

**A LABORED MID-ATLANTIC REGION
DEFINED, NOT DISCOVERED:
SUGGESTIONS ON THE INTERSECTIONS
OF LABOR AND REGIONAL HISTORY**

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Abstract: Despite expansive agendas in labor and working-class history, a Mid-Atlantic regional perspective has not been, and likely will not be, deemed useful in discerning historical change and causation for core questions in the field. Following a brief survey of labor historiography and its emerging directions, the author considers diverse ways of “finding” a region and regional identities through routes of work and place, and suggests that a Mid-Atlantic labor identity might be found in the “drama and debris” of the Great Strike of 1877 and during deindustrialization in the 1970s.

Keywords: Mid-Atlantic region, labor history, 1877 Railroad Strike, labor strikes, deindustrialization, labor historiography, Pennsylvania labor history, Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey

“One inescapable reality of American labor history” is “the never-ending struggle between workers and bosses for power,” writes Melvyn Dubofsky in *Hard Work: The Making of Labor History*.¹ In that collection of essays and articles drawn from decades of his research and teaching the “new” labor history, Dubofsky succinctly captures a fundamental topic explored by historians

in the subfield. The “new” labor history, begun in the 1960s, had departed from the “old” labor history’s institutional focus on trade unions and labor leaders and, by the 1980s, had produced voluminous research on working people and their work (work settings, occupations, labor processes, labor markets, modes of managerial control, and work cultures) in community and case studies. Such work was cross-cut by ethnicity, gender, and race, and considered workers’ experiences both inside and outside of workplaces to understand working-class formation and class consciousness, working-class communities, families, and many other social, fraternal, religious, and political networks operating in—and by and for—workers’ worlds.² By the 1990s this “new” labor history seemed “not so new.” Emerging research on the “cultural” or “linguistic” turn in labor history focused less on materialist and structural sides to the stories of “struggle,” industrial and other relations in working-class life, and “power” (or control, or will, or agency), and more so on language and expression, to reveal operational hierarchies of power, such as whiteness and patriarchy.³ Yet all of these labor histories—the old, the new, and the “new, new”—continue in the twenty-first century. As Dubofsky describes it, “labor history has become a moveable feast.”

Its practitioners have indeed restored voice to the previously inarticulate, turned those at the bottom of society into historical subjects with will and agency, and portrayed working people in all their ethnic, racial, gendered and cultural diversity. They have continued to write solid institutional histories and substantial biographies; add more and more working-class communities to our knowledge base; broaden substantially our understanding of nonwhite workers; explore how gender has governed the behavior of workers; interrogate the language and cultural practices of working people; and probe the ever-changing relationship among workers, the state, and the law.⁴

But what of a *Mid-Atlantic* labor history? Historians of labor and working-class history have assayed regional characteristics of all manner of work in the South, New England, the Midwest, and the West, but they have not yet offered any sustained and discernible *Mid-Atlantic* regional perspective in their studies. To be sure, labor historians have studied workers and work in communities and in regions that fall geographically within the political boundaries of the Mid-Atlantic states—for example, the anthracite region of

northeastern Pennsylvania; the “industrial heartland” of Pittsburgh and its many surrounding mill towns; the coke region of southwestern Pennsylvania, or the Philadelphia metropolitan region—and they have done so in varying, historical time periods.⁵ Industrial geographies of either manufacturing/extractive/commercial pursuits, or transportation systems, or market “revolutions” seem to define such regions—or better labeled “subregions”—should a Mid-Atlantic region be discovered.

By way of contrast in seeking a Mid-Atlantic region, historians have referenced other regions such as “the South,” “the West,” or the Sunbelt and the Rust Belt, and whether in scholarly literature or popular recognition, the monikers conjure narratives of historical trajectories and ones not just based in place and time but in “a sense of place,” a “knowingness,” and an identity of difference that, for example, westerners or southerners had from “the East” or “the North.”⁶ Scholars of the “New Western history” have been successful in critically redefining a regional history of “the West” from that of westward expansion (the Turnerian frontier) to researching distinctive and shared characteristics of the region based in the historical legacies of “conquest” and “colony” and in experiences unique to westerners.⁷ In doing so, the New Western history helps to animate how conceptualizations of region shape the American, national history. Yet, a complete mapping of “the West” remains undone, and as one scholar claims, “to conceive of a West as a single, integrated, homogenous region is to force a ‘square peg’ historical geographic reality into a ‘round hole’ regional label.”⁸ I anticipate that even for the expansive (and currently expanding) field of labor history, a Mid-Atlantic regional lens will focus attention on what is ultimately an artificial, and forced, construct.

Just where (and, more significantly, when, and definitely why) would this Mid-Atlantic region be located and useful to define for the study of labor history? Shall we begin our mapping of the area along the New York–Philadelphia–Baltimore axis in the east, and travel from Baltimore moving upstream on the Susquehanna River and along the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad? Doing so will capture workers, work, and industries of Trenton and Patterson, Camden and Chester, Wilmington to Sparrows Point, and north again to Williamsport. The 1846 charter for the Pennsylvania Railroad, and the earlier years of traversing the Alleghenies, were too important not to connect this Mid-Atlantic east to western Pennsylvania and to the three rivers that meet in Pittsburgh. We might also include the area north of Pittsburgh, to Erie and Buffalo, and head east again to Rochester and Albany, and to the

Hudson River either on canals or rails. Boundaries of a Mid-Atlantic region are blurry in 1855 as they would be in 1955, and yet, however far north (to Connecticut?), or far south (to Virginia?), or far west (to Ohio or West Virginia?) one draws this region, Pennsylvania is its center and likely is its connective core.⁹

We could follow an economic linkage of railroads to draw a Mid-Atlantic laboring region, but why not canals, rivers, the Chesapeake Bay, or the Atlantic Ocean? Or turnpikes, interstate highways, and airports? Or we might track coal, coke, and steel, though we'd neglect glass, pottery, textiles, clothing, and earlier, timber, charcoal, iron, and many water-powered mills and, one hopes, we would not completely ignore agriculture.¹⁰ Such approaches based on "industry" or "technology" or "economic history" might devalue labor and working-class experiences in defining a Mid-Atlantic region.¹¹ The unevenness of capitalist development in different sectors of the economy combined with the total diversity of laboring experiences across place and time—in other words, a holistic heterogeneity from historians' vantage—may well be the defining feature of this Mid-Atlantic map. I would suggest this is the reason labor historians have not written theoretically or comparatively about the significance of a Mid-Atlantic *region* for the culture, politics, and organizational structure of working-class life, or in the traditional "institutions" approach to the study of unions and labor leaders in comprehending the dynamics of working-class struggle in the United States.

In fact, two more recent agendas in labor historiography will likely submerge a focus on region for the national story. The first is transnational history, which includes those "processes and actors that move across territorial boundaries of diverse nation-states," and those processes that are "extremely diverse," including "economies, demographic movements, capital flows, ideas, cultures and commodities." Labor historians using a transnational lens adopt a global perspective, pose research questions no longer contained by a nation-state's borders, and accord "flow and movement itself as constructive of change, as causally significant, and thus producing history."¹² Scholars of contemporary and historical im/migrations have pursued transnationalism with vigor and offer labor historians refined models of transregionalism and transcultural spaces in thinking about economic connections and information networks that im/migrants have used, and still use, to insert themselves into segmented labor markets.¹³

A second agenda comes from a recent issue of *International Labor and Working-Class History* that calls for explorations of "labor geographies," that

is, how workers attempt to shape the geographies of capitalism. The issue suggests future research on topics such as population density and class formation, or contiguity of work and home, or the relationship between property ownership and class identity, and which might probe “how capitalism functions as a spatial system and explore what this means for workers’ social praxis.”¹⁴ Perhaps labor history will develop a “spatial turn” wherein “region” might become a lens to discern effects of globalization on international solidarity movements, diasporas, or commodity chains. As of yet, a “Mid-Atlantic” region has not been historicized as part of a transnational or transregional project.¹⁵

Returning to the sheer diversity of labor and working-class pasts in the Mid-Atlantic: what labor did the area (region) not depend on? Slave labor or cowboys driving cattle? Did only workers in the Mid-Atlantic experience (as the aptly titled works convey) *Lives of Their Own* or *Work in a Disaster-prone Industry*? Mid-Atlantic communities certainly came to understand *Family Time and Industrial Time* (as did communities in New Hampshire), and the area’s workers contributed to *Making a New Deal* (as did workers in Chicago).¹⁶ We might also ask: which immigrant, ethnic, and racial groups did not work in Mid-Atlantic economies over time? Waves of immigrants, Great Migrations, migrant workers, and deindustrial diasporas are captured in labor and industrial community histories, and cumulatively such studies demonstrate how diversity and uneven prosperity have assisted and hindered worker struggles in a capitalist wage-labor system. Further, such studies emphasize the significance of ethnic, gendered, and racial identities in the making of opposition cultures and in working-class life. Yet, these studies supply little evidence or argument for a *Mid-Atlantic* regional cohesion, let alone for workers’ own awareness of a Mid-Atlantic *identity* upon which to act as historical agents in the shaping of capital-labor relations.¹⁷

Perhaps there were historical “moments” when members of a Mid-Atlantic working class saw themselves as part of a shared region of “inequality and stratification, differing social mobility, [and] work discipline” and conjured a movement culture and *mentalité* based in mutual recognition that their labor existed as commodity and themselves as fundamentally different from capitalists.¹⁸ In a pessimistic suggestion of shared experience (perhaps sentimentalist, because I am offering reactive examples), a Mid-Atlantic laboring identity might be found in the “drama and debris” of both the Great Strike of 1877 and in capital’s mobility that occurred throughout the mapped area a century later. Such “moments” actually span years of

connected and unconnected responses to capitalism(s) by industrializing and deindustrializing societies. In order to seek a Mid-Atlantic laboring identity, our quest would be to find “existing qualities, beliefs, experiences, situations that together transcend sub-regional heterogeneity and bind together people and places.”¹⁹

On our map of the Mid-Atlantic, Martinsburg, West Virginia, is uncannily at its center. Though the Great Upheaval began there and on the B&O Railroad in July 1877, Herbert Gutman saw its “prelude” in the years of 1873–74 when workers struck again and again in “small railroad towns and in isolated semi-rural regions” throughout Mid-Atlantic states, and, just as in 1877, strikes occurred in locations farther west and south. Gutman emphasized the railroad workers’ “readiness . . . to express their grievances” with or without the direction from railroad brotherhoods, yet commonly and crucially with support from their local communities.²⁰ Strikes occurred along the Erie Railroad and at its shops in the northeastern Pennsylvania town of Susquehanna Depot and along its western connective hub at Hornellsville, New York; more strikes happened in towns connected by the Lehigh Valley Railroad between Pittston, Pennsylvania, and Waverley, New York, as well as along the Delaware, Lackawanna, & Western Railroad at Hoboken and New York City, and the western divisions of the Pennsylvania Railroad system at Pittsburgh and farther west to cities and towns in Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois. Key characteristics of this prelude to 1877 included how in those many small towns “local discontent sparked the strikes,” and that “unlike in the cities . . . the discontented worker still was viewed by his fellow citizens as an individual and was not yet the stereotyped ‘labor agitator.’” According to Gutman, that striking workers and supportive communities were able to stop trains and “take over” railroad properties signaled shared “institutional and ideological factors [which] added to the strength of the workers and temporarily, at least, weakened the power of employers.”²¹

It is not, though, in the strikers’ demands or in the strikes’ debris (and there was less debris resulting from violence and railroad destruction in 1873–74 than in the upheaval of 1877) that I would seek a Mid-Atlantic regional and laboring identity. Instead, I would look to that period’s present and ensuing drama of how companies and states attempted to restore the working of the roads and to prevent disruptive working-class discontent, in 1873–74 and again in 1877, and to help us discern (or better yet, imagine) a regional pattern of both working-class peoples’ experiences with “law and order” and their expectations for an equitable social contract. At Susquehanna

Depot, a town of 8,000 became an “armed camp” with 1,800 soldiers from the Wilkes-Barre militia and supplemented by Philadelphia soldiers. Martial law was declared, 1,200 workers fired, and the Erie Railroad reasserted its control.²² At Hornellsville the railroad conceded to all striking workers, though “trouble” there reached back to 1869 and forward to 1880s as a “rights consciousness” permeated the social contexts of railroad workers’ lives.²³

Workers along with their sympathetic and supportive communities throughout Mid-Atlantic areas would come to recognize the establishment—and the force—of “state militias,” those National Guard units sent to supplement the railroad police, or the “Cossacks,” a.k.a. the Coal and Iron police, or sent to aid the professional “finks” from such private police forces as Baldwin-Felts or Pinkerton. Workers and communities in rural areas also saw the establishment of the state police, and the building of many arsenals near to industrial worksites. Discovering and defining a Mid-Atlantic region through the drama (and trauma?) of “law and order” imposed by publicly funded forces and military strikebreaking would not, I admit, be contained solely within a Mid-Atlantic area, but residents of the region’s places and spaces in the 1870s surely shared concerns about capital’s and, increasingly, the state’s unilateral terms for a (revised) social contract.

In another example, discovering region might also be found in the debris of deindustrialization and its representations. I wonder, does the Mid-Atlantic have more monuments and historical markers commemorating work, labor leaders, and labor actions than any other region? Does the region have more museums exhibiting working lives and industry? I think the Mid-Atlantic might have the most “ruin porn”: popular and professional images taken of crumbling sites of industry, haunting interiors of factory floors, where once there was activity and noise: now silence, not grease on the machines but dust, from which viewers conjure (or mourn?) imagined men at work. A recent collection of photographs, *Modern Ruins*, captures the rusting Bethlehem Steel in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, and weeds and young trees overtaking the Carrie Furnace at Rankin, Pennsylvania.²⁴ Its introduction asks if these industrial ruins are “fossils,” or “remnant anatomies,” or “survivors,” and ponders our fascination with them: is it due to a delight in witnessing destruction or in reliving those “disturbed layers of a traumatized consciousness”?²⁵ Visual evidence of a deindustrial sublime include the anthracite counties’ culm banks or Ashley’s coal breaker, the latter of which inspired local preservation efforts *in order to* remember and stave off the “future of amnesia,” whereas the outdoor mall at Homestead (“for

shopping, dining, and entertainment at “The Waterfront”) inspires poetry and photography about long-time residents’ social dislocation.²⁶ Artistic renderings and preservation efforts aside, Mid-Atlantic residents are surrounded by material evidence and social memories of many declines: from Hazelton and Trenton, to Camden and Chester, or Coatesville and Sparrows Point, and not just in towns like Brownsville or Braddock, but across rural counties’ landscapes.²⁷ Whether the debris is considered environmentally damaging, or heroic, or nostalgic, those former industrial sites contain a drama, currently in attempts to represent, and certainly in labor historians’ research about the recent, lived pasts when workers and communities heard the silence of the coal tipples, train trestles, and factory floors.

In *The Face of Decline* Thomas Dublin and Walter Licht define Pennsylvania’s anthracite region in two ways: “distinctive” due to its geologic and industrial history, and also in its social dynamics comprised of “crises, coping, resilience, and love of place” due to the long decline of anthracite mining.²⁸ Multiple oral histories inform their study: we hear from extended generations of working families and learn about their strategies to maintain livelihoods and communities, and also adapt in the present and plan for the future. The range of economic problems that wove the “labor question” in the late nineteenth century came to be respun in the late twentieth century with deindustrialization (and in the anthracite region since the 1920s.) Capital’s mobility (often in its quest for cheaper labor) and its effects on workers and communities are subjects of important recent studies of Mid-Atlantic industries, for example, Dan Sidorick’s study of Camden’s Campbell’s Soup, Jefferson Cowie’s study of RCA, and Ken Wolensky’s study of New York City’s “run-away” (garment) shops to Wilkes-Barre.²⁹ Guian McKee and James Wolfinger in separate studies describe the frictions of race and labor politics in the City of Brotherly Love during shifting economies in the mid-twentieth century, and on the other side of the state during the decline and fall of the steel industry, Charlie McCollester contends a laboring identity is the *Point of Pittsburgh* (even in the absence of work).³⁰

Might a Mid-Atlantic regional identity have formed (or have appeared) in workers’ empathy with other workers—even those residing hundreds of miles away—during moments (and over the course of years) when “the necessity of downsizing” was heard? Or, following devastations to rural, often county-wide, economies, might a Mid-Atlantic region convey a wry excitement at the announcement that a Wal-Mart was planned? Could a shared recognition about the “number of new jobs,” and not the quality of work or pay of those

jobs, have been a defining, regional characteristic: an identity of difference that marked a generation who experienced the permanence of a postindustrial Mid-Atlantic?

Perhaps not. Maybe instead workers in their communities became insular, protective, and parochial and so even less suited for a fast-paced global capitalism where corporations have no stake in geographic or political boundaries.³¹ Perhaps in the face of decline during the late twentieth century is another call to labor historians to seek out working-class conservatism: “working people who neither joined unions, nor radical political organizations, nor resisted employers but instead shared a belief in an ‘American way of life,’” who cast votes counter to their economic interests, or rejected an aging New Deal liberalism (or who never fully embraced it) as a shared characteristic of a Mid-Atlantic region.³²

These speculations on shared “dramas and debris” have attempted to connect place with experience (i.e., a sense of place) that workers held and that shaped communities’ responses within Mid-Atlantic economies. In both of these overgeneralized and imaginative examples in search of a Mid-Atlantic regional identity, labor historians would likely agree that geographic power was linked to workplace power: whether seen in the “moments” of 1873–1874/1877 railroad strikes when geographic power was necessary for an increase in workplace power (albeit temporarily) or, by the 1970s, in the representations about its uncoupling. Further, historians in search of region also might conceptualize how a Mid-Atlantic urban-rural divide may have been bridged by capital-state punitive power to restore order during the late nineteenth century, or investigate how “class happens” across urban-suburban-rural settings in the late twentieth century. Such topics would add to the *hard work* that labor historians do: there is a rich body of work on labor history in the Mid-Atlantic states, and this body of work does not come close to constituting a Mid-Atlantic labor and working-class history. A “Mid-Atlantic region” has not been considered as a variable or a lens; it has been more so a “setting” or a “do-able” (researchable) location with boundaries often defined by industry. I cannot say that a “regional identity” will never be found for the Mid-Atlantic; however multiple, key works of labor history find more useful subregions within a Mid-Atlantic, and several current trends in labor historiography militate against the search for subregional cohesion.

In current writings on how to revitalize a contemporary labor movement authors suggest how region is key—rather, region needs to become central—to organizing strategies and to reverse the decline of labor unions.³³ One

critique of the 2005 AFL-CIO/Change to Win debate argued that initiatives did not emphasize the need to build regional power across communities (e.g., “Union Cities”) and urged the transformation of the role of central labor councils into regional bodies by acknowledging that “globalization has increased the importance of regional economies as key sites for public and private decision making.”³⁴ Calls for regional “place-based” power building with social vision have great appeal: creating coalitions with activist groups and across multiple social and economic justice issues. As labor historians continue their historical investigations of locales and workers in new economies and document organizing movements in both the private and the public sectors—at worksites that cannot move—labor identities of place, space, and transregional networks for mobilization may well be topics to explore.

NOTES

1. Melvyn Dubofsky, *Hard Work: The Making of Labor History* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000), 183.
2. Indeed, James Green’s *The World of the Worker* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1980) evidenced one of several attempts to synthesize the many community and case studies researched by labor historians who, like him, were influenced by the “fathers” of the new labor history: David Montgomery, Herbert Gutman, and David Brody. Another important synthesis was David Brody’s *Workers in Industrial America: Essays on the Twentieth Century Struggle* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980). Calls for synthesis continued and a fine collection of essays edited by Leon Fink, *In Search of the Working Class: Essays in American Labor History and Political Culture* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994), offered several strategies and also suggested restoring elements of analysis from John R. Commons and the Wisconsin School. Key works by the “fathers” of the new labor history include David Montgomery, *Workers’ Control in America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), and *The Fall of the House of Labor* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987); Herbert Gutman, *Work, Culture, and Society in Industrializing America: Essays in American Working-Class and Social History* (New York: Vintage, 1977); and David Brody, *Steel Workers in America: The Nonunion Era* (New York: Harper and Row, 1960).
3. On “whiteness” see David Roediger, *Wages of Whiteness: Race and The Making of the American Working Class* (New York: Verso, 1991); and Eric Arnesen’s critique, “Whiteness and the Historians’ Imagination,” *International Labor and Working-Class History* 60 (Fall 2001): 3–32, and in the same issue, James Barrett’s “Whiteness Studies: Anything Here for Historians of the Working Class?” 33–42. New questions about the historical intersections of race and class (and gender) identities are raised by Guenther Peck, “White Slavery and Whiteness: A Transnational View of the Sources of Working-Class Radicalism and Racism,” *LABOR: Studies in Working-class History of the Americas* 1 (Summer 2004): 41–63. On gender, see Joan W. Scott, “On Language, Gender, and Working Class History,” *International Labor and Working-Class History* 31 (Spring 1987): 1–13; Alice Kessler-

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- Harris, *Women Have Always Worked: A Historical Overview* (Old Westbury, NY: Feminist Press, 1981); and Ava Baron, ed., *Work Engendered: Toward a New History of American Labor* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991).
4. Melvyn Dubofsky, "Historiography of American Labor History," in *Encyclopedia of Labor and Working-class History*, ed. Eric Arnesen (New York: Routledge, 2007), 600.
5. Robert P. Wolensky and William A. Hastie Sr., *Anthracite Labor Wars: Tenancy, Italians, and Organized Crime in the Northern Coalfield of Northeastern Pennsylvania, 1897–1959* (Easton, PA: Center for Canal History, 2013); Eric Leif Davin, *Crucible of Freedom: Workers' Democracy in the Industrial Heartland, 1914–1960* (New York: Lexington Books, 2010); Kenneth Warren, *Wealth, Waste, and Alienation: Growth and Decline in the Connellsville Coke Industry* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2001); Muriel Earley Sheppard, *Cloud by Day: The Story of Coal and Coke and People* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1991); Phillip Scranton, *Figured Tapestry: Production, Markets and Power in Philadelphia Textiles, 1855–1941* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); and Francis Ryan, *AFSCME's Philadelphia Story: Municipal Workers and Urban Power in the Twentieth Century* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2010).
6. Finding "region" through folklore and in American cultural studies is Barbara Allen and Thomas J. Schlereth, eds., *A Sense of Place: American Regional Cultures* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1990). On the "regionalist impulse," see Edward L. Ayers, Patricia Nelson Limerick, Stephen Nissenbaum, and Peter S. Onuf, *All Over the Map: Rethinking American Regions* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996); and, more recently, Timothy R. Mahoney and Wendy J. Katz, eds., *Regionalism and the Humanities* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2008).
7. Patricia Limerick, *Legacy of Conquest: The Unbroken Past of the American West* (New York: Norton, 1987); and Richard White, *"It's your misfortune and none of my own": A History of the American West* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991).
8. Peter S. Morris, "Where Is the American West? Creating a Base Map for a New Regional History," paper presented at Ninetieth Annual Meeting of the Association of American Geographers, San Francisco, CA, April 1, 1994.
9. Pennsylvania as the Mid-Atlantic's "connective core" is mainly based in its geographic location, though Pennsylvania labor history certainly has more than its share of labor leaders and major (and alternative) labor movements and actions. The Pennsylvania Historical Association (PHA) and Pennsylvania Labor History Society has published a "Pennsylvania Labor History Bibliography" available at the PHA's website, <http://www.pa-history.org>; and see "Labor's Struggle to Organize" on the public history and heritage website, ExplorePAHistory.com, <http://explorepahistory.com/story.php?storyId=1-9-22>.
10. Cindy Hahamovitch and Rick Halpern, "'Not a 'Sack of Potatoes': Why Labor Historians Need to Take Agriculture Seriously,'" *International Labor and Working-Class History* 65 (Spring 2004): 3–10.
11. Donald R. Adams Jr., an economic historian, periodizes a 1790–1860 Mid-Atlantic economy (and did not cross the Alleghenies). He examines supply and demand for labor in these years, capital flows, and wage rates in somewhat arbitrarily defined the Mid-Atlantic and does not compare his findings interregionally, though he admits that more could be investigated intraregionally. See "The Mid-Atlantic Labor Market in the Nineteenth Century," in *Working Papers from the Regional Economic History Research Center*, ed. Glenn Porter and William H. Mulligan Jr. (Greenville,

- DE: Eleutherian Mills-Hagley Foundation, 1980), 99–112. Borders of this Mid-Atlantic map would not necessarily take one hundred years to shift, and a southern (sectional) economy may not only be distinguished by slave labor. As John Majewski finds in his comparative study of Albemarle County, Virginia, and Cumberland County, Pennsylvania, antebellum citizens and boosters in both places welcomed infrastructure improvements to link markets and increase prosperity. Yet competition between rival Virginia cities hampered the political process of financing railroad development, marking a divergence in economic development of the two counties in the 1830s. Majewski, *A House Dividing: Economic Development in Pennsylvania and Virginia before the Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).
12. Julie Greene, “Historians of the World: Transnational Forces, Nation-States, and the Practice of U.S. History,” in *Workers Across the Americas: The Transnational Turn in Labor History*, ed. Leon Fink (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 13.
 13. Dirk Hoerder, “Overlapping Spaces: Transregional and Transcultural,” in *Workers Across the Americas*, ed. Fink, 33–38. See also Marcel van der Linden, “The Promise and Challenges of Global Labor History,” *International Labor and Working-Class History* 82 (Fall 2012): 57–76.
 14. Andrew Herod, “Workers Space and Labor Geography,” *International Labor and Working-Class History* 64 (Fall 2003): 112–38.
 15. Hoerder, “Overlapping Spaces,” 33–38.
 16. John Bodnar, Roger Simon, and Michael P. Weber, *Lives of Their Own: Blacks, Italians, and Poles in Pittsburgh, 1900–1960* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1982); Anthony F. C. Wallace, *St. Clair: A Nineteenth-Century Coal Town’s Experience with a Disaster-Prone Industry* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1981); Tamara Hareven, *Family Time, Industrial Time: The Relationship between The Family and Work in a New England Community* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982); Elizabeth Cohen, *Making a New Deal: Industrial Workers in Chicago* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).
 17. A detailed historiographical note listing all of those labor histories and industrial community studies of “waves of immigrants, Great Migrations, migrant workers, and de-industrial diasporas” in Mid-Atlantic areas would be impractical here.
 18. These “broad strokes” of class consciousness are from Sean Wilentz, “Against American Exceptionalism: Class Consciousness and the American Labor Movement, 1790–1920,” *International Labor and Working-Class History* 26 (Fall 1984): 1–24.
 19. Morris, “Where Is the American West?,” n.p.
 20. Gutman, “Trouble on the Railroads in 1873–1874: Prelude to the 1877 Crisis?” in *Work, Culture, and Society in Industrializing America*, 295–320.
 21. *Ibid.*, 318–19.
 22. *Ibid.*, 315–17.
 23. Shelton Stromquist, “‘Our Rights as Workingmen’: Class Traditions and Collective Action in a Nineteenth-Century Railroad Town, Hornellsville, N.Y., 1869–1882,” in *The Great Strikes of 1877*, ed. David O. Stowell (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2008), 55–75.
 24. Shaun O’Boyle, *Modern Ruins: Portraits of Place in the Mid-Atlantic Region*, introduction by Geoff Manaugh (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2010).
 25. Geoff Manaugh, “Introduction: The Survivals,” in *ibid.*, viii–xii.

26. Jim Daniels and Charlee Brodsky "Homestead from Mill Town to Mall Town," *LABOR: Studies in Working-class History of the Americas* 4 (Winter 2007): 7–21; and Judith Modell Schachter, *A Town Without Steel, Envisioning Homestead* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1998). Also for the former Homestead Steelworks' Waterfront strip mall and the "ghostly" or "nostalgic" twelve smokestacks that remain, see Jefferson Cowie and Joseph Heathcott, "The Meanings of Deindustrialization," in *Beyond the Ruins*, ed. Cowie and Heathcott (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2003), 1–18. The Huber Breaker Preservation Society (<http://www.huberbreaker.org>) is one of many grassroots organizations that since the 1990s attempted to "save" Glen Alden Coal's Huber breaker. It was dismantled in 2014 to the dismay of those leading local preservation efforts in Ashley: http://dcist.com/2014/01/abandoned_huber_coal_breaker.php#photo-1.
27. Of course, residents in Mid-Atlantic states are surrounded by the remains of earlier declines. Though not a labor historian, Anthony F. C. Wallace began his 1972 study *Rockdale* with a pervasive sense of place and the remains of past industry: "There is a village in America called Rockdale where the people used to manufacture cotton cloth. It lies along the banks of Chester Creek in Delaware County, in southeastern Pennsylvania, between Philadelphia and Wilmington. None of the people who worked in the first cotton mills is alive anymore, but some of their children's children still live there, and the ruins of stone factories, as well as stone tenements and fine stone mansions, are yet standing. Nearby are remains of the other hamlets that made up the Rockdale manufacturing district—Lenni, Parkmount, West Branch, Crozerville, Glen Riddle, and Knowlton—where cotton yarn was spun on mules and throstles and cloth was woven on looms powered by water wheels." Wallace, *Rockdale: The Growth of an American Village in the Early Industrial Revolution* (New York: Norton, 1972), 4.
28. Thomas Dublin and Walter Licht, *The Face of Decline: The Pennsylvania Anthracite Region in the Twentieth Century* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005), 1.
29. Daniel Sidorick, *Condensed Capitalism: Campbell Soup and the Pursuit of Cheap Production in the Twentieth Century* (Ithaca, NY: ILR Press, 2009); Jefferson Cowie, *Capital Moves: RCA's Seventy Years Quest for Cheap Labor* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1999); Kenneth C. Wolensky, Nicole H. Wolensky, and Robert P. Wolensky, *Fighting for the Union Label: The Women's Garment Industry and the ILGWU in Pennsylvania* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2002).
30. Guian A. McKee, *The Problem of Jobs: Liberalism, Race, and Deindustrialization in Philadelphia* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008); James Wolfinger, *Philadelphia Divided: Race and Politics in the City of Brotherly Love* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007); John Hoerr, *And the Wolf Finally Came: The Decline and Fall of the American Steel Industry* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1988); Charles McCollester, *The Point of Pittsburgh: Production and Struggle at the Forks of the Ohio* (Pittsburgh: Battle of Homestead Foundation, 2008).
31. Questioning the "power of community" are Robert Bussel and Amy Bischof, "'Everybody's Town': Defending the Social Contract in Hershey, Pennsylvania," *LABOR: Studies in Working-class History of the Americas* 1 (Summer 2004): 27–39; and Cowie, *Capital Moves*, 185–90.
32. This call to explore workers' conservatism—about workers who chose to support "an American way of life and proved more loyal to their churches or religious faiths than to their unions or class"—is from Dubofsky, *Hard Work*, 231. A recent reformulation of New Deal liberalism is Jefferson Cowie and Nick Salvatore's "The Long Exception: Rethinking the Place of the New Deal in American

- History," *International Labor and Working-Class History* 74 (Fall 2008): 3–32. See several historians' responses in the same *ILWCH* issue, especially Nancy MacLean's critique, "Getting New Deal History Wrong," 49–55.
33. On the role of central labor councils and possibilities of social movement unionism see Bill Fletcher and Fernando Gaspasian, *Solidarity Divided: The Crisis in Organized Labor and A New Path Toward Social Justice* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009); and Rick Fantasia and Kim Voss, *Hard Work: Remaking the American Labor Movement* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004). Twentieth-century historical perspectives are in David Brody, *Labor Embattled: History, Power, Rights* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2005).
 34. Amy Dean and David B. Reynolds, "Labor's New Regional Strategy: The Rebirth of Central Labor Councils," *New Labor Forum* 17, no. 1 (Spring 2008): 46–55.