyone who entertains the idea that the strike is over is deceiving himself."<sup>39</sup> The Kehley Run and William Penn mines

were turning workers away by the 15th. By February 23, the joint committee called an end to the strike in the Schuylkill field.<sup>40</sup>

On March 8 and 9, 1888, eight alleged leaders of the February 3 riot were arrested. According to the *Evening Herald*, "the authorities [were] determined to teach those who thus disgraced the good name of the borough that they cannot violate the peace and order of the community with impunity." On May 9, 1888, a grand jury presented a true bill against Carl Mikniewicz, John Puezkis, Peter Superus, John and George Nowitzkis, Joseph Nuklas, Thomas Polokonas, Mike Dulesky, John Kaminsky, Andrew Miliewicz, John Smiersky, John Surpolis, and Charles Magalinga, on one count of rioting and a second count of assault from February 3.<sup>41</sup>

The rioters were tried together during the week of May 14, 1888 at the Schuylkill County courthouse. Judge Bechtel presided, with John Nash prosecuting the Commonwealth's case, and W. D. Seltzer for the defense. An interpreter was employed as well. It is not clear whether the defendants testified. On Monday William Sedusky testified that the crowd was not composed solely of eastern Europeans. Others on succeeding days offered similar accounts. On Tuesday, Anthony Alex is reported as testifying that he was present at the February 3 riot. In the early stages of Friday night's rioting, before the crowd had gathered before the magistrates' offices, Alex was quoted as saying that he was attempting "to make a speech to the Poles, and some English fellow to the English."<sup>42</sup>

Others attempted to make distinctions between spectators and actual participants. Officer Moyer was reported as testifying on Thursday that "a sprinkling of Irish" was present at the stoning of the magistrate's office, but "only as spectators. There was a great yelling before the door was broken in and I thought I wouldn't get out alive. The Irish were not much in sympathy." Moyer also criticized the actions and behavior of borough police on the night of the 3rd, feeling that "they helped the mob." He was quoted as stating, "the feeling was strong against the Coal and Iron police." At Friday's proceedings, John Lewis, *Evening Herald* editor who was at the center of the action at Monaghan's office on the 3rd, testified. He stated that on Saturday, "Americans" were spectators and "Polanders," the rioters. While it would be tempting to characterize testimony on the nationality of the rioters as falling along ethnic lines, there was at least one witness having the apparently Irish name of Bryan Rooney, who on Wednesday stated that he could not place any of the defendants in the crowd on the night of the 3rd.<sup>43</sup>

Closing arguments were made on Saturday, May 19. The *Shenandoah Herald* reported that "the jury in the Shenandoah riot cases brought in a verdict of 'not guilty, but to pay the costs,' on Saturday evening. As the defendants number over a dozen the costs will not be very heavy." It is not known

what the defendants paid in the final reckoning. Costs for Sheriff's Duffy's posse were estimated at \$2,565.<sup>44</sup>

On May 22, the *Daily Republican* published a commentary from the Shenandoah *Enquirer* which raised the specters of Haymarket—the bomb blast and “police riot” that occurred on May 4, 1886 in Chicago's Haymarket Square—in condemning the acquittals. The writer breathlessly opined:

Men who thus openly defy the law and are permitted to go free will engage in other riots with impunity, should occasion arise, and unless history fails to repeat itself they will continue in their course until it becomes necessary to make a terrible example of some of them. It was the laxity of the law and the temporizing of authorities with crime that caused the Haymarket massacre in Chicago and made the hanging of the anarchists necessary.

It is not readily apparent that this prophecy came to pass, although in the following decades, scenes of rioting and violence would revisit Shenandoah. The *Daily Republican* had this to say on the verdict: “The Shenandoah riot case don't [sic] seem to ‘pan out’ very numerously of convicts for the county jail. It is a pretty hard matter to manage a Hungarian case on its merits.”<sup>45</sup> With these last comments, mention of the rioting disappeared in the press, and, until revived by Harold Aurand and Victor Greene, seemingly vanished from the historical record as well.

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The violence at Shenandoah has obvious connections to labor history. The consolidation of the anthracite industry, as characterized by the acquisition of several Shenandoah collieries by the Reading in the 1870s and early 1880s, did little to mitigate differences between owners and miners. Worker protest often centered around the demands and practices of owners, characterized by Perry Blatz as “ad hoc work load and payment arrangements that, given the complexity that characterized mining, had developed differently from region to region, town to town, company to company, mine to mine, and frequently even from one place to another in the same mine.”<sup>46</sup> Worker dissatisfaction over these arrangements was often expressed in labor strikes. Grace Palladino placed this dissatisfaction within the context of the miners' conception of a “republican” workplace, “the belief that miners and operators had equal rights and obligations, as well as an equal interest in the industry,” and saw it as motivating strikes throughout the nineteenth century.<sup>47</sup> Unions formed throughout the 1850s and 1860s had no real staying power, due to factors including corruption among labor leadership, state intervention in strikes, and a lack of interregional support among miners.<sup>48</sup>

Two of the more effective anthracite labor organizations in the postbellum period were the Workingmen's Benevolent Association (WBA), formed in 1868, and the Knights of Labor, which established their presence in the region in the 1870s, after the collapse of the WBA. Both organizations faced their share of difficulties. These included: corporate opposition from the Reading Railroad and its mining subsidiary, the PRCI, which consolidated its control in the Schuylkill field in the 1870s; differences of opinion between miners of different fields; and the presence of ethnic tensions, especially with the appearance of southern and eastern Europeans in the coal fields beginning in the 1880s.<sup>49</sup>

These difficulties were somewhat intertwined. Throughout the 1870s, the size of the work force in the anthracite region increased, bolstered by thousands of new immigrants. Between 1870 and 1890, the number of those working the mines of the anthracite region increased from 35,600 to 126,000. The percentage of immigrants in the mines increased during that period from five to over twenty percent, and would reach forty percent by 1900.<sup>50</sup> Ethnic differences at times interfered with unionization efforts, as seen during the 1880s. Between 1881 to 1889, some 85 strikes occurred in the anthracite region.<sup>51</sup> At the same time, increasing numbers of eastern and southern Europeans were entering the coal fields, moving into established communities, or forming new towns of their own. They were often viewed as "Pauper labor" by established miners, adding to ethnic tensions which had long existed in the region.

Paradoxically, immigrants were also viewed as a radical threat. As economic instability and labor agitation continued through the 1880s, both corporate and civic authorities were severe in their response. In this context the "Haymarket tragedy" occurred.<sup>52</sup> The trial, conviction, and punishment of eight Chicago labor leaders on charges of conspiracy to commit murder illustrates the extremes of the conflict between workers and capitalists.<sup>53</sup> Haymarket gave vent to a blast of anti-radical and anti-immigrant hysteria among the American people, workers and industrialists alike. The press helped fan the flames. Reports of the incident swept across the nation, focusing on anarchists as the cause of trouble, and calling for harsh reprisals. The connection between radicalism and immigrants was emphasized, with anti-immigrant sentiment rising to new heights. The language used in Chicago newspapers to describe immigrants provides an example:

The 'enemy forces' were not American, declared the *Chicago Times*, but 'rag-tag' and bob-tail cutthroats of Beelzebub from the Rhine, the Danube, the Vistula and the Elbe.' Anarchists, the other papers joined in, were the 'scum and offal' of the Old World, 'human and inhuman rubbish,' the 'lowest stratum found in humanity's formation,' the 'offscourings of Europe' who had 'sought these shores to abuse the hospitality and defy the authority of the country.'<sup>54</sup>

This nativist language was similar to that employed by Schuylkill County newspapers after the Shenandoah rioting.

Workers were caught up in the Haymarket hysteria as well, with the Knights of Labor and other organizations distancing themselves from Albert Parsons and the others charged in connection with Haymarket, who had been members of unions or spokesmen for workers' causes.<sup>55</sup> Although sentiment in working circles shifted to the side of those convicted for Haymarket, this was not the case with the Knights of Labor leadership. Terence Powderly, Grand Master Workman of the Knights, favored methods such as negotiation and legislation, not strikes and demonstrations, in advancing the cause of workers. Paul Avrigh characterized Powderly as wanting to distance the Knights from the anarchists and violence in order "to assert the respectability" of the organization before the public.<sup>56</sup> This was as true in the anthracite region as it was in reaction to Haymarket.

The efforts of the joint committee to distance themselves from the violence at Shenandoah was evidenced in both actions and words. Members of the Knights' advisory board were present during both Friday's and Saturday's violence, working with authorities to reestablish order. The board also printed, in several languages, an appeal for order issued by Chief Burgess Boehm after Saturday's confrontation. The joint committee of the Knights and Amalgamated also issued a statement condemning the violence, printed by the *Daily Republican*, which read in part, "Unlawful methods must be denounced, and we repudiate the lawless actions of Friday and Saturday." The following days; *Republican* reported another meeting of the Knights on Monday, the 6th, in which members of the organization were urged "to keep away from all persons who are in any way calculated to lead to a breach of the peace." This statement was published in "Polish, Hungarian, and Russian Greek [probably Ukrainian] and scattered broadcast throughout the town."<sup>57</sup> Even as labor organizations sought respectability within the community, they were attempting to build constituencies among less-respected community members, the eastern Europeans. Yet many organizations such as the Knights saw the "new" immigrant as a threat to American labor, a view which was part of a larger reaction to the shifting tides of European immigration.

This shift in patterns of immigration contributed to the tensions at Shenandoah. In the Pennsylvania anthracite fields, into what had been a population of primarily English, German, Welsh, Scots-Irish, and Irish descent, immigrants of eastern and southern European origin now appeared. Schuylkill County showed 44 residents born in Poland in the 1870 census, whereas by 1890 there were 1,230 residents from Russia, 1,033 from Hungary, and 4,492 from Poland.<sup>58</sup> Also in 1890, the P&R Coal and Iron Company "employed 24,734 foreign-born workers" in the Schuylkill field. "Of these, 14,176 were classified as 'English Speaking Foreign Born,'" while 5,839 were listed as 'Slavs.'

A second category lists 4,719 workers as 'Slavs Born in the United States.'<sup>59</sup> The many eastern Europeans tended to be indiscriminately grouped as "Slavs," "Poles," or "Hungarians," even if, as in the case of the Lithuanians, they were neither Slavic, Polish, nor Hungarian. Similarly, in reference to "Hungarians," it is not apparent that Magyars were numerous in Shenandoah. Most likely the term was used for any migrant from the Austro-Hungarian empire.

Eastern Europeans first settled in Schuylkill field in significant numbers during the 1870s. Shenandoah soon had concentrations of Poles, Lithuanians, Ukrainians, and Slovaks, as well as Irish, British, and German residents. Perhaps as many as twenty ethnic groups lived within the borough.<sup>60</sup> If, as Harold Aurand argued, the 1880s were a decade of "demographic change and social continuity" in the anthracite region, to native-born Americans this continuity was seemingly threatened by eastern and southern European immigrants as the decade's end.<sup>61</sup> Shenandoah is but one example of a community attempting to deal with population growth and cultural diversity in the region. The disorder of February 1888 provides one example of the overt and hidden tensions created by that growth and diversity.

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Nativism was an overt expression of the antagonism felt against "new" immigrants, and its effects were felt even in the telling of the history of the anthracite region. Michael Barendse viewed the arguments put forth by Greene and Aurand as bridging "a gulf [that] existed between the historical facts of the eastern European penetration of the anthracite industry and most accounts of that history." Barendse saw this gulf as originating among English speaking "communities and observers," operating on nativist preconceptions of eastern European migrants. He concluded that these preconceptions, not immigrant participation in a "split-labor" market, were responsible for discrimination against those immigrants.<sup>62</sup>

The cultural and social patterns of eastern European life in America were often judged negatively by many Americans. More important, the acts of individuals were used to pass judgment on entire nationalities. This is especially true when, as with Haymarket, the coke drawers of western Pennsylvania, or the Shenandoah rioters, eastern Europeans were linked to acts of violence. Individuals within eastern European communities were aware of this prejudice, and responded to it, as can be seen in the aftermath of the violence at Shenandoah. These responses were formed in the setting of an emerging ethnic consciousness among the various communities.

Newspaper editorials condemning the Shenandoah rioting embraced stereotypes similar to ones used by Chicago newspapers in the wake of Haymarket. Indeed, accounts of the disorder in a number of newspapers did

not bother to distinguish between the various nationalities of the participants, describing the rioters merely as Poles and Hungarians. *Daily Republican* editorials denouncing the violence described the rioters as “people who have been imported to the region by the car load during the past few years—a class of people without whom the region would be better off and public safety would be greatly enhanced.” Shenandoah was described as “[being] in the hands of a non-English speaking mob—a mob of people who left their native land for the good of their country—and we also believe that they have been prompted and urged on to deeds of violence by a few hoodlums who, either through ignorance or fired with rum, knew not what they did.”<sup>63</sup>

An article in the February 7 *Daily Republican* quoted a commentator from the *Mahonoy Tri-Weekly* who described the “Poles and Huns” as “cheap labor minions of capital.” He went on to state:

These Huns and Poles have been used by the coal mining companies to break down the price of labor. Their agents have . . . scoured the dark corners of Europe to pour this flood of cheapness and lawlessness upon our hands, and the law-abiding people of this section are now held in dread of the blind rage of these people, and must witness on the one hand the fury of the mob and on the other protection afforded by an army of private police, under the control of these corporations.<sup>64</sup>

Similarly, an article in the *Tamaqua Courier*, quoting from a *Philadelphia Times* article, maintained that the riots “were precipitated by Huns, Poles, and other foreigners who were imported to cut down the wages of our legitimate labor,” and that they were supported “by other strikers who have all the interests of home and family at stake in the issue.”<sup>65</sup> Yet the “rioters” saw themselves as legitimate laborers, and the violence which erupted in Shenandoah can be viewed in part as a reaction to those—immigrant or native—who sought to undermine the goals of the strikers.

The February 9, 1888 *Daily Republican* article which reported the views of a Polish striker serves as a bridge between nativist perceptions of eastern Europeans and the self-perceptions of the new immigrants and their place in the United States. The quoted statements of Joseph C. Powell, a so-called “lifelong newspaper man in the coal fields,” are ambiguous in tone. When it is stated that, in talking to a Pole, “one would place his life in peril by intimating . . . that they were brought to this country by capitalists to work for low wages,” it is not clear if this is meant as condescension, a statement of fact, or both. Powell’s quoted characterization of a discussion with an unnamed Pole seems to play on nativist fears of socialist-inspired violence. The second half of Powell’s report, however, gives a picture of the eastern European community in general, what they sought and what they had gained in America, and how they viewed the land to which they had emigrated.

The “brawny fellow” described as a typical rioter “sneers when advised that the State troops will be sent for if the rioting continues. He has slight regard for American soldiers and expresses open contempt for the ‘Merica miners,’ who sit at home and make bullets for the Polanders to fire.” He is characterized as believing “that the United States will soon be dominated by the aristocrats, and that it is time for poor people to arouse themselves to the danger.” He is described as stating that the Poles, an increasing presence in the anthracite region, “mean to assert their rights,” by force if necessary. As the leader of a substantial group of Poles, with a Napoleonic grasp of strategy, this “daring spirit” seems created to fit the image of the anarchic immigrant.

The second half of Powell’s report initially continues in this vein, with “the Poles” reportedly talking as if “a great war was imminent, and that they were being depended upon to save the country.” Yet then, apparently for the first time in all of the reporting on the rioting, a clearer picture of the eastern European community is given:

Shenandoah is inhabited by the Poles to a great extent. They own a great deal of the property there, and are conducting saloons and small stores in all parts of the town. Some own three story brick houses and are dreaming of being elected members of the town council and school board. They think the United States is a great country but it must be preserved for the poor at any sacrifice. They regard the police as oppressors of the working people and are amazed that the Merica men would sit idle and let themselves be cowed by the authorities. . . . They say they came here of their own free will and are free men in every sense of the word. They refuse to associate with the Huns and are insulted if likened by anyone to that class. In broken English one of them declared to a Justice of the Peace, “This is our vineyard, we work hard at a dangerous work, ask for only living wages, and we will not let any scabs take our places.”<sup>66</sup>

This description reveals the individuals of Shenandoah’s eastern European community, usually masked in the “English” press by stereotypes.

It is understandable that eastern Europeans might disagree with, and contradict, nativist portrayals when given the opportunity to be heard. The disorder at Shenandoah allowed for just such an opportunity with the meeting which took place at the Robbins Opera House on February 6, 1888. A letter in the February 7, 1888 *Evening Herald*, reprinted in that Saturday’s *Herald*, signed by “Verk,” gives details of the meeting beyond what was reported. Verk identified the “Huns” and “Poles” as “Russians [Ukrainians?] and Slavonians,” and “Polanders and Lithuanians,” respectively. He then stated:

The above named nationalities perceived that the capitalists held on the rule, *Divide et impera*, and aim to divide the workingmen into classes



according to their descent, resolved to hold a mass meeting in order to protest against this manner of treating the labor question and the abuse of the name of men who . . . must feel themselves feeble, considering the American population.

In other words, workers—whether Pole or Ukrainian, Irish or Welsh—were workers. This seems to contradict John Bodnar's argument that "when immigrants felt aggrieved about their positions in the New World their natural form of accommodation was identification with, and organization as, an ethnic group rather than as an economic group."<sup>67</sup> Yet the views of a spokesman are being represented, not necessarily those of the workers themselves. Also, in 1888, ethnic communities and identities were very much in flux, and in the earliest stages of formation.

The common themes among the speakers—president of the school board Gallagher, Simenovich, Sliupas, Tmaczynski [Smoczynski?], and Wislosky—were the role the Coal and Iron police played in the violence, the fact that the rioters consisted of "Irishmen, Germans, Welsh, etc.," as well as eastern Europeans, and the need to keep the peace in the face of accusations from the "capitalists." Sliupas voiced other concerns when he stated that "it is premature to begin now a social revolution for the benefit of the working classes; the majority of the laborers and are not yet prepared to execute the revolution to their own profit." None of the other speakers seemed to have anything to say of the revolution.

The meeting passed a series of resolutions which made it known that the assembled were "against all violent acts and riots." Statements of the press which blamed eastern Europeans solely for the rioting were protested, as "only a few individuals . . . took active part in [the rioting], and not our nationalities as such. . . . These individuals . . . acted together with men of other descent." The "blameworthy conduct of the coal and iron police" was noted. "In general, men belonging to our nationalities are eager to fulfill their duties as citizens . . . and if some individuals . . . may struggle against our aims . . . we will make efforts to hinder their further inconsiderate efforts." Finally, a resolution requested the disbanding of the police force in and around the town. It is not known what effect these resolutions had on public opinion.<sup>68</sup>

A different set of resolutions was drawn up by a group of Polish spokesmen and printed in the February 17, 1888 *Evening Herald*. This document stated that, although some participated, Poles were not planners of the rioting. It further stated that the Poles involved in the rioting:

do not seek to escape the condemnation of the public nor to hypocritically charge that the coal and iron police force, by their presence brought upon us the disgraceful scenes of riot and disorder, neither do they at-

tempt to shift the responsibility for the same from their shoulders to those of other nationalities.

Yet two paragraphs below, the spokesmen stated that "the public has lost sight . . . that besides Poles there was a great crowd of other nationalities" present at the rioting of February 3.<sup>69</sup> Were these spokesmen for the Poles attempting to distance themselves from the resolutions of February 6, while avoiding total blame? Among the signers was one R. Smoczynski, presumably the same Smoczynski present who spoke at the earlier meeting. Did he have a change of heart within the course of a few weeks? It is possible that divisions between various eastern European nationalities, which had in the past taken the form of religious disputes, would still be manifested, even in the atmosphere of urgency that seemed to unite the immigrant community after the violence.

The stereotyping of eastern European immigrants in Shenandoah mirrors other nativist commentary of the late 1880s. The response of Shenandoah[s] immigrant community to such criticism reveals a self-awareness and sophistication that belied nativist generalizations.<sup>70</sup> Nativists tended to portray eastern Europeans in simplistic, deprecatory terms. The realities of life in immigrant communities were much more complicated, showing tensions along national, regional, class, and religious lines. The same, of course, is true of other ethnic communities.<sup>71</sup> In the aftermath of the violence at Shenandoah, eastern European spokesmen emerged from those areas in which ethnic identities were being forged: religion, journalism, and business. But these figures were perhaps speaking to, and not for, the majority of immigrants they claimed to represent, further illustrating the complex make-up of these communities.

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Perhaps it is not surprising, considering the many communities that comprised Shenandoah, that differing accounts of the violence of February 3 and 4 would surface. A reporter for the *Evening Herald* wrote that "it is doubtful if any two persons would agree on the details of the events of the third and fourth of February and yet they would each be telling the true story, according to their beliefs."<sup>72</sup> This can be seen in examining the varying newspaper accounts of those events. Caution is necessary when attempting to impart a straightforward narrative. Even as interpretations of history are disputed, at times the details of history remain obscure. Although it has proven to be difficult to answer with certainty the questions which Rudé placed before the student of the crowd in history, an analysis of "the nature and importance" of the disorder can be attempted.

While a general outline of the events of February 3 has been traced, exact details remain unclear. The crowd numbered anywhere between one

hundred and several hundred, seemingly young males. While the majority of the crowd appeared to be eastern European in origin, the presence, and influence, of other nationalities seems fairly certain. While current historiography on the subject supports the notion of an emerging class consciousness among eastern European workers, labor militancy alone does not wholly explain the outbreak of violence in Shenandoah. Once the many accounts are weighed and judged, the disorder of Friday evening can be considered as two events: the protracted scuffling near the "Rocks," which ended with the C&I policemen shooting into the crowd; and the stoning of the magistrates' offices. The former seems to have originated as a rough form of strikers' justice, with strikebreakers beaten for their actions. Although certainty is impossible, given the similar attacks of previous days, perhaps beatings would have been the worst of it had the C&I men been absent.

But with the shooting, the tenor of the evening changed. Could the crowd have known what had happened at first? People shot, strikers among them, but by whom? Strikebreakers? Coal and Iron officers? Given the conflicting nature of the testimony and reporting on that night's events, it is probable that many stories and rumors circulated through the streets of Shenandoah that evening. Given the reputation of the C&I men among the townspeople, knowledge of their presence would not have soothed the gathering crowd. The stoning and vandalism of the magistrates' offices must be seen in a light other than labor violence. It was a riot in which a popular sense of justice was expressed against civil authority. Both the newspapers and arrested officers claimed that the crowd would have murdered the officers if given the chance. While this is uncertain, it is clear that the crowd wished to express its discontent in a most physical way. Yet the evening's activities did not last for very long, with workers leaving the mines at around five in the afternoon, and the streets being cleared by 9 P.M. While this may be attributed to the actions of the sheriff and others, perhaps as well the anger of the crowd had cooled off.

Despite the claims of the *Times* and *Evening Herald* that Saturday's "rioters" sought revenge, their actions seem to originate as labor-related protest. While the gathering crowd may have known the C&I men would be present, Kehley Run was another case of miners working, violating the strike. While it is possible that the strikers were present to do harm, the presence of the Coal and Iron police raised the stakes. Yet if ideas of revenge were in the air that day, little came of them. While the C&I men may have been longing for their Winchesters, their opponents were haphazard in their shooting. A crowd followed the officers as they returned to their headquarters, but seem to have been easily talked out of continuing their pursuit. It does not make a convincing argument for surly Poles, filled with "fighting liquor," bent on vengeance. Arguments of revenge are also refuted by the involvement of other nationalities. Reported claims that "English" miners were involved in Saturday's ac-

tions cannot be overlooked, given the history of labor agitation in the anthracite region.

Contemporaries had other explanations for the disorder, with some viewing the riot as a provocation by the Reading Railroad, while others employed stereotypes to judge the participants. The U.S. House of Representatives committee formed to investigate the 1887-88 anthracite strike placed much of the blame for the violence of both days on the C&I police and their superiors. Local reporting on the disturbances emphasized the role of alcohol and immigrant saloons in the events of February 3 and 4. Ethnic stereotyping aside, there may have been class-related as well as economic and emotional factors behind the violence. An examination of immigrant working-class culture, while beyond the scope of this work, may provide some answers. At the same time, it must be recognized that the immigrant communities of Shenandoah were not made up solely of miners and laborers. The appearance of religious and business leaders, along with newspaper editors, as spokesmen for their respective communities makes this clear. The varying messages emerging from the February 6 meeting at Robbins Opera House, and from later pronouncements, reveal that unanimity did not exist within or between ethnic communities.

Despite the efforts of eastern European spokesmen in Shenandoah, those arrested and tried in connection with the rioting of the 3rd were solely "Poles and Hungarians." The cryptic comment of the *Daily Republican* that "it is a pretty hard matter to manage a Hungarian case on its merits" applies just as well to the possible significance of the verdict in their case.<sup>73</sup> In declaring the defendants not guilty, but making them liable for the riot damages, the jurors seem to have made a Solomonic decision. While no available contemporary news reports give any hint of the reasoning behind the process, two motivations seem possible. The first may be that, unable to reach a decision on the guilt or innocence of the accused, the jury split the difference. The other possibility is that the jury was able to reach a decision, for or against the defendants, but in order to avoid provoking either the eastern European or the English-speaking citizens of Shenandoah, they ruled as they did. In this way, a sense of closure could be gained.

The violence at Shenandoah touches on many issues of historical significance. It occurred at a time when the labor movement in the anthracite regions was in transition. As immigrant workers entered the area, their effect on the struggle between labor and capital was unclear. Many believed they would tip the balance in favor of capital. But although it went practically unacknowledged at the time, the strike of 1887-88 was an example of the willingness of immigrant labor to stand up to its employers. As Greene, Aurand, and Barendse made clear, the Shenandoah "riots" were an example of the militancy and determination of immigrant workers. That determination would be witnessed again at Lattimer. The "massacre" in that mining town in the Lehigh field, on

September 10, 1897, took place when some 400 peacefully marching strikers, including a great number of eastern Europeans, were fired upon by a sheriff's posse. The posse, made up of coal and iron police, businessmen, and coal company employees, among others, left at least 19 marchers dead and over 50 wounded. The sheriff and his deputies were acquitted when brought to trial.<sup>74</sup> Labor activism would bear fruit in the early 1900s, with the help of immigrant miners. Yet it must be remembered that immigrant activism has its limits. Among the apparent targets of such militancy were other eastern Europeans who were willing to work.

This would not have comforted critics of the new immigration. The late nineteenth century can be viewed as a nexus of increasing labor agitation and increasing southern and eastern European immigration. With this confluence, fears of class and ethnic conflict were increasingly entertained by nativist journalists, intellectuals, labor leaders and civic authorities. The hysteria over Haymarket might be viewed as an example of these fears. The violence at Shenandoah, to a lesser extent, played on nativist fears as well, even as it suggested an untapped source of strength for labor with the presence of eastern and southern Europeans in Shenandoah.

As immigrant populations grew larger in communities such as Shenandoah, the established elites were forced to grant access to the "new immigrants." This was due in part to demographic change. Within thirty years, the sheer numbers of eastern and southern Europeans coming into Shenandoah would decide the contest. By the 1930s, "more than one third of the inhabitants in Shenandoah with Lithuanians. They elected their own mayors and other town officials."<sup>75</sup> But that these changes would not come without some struggle is suggested by attitude of "native" Americans toward newcomers. The question of immigrant participation in American politics and institutions is a topic for further study. The nativist reaction to the "new" immigrant suggests that difficulties did exist.

In time, in the aftermath of Lattimer, eastern and southern Europeans would be recognized as an integral component to labor organization efforts in the anthracite region. As their numbers increased with continuing immigration to the United States, the new immigrants would form majorities, becoming prominent figures in business and government in communities such as Shenandoah. Indeed, one Casimir Magalinga, sharing the name of one of the defendants in the rioting trial, would serve as Chief Burgess of Shenandoah from 1918 to 1932. Other Lithuanians would hold that office before and after him.<sup>76</sup> In 1888, however, eastern Europeans were considered outsiders, and a hindrance to a struggling labor movement. For a brief moment, the disorder of February 3 and 4, 1888 put these outsiders at the center of both their adopted home and the movement which barely acknowledged them. The experience of immigrants at Shenandoah reflect on the experiences of

other newcomers throughout the nation during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.<sup>77</sup>

At the same time, an examination of the rioting reveals the often tentative nature of the “facts.” While the conflicting stories of the events at Shenandoah may cause some frustration, they do provide insight on the individuals and groups who are the sources of the narratives. Setting aside the truth or falsity of the varying accounts, we can follow Barendse in allowing that the accounts were shaped by the participants’ preconceptions, and revealed their concerns. For native-born residents of the borough, the incident was a question of law, order, and the “good name” of Shenandoah. Conversely, they believed that the mass of “Poles and Huns” represented a threat to the respectability of the town. The Coal and Iron Police shared similar concerns. These men also seem to be motivated by a desire to show that they were acting in the right, that they did not act irresponsibly on either the 3rd or the 4th. Members of the immigrant communities, as well as those “natives” connected with labor, believed, or stated, the opposite. They blamed the C&I men for the violence on both days. The eastern Europeans were concerned with responsibility for the rioting, claiming that others besides “Poles and Huns” were in the crowd on both days. While some conclusions can be drawn concerning the relative truth of these claims, their variety perhaps reveals more than an authoritative narrative of the rioting could.

The violence at Shenandoah of February 3 and 4, 1888, its aftermath, and the judgment rendered on those arrested illustrate the complicated nature of ethnic communities in the late nineteenth century, and of the sometimes troubled relationship such communities had with more established, “American” communities. The problems inherent in making generalizations about such relationships and communities appear in the Shenandoah incident. A study of the events of February 3 and 4, 1888 makes clear that while it is not always possible to “know” what may have happened at a particular time and place, discovery of the limits of that knowledge often provides more illuminating insights.

## Notes

1. Victor R. Greene, *The Slavic Community on Strike: Immigrant Labor in Pennsylvania Anthracite* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1968), 211.
2. Harold W. Aurand, *From the Molly Maguires to the United Mine Workers: The Social Ecology of an Industrial Union, 1869-1897* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1971).
3. Michael A. Barendse, *Social Expectations and Perceptions: The Case of the Slavic Anthracite Miner* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1981), 47, 50-1.
4. *Ibid.*, 6.
5. George Rudé, *The Crowd in History: A Study of Popular Disturbances in France and England, 1730-1848* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1964), 10-11.
6. Paul A. Gilje, *Rioting in America* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), 10.
7. Idem; *The Road to Mobocracy: Popular Disorder in New York City, 1763-1834* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1987), 286-8.
8. Donald L. Miller, and Richard E. Sharpless, *The Kingdom of Coal: Work, Enterprise, and Ethnic Communities in the Mine Fields* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985), 2-5.
9. Anthony F. C. Wallace, *St. Clair: A Nineteenth Century Coal Town's Experience with a Disaster-Prone Industry* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1987), 372.
10. Greene, *Slavic Community*, 100; Pennsylvania State Board of Health and Vital Statistics, *Third Annual Report of the State Board of Health*, Harrisburg, 1888, 75. The *Third Annual Report* was found at the State Library of Pennsylvania, Harrisburg.
11. Perry K. Blatz, *Democratic Miners: Work and Labor Relations in the Anthracite Coal Industry, 1875-1925* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1994), 40-41; Aurand, 115-22, 126-7, 164; Greene, 85; *Tamaqua Courier*, December 31, 1887.
12. *Reading Eagle*, February 2, 1888; Pottsville *Daily Republican* (hereafter *Daily Republican*), February 2; 3, 1888. The *Reading Eagle* and *Daily Republican* were found on microfilm at the State Library of Pennsylvania, located in Harrisburg.
13. Greene, 97-9.
14. *Daily Republican*, "Attacking Hungarians," February, 1888.
15. *The Reading Eagle*, February 1, 1888; Greene, 100-1; U.S. Congress, House Select Committee on Existing Labor Troubles in Pennsylvania, *Labor Troubles in the Anthracite Regions of Pennsylvania, 1887-1888*, Report 4147 (Washington, D.C.: 50th Congress, 2nd session, 1889), 145-6. The House report was available on microfiche at Juniata College, Huntingdon, Pennsylvania.
16. Greene, 101; *Daily Republican*, February 4, 1888.
17. *Ibid.*, *Wilkes-Barre Record*, February 4, 1888; *Daily Republican*, February 4, 1888. *Labor Troubles in the Anthracite Regions of Pennsylvania, 1887-1888*, xcv, 420.
18. Shenandoah *Evening Herald* (hereafter *Evening Herald*), February 4, 1888; *Daily Republican*, February 4, 1888. The *Daily Republican* placed six C&I officers on the scene, identified the prisoner as Wasilowski, but reported officers Kreiger and Bretz as his escorts. The *Evening Herald* was found on microfilm at the Schuylkill County Historical Society in Pottsville.
19. *Evening Herald*, February 4, 1888. The *New York Times* reported two Poles as shot. It is likely that the second was Joseph Schwincufski, who was actually clubbed by a pistol. *New York Times*, February 4, 1888. Other newspapers reported differing lists of those injured as well. *Reading Eagle*; *Daily Republican*, February 4, 1888. The House committee chaired by George Tillman which investigated the strike reported five men as being shot. *Labor Troubles in the Anthracite Regions of Pennsylvania, 1887-1888*, xcv.
20. *Evening Herald*; February 4, 1888; *Daily Republican*, February 4, 1888. Spellings of eastern European names for the late nineteenth century must be treated cautiously, as neither English language sources nor native language spellings were apparently standardized. For the sake of consistency, the spellings found in court documents were used. Where spellings varied within these documents, a best guess was made.

21. *Evening Herald*; February 4, 1888; *Daily Republican*, February 4, 1888.
22. *Daily Republican*, February 4, 1888.
23. *Daily Republican*, February 4, 1888; *Evening Herald*, February 4, 1888.
24. *Evening Herald*, February 4, 1888. Shields gave a different story before the House committee. He testified that both he and Igo, a special policeman for the borough, were threatened with pistols. "When [the C&I officers] halted, the crowd came rushing toward the police, I did not want to be hurt if they attacked the police and fired at them, and I got to one side." *Labor Troubles in the Anthracite Regions of Pennsylvania, 1887-1888*, 446.
25. *Evening Herald*, *Daily Republican*, February 4.
26. *Daily Republican*, February 4.
27. *Daily Republican*, February 4, 1888.
28. *New York Times*, February 5, 1888; *Evening Herald*, February 6, 1888.
29. *New York Times*, February 5, 1888; *Evening Herald*, February 6, 1888; *Labor Troubles in the Anthracite Regions of Pennsylvania, 1887-1888*, 426-7, 444, 454-5, Peter Kreiger, John Blaker, and Oscar Witman were reported as shot by the *Times*, as were seven of the rioters. A Dr. Williams is reported to have been "called down to the Rocks" where he treated "three gunshot wounds." Witman was reported as seriously wounded, shot in the groin. Both the *Evening Herald* and the *Daily Republican* reported Witman as the sole casualty among the C&I Police, with no rioters being reported as injured. *New York Times*, February 5, 1888; *Evening Herald*; *Daily Republican*, February 6, 1888.
30. *Daily Republican*, February 6, 1888; *Evening Herald*, February 6, 1888.
31. *Labor Trouble in the Anthracite Regions of Pennsylvania, 1887-1888*, 432-4, 455.
32. *New York Times*, February 5, 1888. The *Times* also reported that "some of [the deputized firemen] had to get their weapons from Pottsville, the Shenandoah hardware stores having sold out their supply before noon." This was vigorously denied by the *Evening Herald*, which stated that "local dealers . . . refused to make sales except to well known purchasers." *Evening Herald*, February 7, 1888.
33. *Daily Republican*, February 6, 1888.
34. *Evening Herald*, February 6, 1888.
35. *Daily Republican*, February 6, 1888. A Shenandoah *Herald* editorial stated that "Burgess Boehm says because men who were called upon to act as a posse refused to comply, while most of those whom he swore in the night before were not to be found when wanted," the rioters were not dispersed as they gathered at Kehley Run. Shenandoah *Herald* (hereafter *Herald*), February 11, 1888. The *Herald* was available on microfilm at the Schuylkill County Historical Society.
36. Idem, February 7, 1888; *Evening Herald*, February 7, 1888.
37. *Daily Republican*, February 7, 1888; *Evening Herald*, February 7, 1888; *Wilkes-Barre Record*, February 7, 1888; *Reading Eagle*, February 7, 1888; Greene, 107; David Fainhauz, *Lithuanians in the USA: Aspects of Ethnic Identity* (Chicago: Lithuanian Library Press, 1991), 122, 154.
38. *Daily Republican*, February 7, 1888.
39. *Daily Republican*, February 9, 1888.
40. *Daily Republican*, February 15, 23, 1888.
41. *Evening Herald*, March 9, 1888; Case No. 1198, Schuylkill County Court of Quarter Sessions, Microfilm Reel 40A, Cases No. 938-1718, Criminal Records, Schuylkill County Clerk of Courts.
42. *Daily Republican*, May 15, 16, 1888.
43. *Daily Republican*, May 17, 18, 1888.
44. *Herald*, May 26, 1888; *Evening Herald*, March 31, 1888.
45. *Daily Republican*, May 19, 1888; *Herald*, May 26, 1888; *Daily Republican*, May 21, 1888. This is the only reference to the *Enquirer* found in the course of research. Copies of the *Evening Herald* for this period were not available.
46. Blatz, 3.
47. Grace Palladino, *Another Civil War: Labor, Capital, and the State in the Anthracite Regions of Pennsylvania, 1840-68* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990), 46-9.
48. Aurand, 66-7.
49. Lens, 18-9, 84, 88; Lens, 22-6; Aurand, 87-9; Blatz, 38-9.
50. Blatz, 10.
51. *Ibid.*, 40, 44.
52. Avrich, xi, 186, 208.



53. Avrigh, xi, Lens, 64.
54. Avrigh, 215-17.
55. *Ibid.*, 218-22.
56. *Ibid.*, 307-9.
57. See above, 13, 17; *Evening Herald*, February 6, 1888; *Daily Republican*, February 6, 7, 1888. It is uncertain what language is actually meant by "Hungarian."
58. Barendse, "Slavic Immigrants," 43; *Elevanth Census*, 653.
59. Barendse, *Social Expectations*, 22.
60. Antanas Kucas, *Shenandoah St. George Lithuanian Parish* (Brooklyn: Franciscan Fathers Press, 1968), 162.
61. Harold W. Aurand, *Population Change and Social Continuity: Ten Years in a Coal Town* (Selinsgrove: Susquehanna University Press, 1986).
62. Barendse, *Social Expectations*, 59-66.
63. *Daily Republican*, February 4, 6, 1888.
64. *Daily Republican*, February 7, 1888.
65. *Tamaqua Courier*, February 11, 1888.
66. *Daily Republican*, February 9, 1888.
67. John E. Bodnar, *Immigration and Industrialization: Ethnicity in an American Mill Town, 1870-1940* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1977), xviii. Bodnar summarizes and then modifies the argument of Seymour Lipset and Reinhard Bendix in his study of Steelton, Pennsylvania, noting that due to limited social mobility, "Slavs could not easily move out of their low occupational status nor their ethnic community." *Ibid.*, xix.
68. *Herald*, February 11, 1888.
69. *Evening Herald*, February 17, 1888. The other listed signers of the statement were T. Leymel, L. Heavy, M. Mokarewicz, and W. Krytkowski.
70. Shenandoah *Herald*, February 11, 1888; Shenandoah *Evening Herald*, February 17, 1888.
71. In his examination of the Molly Maguires, Kevin Kenny described the complicated nature of "Irishness" during this period. Kevin Kenny, *Making Sense of the Molly Maguires* (New York: Oxford, 1998), 9-10.
72. *Evening Herald*, February 22, 1888.
73. See above, 25.
74. Michael Novak, *The Guns of Lattimer: The True Story of a Massacre and a Trial, August 1897-March 1898* (New York: Basic Books, 1978).
75. Kucas, 288.
76. *Ibid.*, 193.
77. Mildred Beik chronicled the experiences of eastern European immigrants in the town of Windber, Pennsylvania, home to a bituminous mining operation. Mildred A. Beik, *The Miners of Windber: The Struggles of New Immigrants for Unionization, 1890s-1930s* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996).