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On the cover: View of Lake Conemaugh with the Fisher House. Courtesy of the Johnstown Area Heritage Association.

REVISITING THE TIMING AND EVENTS
LEADING TO AND CAUSING THE
JOHNSTOWN FLOOD OF 1889

*Uldis Kaktins, Carrie Davis Todd,
Stephanie Wojno, and Neil Coleman*

The Johnstown Flood of May 31, 1889, was responsible for more recorded deaths than any other disaster in the United States until the Galveston hurricane of 1900.¹ An important difference between the two is that the Johnstown flood was not a natural disaster. Although the Johnstown region was in the midst of a particularly wet spring and the former boroughs that now form the city of Johnstown were already experiencing low-level flooding on May 31, the ultimate reason for the high death toll was the catastrophic failure of the South Fork Dam, located fourteen miles upstream from the outskirts of Johnstown on the South Fork of the Little Conemaugh River (see fig. 1). The millions of tons of water released by the failure of the dam caused devastation along the Little Conemaugh River drainage. As the water moved downstream it was temporarily impounded by debris dams behind two Pennsylvania Railroad bridges (Viaduct and Bridge no. 6), which caused “reformation of the lake” at these points. When Bridge no. 6 failed, the rejuvenated flood wave sped toward Johnstown. Most structures

were no match for the violent floodwaters, which carried debris from the dam itself, trees, houses, bridges, railroad cars, barbed wire; even livestock and people were caught in the torrent. By the time the flood wave reached the Stone Bridge in Johnstown, it had traveled about sixteen miles. At this point most of its energy was spent and a huge debris jam formed at the bridge. The debris jam subsequently caught fire, claiming additional victims who had been trapped among the debris. In the end, over 2,200 people lost their lives.

Despite the infamy of the Johnstown Flood of 1889 (or perhaps because of it), there is much conflicting, and sometimes inaccurate, information surrounding the factors contributing to the flood and the flood itself. This article reviews the events leading up to the flood and provides new insights as to the cause of the dam's failure, with respect to the fill material used in its reconstruction, the rainfall amounts and intensity, the rate of floodwater runoff into Lake Conemaugh (previously known as the South Fork Reservoir), and the travel time of the flood wave to Johnstown. Special attention is given to resolving the conflicting accounts as to the time of failure for the South Fork Dam, the volume of Lake Conemaugh at the time of the dam failure, the length of the dam's embankment, and the time it took to drain the lake. Finally, we hope to show that the often-presented idea that the designed

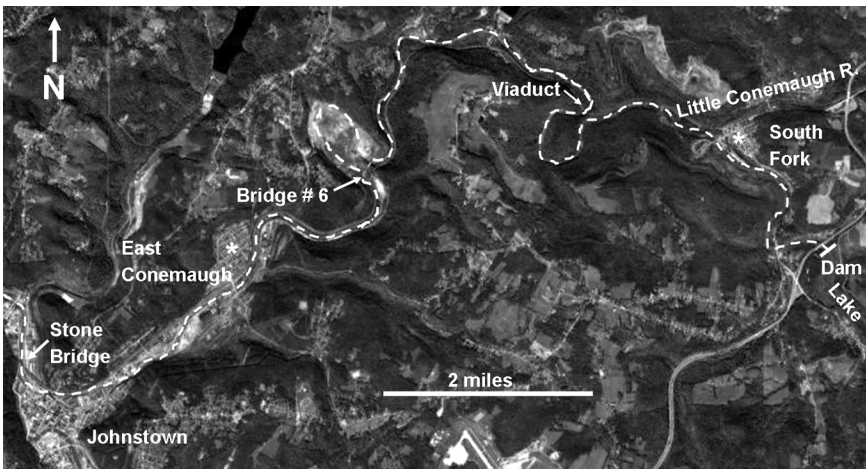


FIGURE 1: Path of the flood from the South Fork Dam through present-day Johnstown, shown by the dashed white line. Note that the meander bend upstream of Bridge no. 6 no longer exists. It has been filled in, primarily with steel-mill slag, and the river now flows through a rock cut in the neck of the meander bend. Base map source. Google Earth image. Software available at: <http://www.google.com/earth/index.html>.

spillway for the original dam was inadequate is without merit and that indeed the culpability for this tragedy rests in large part with the actions/inactions of the South Fork Hunting and Fishing Club.

Original South Fork Dam

The South Fork Dam was designed to hold back water that could be used as a dry-season water supply for the Pennsylvania Main Line Canal, with released water traveling down the Little Conemaugh River to the Johnstown terminus of the canal. William E. Morris, one of the state engineers of the Western Division of the Pennsylvania Canal, prepared the dam's original design in 1839.² Authorization for dam construction contracts and iron work occurred in January 1840 and work began in April of that year.³ Due to Pennsylvania's financial difficulties, funding for the project ran out in 1842 and Morris, along with the other engineers, lost their employment with the Canal Commission. Nevertheless, Morris prepared a modified design in 1846 that would reduce some of the costs when construction resumed. The partially built dam slowly deteriorated during the 1842–51 construction hiatus, and in 1847 a partial break in the dam resulted in minor downstream flooding. Although not completed until the spring of 1853, the dam provided water to the canal as early as the summer of 1852.⁴

Morris estimated that the completed dam, at a water height of 62 feet, would hold about 480 million cubic feet of water, while during dry spells (with water two feet below the lip of the spillway due to evaporation) 450 million cubic feet would be available for the canal.⁵ We performed a Geographic Information Systems (GIS) analysis of newly available Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR) data to obtain a new estimate of the lake volume and acreage. LiDAR is an optical remote sensing technique for measuring distances, and is used for very detailed mapping. The LiDAR data uses high-quality, remotely sensed point data in *x*, *y*, and *z* values to indicate each point's location and elevation.⁶ It is processed to remove tree canopies, buildings, and other unwanted features to produce a "bare Earth" relief map that can be used to create a digital elevation model.

Our analysis reveals that Morris's estimate was on the high side and the dam would only store 388 million cubic feet of water below an elevation contour of 1,609 feet. This elevation is slightly above the spillway lip elevation but we consider it a close approximation of the "normal pool" at high lake level in 1857. Figure 2 shows features in the vicinity of the dam and lake, and the surface extents of the lake in 1857 and at the time of the 1889 flood. Note that these modern (2008) LiDAR elevations are 5.4 to 6.0 feet higher than the elevations

given in the 1891 report by James B. Francis and others.⁷ Our analysis using GIS software (ArcGIS 10) shows that at the moment the dam breached in 1889, the impoundment held about 495 million cubic feet of water (or about 15.5 million tons) below a contour elevation of 1,615 feet, which we find approximates the modern elevation of the impounded lake water at failure. The calculated tonnage is almost 5 million tons less than the usually cited figure of 20 million tons. Our work with modern LiDAR data (1-meter resolution) updates previous results by the National Park Service, which used an older digital elevation model (10-meter resolution), to estimate a lake volume of 449 million cubic feet of water when the dam failed.⁸ The older 10-meter digital elevation model used lower-quality data that was primarily derived by digitizing contours from U.S. Geological Survey 7.5-minute topographic quadrangle maps.

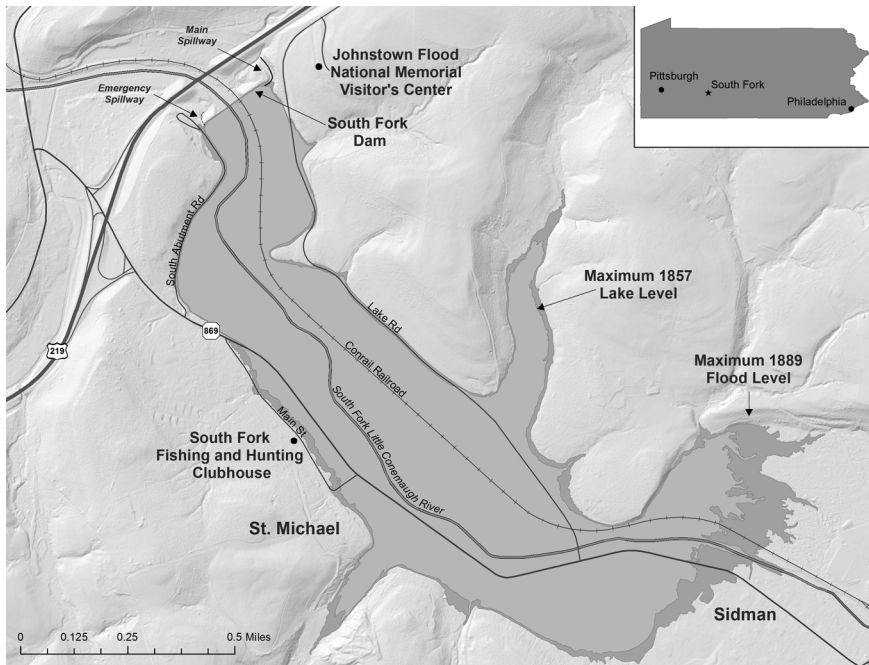


FIGURE 2: Overhead view of the former Lake Conemaugh, superimposed on a relief map with present-day features that include a railway through the dam breach, Highway 219, and the park visitors' center. The areal extent of the lake is shown for two different times: normal pool level of 1,609 feet in 1857, when the dam was acquired by the Pennsylvania Railroad, and later, at maximum flood level (1,615 feet) when the dam breached in 1889. Image prepared by authors for this article. Google Earth image. Software available at <http://www.google.com/earth/index.html>.

The modern lake volumes represent upper limits because lake-bottom sediments were present at the time of the 1889 flood (see fig. 3). The flood washed out some of these sediments and rain over the ensuing years eroded away additional lake-bottom sediments. Our LiDAR-based volumes represent the present basin, but some adjustments, such as for the modern double-track railroad bed, and dam slope have been taken into account so that the basin would be more similar to what existed in 1889. The present study also gives a new acreage value for the lake at spillway lip level (1,609 feet) of 374 acres, and defines the drop in elevation from the base of the dam (1,543 feet) to the Stone Bridge in Johnstown as 380 feet.

A key specification of the original plans was that the aggregate width of spillway channels be at least 150 feet, which could be accomplished by a single large spillway on one side of the dam, or a spillway on each side of the dam. A single curving spillway, 98 feet wide at the bridge over the spillway (narrowing to about 69 feet wide downstream) and 10 feet deep, was cut into bedrock on the northeast side of the dam and is still

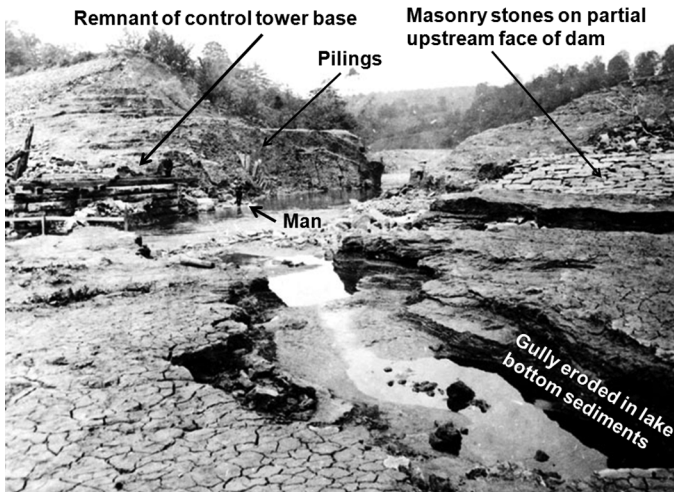


FIGURE 3: View of the former lake bed upstream of the dam. An erosional gully is carved in the lake-bottom sediments. The structure at left center includes remnant of the former control tower and stone culvert. Remains of hemlock pilings used to block the culvert are also visible in the middle of the breach on the left side, near a man standing beside the stream. Masonry covering part of the upstream side of the dam can be seen on the right. Figure courtesy of the Johnstown Area Heritage Association.

evident today. However, Walter S. Frank, in discussing the causes of the flood, makes a strong argument that a second, much shallower spillway was originally excavated on the opposite (southwest) side of the dam. He points out that “it is inconceivable that any engineer would approve the completion of a dam with a waste-way [spillway] width of 69 feet at its narrowest point, when specifications called for 150 feet.”⁹ This secondary spillway would have been about 3 feet deep (down to bedrock) and approximately 70 feet wide. The present study confirms the probable existence of an auxiliary spillway. Such a spillway would have begun to accommodate flow if the lake rose to within about three feet of overtopping the original dam and would therefore substantially increase the safety margin for the dam at high flows.

The original dam also had a series of cast-iron sluice pipes at the base. Five sluices, consisting of seven-foot-long sections of two-foot inside-diameter cast-iron pipes, ran for a total of 77 feet under the dam and fed water to an arched stone culvert, which then discharged at the base of the downstream breast. Sluice gates, controlled from a tower built above the culvert entry, regulated flow into the pipes, which would then eventually feed the Main Line Canal in Johnstown, thus making the canal navigable for most of the dry summer season. Sluice pipes are also important for two other reasons. They allow the water level to be lowered, making it possible to carry out repair work on the upstream dam breast and provide the means to control water level during flood events in order to reduce the possibility of the dam being overtopped. Morris specified an all-masonry control tower in the original 1839 plans, although the control tower ended up as a wooden structure on a stone foundation as a cost-saving measure.¹⁰

The 1839 dam specifications called for a rubble masonry wall laid in a full bed of cement that was to have been built within the shale core of the embankment. The masonry wall was to have been sunk into the bedrock and was to have been 25 feet high, 6 feet thick at the bottom, and 2 feet thick on top. Omission of this “heart wall” in the 1846 plan saved the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania approximately \$40,000 in construction costs. Only the shale core remained. Additionally, a 15-inch-thick dry masonry covering for the upstream slope of the dam was only partly built. Less than one-fourth of the northeast embankment slope was covered this way in 1889 (see fig 3). The original design also called for an 18-inch-thick paving of dry masonry on top of the dam crest. It seems probable that this was not done as maintenance operations for the dam in 1856 included “gravelling of its surface.” All these omissions reduced to some

extent the overall integrity of the dam and its ability to withstand flood conditions. In particular, the lack of a heart wall was critical in subsequent events.¹¹

Upon its completion, the 72-foot-high South Fork Dam was the largest earthen dam in the world, creating the largest artificial reservoir in the United States, and was widely considered an engineering marvel. Morris, in his original plans, estimated that the length of the embankment would be 850 feet, while a number of secondary sources, such as McCullough, Degen and Degen, and O'Connor, give a dam breast length of 931 feet. The first mention of this last number is in an *Engineering Record* article that probably included some of the natural topography (abutment) on either side of the dam embankment.¹² Frank, using survey data from Francis's ASCE paper, gives the length of the dam's embankment as 918 feet, but this also includes some of the abutment. Our GIS study using LiDAR data gives a length along the crest of the dam embankment (excluding abutments) of about 860 feet, which matches more closely Morris's original plan and clarifies the confusion as to the true length of the reconstructed dam structure.

During the 10-year period of service to the Pennsylvania Canal, the South Fork Dam experienced several problems. Workers discovered and immediately repaired two small leaks in 1854, although no information is known about the location or nature of these breaks.¹³ Rapid snowmelt in March 1856 caused concern of a possible dam break, especially in light of a leak in the dam and elevated water level in the reservoir; however, the dam held.¹⁴ In 1857 the entire Main Line Canal system, including the South Fork Dam, was sold to the Pennsylvania Railroad.¹⁵

During the time of Pennsylvania Railroad ownership the dam was not inspected or maintained on a regular basis. Weakening of the mortar joints in the culvert roof led to a partial collapse of the culvert arch on July 18, 1862, but no flooding ensued and the Pennsylvania Railroad seems to have ignored the problem. However, a significant breach occurred on July 26, 1862, when the upstream section of the stone culvert underwent further collapse and a 200-foot section of the dam washed out to a depth of approximately 50 feet.¹⁶ At the time there was less than 50 feet of water behind the dam and water level in the river was low. The railroad watchman at the dam, observing muddy water flowing from the culvert, opened the sluice pipes. Little downstream flooding occurred because the breach formed gradually and the lake drained over a period of 11 hours, causing the nearly dry bed of the Little Conemaugh River to only rise between one and three feet. It should also be noted that had the heart wall been present the dam would probably not have

washed out to that depth. By 1864 the Pennsylvania Railroad essentially abandoned the Western Division of the Pennsylvania Main Line Canal and left the South Fork dam site in complete neglect.¹⁷ The wooden control tower burned down sometime between 1864 and 1875. In 1875 the Pennsylvania Railroad sold the land parcel encompassing the dam and former lake to John Reilly, a former congressman from Altoona, who recouped some of his investment through the salvage and sale of the remaining iron pipes and valves.¹⁸

Rebuilding the Dam

After the 1862 breach, the dam was left in disrepair until 1879, when Benjamin F. Ruff became involved with the nascent South Fork Hunting and Fishing Club (SFHFC) of Pittsburgh, which had been incorporated in May of that year and chartered in November. Ruff seems to have begun repairs to the dam in late 1879 even though the club did not have title to the land until March 1880. The SFHFC started with fifteen prominent members from Pittsburgh. Eventually membership grew to nearly seventy members and included, among others, Andrew Carnegie, Andrew W. Mellon, Henry C. Frick, Robert Pitcairn, Philander C. Knox, Marvin F. Scaife, Durbin Horne, and Benjamin Ruff (the promoter and first president of the club). F. J. Unger was the last president/manager of the SFHFC. The SFHFC commissioned repairs on the dam to re-establish the lake. The first stage of reconstruction involved filling the breach and culvert with any available material, including brush, tree stumps, hay, and manure; however, heavy rains in December 1879 washed away the repairs. When repairs resumed in 1880, hemlock pilings replaced debris as a means to close off the culvert remnants, with earth and rocks used to fill the void left by the breach (see fig. 3 above).¹⁹ Later inspection by engineers concluded that the hemlock pilings were not only improperly emplaced but were also the incorrect material to accomplish proper closure.²⁰ This resulted in continuous leakage at the base of the dam.

Ruff stated that 22,000 cubic yards of fill were emplaced during the reconstruction, but it is doubtful that all this fill came from local borrow pits. Accounts stated that the fill included dirt, clay, shale, old bricks, and, once again, brush, hay, and straw. It is probable that at least part of the fill came from cheap and easily attainable coal- and clay-mining wastes. The Lower Kittanning coal crops out in the South Fork area and was extensively mined at this time.²¹ A plastic clay is associated with the Lower Kittanning seam and

this clay would have been in the waste rock from mining operations. One of the club members, Pitcairn, had a friendship with the superintendent of the Argyl coal company, which operated three mines in the Lower Kittanning.²² The presence of coal waste in the dam is supported by observers who noticed “sulfur water” seeps from the dam breast.²³ Although Ruff tried to dismiss these as natural springs, there is no doubt that this was, in fact, lake water in contact with mine waste in the dam fill seeping through the dam breast. Natural springs would not flow from the abutments to the central portions of the dam, nor is there any evidence of such seeps from the embankment remains today.

The reference to old bricks relates to waste from fire brickyards near South Fork.²⁴ Along with the old bricks, this waste contained a certain amount of plastic clay, which was used to manufacture bricks. When wetted, plastic clay has very low shear strength and was probably a major factor in the resultant catastrophic failure.²⁵ In addition, brick as fill material results in incomplete compaction, especially when there was no attempt to fully compact the fill. An important omission in the repaired dam was the puddled clay in the core of the dam that had originally been used to reduce the permeability of the upstream section of the dam. The absence of low-permeability puddled clay material meant that water saturation could extend further through the core of the dam, making it susceptible to piping and liquefaction. Furthermore, the downstream face of the dam was compromised by the failure to replace the very large rip-rap that originally armored it. Instead, the downstream face of the repaired section was covered by undersized rock (see fig. 4).

Of even greater concern was the fact that, since the new fill in the reconstructed dam was not properly compacted, there was a sag in the central portion of the embankment so that the freeboard (the height to which water could rise without overtopping the dam) above the spillway floor was further reduced. Estimates vary as to the amount of sag, but as measured by Davis it was at least two feet relative to the ends of the embankment two weeks after the flood.²⁶ As a result, water overtopped the dam in the center, which is the worst possible case for an earthen dam.

Upon inspection of the dam in 1880, geologist and engineer John Fulton wrote, “It did not appear to me that this work was being done in a careful and substantial manner, or with the care demanded in a large structure of this kind.” Another engineer, P. F. Brendlinger, also visited the site in 1880 and expressed similar concerns regarding the construction method, comparing it to the construction of a railroad embankment, and noting a series of leaks near the base of the dam.²⁷ Qualified engineers did not supervise any of the dam repairs.

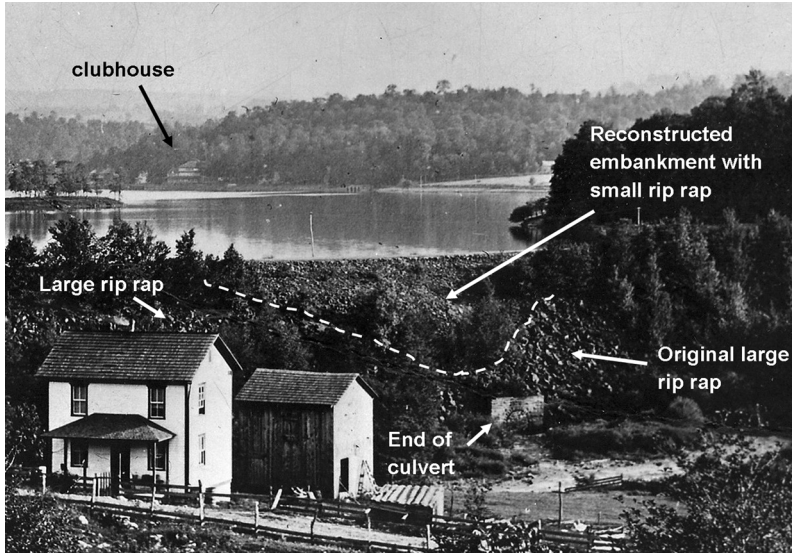


FIGURE 4: Pre-flood view looking upstream at the dam, as repaired by the SFHFC. Note the much smaller rip-rap of the repaired section. Figure courtesy of the Johnstown Area Heritage Association.

Additional modifications to the dam included building a bridge over the spillway and lowering the height of the dam crest by at least two feet, ostensibly to widen the carriage road, but we believe this was also a cheap expedient way to provide additional fill material for dam reconstruction. This lowering of the crest of the dam, in combination with the previously mentioned sag, then reduced the total original freeboard from 10 feet to an effective freeboard of less than 6 feet in the central portion of the dam. Investigations by Davis shortly after the flood found high-water marks in the spillway 6.7 feet above its base, which corroborates witness statements that the maximum overflow depth in the center was about a foot.²⁸ In addition, the lowering of the dam crest essentially negated the auxiliary spillway on the southwestern end. Therefore, the single spillway on the northeastern abutment of the dam now served as the sole discharge point for water in the lake and therefore the “normal” lake level was now at, or slightly above, the base of the spillway (a water depth of at least 62 feet). As a result, water was usually flowing through the spillway and the SFHFC found this satisfactory since club members could picnic by the small waterfall at the outlet of the spillway (see fig. 5).



FIGURE 5: Small waterfall at outlet of main spillway on northeastern side of dam. This feature has not been preserved in its original form. Figure courtesy of the Johnstown Area Heritage Association.

Once the water level had risen sufficiently in the reservoir, the SFHFC stocked the lake with imported game fish. Fish screens on the spillway bridge supports prevented the downstream escape of stocked fish. The height of the initial screen was about two feet, including the sill at the base of the bridge, for the average water level in the spillway, which by marks on the screen seems to have been 9–12 inches above the base of the spillway.²⁹ However, club members soon realized that spillway water depth at times exceeded the height of the fish screens and therefore constructed a floating V-shaped log boom to extend into the lake from the bridge. This boom had three-quarter-inch wire mesh attached to 8-inch by 8-inch timbers to a height of 43 inches. As the timber was mostly submerged, iron spikes projected 4 inches from the top of the wood to keep the fish in the lake.³⁰ The total height of this device, including nails, was about 4.5 feet. There is no doubt that the fish screens and log boom, along with the associated trapped debris, increased the water level behind the dam by reducing the outflow at the entrance to the spillway.

Regional Rainfall and Runoff during Late May 1889

The rainfall event preceding the failure of the South Fork Dam is usually described as “torrential” and, ultimately, the cause of the failure. However, this simplistic statement requires further scrutiny. Investigation of the available records of this multiday rainfall event, although indicating sustained moderate to heavy precipitation, do not support a continuous torrential storm as is often assumed. On May 28, 1889, a large regional storm system developed over Kansas and Nebraska and proceeded eastward, and by the late afternoon to early evening of May 30 the storm had reached the Johnstown area, with the heaviest rainfall occurring during the night of May 30–31.³¹

Total rainfall amounts increased west to east across the Allegheny Mountains. At Indiana, Pennsylvania, the May 30 rainfall was 2 inches, while it was only 1 inch the next day and the bulk of that was probably during the early morning hours. Therefore, the weather to the west and northwest of Johnstown would have been clearing by the morning of May 31. By daylight on May 31, the rain had briefly ceased in the Johnstown area and a heavy mist was hanging over Lake Conemaugh.³² It then rained intermittently in moderate amounts through the rest of the morning and into the afternoon. The recorded rainfall in Johnstown on May 31 was 2.4 inches by 11:00 a.m. Unfortunately, the station observer was lost in the flood and no further data was recorded. Most of this recorded precipitation fell during the night. The Pennsylvania State Weather Service estimated that the total rainfall for Johnstown on May 31 was about 3.0–3.5 inches. For the full 26-hour storm, Franklin Institute rainfall contour maps estimate the rainfall for the Johnstown area at 5–6 inches.³³

Greater rainfall amounts were recorded along the Allegheny Front to the north and east of Johnstown. The South Fork drainage basin received slightly more rainfall than Johnstown itself (an average of 6–7 inches) during the storm.³⁴ At Blue Knob, outside of, and about 12 miles east of the center of the South Fork drainage basin, the U.S. Signal Service recorded 7.9 inches of rain.³⁵ Further east of the Allegheny Mountains, record flooding occurred in the Juniata River basin, although it was Johnstown that gained international attention for flooding as a result of the failure of the South Fork Dam.

L. Blodget, in his analysis of the Pennsylvania floods of May 31–June 1, 1889, does state that this was the “the greatest rainfall of the century in Pennsylvania,” but weather data are not very complete for the nineteenth century, which makes this claim difficult to evaluate.³⁶ Regardless, 6–7 inches

of rainfall on a watershed is a heavy rain, but one must remember that since the dam failed about 17 hours into the storm, the actual rainfall leading to the disaster was somewhat less. An even better perspective may be gained when considering the 12 inches of rain that the same watershed received in the 1977 flood, making that the “storm of the century,” at least for the twentieth century.³⁷

In terms of surface runoff, of even greater importance than the total rainfall is the rainfall intensity.³⁸ As already noted, the most intense rain fell during the night hours of May 30–31. This would have resulted in extreme surface runoff in the early morning hours within the South Fork drainage basin. But it is also important to realize that this extreme runoff would not have continued into the afternoon.

In addition to rainfall intensity, soil moisture conditions also play an important part in surface runoff amounts. With respect to the 1889 flood, it should also be noted that various accounts state that the Allegheny Mountain region received considerable precipitation during the weeks preceding the storm. There had been eight to nine days of precipitation in the two weeks prior to the flood in the areas to the north and south of Johnstown.³⁹ Therefore, the pore spaces in local soils were largely saturated and could not have accepted much more water through infiltration. The steep topography of the area would also increase total runoff from precipitation since there are relatively few low-lying or flat areas in which water can accumulate and slowly enter the soil through infiltration. This low-infiltration capacity due to saturated soil conditions, combined with the relatively steep topography and the storm intensity, was the primary factor in the high surface-runoff rates that occurred during the early morning hours of May 31, 1889.

Rising Water Levels

Based upon eyewitness accounts of observers along the North and South forks of the Little Conemaugh River, water levels ceased to rise between 12:00 p.m. and 1:00 p.m. on May 31, and may even have started to drop. The following information comes from the collection of statements taken by Special Agent Houghton of the Pennsylvania Railroad after the flood.

Flood stage in the headwaters of the North Fork of the Little Conemaugh began sometime before dawn, probably around 4:30 a.m., on May 31.⁴⁰ About 10:00 a.m., maximum flood stage was reached in the Lilly area,

approximately 10 miles from the South Fork Dam.⁴¹ Further downstream in Portage, Wilmore, and Summerhill, high stage was reached between late morning and noon and began to fall in the early afternoon.⁴² There is one report of high stage on the North Fork around 9:00 a.m., but this was probably the result of several small mill dams being washed away and not part of the general rise in stage.⁴³ At the village of South Fork, the North Fork began to rise rapidly sometime before 9:00 a.m. and seems to have reached maximum flood stage between 12:00 p.m. and 1:00 p.m.⁴⁴ The river never rose above bank-full stage until the flood wave hit.⁴⁵ Shortly before the dam failed, the river water level was observed to be “on a stand still.”⁴⁶

Tributaries within the South Fork of the Little Conemaugh drainage basin (upstream of the reservoir) experienced high stage around 11:00 a.m.⁴⁷ In the town of South Fork, at the confluence of the North and South forks of the Little Conemaugh, water in the South Fork began to rise rapidly at about 10:00 a.m. and maximum stage was reached between “shortly before noon” to perhaps 1:00 p.m., before falling slightly after 1:00 p.m., but there was overbank flooding.⁴⁸ Therefore, for perhaps two hours prior to the failure of the dam, the runoff into the reservoir was about constant, or at times even decreasing somewhat. Downstream on the Little Conemaugh River at Conemaugh Borough (now East Conemaugh), the water level was also observed to rise until about noon and then came to a standstill, or perhaps fell slightly, in the early afternoon.⁴⁹ Although some track was washed out east of Bridge no. 6, in general, the river remained at about bank-full conditions in the early afternoon until the arrival of the flood wave, indicating that the runoff from the combined watersheds was also about constant during the early afternoon of May 31.⁵⁰

Dam Failure

Much of the commonly cited information about conditions at the dam on May 31, 1889, are drawn from the account of John Parke, a recent engineering graduate of the University of Pennsylvania, employed to work on a drainage sewer project at the SFHC.⁵¹ However, there were many other observers at the dam on May 31 whose reports on conditions have been preserved.⁵² This has led to many apparent historical inconsistencies. It is natural, however, that catastrophic events are viewed and remembered differently by those witnessing the event. We have collected and organized a number of these

recorded observations (see the appendix) that were made about water levels, overtopping conditions, failure times, and time to drain the lake. It should be noted that some statements may have been adjusted after the flood when observers compared their experiences or read written accounts of the flood.

At about 10:30 a.m., when the water level was about one foot below the central portion of the dam crest, Unger, overall manager of the club, had laborers attempt to cut a ditch through rock on the southwestern abutment of the dam to reduce the chance of the dam being overtopped. But according to Parke's testimony for the ASCE investigation, they initially only managed to cut a channel 14 inches deep and two feet wide. Other statements (including also Parke) say that the original channel or ditch was somewhat wider and deeper.⁵³ Frank suggested that the ditch was within the area of the intended auxiliary spillway from the original plans of Morris.⁵⁴ This is supported by the statement of Boyer, Superintendent of Lake and Grounds, that at about 11:00 a.m., when the water was perhaps 6–12 inches from the crest, water was already going over the southwest abutment. Parke also noted that water rushed into the cut channel and made it a "swift stream" about 25 feet wide; this water width is greater than any estimates for the width of the cut channel.⁵⁵ It is therefore important to note that the water started going over the southwest abutment prior to overtopping the embankment itself. This is *prima facie* evidence that the original southwest abutment had an auxiliary spillway, for no one would build a dam where the abutment was lower than the dam embankment itself unless it was intended to serve as a spillway.

Even with the additional outflow through the cut channel, water was flowing over the top of the dam in several places by 11:30 a.m. After a five-mile round-trip horseback ride to the village of South Fork, Parke noticed water eroding the outer face of the dam and cutting small gullies between the rip-rap on the downstream side. At about 12:30 the water level seems to have stabilized and Parke and the workers went to lunch. By the time Parke returned to the dam after his lunch, the water had washed away some of the rip-rap stones on the downstream face of the dam and a 10-foot (width) by 4-foot (depth) hole had been cut into the face.⁵⁶ According to Parke's testimony, the water

went on widening and deepening this hole until it was worn so near to the body of the water in the lake that the pressure of the water broke through, and then the water rushed through this trough, and cut its way rapidly into the dam at each side and bottom; and this continued until the lake was drained.⁵⁷

This statement is somewhat misleading because our investigation of the breach does not support the hypothesis that the dam was breached by being down-cut from the top, but rather that the upper portion of the breach was due to catastrophic failure of the embankment.

A catastrophic failure is supported by the eyewitness account of U. Ed Schwartzentruber, retold in an interview many years later.⁵⁸ According to Schwartzentruber, who at the time was on the spillway side of the dam, rocks three to four feet square (rip-rap) flew through the air and an air blast blew down trees ahead of the flood wave. The claim of blown-down trees is plausible because rock falls have been known to generate air blasts capable of knocking down trees, such as one that occurred at Yosemite National Park in 1996 and was responsible for breaking about 1,000 trees.⁵⁹ Schwartzentruber remembered that the central section of the dam, instead of being cut down from the top, suddenly gave way with "a terrible roar." This lends credence to the idea that the shear strength of the repaired section of the dam was severely compromised by the addition of plastic clay from mine wastes.

Time of the General Failure of the South Fork Dam

There has always been some disagreement regarding the timing of the general failure of the South Fork Dam and subsequent draining of Lake Conemaugh. Eyewitnesses, such as John Parke, stated that the failure occurred close to 3 p.m., while Unger, who oversaw efforts to save the dam, states that it was 2:45 p.m.⁶⁰ Eyewitness statements can be flawed, and even if observers noted the time on their watch at that exact moment, there was no simple way to calibrate timepieces at remote locations at that time. The situation is further muddled by later investigators and writers who do not clearly identify the basis for their stated time of failure: Shank believes that the failure occurred a few minutes after 3:00 p.m., McCullough and O'Connor give the time of failure as 3:10 p.m., while Degen and Degen state that it was 3:15 p.m.⁶¹

Only one timing source of the dam failure has real credibility: the clock at the Pennsylvania Railroad stationhouse at South Fork, about 1,000 feet up the North Fork of the Little Conemaugh River from the confluence of the North and South forks of the Little Conemaugh River.⁶² C. P. Dougherty, the station agent, stated that the stationhouse was knocked off its foundation when the flood wave hit the town of South Fork and at that moment (3:08 p.m.) the clock stopped because it was thrown out of plumb.⁶³ The South Fork station was a passenger station and care would have been taken to ensure that the

clock showed the correct time. Dougherty's statement is supported by that of Emma Ehrenfeld, who was the telegraph operator at South Fork. She stated that the flood wave hit South Fork a few minutes after 3:00 p.m.⁶⁴ Telegraph lines and stations typically paralleled the railroads and enabled central calibration of clocks to maintain reasonably accurate train schedules. Since the station clock stopped at 3:08 p.m., the question becomes: "How long did it take the flood wave to travel the distance from the dam to the South Fork station?"

Dougherty also stated that the flood wave seemed to be traveling at about 15 miles per hour. At that rate, the wave would have taken about nine minutes to travel the 2.3 miles from the dam site, meaning that the dam broke at 2:59 p.m. In this study, using an estimated maximum discharge from the dam of 318,000 cubic feet per second and converting to a velocity of 13.6 miles per hour, the travel time comes out to be about 10 minutes.⁶⁵ But this only considers the maximum discharge and maximum velocity that occurred at the dam site at the time of failure; average discharge and velocity would be less. The velocity would have been reduced by friction against the streambed, substantial bends in the river, and the resistance encountered when the initial flood wave ran 50 feet up the hillside just below the dam, evidence of which was noted by Davis.⁶⁶ While we do not know the exact average velocity of the flood wave as it traveled down the South Fork, Dougherty's estimate seems to be a bit on the high side. Using a more conservative average velocity of 10 miles per hour would put the time of dam failure between 2:53 and 2:54 p.m. We believe this is a best estimate for the time of the main dam breach.

Time to Drain the Lake

Our ongoing research has also attempted to resolve the question of how long it took the lake to drain. When asked that question, Parke stated, "I do not know the actual time . . . but it was fully forty-five minutes."⁶⁷ Many modern compilations of dam breaches cite the 45-minute drain time as factual, but do not accurately report it as a minimum estimate by Parke. Boyer claimed it was one hour ten minutes, Sherman said the lake emptied in about one hour fifteen minutes, while Unger thought the lake emptied in less than an hour. Our preliminary hydraulic calculations indicate the lake took at least an hour to drain, which is more in line with the statements made by Boyer and Showers. Just as with the timing of the dam failure, most of these eyewitnesses were likely not referencing an accurate timepiece at the exact time of failure and the end of draining.

In his statement to the ASCE, Parke stated that after the lake had drained, “there still remained in the bed of it a violent mountain stream four or five feet deep, with a swift current. . . . This stream in the bed of the lake showed no signs of diminishing in volume until late in the following day, and was impassable with a boat for several days.”⁶⁸ This shows that even after the lake was “drained,” there remained a considerable amount of water in the lakebed. Our calculations for time to drain the lake did not take the lake volume to zero; rather it allows for approximately five feet of water remaining.

Travel Time and Velocity of the Flood Wave to Johnstown

Using the previously determined time of failure (2:50–2:55 p.m.) the total travel time of the flood wave can be calculated. Downstream times of flood-wave arrival remain unchanged: 3:40 p.m. at the AO tower near Bridge no. 6 and 3:50 p.m. at East Conemaugh. About 4:07–4:10 p.m. the flood wave hit downtown Johnstown.⁶⁹ This means that the flood wave took longer (a total of 75–80 minutes) to travel the distance between Lake Conemaugh and Johnstown than commonly reported. Temporary impoundments by debris dams behind the railroad viaduct upstream of Mineral Point and, to a lesser extent, Bridge no. 6 (between East Conemaugh and Mineral Point) increased the travel time of the floodwaters. However, there is no information as to how long these impoundments held back the flood wave. Ignoring these impoundments, we estimate that the maximum average flood-wave velocity was approximately 12 miles per hour, which approximates the speed of the famous train that, with whistle blowing, raced ahead of the flood wave, at 10–12 miles per hour, to warn Conemaugh.⁷⁰ Note that the Little Conemaugh River meander bend near Bridge no. 6 no longer exists—it has been filled in with steel-mill slag (see fig. 1 above) and therefore is not shown as a riverbed on modern maps. Our calculations of flood travel time have included travel through that meander bend. A recent published simulation of the flood did not include this part of the travel path and assumed that most flow bypassed the meander and traveled through the railroad cut.⁷¹ However, the cut represented a considerable bottleneck that forced a significant fraction of the flow around the meander bend, and indeed water did back up in the meander bend, almost to the height of the rails on the bridge, before it was washed away.⁷²

Conclusions

This re-evaluation of issues related to the Johnstown Flood of 1889 clarifies some common misconceptions about the events surrounding the flood. Of significance is the actual timing of the dam failure, 2:50–2:55 p.m.—a full 15 minutes prior to the commonly cited time of 3:10 p.m. This investigation also concluded that the actual length of the dam's embankment is about 860 feet, and at normal level (spillway lip) the lake covered 374 acres. The volume of water behind the dam prior to failure was 495 million cubic feet (or about 15.5 million tons), and that it took at least an hour for Lake Conemaugh to substantially drain. All of these determinations differ to some extent from commonly available sources.

Rainfall and stream conditions at the dam and immediately downstream have also been clarified in this article. The late May storm of 1889 produced between 6 and 7 inches of rain in the South Fork watershed for the duration of the storm (26 hours), but the total rainfall leading to the dam failure would have been somewhat less since the dam failed about 17 hours into the storm. In spite of the high runoff rates upstream of Johnstown, the Little Conemaugh River drainage had minimal overbank flooding and it was for the most part at bank-full conditions. Although rain did fall in the South Fork watershed most of May 31, maximum runoff into the lake occurred in the early to mid-morning on that day. Therefore, we find that at the time of failure, runoff from the watershed was not increasing, as is often assumed. Instead it remained relatively constant for at least the two hours preceding the failure, and the water level in Lake Conemaugh also remained about level (and perhaps even dropped somewhat) in the hours before the dam failed. This is supported by the fact that Parke and the laborers stopped for lunch between noon and 1 p.m. since it is hard to imagine them doing this if the water level was rising higher and higher. That the depth of the water overflowing the dam was relatively low is also corroborated by Schwartzentruver's account of his friend crossing the breast on foot just before failure.⁷³ Such a feat would have been extremely difficult if the water had even been one foot deep. This statement also invalidates the concept that the dam was being cut down from the top.

Modifications to the original design specifications for the South Fork Dam and inadequate repairs after an earlier failure contributed to the catastrophic failure of the dam in 1889. Deviations from the original design that were minor contributing factors include the failure to completely armor the upstream side and crest of the dam with fitted stone. A major factor was the omission of the rubble masonry wall, or heart wall, in the core of the embankment, and to instead rely entirely on puddled clay.

The club's repairs of 1879–81 did not even try to meet the original design specifications and the rebuilding was accomplished in a shoddy and unprofessional manner. In the repaired dam the previous break was filled with substandard material and no puddled clay was emplaced. Nor was there any attempt to replace the sluice pipes or rebuild the control tower, which would have enabled the water level to be controlled. Rip-rap on the repaired section of the downstream face of the dam was of insufficient size. In addition, improper closure of the remnant of the stone arch culvert resulted in continuous leakage at the dam base. At the time of the failure, only one effective spillway remained, as the auxiliary spillway on the western abutment had been rendered useless by lowering of the dam crest two feet, and the remaining spillway was partly obstructed by a sizable fish screen. Not only had the dam crest been lowered, but insufficient compaction of materials used in the repair of the central portion of the dam caused, at minimum, an additional two-foot sag in the center of the dam. The structural integrity of the dam was further compromised by including plastic clay from local mines which reduced the shear strength of the repaired section of the dam, leading to the catastrophic failure of the upper part of the breach. It is hard to imagine what else the SFHFC could have done to invite the forthcoming disaster.

The common excuse given for the club is that the existing spillway was underdesigned. This is based on the Francis report, which states, "the failure was due to the flow of water over the top of the earthen embankment caused by the insufficiency of the waste-way [spillway] to discharge the flood water."⁷⁴ It is hard to fathom how the original existence of the auxiliary spillway could have been missed since it clearly shows up in the surveying data contained in the report. By not taking into account the auxiliary spillway, and also by incorrectly assuming that the runoff into Lake Conemaugh continued to increase up to the time of failure, the Francis report erroneously concluded that the original spillway design was inadequate and that failure was inevitable. Unfortunately, the existence of the former auxiliary spillway is not obvious today because that area of the southwestern abutment has been turned into a parking lot.

The SFHFC always kept its internal affairs secret and even today no club documents have ever been found. Therefore it is impossible to review the exact actions or inactions that were authorized by the club. Nevertheless, in the light of modern analysis, it is quite clear that the club had overwhelming culpability for the tragedy. Yet, at the time, neither the club nor its members were ever assessed any legal liability for this disaster. The members simply abandoned their properties and never returned to Lake Conemaugh.

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APPENDIX. Conditions at the South Fork Dam on May 30-31, 1889

Time	Conditions	Eyewitness	Comments
May 30—evening	Water was about 7 feet from top of dam.	Parke, ^a Boyer ^b	
May 31—6 a.m.	Water was 4-5 feet from top of dam.	Unger ^b	
6:30 a.m.	Water rose 2 feet overnight and was about 5 feet from top.	Parke ^c	
"During breakfast" (6:30-7:30 a.m.)	Water rose 4-5 inches on stakes at Clubhouse.	Parke ^c	
8 a.m.	Water was about 4 feet from top of dam.	Boyer ^b	
8:30 a.m.	Water was about 4 feet from top of dam.	Bidwell ^b	
~ 10 a.m.	Water was about 1 foot from top of dam. Workers began to throw up furrow (temporary embankment) on dam crest with a plow.	Boyer ^b	
10-11 a.m.	Water rose 9 inches per hour.	Parke ^c	
~ 10:30 a.m.	Unger ordered workers to dig ditch. Cut was "about fourteen inches deep and about two feet wide."	Showers ^b , Parke ^c	The cut, or ditch, was on the west abutment; or as Parke puts it, on "the original ground." In other words, the ditch was beyond the end of the dam itself, in the area of the probable auxiliary spillway. This shallow depth (14 inches) must refer to the soil depth, not the total depth of the ditch.

(Continued)

APPENDIX. Conditions at the South Fork Dam on May 30–31, 1889 (*continued*)

Time	Conditions	Eyewitness	Comments
	"cut through about four feet of shale rock."	Parke ^a	Parke was quoted by Johnson as saying that the ditch was much deeper (4 feet). The final depth of the cut, as measured by the ASCE investigators after the flood, was between 3 and 4 feet deep.
~ 10:30–11:00 a.m.	Water started to run over west end (abutment) of dam.	Boyer ^b	At this time the water level was above 1,610 feet relative to the ASCE survey (uncorrected to modern elevations) and was running over the west abutment but not over the crest of the dam.
	Width of water was 6–8 feet.	Unger ^b	
~ 11 a.m.	Water was within 6–12 inches of crest of dam.	Boyer ^b	
	Water level at head of lake "lowered somewhat."	Webber ^a	
~ 11:30 a.m.	Water began running over the dam.	Bidwell ^b	
	Water went over the dam in numerous places for a "distance of 300 feet."	Parke ^c	Water was breaking through the temporary embankment that had been thrown up by a plow.
	Stream in ditch "fully twenty feet wide and three feet deep."	Parke ^a	
~ 12:15 p.m.	Water in ditch "about twenty inches deep" and "twenty-five feet wide." Water depth on dam about 6 inches.	Parke ^c	Parke rode a horse over the dam.

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Time	Conditions	Eyewitness	Comments
~ 12:30 p.m.	"Water at the time was almost at a stand."	Parke ^c	Parke went to dinner at this time. He must have believed that the danger had passed.
~ 12:45 p.m.	Water was about 2 feet from top of new central embankment.	Showers ^b	Workers broke for dinner. Since the plowed-up temporary embankment was only about 2 feet high in the center of the dam, this means that the water level must have dropped noticeably and would explain why the workers were released to go to dinner.
~ 12:45–1:00 p.m.	Central water sheet over dam was 50–60 feet wide.	Siebert ^b	No one was at work on the dam. The width of water going over the dam was now only about 60 feet, further confirming that water level behind the dam had dropped.
~ 1 p.m.	Water was running over dam, but no channel cut into crest.	Boyer ^b	
	Water depth on dam "about three inches"	Parke ^a	Parke walked across dam. According to Parke's previous statements the water depth over the dam seemed to have dropped about 3 inches since noon.
~ 1:15 p.m.	Spillway and ditch were full.	Unger ^b	
~ 2 p.m.	Water was running "over" new 2-foot embankment, but only in the center.	Showers ^b	Workers returned from dinner. It is more likely that instead of "running over" the temporary embankment, the water had cut through.

(Continued)

APPENDIX. Conditions at the South Fork Dam on May 30-31, 1889 (*continued*)

Time	Conditions	Eyewitness	Comments
~ 2 p.m.	Water was running over crest and came out of a hole in the breast of the dam about 12 feet down from crest.	Wilson ^b	
~ 2 p.m.	Water had cut a notch 10 feet wide and 4 feet deep on outer face of dam.	Parke ^c	Parke returned to dam from dinner.
~ 2:15 p.m.	Notch cut in center of dam.	Baker ^d	The cut mentioned here probably refers to erosion on the dam's downstream face, not across the crest.
2:30-2:40 p.m.	Dam broke.	Boyer ^b	Timing is probably not correct.
2:45 p.m.	"Stones in center of dam sink because of undermining, within eight minutes a twenty foot gap in lower half of dam face."	Webber ^a	
~ 2:45 p.m.	Dam broke.	Unger, ^b Showers, ^b Schwartzentraver ^c	
2:45-2:50 p.m.	Dam broke.	Dougherty ^b	
~ 2:50 p.m.	Water was over the top of the dam by about 1 foot and dam broke "a few minutes later."	Rev. Brown ^f	
2:50-2:55 p.m.	Dam broke.		Based upon calculation of travel time from dam to South Fork Railroad station.
"Nearly 3 p.m."	Dam broke.	Parke ^c	
	"Big break took place at just three o'clock."	Parke ^a	

JOHNSTOWN FLOOD OF 1889

Time	Conditions	Eyewitness	Comments
3:10 p.m.	Dam broke.	McCullough ^d	Although no source is given for the stated time, this is the most often quoted time for dam failure.
3:15 p.m.	Dam broke.	Degen and Degen ^e	Probably from a quote attributed to Unger in a Pittsburgh <i>Press</i> article.

^aW. F. Johnson, *History of the Johnstown Flood* (Philadelphia: Edgewood Publishing, 1889).

^bNational Park Service, "Stories," U.S. Department of the Interior, <http://www.nps.gov/jofl/historyculture/stories.htm>.

^cJames B. Francis et al., "Report of the Committee on the Cause of the Failure of the South Fork Dam," *Transactions of the American Society of Civil Engineers* 24 (1891): 431–69.

^dDavid McCullough, *The Johnstown Flood* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1968).

^eT. H. Russell, "All at Once, the Dam was Gone!," *Johnstown Tribune-Democrat*, May 29, 1964.

^fDavid J. Beale, *Through the Johnstown Flood by a Survivor* (Philadelphia: Hubbard Bros., 1890; reprint, Fort Washington, PA: Eastern National, 2009).

^gPaula Degen and Carl Degen, *The Johnstown Flood of 1889* (Durham, NC: Eastern Acorn Press, 1984).

NOTES

We thank Musser Engineering, Inc. of Central City, Pennsylvania for their GPS analysis of key elevations at the South Fork Dam. We are grateful to Robin Rummel, JAHAA Archivist, who helped us access material at the Johnstown Flood Museum library in Johnstown. We thank the National Park Service Johnstown Flood Memorial for access to their archived materials and for a research permit to conduct additional studies at the park. Finally, we express our gratitude toward Paul Newman (University of Pittsburgh–Johnstown) and three anonymous reviewers whose thoughtful and constructive comments helped to significantly improve this manuscript.

1. Most of the victims of the 1900 Galveston hurricane were white. Scarcely remembered are two hurricanes that struck southern U.S. coasts in 1893, causing an estimated death toll of 3,000–4,000, and possibly many more. Most of these victims were African American workers of low income, and a detailed accounting of those who perished is lacking. See Ted Steinberg's *Acts of God: The Unnatural History of Natural Disaster in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), where he points out that "race has had a filtering effect on the collective memory of disaster" (70).
2. William E. Morris, "Report of William E. Morris, Engineer," *Pennsylvania House Journal*, appendix to vol. 2 (1840): 45–56, 401–5; Harlan D. Unrau, "Historic Structure Report: The South Fork Dam Historical Data, Johnstown Flood National Memorial, Pennsylvania," package no. 124, U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service (1980). The Unrau is an extremely comprehensive and well-documented report.

3. James B. Francis et al., "Report of the Committee on the Cause of the Failure of the South Fork Dam," *Transactions of the American Society of Civil Engineers* 24 (1891): 431–69. Francis and Worthen had also previously served on an ASCE committee investigating the Mill River flood. See Elizabeth Sharpe, *In the Shadow of the Dam: The Aftermath of the Mill River Flood of 1874* (New York: Free Press, 2004).
4. Unrau, "Historic Structure Report"; David J. Beale, *Through the Johnstown Flood by a Survivor* (Philadelphia: Hubbard Bros., 1890; reprint, Fort Washington, PA: Eastern National, 2009). Beale's is one of the better early narratives of the flood. Unrau, "Historic Structure Report"; Nathan D. Shappee, "A History of Johnstown and the Great Flood of 1889: A Study of Disaster and Rehabilitation" (Ph.D. diss., University of Pittsburgh, 1940).
5. Francis et al., "Report of the Committee."
6. Paul Longley, Michael F. Goodchild, David Maguire, and David Rhind, *Geographic Information Systems and Science*, 3rd ed. (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 2011).
7. Francis et al., "Report of the Committee."
8. K. Penrod, A. Ellsworth, and J. Farrell, "Application of GIS to Estimate the Volume of the Great Johnstown Flood," *Park Science* 24, no. 1 (2006): 7.
9. Francis et al., "Report of the Committee." See also Walter Smoter Frank, "The Cause of the Johnstown Flood: A New Look at the Historic Johnstown Flood of 1889," <http://smoter.com/flooddam/johnstow.htm>. Frank was the first to suggest that an auxiliary spillway was part of the original construction.
10. Unrau, "Historic Structure Report"; Francis et al., "Report of the Committee."
11. Francis et al., "Report of the Committee"; Unrau, "Historic Structure Report," 51.
12. Morris, "Report of William E. Morris"; David McCullough, *The Johnstown Flood* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1968); Paula Degen and Carl Degen, *The Johnstown Flood of 1889* (Durham, NC: Eastern Acorn Press, 1984); Richard O'Connor, *Johnstown, the Day the Dam Broke* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, 1957); *Engineering Record* 20 (1889): 211. McCullough's account is the best of the popular histories of the flood.
13. Francis et al., "Report of the Committee."
14. Unrau, "Historic Structure Report."
15. John Bach McMaster, "The Johnstown Flood, I," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 62 (1933): 209–43.
16. Shappee, "A History of Johnstown and the Great Flood of 1889."
17. Unrau, "Historic Structure Report"; N. B. Henry (Pennsylvania Railroad engineer), interview by John H. Hampton, July 1889, Pennsylvania Railroad, Pittsburgh, PA, <http://www.nps.gov/jofl/historyculture/henry.htm>; John A. Harper, "The History and Geology of the Allegheny Portage Railroad, Blair and Cambria Counties, Pennsylvania," in *From the Shield to the Sun: Geological Field Trips from the 2011 Joint Meeting of the Geological Society of America Northeastern and North-Central Sections, Field Guide* 20 (Boulder, CO: Geological Society of America, 2011), 111–41.
18. Robert Pitcairn (superintendent of the Western Division of the Pennsylvania Railroad), interview by John H. Hampton, July 1889, Pennsylvania Railroad, Pittsburgh, PA, <http://www.nps.gov/jofl/historyculture/pitcairn.htm> (hereafter Pitcairn interview).
19. Unrau, "Historic Structure Report"; Frank, "The Cause of the Johnstown Flood."

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20. A. M. Wellington and F. B. Burt, "The South Fork Dam and Johnstown Disaster," *Engineering News and Railway Journal* 21 (1889): 540–45.
21. W. C. Phalen, "Johnstown Folio, Pennsylvania," in *Geologic Atlas of the United States Folio 174, Field Edition* (Washington, DC: U.S. Geological Survey, 1911).
22. Pitcairn interview.
23. Fred Ehrenfeld (track laborer), interview by John H. Hampton, July 1889, Pennsylvania Railroad, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, <http://www.nps.gov/jofl/historyculture/emma.htm>.
24. H. Leighton, "Clay and Shale Resources of Pennsylvania," *Pennsylvania Topographic and Geologic Survey Bulletin* M23 (1941).
25. A similar situation (using mine waste) seems to have occurred in the Buffalo Creek disaster. See Kai Erikson, *Everything in Its Path: Destruction of Community in the Buffalo Creek Flood* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1976), 25–28.
26. C. Davis, "The South Fork Dam," *Proceedings of Engineers' Society of Western Pennsylvania* (1889): 89–99.
27. Unrau, "Historic Structure Report," 68. See also William R. Brice, "John Fulton, Surveyor, Geologist, and Friend of the Second Pennsylvania Geological Survey," *Southeastern Geology* 38 (1999): 203–14.
28. Davis, "The South Fork Dam."
29. Wellington and Burt, "The South Fork Dam and Johnstown Disaster."
30. McMaster, "The Johnstown Flood."
31. L. Blodget, "The Floods in Pennsylvania, May 31 and June 1," in *Annual Report of the Secretary of Internal Affairs of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania*, pt. 1 (Harrisburg: Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, 1890), A143–A149. From May 30 to June 1, this regional storm caused flooding throughout northern Virginia, Maryland, a large portion of Pennsylvania, and the southern tier of upstate New York.
32. Francis et al., "Report of the Committee."
33. T. F. Townsend, "Monthly Weather Review for May, 1889," in *Annual Report of the Secretary of Internal Affairs of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania*, pt. 1, A76–A85.
34. Blodget, "Floods in Pennsylvania." Forty-five miles to the north, near Anderson Creek in Clearfield County, 8.6 inches of rain were recorded over a thirty-two-hour period for May 30–31.
35. Francis et al., "Report of the Committee."
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REVEALING DIVISION: THE PHILADELPHIA
SHIRTWAIST STRIKE, THE JEWISH
COMMUNITY, AND REPUBLICAN MACHINE
POLITICS, 1909–1910

Julianne Kornacki

I personally will fight in this strike until after the last morsel of bread that I can buy will pass my lips. I will fight to a finish!

This declaration, made by fifteen-year-old shirtwaist worker Alice Sabowitz in December 1909, embodied the spirit of the shirtwaist workers' strike that took place in Philadelphia during the harsh winter of 1909–10.¹ The strikers, approximately 85 percent of whom were Jewish women and girls from Russia, refused to return to work until their demands for better working conditions and union recognition were met.²

The strike was, among other things, a contest between young immigrant workers who sought to build power and a municipal government that sought to expand its own.³ These opposing goals met with resistance beyond the immediate space of the strike. The actions of young sweatshop workers revealed generational, political, and economic fissures within Philadelphia's Jewish community. Further, the violent response of Mayor John E. Reyburn's administration helped galvanize support for the strike among Philadelphia's club women, suffragists, and female college students. Taking place in distinct spheres of Philadelphia life, the reactions of Reyburn's administration,

society women, and members of the Jewish elite to the strike revealed rifts that had already existed in the city.

Unlike the New York shirtwaist strike, which also began in 1909, its Philadelphia counterpart has received only brief attention by scholars.⁴ Though related works have illuminated components of the strike, none have explored the dynamics at play in Philadelphia beyond the lives and communities of workers and their bosses. This article is an attempt to situate the Philadelphia shirtwaist strike within the immediate history of municipal reform efforts and, conversely, municipal corruption, as well as the traditions of labor radicalism and elite conservatism within Philadelphia's Jewish community.

The Shirtwaist Industry

The central conflict of the strike—the standoff between workers and manufacturers—evolved in part out of Philadelphia's history of sweatshop work. Philadelphia, unlike other northern American cities, had a small immigrant population. The city's economy was mature, dominated by small shops with skilled and semi-skilled employees, and the city's labor market was segmented by gender, ethnic, racial, and national groupings.⁵ The vast majority of African American women were relegated to domestic service, as other industries routinely shut them out.⁶ Irish women also tended to work in domestic service, while both Jewish and Italian women tended to work in the garment industry—with Jewish women working primarily in sweatshops and Italian women working from their homes. In contrast, native-born white women had a much wider range of job options, due in large part to employers' preferences.⁷

Garment sweatshops had been operating in Philadelphia since the 1880s, and complaints about them dated back just as far. In 1894, after receiving negative feedback, the state legislature appointed a commission to investigate Pennsylvania's garment industry.⁸ From a survey of the state's sweatshops, factory inspectors found:

victims striving with pitiable energy to perform their tasks as they labor, it may well be said unceasingly, in stifling rooms, with every principle of proper hygiene and health set at defiance, with ill-fed and poorly clad bodies, unclean in person and degraded in mind. . . . Their animal disregard of the ordinary decencies of life is of itself a sermon

upon the appalling demoralization prevailing among these white slaves of the cities, and this alone should incite a general demand for a government policy which will relieve the body politic of a blot upon its fame as a progressive and intelligent nation.⁹

Despite this report, Philadelphia's garment manufacturers—who were predominantly first- and second-generation Jews from Germany—vehemently opposed regulations, which they argued “would necessitate espionage, and might be prejudicial to coreligionists who are largely employed in this industry.” To the benefit of shop owners, the garment industry remained largely unregulated through the time of the shirtwaist strike.¹⁰

In 1909 Philadelphia's shirtwaist industry was relatively new, though it followed patterns established in other segments of the garment trades. Overall, work in Philadelphia was perpetually fluctuating, with patterns of unemployment and underemployment key features of the city's labor market. In the garment trades specifically, adherence to fashion trends created a pattern of seasonal work. An investigation conducted by the Philadelphia Department of Public Works in 1915 found that the garment industry was “characterized by sudden spurts followed by unemployment—in an order so irregular that it is impossible to be predicted.”¹¹

With the mechanization of the garment trades after the advent of sewing machines in the 1840s and 1850s, the potential for labor organizing increased as the industry's workforce became horizontal—manufacturers now required workers to perform similar tasks—and its labor force moved into the close proximity of large shop rooms.¹² The demands shirtwaist workers made in the winter of 1909–10 were in direct response to the harsh working conditions that evolved from these trends: long hours of fast-paced labor for little money left workers exhausted, fluctuating employment rates eliminated any feeling of job security, and humiliating treatment affronted workers' personal dignity and self-respect.

At the time of the strike, the bulk of Philadelphia's shirtwaists were produced under a subcontracting system, whereby manufacturers would distribute work to contractors who would then hire operators to make the garments. Not only did contractors keep wages low, but they also charged operators for materials including light, heat, power, and thread. Further, contractors were known to harass workers and fire them without just cause. Workers viewed contractors—also called foremen and forewomen—as unnecessary middlemen who compounded workers' exploitation and depressed their earnings.¹³

During the strike, an anonymous editorial published in the Philadelphia weekly paper *The Jewish Exponent* elaborated the grievances that striking workers had with the subcontracting system. From the start of the strike, the industry's top manufacturers declared that they paid their employees as much as \$20 per week, but according to the editorial:

The employer knows nothing of the operators to whom the sub-contracts are given. . . . If they are hurt by machinery, he has no liability to pay; if they are ill he takes no interest in their welfare. The operator in his employ and on his salary list gets paid for the work they do, and she pays those who do it. Her salary is of course higher than the regular operator, but she receives only a portion of the money paid her.¹⁴

Moreover, the average salary of shirtwaist operators was further reduced when the seasonality of the industry and the piece-work system were taken into account:

The average salary of the most skilled operator is not more than \$6.00 a week when it is considered that sometimes for three months at a time there is no work to be had. Nor do the manufacturers say anything of the piece work system now prevailing, by which the piece work operator comes to the shop every morning—is fined if late—and waits there for work. Sometimes she waits all day for it and sometimes two or three hours over-time. If she wants to leave the shop for a time she is refused permission. She makes a dollar perhaps after waiting all day; or fifty cents. The price paid these girls is pitiful. . . . They have hardly enough to keep them from starvation while they are working and when the work gives out there is nothing left.¹⁵

In opposition to these working conditions, over 7,000 out of the city's 12,000 shirtwaist workers walked out on their jobs on December 20, 1909. They presented their employers with a list of demands to alleviate these abuses—the industry's seasonality, its contracting system, and the inadequate prices paid for piece-work. The strikers demanded:

that employers increase wages 10 per cent on all piecework and on contract work; that these wages be paid to the workers personally and

in cash at regular intervals; that employees be not discharged for other reasons than unbecoming conduct or inefficiency; that 50 hours shall constitute one week's work; that all shops be put and kept in sanitary condition; that employers recognize the union representatives; that machines, needles and cotton and all other appliances be furnished free of charge by the employer.¹⁶

In addition, an unofficial demand was put forth to address on-the-job harassment. The preliminary list of grievances that strikers presented to Philadelphia's Central Labor Union included the demand for "freedom from abusive and insulting language by those in authority in the shops"—a direct reference to the mistreatment exacted by contractors.¹⁷

Taken together, these demands reflected the grievances that motivated the mass walkout. Further encouraging the decision to strike was the history of labor organizing in Philadelphia's Jewish community, as well as the experiences that the immigrant strikers had brought with them when they emigrated from Russia and Eastern Europe.

Philadelphia's Jewish Community and its History of Labor Radicalism

In Philadelphia, members of the Jewish community made up 40 percent of the workforce in the garment trades. Men dominated the better-paid jobs—holding the positions of manufacturers, contractors, and tailors—while women and girls dominated the lowest-paid positions. Many of these workers were in their teens or early twenties; in Philadelphia, young Jewish immigrants from Russia had high rates of employment, with 64 percent of fifteen-year-old girls working in 1900.¹⁸

The insular configuration of Philadelphia's Jewish community fostered the preponderance of Jewish workers in the garment trades. Because of the nature of Jewish neighborhoods, bosses and workers sometimes lived next door to one another. Further, Philadelphia's Jewish community had a well-developed niche economy—containing Jewish retail stores, factories, and an informal labor market—as well as cultural institutions such as synagogues, political associations, and labor unions. In Philadelphia and other major cities, Jewish employers, who often paid low wages, provided the majority of the jobs held by Jewish workers.¹⁹

Many of the Jewish immigrants who worked in the garment sweatshops came from parts of the Russian empire where Jews had been facing marginalization, poverty, and violent anti-Semitism for decades. Extensive research has been conducted on life in Russia's Pale of Settlement, where many of Philadelphia's Jews emigrated from. Jewish communities in the Pale, called *shtetls*, were organized around religious institutions. For work, men and women—who, as Jews, were prohibited from owning land—participated in trade and artisanal craftsmanship.²⁰ Laws enacted in the 1880s and 1890s prohibited Jews from settling in rural areas and the largest cities, and informal discrimination and violence further prohibited Jews from holding certain types of jobs.²¹

A large proportion of Jewish women living in Russia were wage earners; it is estimated that in 1897 over 28 percent of Jewish women in Russia were “economically active.” Many of these women worked in the garment trades; in 1898 more than 70 percent of the registered female artisans in the Pale worked in the sewing industry. Thus, many of the young women who worked in Philadelphia's shirtwaist sweatshops immigrated with related skills. In 1900, of the Russian immigrant girls between twelve and seventeen years old who were working in the city, 79 percent were classified as either “skilled” or “white collar.”²²

Over one million Jews immigrated to the United States between 1880 and 1910, with a peak following the failed 1905 revolution in Russia. Most Jewish immigrants, fleeing persecution, left in family groups for the United States and other countries with the intent to settle permanently. As a result, the male-to-female ratio of Jewish migration was almost 1 to 1.²³ Historian Susan Glenn has argued that Eastern European Jews immigrated in order to take advantage of better educational and economic opportunities and to escape discrimination and persecution. The majority went to New York, though significant numbers also settled in Philadelphia and other major cities in the United States and elsewhere.²⁴

Many scholars have written about the unique features of urban Jewish communities at the turn of the twentieth century. Historian Ira Katznelson has described Jewish emigration from Eastern Europe as an “act of emancipation” that was accompanied by “pauperization and proletarianization” in urban cities. Jewish communities in urban America were marked by several distinct qualities: while other ethnic groups were geographically segregating by class and occupation, Jewish communities remained largely cohesive. Further, Jews settled in cities at higher rates than other immigrants, had

generally left-leaning politics, had more concentrated communities, and became leaders in radical political and labor movements.²⁵

The transition from a more traditional—though modernizing—shtetl lifestyle to an urban industrial one created unique problems for immigrant women who, according to historian Alice Kessler-Harris, “wanted to take advantage of the possibilities offered by life in the new world.” As historian Donna Gabbacia has noted, Jewish women from Eastern Europe “defined themselves in economic as well as familial terms” and in the United States, though women’s sweatshops were somewhat more pleasant than the conditions in male dominated industries such as mining and steel, “few satisfied American notions of female gentility.”²⁶

The perspectives of Jewish immigrant men and women were influenced by Jewish political thought and its radical undercurrents. Though only a small proportion of Jews in New York, Philadelphia, and other cities were card-carrying socialists, there was a strong socialist tenor within their communities.²⁷ As historian Tony Michels has argued, Jewish socialism emerged within 1880s New York City, and it was New York that “served as a laboratory of political and innovation that influenced eastern Europe.”²⁸ By the 1900s, there was a strong Jewish labor tradition in both New York and Philadelphia, propelled by a popular Yiddish press, socialist organizations, and immigrants who came with organizing experience.²⁹ Political divisions existed between religious Jews, Zionists, anarchists, and socialists, and further divisions existed within each of these overlapping subgroups.

By the time of the shirtwaist strike, the city’s Jewish community was accustomed to bouts of labor militancy. From the 1880s through 1909, a number of strikes took place in Philadelphia’s textile and clothing industry that revealed intragroup divisions. During moments of labor militancy, rifts were exposed primarily because, as with the shirtwaist strike, both the employers and workers were Jewish—and the employers were members of the Jewish elite. In general, Philadelphia’s Jewish elite took a paternalistic stance toward the new immigrants.

In 1886 approximately 1,000 clothing cutters went on strike to demand a shortened workday. Though it only lasted a week—after which the workers won their demands—the strike alarmed members of Philadelphia’s Jewish upper class. The manufacturers who belonged to the Clothier’s Exchange, in collaboration with the Hebrew Education Society, set out to establish a trade school that would “render [workers] somewhat independent of the whims of the trade unions.” Further, Jewish philanthropists who were attempting

to improve “the condition of the Russian Jews” in Philadelphia lamented that the “the tendency to create a sort of voluntary Ghetto shows no signs of disappearing.”³⁰

Some elites blamed the conditions of the Jewish poor on their living spaces and sought to alleviate social ills through charity work. Philadelphia’s United Hebrew Charities aimed to create productive members of society out of the masses of new immigrants. In addition to the Hebrew Education Society, the agencies that operated under the United Hebrew Charities offered assistance to new immigrants in the form of material aid, employment services, daycare, and shelter. The elites believed that this work offered “ample reassurance for the future,” noting in a report on the conditions of Russian Jews that charity work is “generating a stable and progressive community out of the disorganized and harried victims of Slavic ignorance and brutality,” though added, “much yet remains to be done . . . to further their progress toward stability and order.”³¹

Lacking such “order,” the Jewish community continued to face worker militancy. In 1890 approximately 350 cloak makers went on strike and held out for several months, returning to work only when members of the Jewish elite brokered a settlement. In an address to the cloak tailors prior to the strike, George Randorf—a prominent religious figure who would help negotiate the settlement—was “warning [workers] against rash strikes, and urging them to stand by their brethren in need, and striving for their best interests, to bear in mind the common humanitarian interests of all classes of society.”³² Overall, the upper-class Jewish leadership sought to forge a united Jewish front and often blamed outside agitators for labor militancy. As the contemporary Jewish historian Henry Samuel Morais noted in his 1894 volume on Philadelphia’s Jewish history:

The cause of the unfortunate workmen has, invariably, been injured by the domination of labor agitators, some of whom are rabid Anarchists, and would instill poisonous views into the minds of the untutored. . . . The sentiment of the Jewish people always has been directly opposed to the establishment of Trades’ Unions, or political clubs, of a sectarian character. . . . The unity and harmony necessary to the separateness of the Hebrews are advocated solely with respect to religious belief and religious organization.³³

Here Morais revealed a key divide within the Jewish community. To the chagrin of elites, there were myriad conceptions of what constituted “the

sentiment of the Jewish people.” Despite the conservative revulsion toward political radicalism, socialism and anarchism found adherents among an array of Philadelphia’s Jews—not simply “labor agitators.”

While Jewish elites took a generally positive stance toward new immigration—and the economic benefits it provided for the community—they wished to prevent those “who are low in the scale of moral worth and of physical and intellectual capacity” from coming to Philadelphia.³⁴ By the turn of the twentieth century, Philadelphia’s Jewish philanthropists were complaining that the new immigrants had “created a corresponding increase of new and greater burdens on the older Jewish population of this city,” which was exacerbated by the fact that “these immigrants do not speak our language, are unfamiliar with our manners and customs, and were born and reared in a country surrounded by an ignorant and unenlightened population.”³⁵

In order to “[absorb] this incongruous mass into the body politic” Philadelphia Jews relied on both traditional philanthropy and new tactics.³⁶ By 1901 members of the Philadelphia Jewish community had adopted a scheme it hoped would alleviate intragroup tensions. Between 1901 and 1909, the Philadelphia branch of the Industrial Removal Office—a national Jewish organization—resettled 2,459 immigrants to various parts “rural” America.³⁷ In defense of “removal,” William B. Hackenburg, president of the Jewish Hospital of Philadelphia, emphasized the “importance of agriculture as a means for promoting the welfare of the newly arrived Jewish immigrants.”³⁸ Dr. David Eiesman added:

There must be less overcrowding . . . and rational recreation. The Jewish poor must be taught that the new climactic conditions require the adoption of another sort of food. They should cultivate a love for manly sports, and a spirit of self-respecting, fearless manhood. The Jew, especially the Eastern Jew, is physically and psychically extremely plastic, and only requires a reasonably favorable environment to develop into a noble specimen of man.³⁹

Thus, by the time of the shirtwaist strike there were already considerable divisions within Philadelphia’s Jewish community, as well as divisions among the elite on how to alleviate both “sanitary and hygienic” issues as well as labor militancy. During the 1900s, a number of strikes in the garment industry further exposed these rifts. In the summer of 1905, waist- and

dressmakers went on strike, demanding the recognition of their right to organize and the elimination of fees for work materials. The strikers won these demands, though following their victory there was a decline in union membership and the Jewish employers fired the union's leaders.⁴⁰

Then, in 1906, shirtmakers went on strike and were met by anti-Semitism from both employers and the city. This was the only instance in which the Jewish community rallied against attacks on workers, though members of the Jewish elite did little to secure the demands of the strike. Again in 1908, after the decline in wages that accompanied the Panic of 1907, shirtmakers made appeals to manufacturers, asking them to withhold further wage cuts. The manufacturers refused and began to hire strike-breakers to work for lower wages. The manufacturers accused the strikers of being influenced by anarchism, and stated that they preferred to hire native-born workers anyway. After nearly four months of being locked out of work, the strikers were ultimately defeated.⁴¹

At this time, radical left-leaning thought was becoming increasingly prominent in the community. In the early 1900s, the Jewish Labor Bund of Eastern Europe had grown, and because it was involved in leading the failed 1905 revolution both members and nonmembers alike were targeted for persecution. Many Russian Jews decided to emigrate, with large numbers leaving from the northwest provinces of Lithuania and White Russia, southern and southwestern Russia, Galicia, and Romania. Some came to the United States, including Bund members who brought experience, self-confidence, and ideological sophistication. Prior to this, Jewish labor organizing in Philadelphia had been marred by partial victories and disillusionment. Bund members brought a new energy and focus, providing leadership and support to local unions.⁴²

The Beginning of the Strike

The Philadelphia shirtwaist strike began on December 20, 1909, one month after the "uprising of 20,000" commenced in New York City, and lasted until a settlement was reached between strikers and shirtwaist manufacturers on February 6, 1910.⁴³ From its inception, the Philadelphia strike was linked to its New York counterpart. Because New York manufacturers had been sending work to Philadelphia in order to counteract the strike, the International Ladies Garment Workers Union (ILGWU) and the Women's Trade Union League (WTUL) believed that success in New York required the organization

of Philadelphia workers. Representatives from New York visited Philadelphia on December 5, 1909, to encourage a vote on the issue. Rose Pastor Stokes—a veteran unionist and the wife of a prominent socialist—spoke to a crowd of predominantly male Shirtwaist Makers' Union members:

You know that the price of everything, bread, sugar, meat and what not, has gone soaring high, but have your wages increased with the increase in the price of the food you must have? . . . Would it not be far better for us to go hungry for awhile, if needs be, of our own choice and to better the conditions under which we labor?⁴⁴

Stokes was speaking to workers' key grievances by referencing the recent wage cuts in the garment industry and the increased cost of living that followed the Panic of 1907.⁴⁵ At the meeting, the male unionists expressed near-unanimous support for the strike, but were not confident that the young women and girls working in the shops would be able to carry it out. Just a few weeks later, their fears would be proven unfounded.

Once the strike began, high-ranking leadership of both the ILGWU and WTUL came down from New York to establish an infrastructure in Philadelphia. The ILGWU, based in New York City and affiliated with the craft-oriented American Federation of Labor, was the union under which the workers were organizing.⁴⁶

The ILGWU's leadership believed that women did not make good organizers or leaders, and thus sent its male president, Abraham Rosenberg, to lead the Philadelphia strike. But while Rosenberg was the official leader, the workers did not feel compelled to follow his orders. In mid-January 1910, when employers agreed to arbitrate most of the strikers' demands but refused union recognition, Rosenberg urged the strikers to settle. In defiance, the workers turned down the offer and returned to the picket lines. In general, the strikers rallied behind prominent speakers, such as Mother Jones and the local socialist leader Mary Charsky, and behind rank-and-file chairwomen from each shop.⁴⁷

The WTUL, conversely, was a women-run organization. Most of the members were middle- and upper-class women who sought to improve the working conditions of women by lobbying wealthy women and politicians. From the start of the strike, WTUL president Margaret Dreier Robins spoke at meetings, joined pickets, and promised to gain the support of local society women. The WTUL set up a local headquarters on January 6, 1910, in order to provide a meeting space, food, and other material aid to the strikers.⁴⁸

As a stated goal, the WTUL supported “the organization of women workers into trade unions” as a way to “secure conditions necessary for healthful and efficient work and to obtain a just return for [women’s] work.”⁴⁹ But the reform women who comprised the WTUL’s membership endorsed only peaceful tactics and ultimately sought to compromise with employers. Regarding both the ILGWU and WTUL, tactical divisions between workers and leaders revealed the inadequacy of the two organizing models in building and accommodating the strike’s power. Despite this, and the powerful coalition that opposed them, the workers were able to exert their will during the strike.

Opposition to the Strike

From the start of the strike, the Reyburn administration, Philadelphia’s mainstream press, and the shirtwaist bosses worked in tandem to delegitimize the strikers and their demands. The large shirtwaist manufacturers declared that the strikers’ grievances were “farcical.” Although four firms submitted to the strike within two days, the factories where the majority of strikers worked were determined to hold out.⁵⁰ The largest shop, M. Haber and Company, which employed 900 workers, promised to “abandon their local factory rather than accede to the demands of the strikers.”⁵¹

Leo Becker, head of M. Haber and Company, rallied the large manufacturers together to form the Ladies Shirtwaist Manufacturers’ Association in order “to reform abuses and promote common interests.” (One anonymous commentator noted the hypocrisy, observing that “the right of their employees to form an organization for similar purposes they deny.”)⁵² After the first week of the strike, the Manufacturers’ Association issued a statement that appeared reasonable:

The manufacturers are perfectly willing to arbitrate any grievance that the strikers may have. No arbitration will be entertained however, until the girls return to work. Within 10 minutes after the strikers return, their employers will gladly meet them, or their committee and compromise or arbitrate anything except recognition of the union.

But the strikers knew that without recognition of the union, nothing would prevent the manufacturers from arbitrating strikers’ grievances to their

own advantage. The strikers had no basis upon which to trust their bosses. It was rumored that the manufacturers were hiring girls from the Hebrew Orphan's home, threatening expulsion if they did not work in the shirtwaist factories. There was also an allegation that the manufacturers were bribing police officers with free shirtwaists. At this point, the police were working as de facto security guards for the shops, offering "protection" to any worker who requested it and rounding up strikers arbitrarily. Further, the manufacturers had threatened strikers by telling them "if you do not work you do not live."⁵³

By the strike's fourth week, M. Haber and Company petitioned police director Henry Clay to shut down the WTUL's headquarters, alleging that it was a nuisance for the community. Unable to secure its removal, the company later brought an equity suit against the Ladies' Shirtwaist Makers' Union, as an injunction against their interference with the shirtwaist shops. Leo Becker stated that his intention was to "protect" his workers from the strikers, and this, with the complicity of the municipal government, he successfully enacted.⁵⁴

In their efforts to demonize the strikers, the manufacturers colluded with Philadelphia's mainstream press, which printed stories that highlighted the hundreds of union defections that the manufacturers alleged were taking place.⁵⁵ When the Philadelphia press discussed the material well-being of the women and girls who were working and striking in the shirtwaist industry, it only reported on those who refused to strike and those already striking who did not want to be. On December 26, 1909, the *Public Ledger* reported that 100 unions had pledged support (but not financial assistance) for the strike. The report then quoted a striker who declared "what good are these resolutions? What do we give the landlord on New Year's—a resolution?" The *Public Ledger* went on to assert that the girls who use their incomes to support their families wanted to return to work, and that three had just resigned from the union to be married.⁵⁶

While only a fraction of the articles published in the *Public Ledger*, the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, or the *Evening Bulletin* referenced the plight of workers, none listed the conditions within the shirtwaist industry as a causal factor. Instead, the union was the only villain, accused of using violence and bullying to force those still working to walk out and to keep striking women and girls from returning to the jobs they desperately need. Using the testimony of police officers and strikebreakers, the press publicized the narrative pushed by both the manufacturers and the Reyburn administration.

Mayor Reyburn and his business-friendly government immediately sided with the manufacturers. Even before the strike began, the administration had attempted to shut it down; Director Clay of the Department of Public Safety unsuccessfully tried to prevent a meeting of workers after alleging the presence of radical influences, which his administration had determined to fight.⁵⁷ This reaction was not out of character for an administration already known for its antipathy toward organized labor.

The Reyburn Administration

Encompassing the span of the shirtwaist strike, John E. Reyburn's term as mayor of Philadelphia lasted from his electoral victory in February 1907 through the winter of 1911. Born in 1845, Mayor Reyburn was sixty-two years old when sworn into office and already a veteran politician. Previously, he had served two terms in the Pennsylvania House of Representatives, four terms in the Pennsylvania State Senate, and three terms in the U.S. House of Representatives. Reyburn ended his third congressional term early in order to become Philadelphia's mayor, a position he viewed as his last; after the election Reyburn declared, "I am an old man and have no further political ambitions." Despite his age, admirers described the new mayor as a "strong and virile ruler." Opponents, as expected, were not pleased with the Reyburn administration, observing that it had "made Philadelphia notorious as a flagrant example of misgovernment."⁵⁸

Mayor Reyburn came to power at a time when municipal and progressive reformers were struggling to dislodge Philadelphia's entrenched system of political corruption. Since the 1885 passing of the Bullitt Bill by the Pennsylvania state legislature, there existed a mayor-centered power structure in Philadelphia that enabled the establishment of Philadelphia's "Republican machine"—a system of corporate patronage and other forms of municipal corruption.⁵⁹ In response, reformers pursued legislation that would purge corruption and instill municipal accountability.

Before Reyburn took office, a scandal involving a proposed utility contract galvanized Philadelphians in opposition to machine politics. Historian and sociologist Peter McCaffery has demonstrated that the 1906 "gas steal"—the failed plot of politicians and a powerful gas company to secure an immensely profitable seventy-five-year contract—revealed the aligned interests of

Philadelphia's Republican machine and the city's utility companies. Historians have credited this event with spurring a decade of local reform efforts.⁶⁰

In 1906 the city of Philadelphia passed the Shern Act in response to widespread calls for municipal reform. The new law sought to address the fact that "many a policeman or fireman feels it incumbent upon him to set aside a percentage of his salary for political purposes," and was intended to "do away with the canvassing from door to door, 'bell-pulling,' electioneering and political assessments."⁶¹

Mayor Reyburn did not care for these reforms, and he made no effort hide his political biases. Following his 1907 election, Reyburn stated outright: "I don't pretend and I don't want you to think I am going to be non-partisan. I was born and raised a Republican." Reyburn referred to reform-minded city commissioners as people with "regard for the law," an attribute that, Reyburn chided, "makes them hesitate a bit to satisfy their consciences." The mayor remarked that reading the Shern Act "made me very sleepy when I was less than halfway through it."⁶²

As the political magazine *Harper's Weekly* editorialized, Mayor Reyburn rebuked the 1906 legislation by "[restoring] the reign of vice and lawlessness and corporate plundering" in Philadelphia. Reyburn's mayoral campaign had been endorsed by the infamous state senator James P. McNichol, who had been "charged with robbing the citizens of Philadelphia of more than \$5,000,000."⁶³ In addition, Reyburn associated with several other defamed politicians, and selected like-minded men to run the city's municipal departments. For the Department of Public Safety, Reyburn appointed Henry Clay, a man who critics described as "a tool of public service corporations . . . the man who championed the very gas-lease ordinance which . . . developed into the tornado of reform."⁶⁴

Reyburn held memberships in a number of exclusive clubs, was on the board of the American Protective Tariff League, and served as director of the Union National Bank. The mayor's statement to the press that he longed for "the days when the good and pure and virtuous were running things—when the white wings were in power" alluded to the allegiances he had cultivated during his career.⁶⁵

As mayor, Reyburn openly alienated municipal reformers, conservative Christian groups, and even members of Pennsylvania's Republican establishment.⁶⁶ In a 1907 break from the state's Republican leadership, Mayor Reyburn openly denounced President Theodore Roosevelt's corporate regulatory policies.⁶⁷ The utility contracting that the Philadelphia

Republican machine was known for continued under Reyburn, attracting the ire of state legislators; suspicious contracts prompted a state-run investigation into the dealings of his administration.⁶⁸

Mayor Reyburn and Director Clay had wielded the city's police force against immigrant workers prior to the shirtwaist strike. During Reyburn's mayoral campaign, politicians promised that unemployed immigrant men would be offered municipal jobs if they helped the Republican candidates, including Mayor Reyburn. Following the election, the Panic of 1907 commenced and left thousands of Philadelphia workers unemployed; out of 28,000 textile workers in the city, 18,000 were out of work just one year after Mayor Reyburn took office.⁶⁹

In February 1908 1,000 unemployed immigrants—mostly Jews, Poles, and Italians—marched on city hall to demand jobs in an event that would later be named the “Broad Street Riot.”⁷⁰ According to police and news reports, the crowd immediately turned violent, allegedly injuring Irish bystanders and shooting at police officers. In response, the entire motorbike, mounted, and “big reserve” police squads were dispatched to the scene, as well as the reserve police officers from six Philadelphia-area districts. According to the press, six police officers were injured and “fourteen participants in the demonstration were so severely clubbed by the police that they had to be sent to the hospital.” Following the “riot” the city declared that “the last anarchist meeting has been held in this city.”⁷¹

Given the administration's track record, it is no surprise that Mayor Reyburn and Director Clay would meet the shirtwaist strikers and their allies with violence. Reyburn had consistently aligned his administration with business interests and had proven to be an enemy of organized labor. At the time of the shirtwaist strike, labor disputes were publicized in the mainstream press almost daily.⁷² In particular, discord between Philadelphia Rapid Transit (PRT), its employees, and its customers arose repeatedly during Reyburn's term in office.

Issues with PRT stemmed from a corrupt contract it brokered with the city in 1907 that effectively removed all previous regulatory statutes.⁷³ As a result, poor service and high fares caused customer satisfaction to decline, and a city council member observed that “the police department has been swung over to the aid of the company in preventing suits for personal injuries.”⁷⁴ In 1909 PRT employees went on strike to demand better working conditions. PRT agreed to settle, but in 1910 the PRT employees threatened to strike again after the company refused to enforce

the contract. Reyburn argued that the threats were being stirred up by his political opponents in anticipation of the coming municipal elections, an argument that alluded to the public's disdain for the corrupt relationship between his administration and PRT.⁷⁵

Though the mayor declared himself "neutral" in the present dispute, Reyburn pledged that the police would "provide sufficient protection for the company," adding that the state police would be called in if necessary. Before the strike began the mayor portrayed the yet-to-exist strikers as violent, declaring that the city would "prevent citizens being injured by violence" and "aid the company to run its cars." Adding further evidence of collusion, Reyburn announced that he had sat in on all of PRT's board meetings, adding: "I have seen no action taken that could possibly afford an excuse for the men to strike." Reyburn felt it politically expedient to equivocate publically while PRT stalled the strike, as he needed to secure the coming election for the Republicans. What the shirtwaist strike revealed, as the coming carmen's strike later would, was the overt collusion between Mayor Reyburn's administration, the police department, and Philadelphia's business community.⁷⁶

Having tried and failed to prevent the shirtwaist strike, the Philadelphia police came to the aid of the manufacturers, becoming akin to private security guards—but ones with judicial impunity. On the second day of the strike, officers visited the sweatshops to ask if they needed police protection. During the course of the strike, hundreds of workers and their allies were beaten by police officers and arrested—and manufacturers sometimes pointed out strikers for cops to round up. At court hearings, judges overwhelmingly sided against arrested strikers and their allies, exhibiting the judicial bias that had been institutionalized under Reyburn's administration.⁷⁷

During the strike, young women were arrested for crimes ranging from "intimidating," "interfering with," "annoying," and "insulting" workers who were not on strike, assault and battery of police officers and workers, inciting to riot, disorderly conduct, and conspiracy.⁷⁸ Based on the available documents it cannot be known for certain whether any strikers or their allies used violence against their opponents or if any of the convictions for assault and battery were based on fabricated testimony. The press predominantly reported the perspectives of police officers and the alleged victims of strikers' violence, and not those of the defendants. When wealthy allies were present at the time of the arrest or were themselves arrested the press sometimes

published their comments, but no other arrestees were given space in the papers to share their experiences.

From the quoted testimony of allied society women and strikers it is evident that both denied that there was any legitimate basis for the arrests of tens of young women and men per day. Strikers insisted that though they commonly followed strikebreakers home and “[gave] them finger talk,” they “wouldn’t lay [their] hands on them . . . they’re scared to death of us as it is.”⁷⁹ Society women, whose support will be discussed in detail below, sat at arraignment hearings and provided bail for the strikers they deemed “worthy” of assistance, including those accused of assault and battery. These women sometimes went from jail to jail to bail strikers out, claiming that the police were unjustly arresting strikers and their allies.⁸⁰

Prominent figure Fannie Cochran inquired into the validity of the police’s statement “that none but violent or disorderly sympathizers were placed under arrest.” While conducting her investigation at the Kauffman and Harris shirtwaist factory she was arrested by a plainclothes police officer. Her high-profile arrest was publicized on the front pages of Philadelphia’s newspapers, including Cochran’s testimony that “the statement made by the police that the girls are not arrested unless disorderly is not true. The whole attitude of the police is unjust and brutal.”⁸¹

Yet the city did not stop making such arrests. Rather, it made them easier to make by creating a new crime that only applied to the shirtwaist strikers and their allies. Under the headline “Police Plan War on Strike Pickets,” Philadelphia’s *Evening Bulletin* reported on the new law that made “loitering” in front of shirtwaist factories a “breach of the peace.” Further, the city often arrested allegedly violent strikers post facto, arrested strikers when they were “about” to commit a crime (such as a hat-pin stabbing or the seizure of an operator), and convicted strikers of violence with minimal evidence, such as a beaten hat that was used to give evidence of a beating simply because it fit the plaintiff.⁸²

John R. K. Scott, a Republican and well-known socialite attorney in Philadelphia, served as the lawyer for both the Manufacturer’s Association and the workers who were allegedly harassed and assaulted by strikers. In an attempt to secure the arrest of society women who provided strikers’ bail money, Scott declared that the “foolish interference on the part of [society] women constitutes contempt of the law. . . . They either must keep within the bounds of the law, and respect the courts, or submit to arrest.” Scott’s move

signified the desperation of the Manufacturer's Association, as well as Scott's blatant conflict of interest. Yet the press continued to print strikebreakers,' manufacturers,' and police officers' testimony as fact.⁸³

It is possible that any of the dozens of assault and battery charges were founded, as even the leaders of the strike deemed it prudent to distance the union from the allegedly violent shirtwaist cutters who were picketing in sympathy. However, the testimony of society women and strikers, the efforts of the city to create new crimes to arrest strikers for, the city's overt sympathy with the manufacturers, and the fact that the lawyer for the alleged victims was being paid by the manufacturers all cast doubt on the dominant narrative presented in Philadelphia's mainstream press. And in its battle to defeat the strike, the city of Philadelphia did not only target picketers and those providing them with material support, but it also targeted the labor organizer William D. Haywood, who spoke at a benefit for the strike. The city issued an arrest warrant for Haywood for speaking "in scathing terms of the police of this city and of the Mayor" and declared that he is never to speak in the city again." The Reyburn administration deemed Haywood enough of a threat that it revoked his First Amendment rights.⁸⁴

Despite the mass arrests, the strikers were able to hold out until early February with the help of allies who provided bail and other material support. There were up to 2,000 pickets on the streets each day, including 70 workers between the ages of eleven and fourteen who were members of the Markers' and Cleaners' Union. Workers braved harsh storms in order "to take a monster canvass of all the non-union employees" and to execute other actions. Strikers assembled at meetings and social gatherings—including dances, shows, and speaking events. The workers were involved in all aspects of the strike, and stuck to their demand for union recognition despite the dissent of allies and union leadership.⁸⁵

Manufacturers hired strikebreakers, opened a school to train them, and made efforts to pit Jewish strikers against Italians, African American, and native-born white workers. (Leo Becker claimed that American-born girls were "the most satisfactory.")⁸⁶ But because of the strikers' perseverance and the support of society women—whose aid fed the strikers and kept them out of jail and on the picket lines—these fissures did not weaken the strike.⁸⁷ On February 6, 1910, workers and manufacturers reached a settlement that granted some of the strikers' demands: it provided a system for negotiating piece-work prices, the reduction of work hours, and the elimination of charges for materials.⁸⁸

The Strike's Allies: Club Women, Suffragists, and College Students

In response to Mayor Reyburn's relationship with the shirtwaist manufacturers, the Philadelphia shirtwaist strikers built alliances with unions, society women, and reformers based in Philadelphia and elsewhere. Many local unions offered verbal and material support.⁸⁹ For example, on the sixth day of the strike, approximately 100 unions had expressed sympathy with the strikers, including the Workmen's Circle, the Carmen's Union, the Building Trades Council, the Silk Shirtwaist Makers Union, the Cloak Makers Union, the American Glove Workers Union, the Central Labor Union, and the Cigar Makers' Union.⁹⁰

During the strike, society women and reformers provided crucial financial, material, and moral support to the strikers, often posting bail for arrested strikers and funding other services. The first organization of society women to take an interest in the strike was the College Settlement, a group comprised of young college students and graduates who provided food during the strike's first week.⁹¹

On December 30, 1909, a week and a half after the strike began, the Consumers League—an organization concerned with working conditions in local industries—offered to conduct “a mere inspection tour of a committee” that would put forth its suggestions in the event of the strike's arbitration.⁹² Unlike ILGWU and WTUL, the league did not support labor organizing, and it often ignored issues related to wages and working hours. Instead, the league saw “co-operating with employers” as its “chief mission.”⁹³ Later, many organizations came to pledge their support, including the Pennsylvania Women's Suffrage Association, the College Equal Franchise League, the New Century Club, the Women's Branch of the Ethical Culture Society, the Women's Club in Harrisburg, and the Lighthouse Settlement.⁹⁴

From the early stages of the strike, WTUL's president Margaret Dreier Robins worked to enlist the support of clubwomen. By December 31, 1909, Robins had recruited the “well known social workers” Martha C. Bary, Mabel Stewart, and Fannie Cochran to teach singing lessons and English to the strikers—many of whom spoke only Russian, Yiddish, German, or Polish.⁹⁵ Donations began coming in by January 4, 1910, when Robins spoke before Philadelphia's elite College Club. According to a news report in Philadelphia's *Public Ledger*, Robins was only able to garner support when she declared that the “surely growing wave of woman suffrage was quite as sure to bring with it better working conditions for working women.”⁹⁶

Some scholars have argued that the society women and elite reformers supported the strike exclusively because of these sentiments. In his article on the Philadelphia shirtwaist strike, Daniel Sidorick echoed this sentiment, calling the alliance an “attempt at sisterhood across the great divide of class.”⁹⁷

But for elite women in Philadelphia, their support was not exclusively motivated by ideology but also by the abuses of Reyburn’s administration. Robins’s efforts to solicit the aid of society women became enormously successful only after the high-profile arrest of Fannie Cochran. The fact that thousands of young women were on strike for better conditions had not provided sufficient motivation for the majority of Philadelphia’s wealthy women who came to support the strike. Rather, their support was forthcoming only after a prominent young society woman was arrested while picketing.⁹⁸

After Cochran’s arrest the *Public Ledger* reported that there was now “widespread interest among a large and influential class who heretofore have not shown concerns in the labor movement.” Convinced of its merits by Robins, many of these women began to see the shirtwaist strike as “an excellent opportunity for promulgating their ideas,” particularly its “possibilities as suffrage propaganda.”⁹⁹ At speaking events, prominent figures from New York and Chicago “made it evident that they consider the matter of woman suffrage and the question of the women in labor to be the same.” Robins’s lectures now resonated with a wider audience:

You women who want stylist shirtwaists and desire to see a new style or design every month . . . do not figure how it affects the girl shirtwaist maker. For all the extra frills and furbelows which she is compelled to add to the waist for the delight of the wearer she receives no extra compensation. She is forced to put in more time and therefore makes less money.¹⁰⁰

These new supporters of the strike perceived gender discrimination on the part of shirtwaist manufacturers to be the root cause of the strike, arguing that if it were thousands of men on strike they would have been treated different “because of the vote” and that “the workers received the treatment they do because they are nonentities politically.”¹⁰¹

The clubwomen, suffragists, and college students who supported the strike invoked ideas of what Sidorick refers to as “sisterhood,” but it was the arrests and harassment of fellow reformers that galvanized the majority

of these women into action. In response to Cochran's treatment and testimony, society women were galvanized in opposition to the injustices they perceived were taking place. Prominent figures, such as Miss Marguretta Hutchinson, began providing thousands of dollars in bail money to arrested strikers. Four days after Cochran's arrest, a delegation of clubwomen lodged a protest with Director Clay, declaring that "strikers should not be arrested unless there was some real charge against them, and that the police should treat the girls with more consideration." On that day it was also reported that the Consumers League, the organization under which Cochran was conducting her investigation, was preparing to bring a lawsuit against the city.¹⁰²

But this new coalition did not decrease the frequency of strikers' arrests. On the day that clubwomen protested the police department, the number of arrests diminished, though they picked up again the next day. Philadelphia clubwomen, suffragists, and college students who joined the picket lines often faced harassment from Philadelphia police officers. When they were aware of society women's identities, police treated them preferentially, though this was insufficient to stem abuses. On January 18, 1910, one week after Cochran's arrest, the police raided a picket line and made several arrests for unlawful assembly. The list of arrestees included Inez Millholland, a graduate of Vassar College, and First Lieutenant Henry W. Torney of the U.S. Coast Artillery. By this point, the press stopped publishing the testimony of high-profile sympathizers, and returned to publishing the numbers of and reasons for the arrests that were being made. On January 29, 1910, when Martha Gruening, a Bryn Mawr postgraduate student, was arrested for loitering, the *Evening Bulletin* only published the lecture she received from the magistrate at her trial who remarked that "it is women of your class, not the actual strikers . . . who have stirred up all this strife."¹⁰³

Despite the continued arrests, the support of prominent women gave strikers hope that victory was possible.¹⁰⁴ The Pennsylvania Women's Suffrage Association continued to send letters of solicitation to prominent Philadelphians, and the mayor of Lancaster declared his sympathy for the strike. High-profile figures from outside Philadelphia added their support, such as the daughter of financier J. P. Morgan, who raised the idea of opening her own unionized shirtwaist shop, and the daughter of President William Howard Taft. After hearing a lecture on the shirtwaist pickets, Helen Taft became an ardent supporter of the cause and vowed to speak with her father on the issue. Speaking to reporters, Taft stated:

I certainly sympathize with the poor little girls. . . . I never knew they were so downtrodden. Really, I'll never put on a shirtwaist again without a shudder . . . to think that these poor creatures have to work ten and twelve hours a day, suffer agonizing headaches because they have to watch a dozen needles flash up and down a thousand times a minute, and then get but \$5 a week is too awful. . . . Why, it's just like reading Nietzsche, isn't it?¹⁰⁵

Mayor Reyburn's flagrant disregard for municipal reform efforts and the brutality of his administration pitted suffragists and other society women against him, and thus altered the course of the strike in favor of the workers. Their stand against the abuses in the shirtwaist industry was also a stand against the flagrant abuses they saw taking place in the streets. The allegiance that was forged between manufacturers and police officers made them into a single target of these elite women's activism. It was the abuse of municipal power that prompted the majority of these society women to take a stand.

The Response of Philadelphia's Jewish Community

As has been discussed, the Jewish community did not have a united stance on labor activism. While there was some unity in response to a rash of anti-Semitism in 1906, the elites of the community were never able to fully side with the workers who organized for better conditions and generally sided against them. In 1909 significant opposition to the shirtwaist strike came from Philadelphia's Jewish upper class. Unsurprisingly, the Jewish shirtwaist manufacturers were opposed to the strike, but so too were other members of the Jewish business community, middle- and upper-class Jewish institutions such as the Young Women's Union, and the conservative *Jewish Exponent* newspaper. In favor of the strike, Jewish organizations such as the United Hebrew Trades, the Milkmen's Union, the Trolleyman's Union, the Markers and Cleaners' Union, Jewish branches of the Socialist Party, the Workmen's Circle, and establishments such as the Levis and Co. movie theater offered support.¹⁰⁶ The strike did not create these fissures within Philadelphia's Jewish community, but rather exposed them in the same way that previous strikes had.

The shirtwaist strike of 1909–10 revealed divisions in the Philadelphia Jewish community that had already existed between elites and new

immigrants. In the 1880s Philadelphia's Jewish intelligentsia held debates on the merits of encouraging emigration from Russia, with prominent figures on both sides of the issue.¹⁰⁷ Revealed by the strikes during this period, those who would have held positions of authority in Eastern Europe's Jewish communities—such as religious figures and other elites—could not replicate such power structures in urban Jewish America where currents of radicalism were integrated into everyday life.¹⁰⁸ By 1909, these rifts had not lessened, as wages were steadily decreasing and periods of under- and unemployment continued to accompany work in the garment trades.

The Jewish unions and political groups that supported the strike provided financial support as well as aid on the picket lines. In opposition, elites editorialized that “no one is doing more than the Manufacturers’ Association to suppress conditions . . . which the Jewish strikers affected by the shirtwaist strike and their sympathizers are denouncing.” They continued that the strike is taking place in “good” shops because of “irresponsible agitators” and the “ill tempered utterances of demagogues.” Conservative Jewish figures supported the manufacturers’ right to deny recognition of the union, because “industry cannot be conducted under the present system, if a manufacturer is obliged to turn over the control of his business to such experts as Mother Jones and Mr. Rosenberg, of New York and their associates.”¹⁰⁹

Echoing the tenor of earlier strikes, the shirtwaist strike exposed the generational, political, economic, and other fissures that the past had seen. The condemnation of elites held no sway over the strikers, as their decisions to strike had been motivated by factors directly relevant to the strikers’ lives.

The Decision to Strike

Scholars have examined the various shirtwaist strikes of the period—predominantly the New York strike—and have drawn out the influence of politics, popular culture, religion, ethnicity, and other factors on workers’ decisions to strike.

Because there were commonalities between the strikes in New York and Philadelphia, it is useful for this discussion to engage with the extensive research that has been conducted on the New York strike. The young women working in both Philadelphia and New York had

emigrated from the same parts of the Russian empire, and the Jewish communities of both cities had socialist undercurrents and strong radical labor traditions. Furthermore, according to the National Consumers League, shirtwaist workers in Philadelphia and New York faced similar working conditions.¹¹⁰

In conceptualizing the strikers' motivations, scholars have described a "working class consciousness" that influenced the decision to strike, one that was rooted in workers' experiences both in Russia and the United States. Daniel Sidorick—whose article on the Philadelphia strike delves into this issue—has argued that the strikers were motivated by the reality and consciousness of class, both influenced by structural changes in industrial capitalism, the context of anarchist and socialist thought, and evolving constructions of gender and ethnicity.¹¹¹

It is likely that those who went on strike were dissatisfied with their working conditions, and that they believed labor militancy—a tactic familiar to Philadelphia's Jewish community—could bring them closer to the quality of life they felt they deserved. As Susan Glenn notes, poor working conditions marred the shirtwaist industry for many years; what changed in 1909 was "the ability of immigrant women and men to channel [their grievances] into a mass movement with the potential for continuity and stability."¹¹² Workers, like the other actors involved in the strike, were responding to conditions specific to their time and place, and were utilizing tools they were familiar with.

Historian Nan Enstad, whose work has focused on the role of popular culture in the formation of "working ladyhood," has argued that the New York shirtwaist strike was not a moment in which workers suddenly formed identities that were incompatible with their labor, but rather that the women had already "experienced the pains and the pleasures of consumer capitalism simultaneously" and found power in "their creative use of limited resources"—the strike and its correlated coalition building being two examples.¹¹³

There is limited archival information available from the perspective of the strikers, and so it is difficult to assess the specific factors that motivated their actions. Because the workers relied on their meager earnings to support themselves and their families, the fact that they were willing to forego wages indefinitely demonstrates both the deplorable working conditions in the shirtwaist industry, as well as the strength of the workers' support, whether newfound or established, for unionization.

Conclusion

Shortly after the shirtwaist strike was settled, Philadelphia Rapid Transit laid off 173 union organizers in anticipation of the February 15, 1910, municipal elections, and in retaliation hundreds of their employees went on strike.¹¹⁴ After PRT brought in strikebreakers, and the Reyburn administration dispatched thousands of police officers and jailed the strike's leaders, the Central Labor Union and Philadelphia Council of Allied Building Trades called a general sympathy strike.¹¹⁵ Over 140,000 people marched in the streets both in solidarity with the striking transportation workers and in opposition to the alliance between the Republican administration and the Rapid Transit Company—a partnership illustrated by the thousands of active and temporary police officers and state troopers that were dispatched to protect the cars. Mayor Reyburn was urged by the business community, labor unions, and the Republican establishment in Pennsylvania to pursue arbitration to end the strike but he refused to yield. His denial of the strikers' right to peaceably assemble, and his orders for police to shoot “missiles and bullets” at the “rioters,” which caused at least three deaths, helped the strike gain sympathy from unions and large employers across the country.¹¹⁶

Eventually the general strike ended and the PRT agreed to settle (though not until after a level of violence was reached that the *Public Ledger* declared akin to “civil war”).¹¹⁷ For the mayor and Director Clay, the strikes of 1909 and 1910 “furnished evidence of the efficiency of the police force; and, also, the necessity for a material increase.”¹¹⁸ The administration's proclivity for violence catalyzed local middle- and upper-class support for the shirtwaist strike, and was used by Reyburn to defend, and achieve, the expansion of municipal power.

Further research needs to be conducted on the factors that motivated the shirtwaist strikers, and on the unique dynamics within the Philadelphia Jewish community, which were more complex than what has been suggested here and in related scholarship. It seems clear, however, that the flagrant corruption of Philadelphia's municipal government played a key role in inducing Philadelphia's elite women to support the strike, as many of them were striving to actively participate in political life and were appalled by Mayor Reyburn's corruption and violent means of censoring dissent.

Shirtwaist manufacturers, building on trends in the industry, sought to exploit as much labor out of their workers for the smallest wages they could

get away with, and the shirtwaist strike was an act of resistance against this exploitation and the deplorable working conditions that the primarily young immigrant women and girls faced. The Jewish community's elite, not heeding their own call "to bear in mind the common humanitarian interests," predominantly sided with the manufacturers. The shirtwaist strike, like other moments of labor militancy that took place within Philadelphia's Jewish community, revealed the generational, class, and other intra-group fissures that existed at the turn of the twentieth century.

Despite the odds against them, shirtwaist strikers were able to depress the manufacturers' profits by withholding their labor and, in so doing, were able to build enough power to compel manufacturers to join them at the bargaining table. Though they were unable to win all of their demands—particularly the demand for union recognition that they most eagerly sought—the workers were able to display their strength over the seven-week span of the strike, and to gain the support of some of Philadelphia's most powerful women.

NOTES

1. "Tiny Strikers Tell Sad Tales," *Philadelphia Press*, December 27, 1909. During the winter of 1909–10, temperatures were lower and snow accumulation was higher than the historic averages for the northeastern United States. In Philadelphia the large snowstorm that spanned December 26–27, 1909, shut down trains and trolley cars and caused a number of deaths. Laura B. Edge, *We Stand as One: The International Ladies Garment Workers Strike, New York, 1909* (Minneapolis, MN: Twenty First Century Books, 2011), 53; "Blizzard Still Prostrates City" *Evening Bulletin*, December 27, 1909.
2. Eighty-five percent of the shirtwaist makers in Philadelphia were Jewish, and about the same proportion were women. Despite the fact that there were non-Jewish workers in the shirtwaist sweatshops, such as Italians, native-born white workers, and a very small number of African Americans, the strike came to be thought of as a Jewish strike. Both Barbara Klaczyńska and Daniel Sidorick go into depth about the inter-ethnic divisions that were apparent during the strike. Barbara Klaczyńska, "Working Women in Philadelphia, 1900–1930" (PhD diss., Temple University, 1975), 236–40; Daniel Sidorick "The 'Girl Army': The Philadelphia Shirtwaist Strike of 1909–1910," *Pennsylvania History* 71, no. 3 (Summer 2004): 332.
3. At its most basic level, the strike was a fight between workers and employers. It can be argued, as has been done with the New York shirtwaist strike, that the strike also represented a moment of awakening for the shirtwaist strikers. This issue is discussed in more depth below.
4. One exception is an article written by historian Daniel Sidorick that explores the Philadelphia "girl army" and the strike's key events in significantly more depth than other works on the subject. Sidorick's article on the Philadelphia shirtwaist strike relies primarily on local news articles from

the time of the strike. As Sidorick notes, Philadelphia-area press was generally only interested in speaking with union leaders and wealthy society women; there has not been much archival material found from the perspectives of the rank-and-file strikers. Sidorick uses the available information, with its inherent limitations, coupled with popular theories regarding similar strikes to construct a portrait of the Philadelphia shirtwaist strike and its participants.

Philip S. Foner devotes three pages of *Women and the American Labor Movement* to the Philadelphia strike, and thus does not go into significant depth. Barbara Klaczynska's dissertation analyzes the vast terrain of women's work in Philadelphia, and touches on the shirtwaist strike. Though useful, Klaczynska's portrayal is incomplete and contains certain inaccuracies, particularly regarding the wrongly dated 1912 Lawrence strike and its influence. Within the compilation *Jewish Life in Philadelphia*, Maxwell Whiteman's "Out of the Sweatshop" devotes considerable more space to the Philadelphia strike, but also contains several factual inaccuracies (such as his claim that "the first general strike in the Philadelphia apparel trade was an abysmal failure") that cannot be reconciled with the history of the strike. Despite this, the chapter offers a useful overview of the Jewish labor movement in Philadelphia from the 1880s through at the turn of the twentieth century. Sidorick, "Girl Army," 323–69. Philip S. Foner, *Women and the American Labor Movement: From Colonial Times to the Eve of World War I* (New York: The Free Press, 1979), 333–35; Klaczynska, "Working Women in Philadelphia"; Maxwell Whiteman, "Out of the Sweatshop," *Jewish Life in Philadelphia: 1830–1940* (Philadelphia: Ishi Publications, 1983), 64–79.

5. For example, Italians dominated jobs in steel construction, road paving, and waste management in Philadelphia, and both German and Russian Jews dominated jobs in Philadelphia's garment industry. Whiteman, *Out of the Sweatshop*, 159–60.

In 1900 55 percent of the city's population was classified as "foreign stock"—a term that encompasses both first- and second-generation immigrants—with the vast majority, 80 percent, from northwest Europe (most significantly Ireland, Germany, and England). In 1900 Philadelphia's population was 21 percent Irish heritage, 15 percent German, and 8 percent British.

Historian Kenneth C. Meyer has argued that because of Philadelphia's large population of African Americans, new immigrants preferred to avoid the competition for unskilled work, and thus to settle elsewhere. African Americans made up a large proportion of Philadelphia's unskilled labor force at the turn of the twentieth century. The industries included road construction, building construction, railroad work, manufacturing, and domestic service. Russell A. Kazal, *Becoming Old Stock: The Paradox of German-American Identity* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004), 19; Kenneth Charles Meyer, "Persistence and Change in Ethnic Residential Space: An Ecological Case Study of the Polish in Philadelphia" (Ph.D. diss., Syracuse University, 1974), 123–34. Only a handful of the more than 8,000 shops in Philadelphia in 1915 employed more than 500 people. By the time of the shirtwaist strike, no new industries, especially heavy ones, were entering the city. The main industries in Philadelphia at the time of the strike were textile and clothing, machine shop and hardware manufacturing, printing and publishing, and leather production. Interestingly, the state of Pennsylvania attracted the largest number of certain new immigrants—particularly Poles, Slovaks, Croatians, Slovenes, and Ukrainians—but 71 percent of them settled outside of Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, taking up work in one of the new heavy industries (such as the production of coal, iron, steel, railroads, glass, cement, and chemicals). Meyer, "Persistence and Change in Ethnic Residential Space," 211–12.

6. The 1910 census revealed that 21,235 out of 22,535 African American women workers in Philadelphia were employed in domestic service. The textile and clothing industry, the largest employer of women in Philadelphia, put up some of the highest barriers to African American women's employment, though there were a few who worked in the shirtwaist industry. Klaczynska "Working Women in Philadelphia," 15, 59.
7. In her dissertation, Barbara Klaczynska argues that in Philadelphia, a woman's ethnic group was the most relevant determinant of her occupation, due primarily to the customary age of marriage. Klaczynska further argues that employer's preferences were often a determining factor in women's job choices, as some preferred one group of workers (such as native white women) to another. *Ibid.*, 15, 47.
8. William Franklin Willoughby, *Regulation of the Sweating System* (Washington, DC: Department of Labor, 1900), 10–12.
9. *Fifth Annual Report of the Factory Inspector of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania for the Year 1894* (Harrisburg: State Printer of Pennsylvania, 1895), 504–5.
10. "Clothing Manufacturers to Oppose Senator Hear's Bill" *Jewish Exponent*, April 22, 1892. In 1909 the Consumers League was still trying to pass legislation that would effectively regulate the sweatshop industry. Evelyn Bodek Rosen, *The Philadelphia Fels, 1880–1920: A Social Portrait* (London: Associated University Press, 2000), 133.
11. Walter Licht, *Getting Work: Philadelphia, 1840–1950* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992), 10; Joseph H. Willits, *Philadelphia Unemployment: With a Special Reference to the Textile Industry* (Philadelphia: Department of Public Works, 1915), 32–33.
12. Alice Kessler-Harris, *Out to Work: A History of Wage-Earning Women in the United States*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 151.
13. For example, despite manufacturers' claims that workers were no longer being charged for materials, many contractors continued the practice. *Ibid.*, 150.
14. "The Strikers' Demands," *Jewish Exponent*, December 31, 1909.
15. *Ibid.*
16. "1909 Shirtwaistmakers' Strike," *Public Ledger*, December 21, 1909.
17. Minutes of the Central Labor Union, December 12, 1909, and January 6, 1910, Urban Archives, Temple University Library, Philadelphia; from Sidorick, "Girl Army," 358.
18. Most young Jewish women workers were earning money in order to support themselves or their families, as immigrant families often needed daughters to contribute financially. Despite a 1903 education law that mandated schooling through the age of fourteen, forged documents were easy to obtain and the law's enforcement was lax. Susan A. Glenn, *Daughters of the Shtetl: Life and Labor in the Immigrant Generation* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990), 84–86; Licht, *Getting Work*, 23.
19. Most Jews lived in one of two neighborhoods, one located in South Philadelphia and the other in Northern Liberties. Sidorick, "Girl Army," 185–93, 323–30.
20. Gerald Sorin, *The Prophetic Minority: American Jewish Immigrant Radicals, 1880–1920* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), 11–16.
21. Russian laws enacted in the 1880s and 1890s indirectly prohibited Jews from settling in rural areas and large cities. As a result, Jewish workers were barred from traditional industries, and job discrimination elsewhere further restricted the type of work Jews were able to find. Moreover, by the 1890s the competition for work resulted in high unemployment. Violent pogroms further

- compelled Jews to migrate. Yoav Peled, *Class and Ethnicity in the Pale: The New Political Economy of Jewish Workers' Nationalism in Late Imperial Russia* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989), 18; Glenn, *Daughters of the Shtetl*, 30–34.
22. Glenn, *Daughters of the Shtetl*, 13–20; Licht, *Getting Work*, 33.
23. Licht, *Getting Work*, 42–46. Unlike most immigrant groups, Jews often immigrated in family groups and sometimes sent women alone to make money (nearly 43 percent of Jews who left Russia were women). Once networks were established with relatives, some families sent working-aged daughters to work. In Russia the garment trades were overcrowded; this was not the case in the United States. Glenn, *Daughters of the Shtetl*, 47–49.
24. Ira Katznelson, "Between Separation and Disappearance: Jews on the Margins of American Liberalism," in *Paths of Emancipation* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995), 157–205. Susan Glenn, in *Daughters of the Shtetl*, further argues that migration was not new for Eastern European Jews, as they had been migrating within the region, from rural to urban areas and between other types of places (42).
25. Katznelson ("Between Separation and Disappearance," 157–205) notes that two-thirds of Jewish immigrants that came to the United States between 1899 and 1914 stated a preference to settle in New York City.
26. Alice Kessler-Harris, "Organizing the Unorganizable," in *Class, Sex, and the Woman Worker*, ed. Milton Cantor and Bruce Laurie (London: Greenwood Press, 1977), 145; Donna Gabaccia, *From the Other Side* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 19, 49.
27. Tony Michels has argued, building on the work of Irving Howe, that "Jewish political culture was socialist-oriented." Michels, "Socialism and the Writing of American Jewish History: World of Our Fathers Revisited," *American Jewish History* 88, no. 4 (December 2000): 541.
28. Tony Michels demonstrates that when Eastern European Jews arrived in the United States, at the beginning of the 1880s, they did not come as radicals. Rather, it was through association with German socialists, who offered various forms of assistance to Jewish intellectuals, that a Jewish socialist tradition emerged. New York, which had the largest concentration of Jews in the world, provided an economic base and the space for Jewish radicals to build a movement. Michels, *A Fire in Their Hearts* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), 4–13.
29. Tony Michels details the emergence and importance of the Yiddish press in forming a Jewish socialist consciousness. Tony Michels, "'Speaking to Moyshe': The Early Socialist Yiddish Press and Its Readers," *Jewish History* 14, no. 1 (2000): 51–82; Michels, *A Fire in Their Hearts*.
30. Whiteman, "Out of the Sweatshop," 73; "Philadelphia Notes," *American Hebrew*, May 28, 1886; "Correspondence: Our Philadelphia Letter," *American Hebrew*, September 3, 1886.
31. Klaczynska, "Working Women in Philadelphia," 189; Charles Bernheimer, ed., *The Russian Jew in the United States*, 2nd ed. (New York: Young People's Missionary Movement, 1905), 86.
32. "Jewish Tailors and Operators," *Jewish Exponent*, January 11, 1889.
33. Henry Samuel Morais, *The Jews of Philadelphia: Their History From the Earliest Settlements to the Present Time* (Philadelphia: The Levytype Company, 1894), 233.
34. Louis Edward Levy, *The Russian Jewish Refugees in America* (Philadelphia: The Levytype Company, 1895), 18.
35. *Fifty Years' Work of the Hebrew Education Society of Philadelphia, 1848–1898* (Philadelphia: Hebrew Education Society, 1899), 94–95.

36. Ibid., 95.
37. Founded in 1901, the Industrial Removal Office (IRO) sought to remove Jewish immigrants from crowded eastern cities and resettle them throughout the United States; the IRO relied on local assistance in cities to organize removal. *Sixth Biennial Session of the National Conference of Jewish Charities* (Baltimore: Press of Kohn and Pollock, 1910), 136; Carol Gendler, "The Industrial Removal Office and the Settlement of Jews in Nebraska, 1901-1917," *Nebraska History* 72 (1991): 127-34.
38. *Charities: A Review of Local and General Philanthropy* (New York: New York Charity Organization Society, 1903), 164.
39. Ibid., 165.
40. Ibid.; Whiteman, "Out of the Sweatshop," 70.
41. This strike was against the manufacturing company Tutelman Brothers and Fagen, which was ruthless against the strikers and told the press that the strikers were upset because they had non-Jewish coworkers. This claim provoked an anti-Semitic backlash in the Philadelphia press. Whiteman, "Out of the Sweatshop," 71-72, 74.
42. Glenn, *Daughters of the Shtetl*, 41-46; Irving Howe, *World of Our Fathers: The Journey of the East European Jews to America and the Life They Found and Made* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1976), 291-96. Howe's work relates specifically to New York, but in Philadelphia as well new immigrants joined the Socialist Party, the Workmen's Circle, and other organizations. Howe further attributes the 1909 jump in labor radicalism to the fact that the Panic of 1907 had subsided, and the slightly increased wages prompted workers to demand more. Additionally, new immigrants realized that they were not going to return to eastern Europe, so they committed themselves to local struggles (296-97).
43. In New York City, between 15,000 and 40,000 shirtwaist workers went on strike beginning on November 22, 1909. Similar strikes popped up in cities across the nation. Approximately 100,000 shirtwaist workers went on strike in New York, Rochester, Chicago, Philadelphia, and Cleveland between 1900 and 1915. Howe, *World of Our Fathers*, 297; Joan M. Jensen *A Needle, a Bobbin, a Strike: Women Needleworkers in America* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1984), 83-93.
44. "Shirt Makers Vote to Declare Strike," *The Press*, December 5, 1909.
45. Over the previous few decades, the United States had undergone dramatic industrial changes, and it had emerged as a formidable imperial power. Workers, however, were not benefitting from the upward trend. Since the economic crisis of 1893, wages had been decreasing in relation to the cost of living. The Panic exacerbated the trend, which continued through the winter of 1909-10. Philip S. Foner, *The Policies and Practices of the American Federation of Labor, 1900-1909*, vol. 3 of *History of the Labor Movement in the United States* (New York: International Publishers, 1964), 11-13; Whiteman, "Out of the Sweatshop," 73.
46. The ILGWU's leadership—and pre-1909 membership—was predominantly male. In 1903, despite the fact that women dominated the garment industry's workforce, the ILGWU had organized male and female workers at a ratio of 5 to 3. Prior to 1909, the ILGWU had organized the highest-skilled workers in the garment industry—the cutters—into craft locals. These workers had reasonable prospects for upward mobility within the industry, unlike the majority of workers who went on strike in 1909. Sidorick, "Girl Army," 323-26, 329; Foner, *Women and the American Labor Movement*, 277.

47. Foner, *Women and the American Labor Movement*, 279. Rosenberg denounced socialism and anarchism, and praised the police overall, noting that it was a case of bad apples: "for the cases of so-called brutality. . . . The individual policemen—and some of them colored—are to blame for the great deal of the harsh treatment." Rosenberg sought a swift end to the strike, and was quick to compromise with manufacturers. Sidorick, "Girl Army," 349, 324, 356.
48. Sidorick, "Girl Army," 336; Klaczynska "Working Women in Philadelphia," 243–46.
49. Founded in 1903, the WTUL stated that its goal was "to assist in the organization of women workers into trade unions . . . and thereby to help secure conditions necessary for healthful and efficient work and to obtain a just return for such work." At its 1904 convention, the WTUL agreed to pursue an eight-hour day and fifty-eight-hour week, legislation preventing the hiring of workers under false pretenses, and jobs for displaced workers. WTUL members presented their campaigns to women's clubs. Though not a formal affiliation, the WTUL followed the direction of the AFL. Ultimately, this hindered the League's work as the AFL had entrenched gender biases. Foner, *Women and the American Labor Movement*, 298–302; Ileen DeVault, *United Apart: Gender and the Rise of Craft Unionism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004), 216–17.
50. "Strikers Claim Partial Victory" *Public Ledger*, December 22, 1909.
51. Conditions in the Haber factory were particularly egregious. Workers had to pay for water to drink, and despite the fact that they were paid per piece, workers were kept in the shop regardless of whether there was work to do. Here, employers kept the doors locked, despite the inherent safety concerns. *Ibid.*; Sidorick, "Girl Army," 335.
52. "Seven Waistmaker Strikers Arrested," *Public Ledger*, December 31, 1909; "The Strikers' Demands," *Jewish Exponent*, December 31, 1909.
53. "Girl Strikers Get Aid of Club Women" *Public Ledger*, January 7, 1910; "Society Girls to Act as Pickets," *Public Ledger*, January 10, 1910; "Strikers Held on Riot Charge," *Evening Bulletin*, January 11, 1910; "Suffragists Join in Strikers' Plea," *Public Ledger*, January 13, 1910.
54. "Plan to Arbitrate Shirtwaist Strike," *Evening Bulletin*, January 14, 1910; "Bryn Mawr Student in Shirtwaist Row," *Evening Bulletin*, January 29, 1910.
55. Both on December 30, 1909, and on January 29, 1910, it was reported that over 1,000 strikers had returned to their jobs. "1000 Girl Strikers Are Back at Work," *Public Ledger*, December 30, 1909; "Union Workers Locked Out," *Evening Bulletin*, January 29, 1910.
56. "Shirtwaist Firm Repudiated," *Public Ledger*, December 26, 1909.
57. Sidorick, "Girl Army," 334.
58. T. Everett Harry, "The Backsliding of Philadelphia," *Harper's Weekly* 51, no. 2628 (May 4, 1907): 635–58; "Mayor John E. Reyburn," *Washington Post*, February 22, 1907; Sam Hudson, *Pennsylvania and Its Public Men: Containing a History of His Life and the Men He Has Met* (Philadelphia: Hudson and Joseph, 1909), 39; "The Campaign in Philadelphia," *Outlook*, September 16, 1911.
59. Enacted in 1887, the Bullit Bill provided a new city charter that transferred municipal power from semiautonomous wards to a central committee. This committee—which was directed by the mayor—was granted control over the city's finances, patronage, and office nominations.

In Philadelphia, public utilities were often involved in corporate patronage. For example, there were a number of scandals regarding the United Gas Improvement Company (UGI). In 1897 the company acquired a thirty-year municipal gas contract, despite outcry from the general public, reform groups, and the local press. Other questionable contracts involved the city's transit system,

- road repair, electricity, and other services. Martin J. Schiesl, *The Politics of Efficiency: Municipal Administration and Reform in America, 1880–1920* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), 52–53; Peter McCaffery, *When Bosses Ruled Philadelphia: The Emergence of the Republican Machine, 1867–1933* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1993), 157–59.
60. McCaffery, *When Bosses Ruled Philadelphia*, 158.
61. *Good Government: Official Journal of the National Civil Service Reform League* (New York: National Civil Service Reform League, 1907), 81.
62. Harry, “Backsliding of Philadelphia,” 635–58; *Good Government*, 93.
63. Harry, “Backsliding of Philadelphia,” 635, 636–37; “The Philadelphia Election,” *Outlook*, March 2, 1907.
64. Reyburn associated with Machine “Boss” Durham, William S. Vare, the “Boss” of southern Philadelphia, and corrupt senator Charles L. Brown. In the Department of Health and Charities, Reyburn appointed Dr. Joseph S. Neff, “a loyal adherent of the machine,” and to the Department of Supplies, Reyburn appointed Joseph H. Klernmer, who was known as “Durham’s valet.” Harry, “Backsliding of Philadelphia,” 637–39.
65. Hudson, *Pennsylvania and Its Public Men*, 39, 53. Mayor Reyburn was a member of the Union League and the Philadelphia Yacht Club. For leisure, Reyburn was “a confirmed lover of water sports and a practical yachtsman,” and traveled between his estate in Quebec and his two “shooting and fishing [preserves],” one on Durant’s Island and the other on the Potomac River. *American Economist: Devoted to the Protection of American Labor and Industries* (New York: American Protective Tariff League, 1908).
66. Christian groups decried what they saw as “the efforts of our municipal officials to protect criminals” and condemned Mayor Reyburn “for his intolerable inaction on the side of enforcement of law” specifically regarding “speak-easies and houses of ill-fame, gambling dens and places of vice and crime.” *The Christian Work and Evangelist* 2130, no. 83 (December 14, 1907).
67. “Declares Taft Is ‘Mere Echo’: Philadelphia Mayor Heaps Scorn on Candidate,” *Los Angeles Times*, August 23, 1907.
68. Suspicious contracts included “street-cleaning, street-paving, the building of boulevards, and the construction of a filtration plant.” The Reyburn administration was accused in several cases of graft and corruption, and the mayor was charged, though never indicted or tried, of receiving over \$400,000 from corporations, politicians, contractors, and public officers. “The Campaign in Philadelphia,” *Outlook*, September 16, 1911; Kim Long, *The Almanac of Political Corruption, Scandals and Dirty Politics* (New York: Random House, 2007).
69. Whiteman, “Out of the Sweatshop,” 72–73; “Woman Held for Riot,” *Washington Post*, February 22, 1908.
70. The march began after a meeting that featured prominent socialists, anarchists, and unionists speaking about economic conditions in Philadelphia. It is unclear who called the march, as there exists no formal record of the meeting. Following her arrest for allegedly inciting the riot, Voltairine de Cleyre insisted that she did not call the march. Instead, she had wished to march with more workers present. Whiteman, “Out of the Sweatshop,” 73. In a statement to the press de Cleyre said “it is certain that I did not advise the march, that I had no idea of such a thing occurring at such a time and that all of the speakers, when the crowd suddenly began to surge toward the door on its own initiative, found themselves amazedly in the ludicrous position of orators deserted by their audience.” “Check on the Anarchists,” *Washington Post*, February 23, 1908.

71. "Riot in Philadelphia," *New York Times*, February 21, 1908; Whiteman, "Out of the Sweatshop," 73; "Check on the Anarchists."
72. During the shirtwaist strike, the Philadelphia press printed reports on its front pages regarding organized carmen, trolleyemen, railroad workers, fur workers, and steel workers. "Trainmen Threaten Railroad Strike," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, January 5, 1910; "Carmen's Meeting to Decide Action," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, January 18, 1910; "Trolleyemen Will Appeal to Stuart for Arbitration," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, January 22, 1910; "Fur Men Don't Fear Strike," *Evening Bulletin*, December 23, 1909; "2,600 More Join Bethlehem Strike," *Evening Bulletin*, February 8, 1910.
73. Edwin Lewis, a lawyer and member of Philadelphia's city council, wrote in 1908 about a contract between the city and the Philadelphia Rapid Transit company that effectively removed all previous regulatory statutes (which had required, among other things, that the transit company had to maintain roads and other transit routes) in exchange for massive corporate profits and a lengthy lease. Edwin foreboded that "when the people learn the truth there will ensue a period of violent agitation"; in 1910 a massive general strike was called by transit workers, and was met with state violence. Edwin O. Lewis, "Philadelphia's Relation to Rapid Transit Company," *Annals of the American Academy of Political Science* 31, no. 66 (1908): 610.
74. The city and the company worked together to bring in strikebreakers and violently crush the union. Philip S. Foner, *The AFL in the Progressive Era*, vol. 5 of *History of the Labor Movement in the United States* (New York: International Publishers Co., 1980), 144-47; "Reyburn Will Fight Strike Arbitration," *New York Times*, March 3, 1910.
75. In 1907 the city of Philadelphia had granted PRT a long-term contract that guaranteed PRT's monopoly over all new transportation construction and allowed PRT to self-regulate. Philip Scranton, *Figured Tapestry: Production, Markets, and Power in Philadelphia Textiles, 1885-1941* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 267-71.
76. "Carmen's Meeting to Decide Action; Mayor Is Neutral," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, January 5, 1910; "Mayor Declares City Will Protect Cars," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, January 18, 1910; Scranton, *Figured Tapestry*, 270.
77. Workers were arrested for allegedly distributing leaflets, "annoying" and attacking strikebreakers, and walking in front of factories. Sidorick, "Girl Army," 337-38; "Girl Strikers Claim Big Gains," *Philadelphia Record*, December 22, 1909.
78. "Miss Hutchinson on Strikers' Bonds," *Evening Bulletin*, January 12, 1910; "Union Workers Locked Out," *Evening Bulletin*, January 29, 1910.
79. "Against Disorder Say Strike Leaders," *Evening Bulletin*, February 3, 1910.
80. The "social leader" and "prominent club woman" Mrs. George Biddle declared to the press that "I am interested in the matter to see that justice is done. . . . I am ready at all times to furnish bail for any girl arrested, if, after investigating the case, I find it a worthy one." "Mrs. George Biddle Aids Girl Striker," *Public Ledger*, January 8, 1910; "Mrs. Biddle Aids Girls on Strike," *Evening Bulletin*, January 7, 1910; "More Girl Strikers Arrested," *Evening Bulletin*, February 8, 1910.
81. "Fannie Cochran Arrested as Strike Picket," *Public Ledger*, January 11, 1910.
82. "Police Plan War on Strike Pickets," *Evening Bulletin*, February 2, 1910; "Miss Hutchinson on Strikers' Bonds," *Evening Bulletin*, January 12, 1910; "Mayor Takes Hand in Waist Strike," *Evening Bulletin*, January 27, 1910. According to the news report, a man was beaten on his way home; his hat was taken from him and then returned to him the next day. The magistrate in the trial against the alleged assailant, a shirtwaist striker, asked the witness to try on the hat as it was the "chief

- exhibit." Once it was seen to fit the plaintiff the magistrate declared the defendant guilty and held him on \$400 bail. "Bryn Mawr Student in Shirtwaist Row."
83. Ken Dornstein, *Accidentally on Purpose: The Making of a Personal Injury Underworld in America* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996), 145; "Threaten Arrest of Miss Cochran," *Evening Bulletin*, February 5, 1910.
 84. "Against Disorder Say Strike Leaders," *Evening Bulletin*, February 3, 1910; "Police Plan War on Strike Pickets," *Evening Bulletin*, February 2, 1910.
 85. The ILGWU and other allies sought to resolve the strike and were not committed to the goal of union recognition. The ILGWU, as a craft-based union, was interested in securing a contract as soon as possible. From day two of the strike, ILGWU president predicted a swift victory. Sidorick, "Girl Army," 336, 338, 346–47; "Girl Strikers Claim Big Gains"; "Tiny Strikers Tell Sad Tales."
 86. "Bryn Mawr Student in Shirtwaist Row"; "Mrs. Robins Begs for Waist Strike," *Evening Bulletin*, January 19, 1910.
 87. Daniel Sidorick goes into depth on the issue of inter-ethnic divisions. Employers explicitly sought to hire non-Jews, though the majority of strikebreakers were members of the Jewish community. Sidorick calls ethnicity "a double edged sword" for the strike, as it provided unity among Jews but prevented unity with other women workers. (Italian women noted not feeling welcome in unions where Yiddish was the primary language spoken.) The press and the city tried to capitalize on these divides, by portraying the Jewish strikers as racist against Italians. Jewish women were portrayed as attacking Italian scabs. The strikers seem to have been aggressive with strikebreakers, though statements of police in the press cannot be taken at face value. From the large shops, strikebreakers petitioned the mayor to side with them as "American" workers, and against the strikers who were "of foreign nationality." Sidorick, "Girl Army," 340–45.
 88. By mid-January, the employers agreed to arbitrate some of the workers' demands but refused union recognition. In the end, the employers created a system of arbitration for the negotiation of piece-work prices, and employers also eliminated charges for materials. Further, the employers reduced the work week from 56 to 52.5 hours. But, to the disappointment of the strikers, the employers still refused to recognize the union. Sidorick, "Girl Army," 350; Klaczyńska, "Working Women in Philadelphia," 247.
 89. The Central Labor Union, the Building Trades Council, and Jewish unions (such as the trolleyman's union and the miner's union) offered solidarity and aid. The Jewish unions were more likely to give money, join pickets, and go door to door to raise money. The conservative craft unions in the city did not offer much support instead "urged caution" and sought to "end labor disturbances." From Sidorick, "Girl Army," 347.
 90. "Seven Waistmaker Strikers Arrested," *Public Ledger*, December 31, 1909; "Society Girls to Act as Pickets," *Public Ledger*, January 10, 1910; "Suffragists Join in Strikers' Plea"; "Mrs. Biddle Aids Girls on Strike."
 91. Sidorick, "Girl Army," 345–55; "Strikers Close One Shirtwaist Shop," *Public Ledger*, December 25, 1909.
 92. "1,000 Girl Strikers Are Back at Work," *Public Ledger*, December 30, 1909.
 93. The Consumers League, a national organization with a local Philadelphia chapter, pursued sanitary working conditions in Philadelphia through its investigations, reports, and lobbying campaigns. Foner, *Women and the American Labor Movement*, 277.

REVEALING DIVISION

- The Consumers League took issue with the negative impact of sweatshop work on families and public health, and proposed legislation to regulate sweatshops. In 1907 the Consumers League proposed reform legislation to the Pennsylvania state legislature. The state's chief factory inspector opposed the measure because he felt that "inspectors of his department were not fit men to enforce the provisions of a measure which would give them the right of entrance to private houses." *Good Government*, 53; Rosen, *The Philadelphia Fels*, 133; Sidorick, "Girl Army," 335.
94. "Miss Biddle Acts as Strike Picket," *Public Ledger*, January 9, 1910.
 95. "1,000 Girl Strikers Are Back at Work."
 96. "Club Women Will Aid Waistmakers," *Public Ledger*, January 4, 1910.
 97. Sidorick, "Girl Army," 333. Philip S. Foner has described the sentiments of many reform women, who sought "harmonious accommodation between working-women and their employers." Foner, *Women and the American Labor Movement*, 291.
 98. Sidorick, "Girl Army," 336; Klaczynska, "Working Women in Philadelphia," 243.
 99. "Women of Social Distinction Give Aid to Strikers," *Public Ledger*, January 12, 1910; "Society Women Aid Quaker City Strike," *New York Times*, January 14, 1910; "Suffragists Join in Strikers' Plea."
 100. "Style Changes Injure Workers," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, January 13, 1910.
 101. Ibid.
 102. "Miss Hutchinson on Strikers' Bonds," *Evening Bulletin*, January 12, 1910; "Plan to Arbitrate Shirtwaist Strike."
 103. "Bryn Mawr Student in Shirtwaist Row." Press reported that "the police are very careful about who they take into custody, without definite cause," after they arrested, then immediately released, certain prominent society women. "Society Women Aid Quaker City Strike"; "Plan to Arbitrate Shirtwaist Strike"; "Inez Millholland in Cell," *Evening Bulletin*, January 19, 1910.
 104. "Inez Millholland in Cell."
 105. "Miss Taft to Aid the Girl Strikers," *New York Times*, January 31, 1910.
 106. Sidorick, "Girl Army," 333-39.
 107. "Hebrew Literature Society," *Jewish Exponent*, January 11, 1889.
 108. Tony Michels has demonstrated that conservative Orthodox Jewish leaders who held positions of authority in Russia, advocated "inter-class cooperation and fortification of beleaguered religious institutions against secularization" in the United States. Jewish socialists, on the other hand, were able to take advantage of connections of national and international organizations. Jewish Orthodoxy never became a political force in the United States. Michels, "Socialism and the Writing of American Jewish History," 540.
 109. "Unsanitary Shops," *Jewish Exponent*, December 24, 1909; "The Strike and Its Bearings," *Jewish Exponent*, January 14, 1910.
 110. Moreover, the two strikes made similar demands (both strikes' demands pertained to "the closed shop, wages, a contracting system, hours and overtime, small injustices and grievances, and sanitation") and both found support from the WTUL, ILGWU, society women, reformers, and Jewish radical organizations. "The Philadelphia Shirtwaist Strike," *The Survey* 23 (October 1909-March 1910): 595-96.
 111. Daniel Sidorick bases his conclusion on the statements of society women, labor leaders, and a few of the strikers, as well as on theories regarding similar strikes. There are few to no records in existence

from the Philadelphia branches of the WTUL, ILGWU, or other Jewish labor organizations that highlight workers' sentiments. Both Daniel Sidorick and Barbara Klaczynska have analyzed surveys were conducted by women's settlement groups and governmental agencies, which concern prominent workers (not all of whom participated in the strike). Sidorick primarily utilizes contemporary news sources, which generally excluded the opinions of the strikers themselves.

I do not believe that there is enough evidence to conclude that the strikers had a consciousness of class—Sidorick bases this claim on the fact that the strikers were observed reading books and attending meetings en masse—but it does seem plausible, specifically because of what Ardis Cameron has observed as the “radicalizing process” that accompanies “participation in militancy”—especially when those in power respond with violence. Sidorick, “Girl Army,” 323–69; Klaczynska, “Working Women in Philadelphia.”

112. Glenn, *Daughters of the Shtetl*, 176.
113. Nan Enstad elaborates the role of popular culture—specifically, dime novels, fashion, and film—in the creation of “distinctive and pleasurable social practices” and workers’ “identities as ladies.” Rather than a challenge to the popular conception of women, “working ladyhood inverted a notion of prestige in order to create a utopian practice of entitlement,” one that “did not lead inevitably to efforts for progressive social change.” Nan Enstad, *Ladies of Labor, Girls of Adventure: Working Women, Popular Culture, and Labor Politics at the Turn of the Twentieth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 120–203.
114. This mass firing delayed the strike and helped Republicans sweep the municipal elections. Foner, *AFL in the Progressive Era*, 144–47; “Reyburn Will Fight Strike Arbitration.”
115. The strike’s leaders, Clarence Pratt and John Murphy, were arrested for conspiracy to incite a riot, and the general strike was called on March 4, 1910. Peter J. Albert and Grace Palladino, eds., *Progress and Reaction in the Age of Reform, 1909–13*, vol. 8 of *The Samuel Gompers Papers* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2001), 52.
116. The violence that erupted was described by the *Public Ledger* as a “civil war.” The tens of thousands of men, women, and children were disgusted with the corruption and election rigging that allowed the Republican party to sweep the February 15, 1910, municipal elections. Scranton, *Figured Tapestry*, 267–71; “Unions March in Philadelphia,” *New York Times*, March 6, 1910.
117. The general strike lasted until March 27, 1910, and the carmen lasted until April 19, 1910. They were able to win an increase in wages, rehire striking workers within three months, and mediate the discharges of the 173 men originally laid off. Albert and Palladino, eds., *Progress and Reaction in the Age of Reform*, 52.
118. *Annual Report of the Director of the Department of Public Safety and the Chief of the Electrical Bureau* (Philadelphia: Dunlap Printing Co., 1910), 7.

**"IT'S THE UNION MAN THAT HOLDS
THE WINNING HAND": GAMBLING IN
PENNSYLVANIA'S ANTHRACITE REGION**

Karol K. Weaver

Gambling is everywhere in Pennsylvania. Turn on the television and you are enticed to visit Mohegan Sun, one of the state's casinos. Stop by a convenience store and be lured by the dream of the next big lottery win. Pass by a local church and read a sign that invites you to "Bingo!" Talk of gambling in Pennsylvania made former governor Ed Rendell so heated that he called CBS news staffers "simpletons" and "idiots" after they questioned the extent and morality of gambling in Pennsylvania.¹ Politicians, development professionals, and ordinary Pennsylvanians are betting that gambling will bring the state and its economy some much-needed luck. Throughout history, gambling has reflected major cultural values of a given society. Using the anthracite region in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries as a case study, this article shows that gambling opportunities abounded in the anthracite coal region, even as the activity came under fire. Coal-region residents gambled because gambling provided them

with leisure activities, it was religiously sanctioned, and it represented a sense of control in their otherwise risky and chance-filled lives.

Pennsylvania's anthracite region lies in the northeastern and north-central portions of the state. In the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, ethnic diversity, class differences, and religious variety characterized the region. The influx of "new immigrants" from eastern and southern Europe to Pennsylvania was immense. Between 1899 and 1914, over 2.3 million immigrants contributed to making Pennsylvania one of the nation's industrial powerhouses. Drawn by the promise of work, many new immigrants made the anthracite coalfields their destination. American-born descendants of English, Welsh, German, and Irish immigrants inhabited the area, as did the new immigrants. The region's economic livelihood depended on anthracite coal mining by men and boys and textile manufacturing by women and girls.² Class distinctions based on where one figured into the coal economy divided residents. The area also was a diverse blend of religions. Catholics outnumbered both Protestants and a small community of Jews. Although men, women, boys, and girls worked hard, they appreciated and took advantage of the leisure time that they possessed. One type of activity in which they readily and eagerly participated was gambling.

The story of gambling in the anthracite coal region will build upon work done by scholars who specialize in the history of gambling, the history of mining, and the history of Pennsylvania. Many scholars who have studied gambling in the United States have presented broad surveys of the subject. When they have concentrated on specific regions of the nation, they have focused on gaming in the West, particularly as a characteristic of the settlement of the frontier.³ Historian of Pennsylvania Anthony F. C. Wallace considered risk seeking when analyzing the Pennsylvania coal town of Saint Clair, but focused his study on mine owners, not miners or other working-class residents.⁴ The connection between mining, gambling, and risk also drew the attention of Gunther Peck, who investigated the class, gender, and racial dimensions of risk-taking in Nevada's silver mines. Peck noted that "[the study of how] miners responded to a spectrum of physical and financial risks . . . remain[s] neglected."⁵ This article works to fill that need by analyzing the ethnic, gendered, religious, and occupational dimensions of gambling in Pennsylvania's anthracite region.

To get at the meaning of gambling for the men and women of the anthracite coal region, theories derived from anthropology, working-class studies, and feminist theory are employed. The field of anthropology looks at gambling in the context of the culture in which the activity takes place. Specifically, anthropologists see gambling as reflecting the values of the people who

participate in the activity.⁶ Similarly, this study shows that gambling in the anthracite coal region displays the ethnic diversity of the area, reflects the gender divisions that existed there, indicates the religious worldview and situation of the residents, and echoes the dangerous work environment of the area.

The article also draws from working-class studies and feminist theory. Specifically, these research areas articulated the importance of considering the multiple identities that encompass individual lives. Gambling and a society's attitude toward it are influenced by ethnicity, class, gender, and religion. Feminist theory and working-class studies also hint at what I call the dual system of gambling in the United States in their analysis of the dual system of welfare that exists in America.⁷ In using these diverse methodologies, I am, appropriately, taking a gamble.

In addition to considering anthropological, feminist, and working-class studies source material, this article relies on several types of primary sources. Autobiographies written by coalcrackers provide essential information about gambling and the spaces in which it took place. Patrick Canfield's *Growing Up with Bootleggers, Gamblers, and Pigeons* was instrumental in learning about the gambling culture of the coal region. The works of early twentieth-century middle-class reformers documented the variety of gambling activities in which individuals participated and analyzed the different people—men, women, boys, young, old, professional class, and working class—who enjoyed gaming. These reformers clearly worried about the economic, social, and moral implications of gambling. Sociologist Peter Roberts's *Anthracite Coal Communities* is representative of this type of social reform literature. Finally, folk music includes references to gambling activities like dogfights, but also uses gambling as a metaphor for other risky working-class pursuits such as union organization and strikes. George Korson's collection of mining music is the premier repository for these songs.

Before analyzing the history of gambling in the anthracite region, a definition of "gambling" is necessary. As used in this article, "gambling" encompasses betting and risk-taking. It includes using money or personal belongings to place bets with the hope that one's investment might produce financial, emotional, and/or social returns.⁸ Defined this way, gambling encompasses traditional gaming activities as well as risks associated with work and labor organizing.

Gambling was a major form of leisure in the coal region, and leisure was closely tied to the industrial order of which coal mining was a part. Like work, leisure diverged according to gender; in the most general terms, men and boys mined and women and girls worked at home and

in the factories. Leisure broke down divisions that kept workers of different ethnicities apart, and enabled them to see one another as partners tied together in a common struggle. The development of working-class camaraderie via leisure allowed for union organizing, a phenomenon that resulted in additional leisure opportunities by providing space (labor clubs) and time for varied pursuits.⁹ Many leisure activities depended on cooperation between participants, a characteristic that was similar to the shared work in which miners took part. Gambling also mirrored industrialization in that class divisions marked gaming activities especially at pigeon shoots. Economic and social differences affected when, where, and how people gambled. Nonetheless, residents of the coal region embraced the pleasures that their non-work hours provided them. Gambling was one of their many forms of leisure; in fact, most free-time activities were accompanied by wagering.

One key social difference that affected gaming in the anthracite coal region was ethnicity. The ethnic diversity of an area touched by several waves of immigrants over the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries impacted the wagering that took place there. First of all, the very identity of some ethnic groups was founded upon their attraction to gambling, for example, the Irish. John Edward Walsh, author of the nineteenth-century study *Sketches of Ireland Sixty Years Ago*, writes, "The intense passion of the Irish for gambling has often been observed."¹⁰ The clover, a key symbol of Irish identity, was, likewise, associated with gambling because of its connotation with luck. One needs only to think of the well-known and well-worn phrase, "the luck of the Irish." The Roman Catholicism to which many Irish adhered sanctioned the gambling in which they participated. American-born Pennsylvanians, including the Pennsylvania Germans, reinforced this understanding of Irish ethnic identity and its accompanying luck by appropriating the clover as a means to good fortune.¹¹

The association of an ethnic group with a particular economic activity also impacted gambling in the anthracite coal region. Specifically, the agricultural work undertaken by Pennsylvania Germans influenced their participation in pigeon shoots. The identification of these birds as pests was used to justify their destruction during pigeon shoots.¹² Pennsylvania Germans not only provided barn pigeons for shoots, but also raised and bred them, as they did other animals. Some of these pigeons were trained for shooting contests; others were raised as homing pigeons and were subject to gaming as participants tried to bet on the animal that completed the trip first.

Gambling by ethnic groups provided them with pastimes, literally opportunities to pass the time as they worked hard, tiring, and monotonous jobs. A shared gaming and sports activity, its rules, and unique language were understood by immigrants. They passed time in a new country, but harkened back to memories of previous times in distant places. Gambling, in a sense, brought them home—linguistically and culturally. Italian immigrants, for example, continued to participate in and wager on boxing, a sport they had enjoyed in Italy.¹³ Slavic residents enjoyed card games that they had played in Europe. Cards and other gambling devices like dice were easily transported, and, thus, they could be used when there was a break at work.¹⁴

There was a definite interplay between gambling and ethnicity. Gender differences also shaped gambling. Men and boys in the coal region participated in several different gambling activities. First of all, men and boys bet on blood sports. Specifically, they wagered on cockfights and dogfights. The bastion of coal-region masculinity, the saloon, functioned as the destination for many cockfighting matches. Early twentieth-century sociologist Peter Roberts noted the popularity of the saloon for the blood sport, but also reported, "In a town of Schuylkill County, a company of . . . men bought an old school-house for the expressed purpose of cock-fighting and, from November until April, hardly a week passes but a match or two takes place, where on an average about 200 persons assembled." Roberts noted that cockfighting generated tremendous excitement: "Around the pit young boys and old men gather and become roused to a pitch of excitement . . . completely carried away." Similarly, dogfighting also drew gamblers. The dogs that fought are even commemorated in song. The anthracite region ballad, "Lost Creek," written by Martin J. Mulhall, features

. . . a savage looking dog
That his owner wouldn't part with for a fifty dollar bill,
He could lick his weight in lions and would either die or kill
The dog that dared to face him, for he never would give up;
And the owner smoothed the ruffles on the darling little pup.¹⁵

A third type of blood sport that took place in the coal region was the pigeon shoot. These shooting matches produced the highest stakes, ranging from \$100 to \$200. They also drew hundreds of spectators.¹⁶ Good shots became hometown celebrities and remained popular even after moving out of the area. As the shoots often pitted two teams against each other,

gamblers wagered on which side would prevail in shooting the most pigeons. They also bet on individual shots. Gamblers not only wagered on the shots and bet on which team would win, but also actively sought to influence the outcome of the matches by flustering shooters with noise and physical intimidation. In the twentieth century, Big Bill Yeasted, a former professional football player for the Pottsville Maroons, employed such tactics. He bellowed, cursed, and used his massive physical presence to force shooters to miss their marks. As matches progressed, shooters expected to have onlookers breathing down their necks and “accidentally” bumping into them. The gamblers who attended the pigeon shoots had opportunities to wager on the matches and on other activities including, as writer and pigeon-shoot enthusiast Patrick Canfield alliteratively noted, “cards, craps, and . . . chicken fights.”¹⁷ Like other blood sports, men and boys were the primary players at the pigeon shoots. Boys learned to train the pigeons for “match shoots,” or shoots that involved pigeons that had been, as folklorist Simon Bronner described, “‘brushed,’ that is, trained to fly in particularly designed patterns unknown to the shooter.” Trainers also bred pigeons so that they displayed certain physical characteristics. One group of breeders, the Dutch Hill Gang of Schuylkill County, produced the “archangels,” a type of bird known for its large wings and fast speed.¹⁸ A trainer eventually became a trapper who partnered with a shooter to form a team that took on opponents. These shoots were private unlike the public, straight shoots. In straight shoots, like the now-defunct Hegins Pigeon Shoot, shooters targeted untrained pigeons.¹⁹

Although the saloon functioned as the locale where blood sports like chicken- and dogfights took place or where they, especially pigeon matches, were arranged, another destination offered gamblers chances to try their luck. Shooters, trappers, gamblers, drinkers, and spectators gathered at gun clubs to participate in a variety of activities. Gun clubs sold food and drink, were the settings for pigeon shoots, and allowed gamblers to wager on darts, craps, cards, pool, and chicken fights. Privately owned and plentiful in the region, the gun clubs drew a cross-section of coal-country residents. Well-to-do professionals as well as working-class laborers frequented the clubs. Businessmen and professionals patronized gun clubs on Thursday, the weekday when they traditionally took a half day. Middle- and upper-class gamblers had deeper pockets than working-class folk and they wagered more money. Better-off gamblers left gun clubs earlier in the evening than other players, who stayed long past midnight.²⁰

Games and devices normally associated with casino gambling also enticed men and boys. In the saloons, men gambled on card games. One of the most popular means of gambling, the slot machine, also was found in spaces frequented by male residents. Bars housed the one-armed bandits, but after a campaign to eradicate them from public houses, they moved, as Roberts reported, into "candy and barber shops, cigar and tobacco stores." At these establishments, "boys from ten to twenty years of age, when they have money, cluster around these and, infatuated with the whirl and click of the machine, they stand there until the last penny is spent, and then they curse the machine." Due to the influence that these machines had on the young, they were reviled by middle-class reformers.²¹ Some advocates, especially those concerned with child labor, argued that the numbing and mindless work of boys in the mines led to the leisure activities in which the lads participated. In fact, the spinning of the machines that the boys tended in the mines was similar to the revolving images inside the slot machines. In both the mines and tobacco shops, boys crowded around machines, whether industrial or gaming, and endured a choking atmosphere, whether from coal dust or from smoking tobacco. Owen R. Lovejoy, assistant secretary of the National Child Labor Committee, wrote that the children who worked in the mines "sit all day over a dusty coal chute, fixing the mind solely on the distinction between a piece of coal and a piece of rock or slate, and in the close company of a group of boys." Lovejoy drew no distinction between labor and leisure; his statement about child labor, "the menace to morals is not less than that to health," matched his attitude toward gambling, which he lumped in with "the evils of profanity, obscenity, . . . and various forms of intemperance."²²

Over the course of the twentieth century, the public crusade to ban slot machines actually enlarged the scope of their reach. State police contacted saloon proprietors prior to raids. Bar owners made sure to hide the machines in locked cubbyholes under stairs and in out-of-the-way places. Once they arrived, state police verified that they saw no gambling devices. Supplied with drink and payoffs, the authorities left. In order to save face and flex their muscles, police arranged with the saloon owners to have the slot machines out in the open twice a year. The police then slapped the tavern keepers with small fines, but the slot machines stayed. Eventually, the arrangement between the state police and the bar owners ended in the second half of the twentieth century when the Internal Revenue Service got involved and charged slots owners with tax evasion.²³ In addition to slot machines, men and boys spent their money on craps.²⁴

Activities designed to identify sure shots also drew men, young and old. The pigeon shoots are one example. Darts was another game upon which men and boys wagered.²⁵ Quoits, too, was very popular. In comparison to shooting matches, the stakes for quoits were low, with a maximum of \$25. The sports, however, prized steady hands and sharp eyes. Men and boys with known skills drew large crowds and larger pots.

While women also gambled, the contests in which they participated differed markedly from their male counterparts. Just as they frequented their local parishes' religious societies, women of the coal region supported the churches' charitable gambling ventures. The majority of amusements in which coal-region women participated were affiliated with the Catholic Church. Parishes sponsored summer picnics and winter balls.²⁶ Specifically, women took part in lotteries. Sociologist Roberts decried these activities, stating, "This cannot inspire joyful veneration, and such means of getting money cannot be to the glory of God and the spiritual edification of the contributors." Roberts's criticism fits well into early twentieth-century Protestant America's disdain for wagering, but misses the mark. One can easily imagine the "joyful veneration" inspired by having one's numbers picked, and can picture devout women marching up the main aisle of the church to light candles that gratefully acknowledged "the glory of God" via the dancing flames and plumes of smoke that ascended skyward.

A more somber form of gambling in which women took part resulted from the tragic deaths of husbands. Instead of paying out death benefits to widows, fraternal organizations sometimes opted to hold raffles. This arrangement entailed the bereaved selling chances for an article of value that once belonged to the deceased. Guns, watches, and livestock were most often the prizes. Desperate for money, the widow peddled the chances and the winning number was drawn at a local saloon. Although economically necessary, parting with an object special to the recently dead likely compounded the grief and sorrow under which the woman struggled.²⁷

Whether undertaken by men or women, gambling flourished in the coal region for a number of reasons. First of all, the Catholic Church sanctioned it. In fact, the church provided opportunities for residents to engage in gambling. As we have seen, the church organized lotteries. Sociologist Roberts stated, "Catholics resort also to unworthy means to secure money for church purposes . . . and appeal to the gambling instinct and the craving for amusement in order to keep the institution alive."²⁸ The church permitted gambling because church doctrine did not consider it sinful unless it was excessive, jeopardized a family's welfare, was fraudulent, and was not

freely undertaken. Catholicism, instead, defined gambling, as T. Slater of the *Catholic Encyclopedia*’s entry on “Gambling,” wrote, “The staking of money or other things of value on the issue of a game of chance.” In his entry on “Betting,” Slater went as far as to say “it follows that the avocation of the professional bookmaker need not be morally wrong. It is quite possible to keep the moral law and at the same time so to arrange one’s bets with different people that, though in all probability there will be some loss, still there will be gain on the whole.”²⁹

The Church argued by definition that some business activities constituted a type of gambling. Slater wrote,

Time bargains, difference transactions, options, and other speculative dealings on the exchanges, which are so common nowadays, add to the malice of gambling special evils of their own. They lead to the disturbance of the natural prices of commodities and securities, do grave injury to producers and consumers of those commodities, and are frequently attended by such unlawful methods of influencing prices as the dissemination of false reports, cornering, and the fierce contests of “bulls” and “bears,” i.e. of the dealers who wish respectively to raise or lower prices.³⁰

Slater’s commentary documents behavior in which mine companies and industrial corporations participated regularly and which the entry identifies as evil. The use of animal imagery and the fact that Slater described the fluctuations of the stock market as “the fierce contests of ‘bulls’ and ‘bears’” bring to mind the real blood sports popular in coal country.

The Church, instead, regarded as harmless the minor acts of gambling, like raffles and lotteries, that residents engaged in and that the church sponsored. Likewise, the Church endorsed deeds, like strikes, that constituted major risk. The appearance of clergymen, like Monsignor John Curran, in the photographs (see fig.1) of the major coal strikes of the early twentieth century and the church’s support of other chancy measures, such as bootleg mining during the Great Depression, show that the Catholic Church was consistently betting on the side of the miner. During the 1930s, coal-area priests rationalized bootleg mining by explicitly noting the risk involved. Father Weaver of Mount Carmel stated, “They risk their lives every minute they work in these holes, and they deserve everyone’s respect and admiration. They have mine.” Weaver recognized that the bootleg miners were gambling with their very lives. His reasoning matched the Catholic Church’s attitude toward gambling, that it entailed “the staking of . . . other things of value

on the issue of a game of chance.”³¹ Bootleggers chanced life and limb entering a small contraption, often a steel barrel rigged to an engine and hoist, which deposited them in the earth with little more than their buddies’ help at the openings of the bootleg holes. Safety precautions were less common in bootleg mines, and accidents, like cave-ins, occurred. The longer hours that miners worked in bootleg operations meant that miners often labored while fatigued, thus increasing their risk of injury or even death.³²

Catholics and their church were more open to gambling, whether they were waging on a raffle or risking life and limb in a bootleg hole, due to Catholicism’s belief in an immanent God, a divine being who is present in the world, interacts with human beings, and affects human events. Catholic devotion to patron saints is one example of this otherworldly association. Catholics believed that pleas to St. Anthony might help to uncover a lost object, appeals to St. Jude, the patron saint of lost causes, might reverse the misfortune of disease, and faith in the healing intercession of St. Blaise might keep the believer from falling victim to diseases of the throat. The banks of altar candles that lined area churches, likewise, were opportunities for special requests or for gratitude for a wish fulfilled. This notion of divine intervention and its relationship to fatalism correspond to notions of luck associated with gambling.³³



FIGURE 1: Father John Curran and UMW president John L. Lewis seated before a picture of Theodore Roosevelt. (Standing) Thomas Kennerly. Curran was instrumental in coal disputes in the twentieth century, especially the 1902 Coal Strike. 1930. Courtesy of the Luzerne County Historical Society.

Despite prohibitions against gambling, Protestant churches in the coal region sponsored gambling events, too. Religiously affiliated organizations that catered to the poor, likewise, participated in beneficent, charitable gambling. This situation differed markedly from American Protestantism's condemnation of gambling on the basis of biblical principle. Citing Scripture, Protestants regarded gambling as akin to idleness and idol worship. Instead of applying themselves and working hard, gamblers turned away from God's providence toward the god of fortune. Protestant America's attitude toward gambling supported capitalism. The strength of American Protestantism as a majority religion influenced the disdain for gambling displayed by many in the nation. Conversely, the minority status of Protestantism in the anthracite coal region explains why wagering was a means of supporting churches and providing for the poor. The membership of the small Protestant churches was often too small to meet the financial obligations they incurred. Their desire to help the poor also was impeded by small numbers and small financial returns. As a result, the churches turned to gambling as well as other leisure activities such as concerts, dinners, and socials to support themselves and the needy.³⁴

A second reason gambling flourished in the coal region was because it provided participants with a sense of control. Boys and girls, women and men learned early and frequently that they controlled very little in their lives. Children and wives lost fathers and husbands to mine accidents and to black lung. A consistent wage was not guaranteed. The tunnels in which men and boys worked gave way, flooded, and exploded. Gambling, on the other hand, offered a feeling of control. With the bet properly wagered and some skill, the gambler had the potential to beat the system and control fate.³⁵

A related explanation why residents gambled was because their lives and work epitomized risk-taking and chance. Men and boys risked their lives on a daily basis. The risks that mining presented—the movement of the earth, the kick of a mule, the steady, slow creep of dangerous gases—were multiple and ever-present. Of course, mine workers developed skills and procedures to deal with these dicey circumstances.³⁶ Women faced hazards, too—childbearing and the complications that arose after not taking sufficient time to recuperate from their labors debilitated many women. Whether they were factory laborers or housewives, women worked and the care of large families fell largely upon their shoulders. Many women did not or could not stay away from their economic and domestic obligations.³⁷ In order to ease the risk of overwork, women developed strong networks of female relatives and neighbors on whom they could depend. Some risks proved more difficult to deal with—the ups and downs of the mining

business, the layoffs, the slowdowns, and the greed of big business. In order to combat these facts, miners and their families became die-hard (sometimes literally) union folk. They recognized that the strikes in which they participated were a gamble; a folksong from the coal region composed by Edward Craig encourages, "It's the Union Man That Holds the Winning Hand." The chorus states,

"I told you," said John Mitchell, "there soon would come a day
When a scale of Pauper wages would have to pass away.
I told those operators, too, who ruled the great coal fields
That the miners were in a union, and would hold the winning hand."

Craig's song compares the battle between the mine bosses and the United Mine Workers Association to a game of cards. He continues his use of the gambling metaphor by telling his listeners what they might win if the union sticks together:

If you only pull together, boys, like men, and not like scabs
You soon can eat and drink best, and wear good clothes, not rags;
You can tell all those millionaires that they cannot wrong you.

The songwriter understood the close connection between masculinity and gambling when he told "boys" to "pull together . . . like men." The same measures, like developing skills, relying on their senses, and joining together in good times and bad, that they took to beat the odds that characterized their work, they applied to gambling. They got good at cards, they became good shots, and they trained their dogs, cocks, and pigeons well.

So what does the story of gambling in the coal region teach us about gambling in the United States? First of all, gambling in the coal region exemplifies "dual gambling." This term relates to the idea that the attitude toward gambling differs depending on the class of the gambler and the activity in which he or she is participating. The Catholic Church's acknowledgment that business speculation is a form of gambling and a type that easily leads one to commit wrong helps to get at dual gambling. The term indicates that participating in games of chance and risk-taking by members of the working class has historically been subject to criticism by American society, in particular by some religious groups, and subject to oversight by the law, while economic risk-taking by entrepreneurs and investors has been applauded as embodying the American spirit. A major difference in these

two types of gambling is that in traditional gambling the gambler stakes his own money, while in investment the gambler plays with his or her money and, more often, with money belonging to someone else. Yet, working-class gambling and financial investment in the stock market share similar qualities.³⁸ Gambling studies have shown that numbers games in small neighborhoods were investment strategies for bettors—playing the numbers invested economically and socially in the neighborhood and in the space in which the betting took place.³⁹ In the coal region, gambling supported various businesses and organizations. The neighborhood bar sold alcohol and food, served as a post office, and provided opportunities for gambling. Most gambling activities in a local saloon ensured the bar owner with a cut of the proceeds. The proprietor usually received 10 percent of the wagers in dice and card games. Chicken fights scored the owner a fee for every cock entered. Likewise, privately owned gun clubs raked in money from gambling by hosting dice games, poker games, and cockfights, and supplying the facilities for pigeon matches. The pigeons killed during matches were collected by the owners of these establishments and made into soups and hors d'oeuvres, which were then sold to customers. Winning and losing by gamblers also led to the sale of more food and alcohol—whether to drown one's sorrows or celebrate one's victories. And more alcohol consumed meant more money wagered.⁴⁰ Gambling revenues helped to sustain local churches, too. Parish budgets depended on the raffles and other games of chance that the churches sponsored. Like other forms of investment, gambling paid off.

The history of gambling in the coal region also speaks to the myth of luck that pervades the American class and economic system. The realization of the American dream is supposedly made possible through hard work, merit, and a little bit of luck. When individuals fail to make that dream a reality, the conclusion is that those who failed did not work hard enough and had bad luck. The very real limitations placed on people by class, ethnicity, race, creed, and gender play little role in this myth.⁴¹

Related to this myth of luck are the folk ideas of unlimited good versus limited good. According to folklorist Alan Dundes and anthropologist George Foster, "unlimited good" is a folk idea that prevails in American culture while "limited good" is a folk idea that exists in what Foster calls "peasant cultures."⁴² Unlimited good means that good fortune is available to all members of a society—the success of one person does not negate or preclude someone else's achievement. Limited good, on the other hand, signifies that fortune is finite—there is only so much good to go around.

The history of gambling in the anthracite region provides a corrective to unlimited good being the dominant folk idea in America. The area was a meeting ground for native-born Americans and immigrants from across Europe. Many of the immigrants had journeyed from peasant economies, and the mine companies, by and large, kept these men and boys peasants despite the industrial economy. Foster points out that the folk idea of limited good not only relates to the economic order but affects “social institutions, personal behavior, values, and personality.”⁴³

The treating that took place at the saloons where gambling also occurred is just one example of how an individual worked to equalize his position within the region so as not to be thought better than the next man. The religious devotion displayed by women when they hit is another example of what Foster calls “ritual extravagance.”⁴⁴ The desire to minimize praise and achievement even extended to folk medical practices in the anthracite coal region. Mothers fretted over the excessive admiration of their newborn babies—they worried about the envy and jealousy that resulted. These negative feelings, they believed, ultimately put the child in danger of physical illness, the evil eye. Similarly, the laborer who worked too hard was an object of derision, not celebration. The folk song, “The Celebrated Workingman,” pokes fun at barroom blowhards who pride themselves on hard work. Foster says that the hard worker “emerges as a positive fool, a clod who not knowing the score labors blindly against hopeless conditions.” Most significantly, Foster notes, “The gambler, instead, is more properly laudable, worthy of emulation and adulation. . . . He looks for the places in which good fortune is most apt to strike, and tries to be there.” As this article shows, the gambling and the men and women who participated in it were welcome members of the coal-region community.⁴⁵ In coal country, gambling and the luck on which it depended were practical in spite of mythmaking. Miners and their wives hoped, even prayed, to win big via their gambling, but prized the social riches that gambling provided more than the prizes promised. In fact, their investment of time and sociability in gambling pursuits promised greater returns—help in time of need, sorrow, and grief—than the bets themselves. Similarly, coal-region residents gambled their money in the form of dues and their time in the form of strikes and union membership when they supported benefits insurance programs and union dues. Like all good gamblers, inhabitants of the coal region knew that sometimes you create your own luck.

Gambling in coal country also reflects the gendered division of gambling activities by women and men. Male gamblers tend to favor gambling that incorporate skill and luck. In the coal region, men and boys participated in card games, blood sports, and shooting pastimes. Even their attraction to slot machines reflected this idea of skilled play—men and boys sought to rig them in order to win jackpots. The stress placed on athletics in the United States and in the coal region translated into an emphasis on other skilled games and on the ability to wager on sporting victors. Mining itself was a skilled occupation—men and boys appreciated workers who were good at their jobs. They, likewise, respected accomplished gamblers. Scholars of gambling argue that this behavior upholds prized masculine traits, including competition, independence, and being sure shots (and, thus, good economic and sexual providers).⁴⁶ Adopting a Freudian approach, folklorist Alan Dundes interprets cockfights and the gambling that accompanies the contests as unconscious forms of male sexual release.⁴⁷ Dundes elaborates on this idea by seeing the cock as a phallic symbol; similarly, folklorist Simon Bronner interpreted the guns used in shooting matches as representative of the penis.⁴⁸ Furthermore, gambling activities preferred by men—preparing cocks for battle, pulling one-armed bandits, and blowing on and rolling dice—have been likened to masturbation. The physically confining nature of mine work, the emphasis that miners put on being a man or a boy, and the constant criticism by mine bosses and middle-class reformers of the rough masculinity that coal-region men exhibited support the contention that gambling was sexually as well as physically, psychologically, and socially fulfilling.

Women, on the other hand, favor games of chance. Gambling by women relied on socializing, religious devotion, and acceptance of one's fate; lotteries and raffles were their preferred pursuits. Women's participation in masculine forms of gambling depended on their intimate relationships with men and their ability to enter and work in masculine spaces. When the spaces that separated the genders blurred, women enjoyed masculine forms of gambling. Women who ran bars with male relatives, especially husbands, enjoyed masculine betting. Ellie McClure of Locust Gap took great pleasure in and profited from dice, cockfights, and pigeon shoots, activities that either took place in or were organized within the bar she owned with her husband, Billie.⁴⁹ In the anthracite coal region, domestic and feminine spaces like the home served also as

masculine destinations of fellowship and refreshment. The front rooms of homes sometimes served as bars and, thus, also provided the space to wager. Due to laws that prohibited saloons to be open on Sunday, neighborhood men pooled their money and bought alcohol in bulk, usually a keg of beer, which they consumed at one of the buyers' homes. The close connection between alcohol consumption and gambling in public houses likely continued in people's private homes. Therefore, women and boy and girl children had the chance to witness and participate in more masculine forms of gambling.⁵⁰

Gambling in the anthracite region clearly demonstrates the relationship between gaming activities and the culture in which they take place. In coal country, ethnic identity impacted gambling. Men and women gambled as part of their leisure time and this play affirmed gendered expectations. Religious tradition as well as the economic and social circumstances of local churches also promoted wagering. The risk-taking that characterized life in the mines and the surrounding communities lent itself to gambling. Even now, gambling remains a mainstay in the anthracite coal region and the deindustrialization that depressed the area has shaped the gaming that takes place. Depopulation has led to the shrinking as well as the aging of the population. As a result, the Catholic parishes that struggle to stay open depend greatly on the money made through a variety of gambling forms including raffles, bingo, and lotteries. Old women and old men get up early to ride local buses to one of the many local casinos. The mines as a space of masculine bonding have gone away, but other manly destinations remain the meeting places for men and boys and the locales where wagering flourishes. One site of masculine camaraderie is the local volunteer fire company. The fire engines housed there and ridden to local blazes are funded in great part by games of chance. Gun clubs and hunting camps also endure. The demise of public pigeon shoots, like the one in Hegins, Pennsylvania, due to animal rights activism means that blood sports take place at gun clubs or at hunting camps, a fact bemoaned by organizations like the Humane Society of America.⁵¹ Since the nineteenth century, gambling has flourished in the anthracite coal region because it offered residents leisure activities that affirmed their identities, it was religiously sanctioned, and it represented a sense of control in their otherwise risky and chance-filled lives.

NOTES

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CREATING A LIVING
HISTORIOGRAPHY: TRACING THE
OUTLINES OF PHILADELPHIA'S
ANTEBELLUM AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN
AND MAPPING MEMORY ONTO THE BODY

Valerie M. Joyce

*I*n 1865 Sarah Gudger left her master's farm in North Carolina to begin life as a free black woman. "Aunt Sarah," as she was called locally, had seen fifty years of slavery and watched from her porch in Asheville as America transformed into an emancipated nation. In 1937, at what she claimed was the age of 121, Gudger recounted her slave experience for the Federal Writer's Project of the Works Progress Administration (WPA).¹ Her riveting narrative, in which the WPA transcriber attempts to capture her southern dialect in detailed phonetic spellings, is replete with descriptions of nightmarish conditions, cruel masters, violent lashings, and watching her mother be taken away. Gudger assures the interviewer, "Law, chile, nobuddy knows how mean da'kies wah treated."²

Sarah Gudger's WPA slave narrative, available online from the Library of Congress, is a part of the most concrete and widely accessible evidence attesting to black women's lives in America before Emancipation. However, while the WPA records and other

published slave narratives contribute a crucial part of American history, their compelling content and distinctively broken dialect can also serve to limit the modern American characterization of black women before 1863. In addition to these first-person accounts, persistent “Mammy” and “pickaninny” stereotypes that dominate popular culture’s engagement with the period reinforce the notion that before the end of the Civil War black women in America were one monolithic enslaved, uneducated, and passive group.

The reality is that black women, from colonial times through the early nineteenth century, found ways to make bold choices within the confines of their situations at a time when much of society questioned whether they had the intelligence to even understand their circumstances. There are few biographies of these courageous women because, in contrast to their male counterparts, their actions were often personal and their audience was usually private. Their choices were subtle, but their impact was substantial and sustained. For each Harriet Tubman or Sojourner Truth, there are hundreds of other women who actively pursued social change and remain undocumented because evidence of their contributions and sometimes even their existence has been lost, ignored, or, worse, purposefully erased. Scholars and artists must begin to piece together the scraps of evidence that remain in order to revitalize their stories and fully recognize the foundational ways in which black women have shaped the American experience from its very beginning.

The scholar and the artist often face similar dilemmas when conjuring the voices of the past—particularly when those voices have been deliberately erased or marginalized in traditional historical narratives. And yet both scholars and artists may also share a common goal: to allow those oppressed voices to speak again and to invite contemporary audiences—whether readers or spectators—to imagine the experiences and understand the lives of a long-silenced community. Recapturing the lives of seventeenth-, eighteenth-, and early nineteenth-century African American women presents a particular challenge for both the historian and the theater artist. The traces that remain of their stories are often buried deep in records left by others. Scattered remnants and hints endure, tantalizing the modern researcher. John Ernest has described the process of reinscribing lost tales of African American history over familiar narratives as a kind of “performative historiography.”³

The medium of performance offers a unique means to access, embody, and recuperate these lost histories. My current project, titled *I Will Speak for Myself: Emancipating African American Women’s Lives from Before Slavery and Beyond*, works to unveil, document, and vivify long-forgotten early American

black women by blending historical research with performance in what I call a “living historiography.” This project began as a series of monologues titled *(Dis)Embodied Voices*, which were partially inspired by early American scholar Odoi Johnson’s continued examination of issues of evidentiary absence when pursuing historical reconstruction. Johnson explored a similar lacuna of evidence when reconstructing Colonial Williamsburg’s playhouse from nothing more than several postholes left in the dirt over two centuries ago. Johnson contends that the disappearance of a performance “is never utterly without a trace,” and that beginning from the smallest pieces of (im)material evidence, “a history does indeed seem acutely possible, acutely necessary.”⁴ Johnson’s challenge, to recover what is now absent, inspired the research and crafting of the *(Dis)Embodied Voices* characters as a way to envision the performance of a woman’s life based on the impressions left from her presence in history.⁵

If Johnson’s scholarship served as one impetus for *(Dis)Embodied Voices*, Philadelphia actress Kimberly S. Fairbanks served as the other. A gifted practitioner and generous collaborator, Fairbanks jumped at the opportunity to embody these forgotten women and became a partner in crafting each woman’s story through a rigorous investment in the facts of each woman’s life and a commitment to truthful depiction in every word, gesture, and moment. One of the most exciting aspects of developing *(Dis)Embodied Voices*’ living historiography was the rewarding interpersonal nature of blending scholarship and practice, both in rehearsal and on stage.

In developing the performance script, I focused on evidence of real women and, whenever possible, used their own words. On the whole, the project breathes life into slave narratives, personal letters, memoirs, diary entries, court records, poems, public addresses, and newspaper advertisements in order to share these women’s experiences, struggles, and journeys in their own voices. From a pool of many interesting possibilities, we narrowed the field to nine women of various ages who lived between 1649 and 1865 in states from Vermont to North Carolina. Their experiences ranged from tragic to passionate: for example, one monologue recreates the experiences of a seventeenth-century African American indentured servant pilloried for her “affair” with her white master.⁶ Another depicts the heartbreaking decision of a free woman of color to return to slavery in order to be with her slave husband.⁷ Each character is a case study of potentials and probabilities of what a black woman’s life might have been like in early America. Perhaps more important, this living historiography offers a roadmap for contemporary scholars to recover and reintegrate those lives and histories into our dominant narratives.

This article explores the research and development of *(Dis)Embodied Voices* through a close examination of the creation of three characters who lived in Philadelphia before 1863, “Abigail,” “Matilda,” and “Mrs. Mary E. Webb.” Developing these characters required meticulous research into social, educational, and economic circumstances in order to create a text that would both reflect the women’s historical situation and provide a compelling dramatic arc. Although the research and writing process for each monologue was relatively similar, each case posed its own unique issues of evidence, construction, and performance choices. One of the exciting challenges for this type of research, when the remaining absence is greater than the presence, is defining credible evidence that testifies to these women’s existence. Crafting tangible and credible identities for these insightful and, at times, incited women required striking a delicate balance between scholarly rigor and artistic license as I traced the outlines that remain to attest to the fuller lives of these women. Through my research for these monologues, what began as distant and disembodied voices became present and distinctive characters who allow modern audiences to directly engage with the social, cultural, religious, sexual, and gender constructs of early America.



FIGURE 1. Kimberly Fairbanks as “Abigail” in *(Dis)Embodied Voices*. Photograph by Valerie Joyce.

Abigail

“Abigail” is a former slave who has recently been manumitted by her French owner after they fled the island of St. Domingue (Haiti) during slave uprisings in 1791. Her monologue offers a glimpse into life after slavery during the years of the early republic, as Abigail’s creation was inspired by an entry that appeared on the list of the dead after the yellow fever epidemic that killed almost 5,000 Philadelphians in 1793.⁸ Abigail’s name was noteworthy because, unlike the thousands of other names from some of Philadelphia’s notable families, hers was followed by the simple description “a negress.”

In the overall development of this living historiography, Abigail represents the extreme example of creating a presence from absence, because there is literally no other information about her beyond the fact that she existed and the color of her skin. Without biographical evidence or a timeline for Abigail, the balance of artistic interpretation shifted to imagination. Therefore, supplementary evidence and careful crafting of a vocal and physical presence were required in order to accurately envision and fully embody Abigail’s post-slavery experience. Three carefully recorded aspects of late eighteenth-century life in Philadelphia proved useful in imagining Abigail’s daily existence; these were Absalom Jones and Richard Allen’s published defense of the Free African Society, the empirical records of the yellow fever’s impact on the city, and Dr. Benjamin Rush’s meticulously detailed accounts of the fever’s course through the human body.⁹ Each of these sources established the historical milieu, creating a plausible context for Abigail and in turn informing the character’s given circumstances, the monologue’s textual content, and physical and vocal style choices for the actress.

By 1793 Abigail’s new home of Philadelphia had become the metropolis of North America. The city was both a thriving port controlling nearly one-quarter of the export trade of the United States and a complex urban center, housing both state and federal governments. Teeming with a cosmopolitan population of some 51,000, Philadelphia was home to Quakers and numerous other religious practitioners, statesmen, and recently transplanted members of French nobility who, like Abigail’s former master, had fled the revolt in St. Domingue.¹⁰ Also, as a result of Pennsylvania’s 1780 law mandating gradual emancipation, Philadelphia was the city with the largest free black population, 6,537 people, in the United States.¹¹ Incorporating these demographics grounded Abigail’s circumstances and her status in culture of the city.¹²

Many of Philadelphia's free blacks belonged to Reverend Richard Allen and Absalom Jones's Free African Society, a groundbreaking mutual aid founded in 1787 that fostered identity, leadership, and unity in the black community.¹³ In the monologue, Abigail is a dedicated member of Allen and Jones's Free African Society, playing an important part in their volunteer effort during the Yellow Fever Epidemic of 1793.

When yellow fever seized the city in late summer of 1793, panic mounted and the citizens fled in droves. Estimates hold that 40 percent of the whites and 14 percent of all blacks left the city.¹⁴ One of the most important contexts of Abigail's monologue is the medical misinformation that prevailed during this period and kept many blacks in the city. Dr. Benjamin Rush, one of Philadelphia's leading physicians and citizens, promoted the notion that blacks were immune to the disease that caused the yellow fever and, relying on this assurance, many blacks stayed. Mayor Matthew Clarkson pleaded with Allen and Jones to mobilize the members of the Free African Society to nurse the sick and care for the dying and dead of the abandoned city.¹⁵

Richard Allen was a man who preached morality and discipline, noting for his followers that each was "a reflection of our entire race." In every situation, he counseled Philadelphia's free blacks to "let your conduct manifest your gratitude toward the compassionate masters who have set you free. And let no rancor or ill-will lodge in your breasts for any bad treatment you may have received from any. If you do, you transgress against God, who will not hold you guiltless."¹⁶ With his urging, hundreds of his followers volunteered during the hellish days after several weeks of yellow fever. Given this supplementary evidence, it seemed very possible that Abigail had also volunteered out of a sense of Christian charity to willingly do her part in aiding her fellow man suffering from yellow fever.

In the monologue, Abigail serves as one of Dr. Benjamin Rush's nurses. Dr. Rush and other physicians of the period kept thorough records of the stages and effects of yellow fever, which informed the content and context of Abigail's exchange with her patients. The first stage that Abigail would encounter usually lasted one to five days. According to firsthand accounts, during this phase the infected patient suffered chills, hot skin, pain in the head, back, and limbs, flushed face, inflamed eye, retching to vomit without producing anything, and constipation. The whites of the patient's eyes became tinged with yellow and there was constant puking of everything taken into the stomach, with much straining, accompanied with a hoarse hollow noise. It became clear that the patients were going to die from the

virus when they began to vomit something that looked like coffee grounds. This “black vomit” was sometimes accompanied by bleeding from the nose, tonsils, and gums. Finally, between the fifth and eighth days, the body would appear yellowish-purple and putrescent. The patient would be overcome with hiccups, agitations, deep and distressed sighing, comatose delirium, and finally death.¹⁷

Throughout the epidemic, Dr. Rush trained his nurses to give relief to hundreds of infected patients by bleeding therapy and by purging them through the ingestion of mercurial chloride as a laxative.¹⁸ In the play, Abigail has learned to bleed and purge patients and despite the nauseating results and her own personal anxieties about her children’s welfare, she feels compelled by her devotion to Reverend Allen’s teachings and by the responsibility of her new profession to persevere with her patient until dawn. The negotiation of these conflicting emotional forces creates Abigail’s central conflict.¹⁹

In developing all of the characters, two issues of dramatic construction became abundantly clear: first, each woman must be engaged in a central conflict that drives the action of her monologue and, second, each woman must exist in a moment of heightened tension, whether faced with a crisis or a catharsis, or on a crusade. Finding the specific moment where the stakes are highest for the character—that is also grounded in the historical context and fraught with conflict—became the most critical decision, along with how to make this moment immediate for the audience.

In order to set Abigail in a moment of heightened tension, the monologue occurs just before dawn in a private home, as her patient, the wealthy Mr. Taylor, struggles through a comatose delirium in the final stages of the infection. Abigail has been up for several nights and can leave her patient at dawn to go home to her children.

As the lights rise, an obviously exhausted Abigail struggles with the sheets, as if wrestling her delirious patient into submission in the bed.

Now I don’t want to have to get somebody to tie you down. Saw one poor soul break his neck last week jumping out a window when he was raging with one of these frightful fits. . . . Why are you fighting me? I know you are scared. I am too. But Dr. Rush is not here. He left *me* in charge. It’s just you and me tonight. The calomel will take its effects soon and I’m staying until the morning to see you through . . . one way or the other. (*The patient begins to relax*) I will be here with you Mr. Taylor . . . even though I been on duty for six nights now. No rest

for the weary, right? Well, I am certainly weary, but the Fever won't give up so I won't give up either.

The private bedroom setting in an empty city and the comatose condition of her patient allows Abigail a bit of freedom and familiarity. As each monologue developed beyond basic plot and dialogue, it became increasingly clear that language, dialect, and physical choices were the defining features that would not only distinguish each character, but would also allow the audience to fully engage with their personal experiences.

Actress Kimberly Fairbanks, playing Abigail, capitalized on this freedom physically as well, allowing her shoulders to slump as a result of the exhaustion and rhythmically rocking to comfort herself and her patient. As the character developed during rehearsals, Abigail's given circumstances also affected other performance choices; for example, in order to reflect her position as a recently freed slave from St. Domingue, Fairbanks employed a West Indian accent that gave texture and warmth to her lilting dialogue.

Much of Abigail's text is drawn from firsthand accounts of Philadelphia during the epidemic, including her vivid descriptions of trudging from Water Street through the empty and filthy streets to the chemists Goldthwait and Baldwin at the corner of Second and Walnut streets to get Dr. Rush's cure.²⁰ She describes choking on the haze of fires burning the contents of houses and clothes of the dead and hearing the jangle of bells as the graveyard cart dragged by fatigued horses draws down the street.²¹ Abigail's position as a member of the Free African Society also guided decisions for the text.

Abigail's stylized language is drawn from and inspired by *A Narrative of the Proceedings of the Black People*, Absalom Jones and Richard Allen's public rebuttal of publisher Mathew Carey's post-fever criticisms of the members of the Free African Society.²² Carey, a respected publisher and leading citizen of Philadelphia, had accused the blacks of exploiting the sick and abusing their desperate state during the epidemic. One specific story from Jones and Allen's refutation, offered in order to highlight the substantial and thankless work the Free African members did, became Abigail's personal experience. As she gazes out onto the empty street, she recalls:

Last week I watched as a man pushed a woman who was not yet dead out of his house. She staggered drunkenly and fell on her face in the gutter and was not able to turn herself. Thomas, the black man driving the cart, climbed down to prevent the woman from

suffocating. In taking her up he found her perfectly sober, but so far gone with the fever that she was not able to help herself. I still shudder to think of the look on her hard-hearted husband's face as he shut the door and left her to die in such a situation. She would be in Potter's Field now if Thomas had not gathered her up and taken her to Bush Hill where Dr. Rush bled her four times. She is recovering now. I hope she doesn't return to that husband of hers when she is fully well.²³

Here, Jones and Allen's specific experience of the epidemic helps to create Abigail's response to her environment, enabling the audience to envision the hardships the volunteers faced each day and the inhumanity that the epidemic provoked in its wake.

One of Carey's specific accusations was that the black nurses manipulated their patients by charging high rates for service. Jones and Allen refuted this accusation in their *Narrative*, asserting that many white patients preferred black nurses because of their alleged immunity.²⁴ At times bidding was erupted between ailing families over nursing care. Abigail shares a wry laugh with her comatose patient at the fervor that ensued:

You stole me right out from Mr. Cooper. Didn't you, sir? Said you'd pay me double the \$2 he offered me for house care. And me not askin' for anything more than a warm meal one night next winter. If I took all you was offering me I could be rich myself. But we follow the benevolent lead that Dr. Rush provides. He is seeing over 100 patients a day now. 57 died yesterday, 88 the day before that.²⁵

The venerable Dr. Rush was a part of the larger medical community that generated much of the misleading information. Rush was later accused of disseminating the false reports in an effort to keep the blacks in the city for assistance.²⁶

Whether the misinformation was purposeful or not, those free blacks who were urged to stay and help, as Abigail did, walked straight into peril because they believed in the cause and in their immunity. She explains to Taylor:

Reverend Allen says that nursing takes experience and the finer feelings of humanity. I don't have much of the first. Before last month I had never nursed more than my own babies' colds. But the Lord gives me strength. He removes all fear and sets my heart to be as useful as I can be.²⁷

It is this strong sense of duty, instigated by Reverend Allen's call, Dr. Rush's confidence in her, and her patient's dire circumstances, that raises the stakes of the central conflict for this character, for Abigail's mind is constantly drawn to her children, who are also ill.

Abigail's conflict becomes evident as she repeatedly confides in her patient, "You know, I have my own babies to worry about, too. When I left, my William had a chill and his head ached. But Dr. Rush assures me that we do not succumb to the disease and he will be fine." She is assuring herself more than the comatose Mr. Taylor and, as her spirits flag, her exhaustion seems noticeably like the first stages of the fever. As the monologue ends and the lights dim, the audience is left to imagine the inevitable fate that awaits Abigail, as Mathew Carey's published list of the dead is projected and her name appears as the first entry.

Left with only a name and the description "a negress" to testify to the entirety of a human life, I relied upon supplementary evidence and a good deal of artistic invention to create a credible and tangible presence for Abigail. Abigail's central conflict and her ultimate demise are conveyed through a text reconstructed from evidence of the period and serve as a counterpoint view of Dr. Benjamin Rush's life-altering work during the epidemic—work that both killed African Americans and enhanced their status as caregivers. Fairbanks's richly layered performance of the character illustrates the ways in which scholars and performers might craft living historiographies that establish and explore the complexities of life as a former slave in the capital city of the early republic. Utilizing Jones and Allen's text to create Abigail's detailed observations offers the audience both a specific understanding of the dire circumstances and a broader sense of the ways in which each Free African Society volunteer played a part in the city's recovery. Most important, Abigail's monologue works to remember, recuperate, and honor all of the Free African Society volunteers who risked their lives and whose generous sacrifice remains widely unacknowledged.

Matilda

The lights rise as "Matilda" strides confidently into the room and takes in her audience with a sweeping glance. It is 1828 and Matilda is a rabble-rousing educator, a grassroots agitator, and an early agent of nonviolent social change.

Her strong, clear voice rings out as she demands, “How can you, as mothers of daughters, not fight for the right to educate these young women?”

Developing the text for Matilda’s monologue was, in contrast to the other Philadelphia women, relatively simple because her words are drawn directly from an 1827 letter to the editors of the short-lived *Freedom’s Journal*.²⁸ The letter establishes the author as black, a woman, and educated, so setting became the most important choice in creating this character—somewhere a free black woman would have had access to the *Freedom’s Journal* and a passion for education activism. By 1827 Philadelphia’s black population was 97 percent free and, while the *Freedom’s Journal* was published in New York, editors Samuel E. Cornish and John Brown Russwurm had strong ties to Delaware and Philadelphia, making it certainly possible that Matilda could have read the newspaper while living in the city.²⁹

Matilda’s letter also coincided with a burgeoning revolution in Philadelphia that grounded her personal text in a specific cultural moment. As slave narratives and histories of the antebellum period note, formal education for African Americans in public and private settings developed slowly and unevenly before 1862 and, by the late 1820s, the black public, free and enslaved, varied widely in levels of literacy.³⁰ Historian Elizabeth McHenry, in her work *Forgotten Readers*, notes a cultural resistance to the black literacy movement, as education “posed a significant threat to . . . maintaining black subordination generally.”³¹ It is noteworthy, then, that nine African American literary societies cropped up in Philadelphia between 1828 and 1841.³² The all-male Reading Room Society, one of the first African American literary societies in the nation, was established in 1828 and the Female Literary Society followed shortly in 1831.

Matilda and the women of the Female Literary Society are some of the “Forgotten Readers” that McHenry asserts are from “a virtually unknown chapter in African American social and literary history” and they are the historical absence that this monologue works to address. One of the great challenges McHenry faced in learning about these female readers is that, in addition to the complete absence of records documenting their conversations or meeting agendas, the very act of reading is ephemeral and almost impossible to recapture. Some of the evidence that remains to guide the way to reconstructing these women’s reading activities is in their subsequent writings. McHenry notes that readers eventually used their literacy skills in writing “as a means of asserting identity, recording information, and communicating . . . their demands for full citizenship and equal participation in

the life of the republic.”³³ When Matilda’s letter to the *Freedom’s Journal* was aligned with the evidence of the Forgotten Readers, she became extracted from her anonymous beginnings and firmly rooted in Philadelphia, embodied as an education activist.

As her letter precedes the Female Literary Society’s investiture by several years, I envisioned Matilda as one of the women who were fully engaged at the beginning of the black literacy movement, calling for change long before the change actually occurred. In turn, I heard Matilda’s voice as more strident in person than it was in print, carried and lifted by the passion she feels for her subject. In order to dramatize Matilda’s text from the more passive modes of letter-writing or reading, I changed her imagined audience and raised the stakes of the moment at hand. Her letter’s intended audience was the educated black male editors of the *Freedom’s Journal* and the black readership of the first black paper, though the wider readership may have also consisted of white men and women. Given her status in this larger society, Matilda begins her provocative letter by respectfully asking for permission to speak: “Will you allow a female to offer a few remarks upon a subject that you must allow to be all important? I don’t know that in any of your papers, you have said sufficient upon the education of females.”³⁴ This deferential opening request allows readers to decide if they have any interest in her argument as she gently approaches her theme.

In performance, Matilda’s immediate setting became a gathering of a few dozen free black women in Philadelphia in 1828 who would be aware of, and probably have social or familial connections to, the recently formed men’s Reading Room Society. This more semiprivate setting gives Matilda a higher status than in the larger society of the print world and allows for a less conciliatory tone as she instigates her own educational revolution for her black female peers and particularly for their daughters.

Through this conceit, Matilda becomes “present” for the theater audience and, although almost none of the text is changed from her original letter, she is now able to pursue actively the higher stakes of her immediate goal: exhorting her audience of mothers to fight for the right to educate their daughters. These women’s indifference, inability, or lack of vision provides Matilda’s obstacle and she challenges them:

Do you, like so many others, think that our mathematical knowledge should be limited to “fathoming the dish-kettle,” and do you believe like so many generations before that we have acquired enough of

history if we know that our grandfather's father lived and died? 'Tis true the time has been when to darn a stocking and cook a pudding well was considered the end aim of a woman's being. But those were days of ignorance. . . . There are difficulties, and great difficulties in the way of our advancement; but that should only stir us to greater efforts.

Her fervent, elevated language marks Matilda as educated and her logical argument firmly rooted in emotion underscores her specifically female audience. Actress Kimberly Fairbanks employed a standard mid-Atlantic dialect for Matilda and employed a dynamic and energetically open physicality to both enthrall and spur her audience on to action.

Matilda recognizes literacy's potential for black women as a means of resisting subjugation. Her words are a window into thoughts many free black women must have had who were able to see education as crucially important in the fight for civil rights. She continues by asserting:

We possess not the advantages with those of our sex whose skins are not coloured like our own, but we can improve what little we have, and make our one talent produce two-fold. The influence that we have over the male sex demands, that our minds should be instructed and improved with the principles of education and religion, in order that this influence should be properly directed. Ignorant ourselves, how can we be expected to form the minds of our youth, and conduct them in the paths of knowledge?

Through the organized efforts of literary societies in Philadelphia, African Americans developed circulating libraries and engaged the free black public in self-education through surveys and academic lectures.³⁵ McHenry notes that this "invaluable method of acquiring knowledge" eventually turned reading rooms into a communal places to "experiment with rhetorical strategies" and engage in "a forum for debate on issues of racial and American identity."³⁶ Throughout the 1830s societies including the Library Company of Colored Persons (1833), the Minerva Literary Association (1834), and the Philadelphia Association for Moral and Mental Improvement of the People of Color (1835) took root and thrived in the city.³⁷

For their part, Matilda and the women of the Female Literary Society flourished in their first year. According to scholar Erica Armstrong Dunbar,

in 1831 the group had “approximately twenty members who congregated every Tuesday night for the purpose of ‘mental improvement.’”³⁸ Their actions were so remarkable that, in celebration of the society’s anniversary, abolitionist and newspaper editor William Lloyd Garrison touted the group in *The Liberator*, asserting that “if the traducers of the Negro race could be acquainted with the moral worth, just refinement, and large intelligence of this association, their mouths would be hereafter dumb.”³⁹ These women were a part of a growing group of free, literate black women who, like Matilda in 1827, were now able to utilize writing in order to communicate, argue, assert, and demand recognition and full participation in their society.⁴⁰

With only the few lines in the *Freedom’s Journal* remaining to attest to Matilda’s personal convictions, this character represents the countless other African American women who valued education throughout the early nineteenth century. In order to galvanize the formation of the Female Literary Society, women like Matilda must have stood before groups of black women in this same manner; arguing for equality and their children’s future. She urges her fellow free women to imagine beyond the very basics of education in order to prepare for the day when they might be acknowledged as “capable, respected citizens.”⁴¹

We have minds that are capable and deserving of education and culture. And for ourselves and our daughters we must rise up and face the difficulties in the way of our advancement and fight for the future.

This letter endures as a piece of evidence testifying to educated and activist women’s existence throughout the country. The text is employed in the monologue to expand the understanding of free black women’s lives in the early nineteenth century and to imagine how the earliest advocates for black women’s education and equality rallied the women around them to join the reading revolution in order to prepare for the larger revolution yet to come.

Mrs. Mary E. Webb

During the increasingly tense years leading up to the Civil War, Mrs. Mary E. Webb of Philadelphia worked as an orator and actress, quickly becoming known as the “Black Siddons,” likened to the famous British actress of the period Sarah Siddons, for her skilled readings and performances. Mrs. Webb’s

talents inspired abolitionist Harriet Beecher Stowe to create a one-woman adaptation of Stowe's antislavery novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin* "expressly" for her. This piece, *The Christian Slave*, was a clever marriage of patronage and promotional innovation that earned Stowe and Webb international recognition.⁴² After touring parts of America and performing for royalty in Europe from 1855 to 1856, Mrs. Webb died abruptly of consumption in 1859 at the age of thirty-one, leaving no diary or memoir to concretely establish the facts of her life.⁴³ In fact, her own thoughts or words are not recorded anywhere. All that remains to illuminate her story is a brief "Biographical Sketch" written by her husband, a few personal letters from Mrs. Stowe, and newspaper articles and reviews that followed her brief but controversial career.⁴⁴

Mr. Frank Webb, a Philadelphia novelist, developed his wife's "Biographical Sketch" as a part of the promotional events around *The Christian Slave*'s performance tour, offering details of Mrs. Webb's early life as the child of a runaway slave who was born free in Massachusetts in 1827.⁴⁵ The somewhat-biased personal nature of the piece caused speculation about her parentage and education, but most biographical accounts agree that she was of Spanish and African descent and that she was educated in a convent in Cuba. The facts of her biography solidify in 1845 when she married Frank Webb who, according to one biographer, "lived on the fringes of Philadelphia's black elite."⁴⁶ For a decade, the Webbs worked in "clothing-related trades" and participated in the city's black intellectual culture. Their financial circumstances changed for the worse in 1854 and Mrs. Webb sought employment by putting "her marked elocutionary powers to some practical account."⁴⁷ She had only modest success as a performer until the Webbs attracted the attention of Philadelphia abolitionist newspapers when Mr. Webb was denied passage on a ship for Rio de Janeiro because of his dark skin.⁴⁸ Mrs. Webb soon became a darling of the antislavery movement and her career gained momentum as she performed for audiences including Lucretia Mott, Thomas Wentworth Higginson, and Mrs. Stowe.

Although her biography is interesting to this point, a crucial detail is absent: Mrs. Webb's appearance. As noted above, newspapers consistently billed Mrs. Webb as the "Black Siddons," creating specific expectations for audiences and critics when they attended her performances. The descriptor "Black" is an important distinction because, by all accounts, Mrs. Webb was so light-skinned as to be mistaken for an "Anglo Saxon" who was "a deep brunette."⁴⁹ Even *Frederick Douglass' Paper* noted the title was "ill-advised" and this controversy persisted as a steadfast component of every newspaper blurb and advertisement for her performance career.⁵⁰ Eventually this controversy

became a public scandal in Boston that was followed in the newspapers along the East Coast. This incident shaped the content and context of the “Mrs. Mary E. Webb” monologue because it provides the setting and illuminates the character’s central conflict.⁵¹

Striking the balance between scholarly rigor and artistic license was in some ways most fluid in “Mrs. Mary E. Webb” because Stowe’s script is available and newspaper accounts provide enough pieces of the puzzle to allow the evidence to essentially speak for itself, creating dramatic dialogue that strove to be faithful to Mrs. Webb’s experience. In contrast to the other Philadelphia monologues, the complex setting of this piece layers both a public and private space, allowing the audience to observe the contrast in this character’s public and private behavior. During the monologue, Mrs. Webb is first in her private hotel room, where she is preparing to perform *The Christian Slave* for the first time, and then she later appears in a public performance space on tour in Europe.

As the lights rise, Mrs. Webb is distracted from her rehearsal by her frustration and rage after a confrontation with hypocritical Boston abolitionists who have invited her to perform as a part of an antislavery lecture series. The irony at the center of her frustration is that, although newspaper critics repeatedly state that her skin tone is too light to earn her the moniker “Black Siddons,” she has just been barred from taking meals at the hotel’s public table or praying with the Boston abolitionists because her skin is too dark. The central conflict for Mrs. Webb, now that she has experienced the abolitionists’ hypocrisy and fully understands her status in this society, is whether or not she can continue accepting Stowe’s patronage, knowing that she is simply part of a contrivance to sell novels.

In “Mrs. Mary E. Webb,” Mr. Frank Webb is theoretically present in the hotel room and provides Mrs. Webb with a sounding board for her conundrum. Due to their financial straits, she needs the money that Stowe and a professional career provide. Additionally, she very naturally craves the recognition for her artistic talents in a vehicle that is sure to bring acclaim. However, she also realizes that her mother risked her life so that she might be free and, ultimately, to work with hypocrites and be controlled by a white patron is too high a price for fame and security. In the privacy of her room, she bellows at her husband that these abolitionists are as *Frederick Douglass’ Paper* claims, “praying, preaching, psalm singing, black-hearted scoundrels, whitened sepulchers, fair without, but polluted within.”⁵² The private hotel setting exposes Mrs. Webb in a personal moment as she is caught in a frenzy of emotion and reason as she agonizes over whether or not to quit.

Mrs. Webb's monologue offers an example of the ways in which characters can be discerned through language and by artistic choices, as Fairbanks employed different dialects and physical presences throughout the piece to create three distinctive characters: Mrs. Webb and two of Stowe's characters from *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Miss Ophelia and Topsy.

In writing Mrs. Webb's text, I used elevated language and a refined mid-Atlantic dialect to interweave her status as free born and financially secure in Massachusetts and to reflect her convent education in Cuba, as well as her oratory training. While she rages to her husband in her hotel room, her distinguished vocabulary and strident cadence combine to evoke her strongly independent-minded character voice, establishing the intimate nature of their familial relationship. As she struggles with her inner conflict, Mrs. Webb begins to read from Stowe's script that has been written "expressly" for her. She suddenly realizes that she has been bestowed this honor not for her acting skills, but because her appearance and her education allow her to believably play both black and white characters. The very same frustrating contradiction she faces each day, being neither "white" enough nor "black" enough, has brought her at once a rare opportunity and a painful choice. The interspersed passages of text from Stowe's rarely produced *The Christian Slave* highlight this paradox as she rehearses an exchange between the genteel southern mistress Miss Ophelia and the pickaninny character Topsy.

Ophelia: Now, Topsy, I'm going to show you just how my bed is to be made. I am very particular about my bed. You must learn exactly how to do it.

Topsy: Yes, ma'am.

Oph: Now, Topsy, look here; this is the hem of the sheet—this is the right side of the sheet, and this is the wrong; will you remember?

Top: Yes, ma'am.

[*Adroitly snatching a pair of gloves and a ribbon, and hiding them in her sleeve.*]

Oph: Now, Topsy, let's see you do this.

[*As TOPSY goes to make the bed, the ribbon hangs out of her sleeve.*]

Oph: [*Seizing it.*] What's this? You naughty, wicked child—you've been stealing this!

Top: Laws! How could it a got in my sleeve?

Oph.: Topsy, you naughty girl, don't you tell me a lie; you stole that ribbon.

Top.: Missis, I declar for 't, I did n't; never seed it till dis yer blessed minnit!

Oph.: Topsy, don't you know it's wicked to tell lies?

Top.: I never tells no lies; it's jist the truth I've been a tellin' now, and an't nothin' else.⁵³

Stowe's script dictates a drawl for white southern slave owner Miss Ophelia and a "pickaninny" dialect for slave girl Topsy. As Mrs. Webb performs in private, her anger and scorn seethe under the surface of derisive parodies of the required dialects. For this moment, Fairbanks also crafted nuances between Mrs. Webb's erect posture and Topsy's wayward childlike shuffling to emphasize their drastic differences in status, education, and physical well-being. Later in the monologue, when Mrs. Webb formally recites the same lines from Stowe's *The Christian Slave* as part of an eventual public performance, Fairbanks drew striking distinctions between the angry Mrs. Webb and the character Miss Ophelia by softening her voice to a sugary drawl as she coaxes Topsy into a confession. In this setting, Fairbanks made Mrs. Webb's tone refined and gracious even as she performs the "pickaninny" Topsy. The contrasting nature of public and private behavior within the "Mrs. Mary E. Webb" monologue effectively conveys the dichotomy between stereotype and reality by literally and figuratively forcing them into conversation with one another.

This dichotomy becomes heartrending at the climax as the formerly enraged, articulate, and opinionated Mrs. Webb performs a sadly palatable Topsy in public for the benefit of her patron, Stowe. The opportunity for audiences to read this reserved performance with the contextual knowledge of "The Black Siddons" conflict with the abolitionists vividly illustrates the ultimate goal of the entire project: to illuminate each woman's deeply layered experience in order to subvert the stereotypical expectations of the pre-twentieth-century black woman.

Conclusion

With only the traces that remain of Abigail, Matilda, and Mrs. Mary E. Webb's work in the world, the *(Dis)Embodied Voices* monologues and the larger *I Will Speak for Myself* project illustrate the ways in which historical research and performance might collaborate in a living historiography that strives to shape

a fuller, more nuanced understanding of the complexities of life after slavery, the fight for women's education and equality, and the abolitionist movement. By examining the facts and imagining the possibilities inherent in each of their social, cultural, religious, educational, regional, and economic realities, we can see an outline of the human who inhabited this space and time begin to emerge. By our tracing this outline and mapping these experiences onto the performer's body, these women's voices began to ring out loud and clear.

Together, the scholar and artist can actively engage history, filling these women with breath and life for the benefit of today's audiences. *I Will Speak for Myself* works to answer Johnson's call "to evoke the ghost of performance itself that has survived so incompletely, and to reassert that monumental and monumentally absent presence back into the civic . . . and cultural landscape" of America by shaping a fuller, more nuanced understanding of the complexities of these lives so that it is possible, as Johnson notes, that the "residue and traces may yet be made legible, may yet be read for the materiality that was, and the memory they yet contain."⁵⁴

The challenge remains, however, to examine more closely the circumstances and the evidence of African American women's lives, from colonial times through the early nineteenth century, and to inscribe new histories that embrace private and personal behavior that is just as substantial as the traditionally masculine narratives of transformative social change. Their stories are compelling because they are both universal and specific, and heroic in their inherent complexity that compels women to make difficult and frequently dangerous choices. We must continue to document and remember their stories by piecing together the scraps—the passing references in other works, the hastily scribbled day books, the meager evidence in newspapers—that can revitalize these women's stories in order to fully recognize the foundational ways in which black women have shaped the American experience from its very beginning.

NOTES

1. "Sarah Gudger," *Born in Slavery: Slave Narratives from the Federal Writers' Project, 1936–1938*, available from the Library of Congress at <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/snhtml/snhome.html>. Without the benefit of birth records, many slaves were unable to document the year of their birth and in turn their exact age. The WPA interviewer begins Sarah Gudger's Slave Narrative by acknowledging that this interview was an "investigation of the almost incredible claim . . . that she was born September 15, 1816." The first three pages of the document provide corroborating statements from family and community members that validate Aunt Sarah's "claim" of being 121.

2. Ibid.
3. John Ernest, *Liberation Historiography: African American Writers and the Challenge of History 1794–1861* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 9. “Attending to their fragmented stories can enable us to recover the essentially performative nature of the black historians’ collective project . . . a performative historiographical mode that supports the shifting performance of individual and collective African American identity necessitated by the containment of blackness within white nationalist history.”
4. Odai Johnson, “Working Up from Postholes: (Im)Material Witness, Evidence, and Narrativity in the Colonial American Theatre,” *Theatre Survey* 46, no. 2 (November 2005): 183–98.
5. *(Dis)Embodied Voices* was first produced in May 2012 at the Society of Early Americanists’ “Triumph in My Song” conference, which focused on the experiences of Africans in the Atlantic world before the Civil War.
6. “William Watts’s and Mary’s Case, 1649,” *Lower Norfolk County Order Book 1646–1650*, “William Watts and Mary (Mr Cornelius Lloyds negro Woman) are ordered each of them to doe penance by standing in a white sheete with a white Rodd in theire hands in the Chappell of Elizabeth River in the face of the Congregation on the next Sabbath day that the minister shall make penince service and the said Watts to pay the court charges,” quoted in *The Old Dominion in the Seventeenth Century: A Documentary History of Virginia, 1606–1689*, ed. Warren M. Billings (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1975), 161.
7. “Petition of Lucinda to Legislature of the Commonwealth of Virginia, Nov. 27, 1813, King George County, Library of Virginia, Richmond,” in *Beyond Bondage: Free Women of Color in the Americas*, ed. David Barry Gaspar and Darlene Clark Hine (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2004), 106–17.
8. Philip Lapsansky, “‘Abigail, a Negress’: The Role and the Legacy of African Americans in the Yellow Fever Epidemic,” in *A Melancholy Scene of Devastation: The Public Response to the 1793 Philadelphia Yellow Fever Epidemic*, ed. J. Worth Estes and Billy G. Smith (Philadelphia: College of Physicians and the Library Company of Philadelphia, 1997), 68, and Mathew Carey, *A Short Account of the Malignant Fever, Lately Prevalent in Philadelphia: With a Statement of the Proceedings That Took Place on the Subject, in Different Parts of the United States*, 4th ed. (Philadelphia, 1793).
9. Absalom Jones and Richard Allen, *A Narrative of the Proceedings of the Black People During the Late Awful Calamity in Philadelphia, in the Year 1793* (Philadelphia, 1794). See also Lapsansky, “Abigail.”
10. Lapsansky, “Abigail,” 68, and Samuel A. Gum, “Philadelphia under Siege: The Yellow Fever of 1793,” *The Pennsylvania Center for the Book: Yellow Fever Epidemic of 1793* (2010), 2, available at <http://pabook.libraries.psu.edu/palitmap/YellowFever.html>. For an analysis of how Jones and Allen defended Philadelphia blacks for accepting payments for nursing on the grounds that Carey, like other elite Philadelphians, encouraged citizens both to pursue wealth and engage in useful community service, see Thomas E. Will, “Liberalism, Republicanism, and Philadelphia’s Black Elite in the Early Republic: The Social Thought of Absalom Jones and Richard Allen,” *Pennsylvania History* 69, no. 4 (Autumn 2002): 558–76.
11. “Gradual Emancipation,” *Oxford African American Studies Center Online*, accessible at <http://www.oxfordaasc.com/article/opr/t0004/e0254?hi=1&highlight=1&from=quick&pos=1>. See also Clayton Cramer, *Black Demographic Data* (New York: Greenwood, 1997).
12. Ira Berlin, *Generations of Captivity: A History of African-American Slaves* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 276–78.

13. Jones and Allen, *Narrative*. See also Samuel Otter, *Philadelphia Stories: America's Literature of Race and Freedom* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 30–31, and Lapsansky, “Abigail,” 69–70.
14. Lapsansky, “Abigail,” 64.
15. Jones and Allen, *Narrative*, 8.
16. *Ibid.*, 27.
17. William Currie, *A Description of the Malignant, Infectious Fever Prevailing at Present in Philadelphia: With an Account of the Means to Prevent Infection, and the Remedies and Method of Treatment, Which Have Been Found Most Successful* (Philadelphia: T. Dobson, 1793), available at <http://pds.lib.harvard.edu/pds/view/7468293?n=13&imageSize=1200&jp2Res=.5&printThumbnails=no>.
18. Gum, “Philadelphia under Siege,” 4.
19. In drama, conflicts are primarily resolved through interaction with another character who acts as the obstacle between the central character and their objective. As a one-woman piece, *(Dis)Embodied Voices* creates the other characters/obstacles through dialogue that reaches out to, interacts with, or responds to the central conflict.
20. William Cobbett, *Selections from Porcupine's Gazette* (London: Cobbett and Morgan, 1801), 7:233.
21. John Edgar Wideman's short story “Fever” in *Fever: Twelve Stories* (New York: Penguin, 1990) provides an evocative take on the actual experience of the street scenes during the epidemic.
22. Jones and Allen, *Narrative*.
23. *Ibid.*, 19.
24. *Ibid.*, 14–15.
25. *Ibid.*; Carey, *A Short Account*.
26. Otter, *Philadelphia Stories*, 3–57.
27. Jones and Allen, *Narrative*, 4, 12.
28. The “Letter to the Editors” was printed under the heading “An Anonymous Letter,” but is also signed, “MATILDA.” *New York Freedom's Journal*, August 10, 1827.
29. “Freedom's Journal,” informational note from Accessible Archives online database, <http://www.accessible-archives.com/collections/african-american-newspapers/freedoms-journal/#ixzz2EWcRq6yQ>.
30. Cora Lee Upshur-Ransome, *A Comparison of the African-American Presence in an Earlier and Later American History Textbook* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2000), 18.
31. Elizabeth McHenry, *Forgotten Readers: Recovering the Lost History of African American Literary Societies* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002), 24.
32. Erica Armstrong Dunbar, “Writing for True Womanhood: African American Women's Writings and the Anti-Slavery Struggle,” in *Women's Rights and Transatlantic Antislavery in the Era of Emancipation*, ed. Kathryn Kish Sklar and James Brewer Stewart (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007), 302.
33. McHenry, *Forgotten Readers*, 24, 23.
34. *Freedom's Journal*, August 10, 1827.
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36. McHenry, *Forgotten Readers*, 23–24.

37. Dunbar, "Writing for True Womanhood," 301.
38. Ibid.
39. William Lloyd Garrison, "Address to the Female Literary Association of Philadelphia, on their First Anniversary, By a Member," *The Liberator*, October 13, 1832, 163.
40. McHenry, *Forgotten Readers*, 23.
41. Ibid.
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48. "Disgraceful Conduct," *Frederick Douglass' Paper*, October 5, 1855.
49. "The Black Siddons," *Provincial Freeman*, May 12, 1855.
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53. Harriet Beecher Stowe, *The Christian Slave, A Drama Founded on a Portion of Uncle Tom's Cabin, Dramatized by Harriet Beecher Stowe, Expressly for the Readings of Mrs. Mary E. Webb* (1855). Entire script accessible at <http://utc.iath.virginia.edu/uncletom/xianslav/xshp.html>.
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BEING PROMETHEUS IN 1943: BRINGING PENICILLIN TO THE WORKING MAN

Anthony Julius Scibilia

In 1943 the United States was engulfed in World War II, which had forced the American people to make sacrifices. The limited availability of gasoline and certain foods became commonplace nuisances, but by reserving all manufactured penicillin to care for injured soldiers the American people put their own health and safety at risk. Penicillin, which later became known as the “Wonder Drug,” had the ability to cure many life-threatening infections for which there was no other therapeutic option. The ability to manufacture penicillin on a major scale was hindered by the belief that the drug could only be grown in a completely sterile environment at academic hospitals. On November 10, 1943, Julius A. Vogel, a plant physician at the Jones and Laughlin Steel Plant in Aliquippa, Pennsylvania, discovered a method for creating usable penicillin in his kitchen. What became known as “kitchen” penicillin would change an entire nation’s view about this medication and help to treat infection in the United States as well as across the globe.

In the fall of 1928, penicillin was accidentally discovered in London by Dr. Alexander Fleming.¹ An airborne mold found

its way into his basement laboratory at St. Mary's Hospital and landed on one of Fleming's purest staphylococci cultures. Only when he was about to discard the culture did he realize the staphylococci had died around the invading mold.² Fleming discovered that the fungus that killed his staphylococci was penicillium mold, thus he called the substance responsible for the effect "penicillin."³

After many tests Fleming discovered that this new mold also had the ability to prevent the growth of streptococci and pneumococci, two organisms that caused many infectious fatalities. Unfortunately after the discovery, the greatest challenge that faced researchers in penicillin was the inability to make the material in large quantities. By 1938 the threat of a second world war halted research on all antibacterial agents in England.⁴

Howard Florey, an Oxford University professor of pathology, contacted Fleming and had some of the original strain of penicillium transferred from St. Mary's Hospital to his pathology laboratory.⁵ In February 1940 Florey treated a London police officer who was dying of blood poisoning from a shaving cut. Florey injected penicillin into the man's bloodstream and by the fifth day the man, who should have died four days before, seemed on the road to recovery. Unfortunately, Florey had exhausted his penicillin supply before curing the man's progressive infection and the police officer ultimately died.⁶

Florey traveled to the United States in July 1941 to explore interest in meeting the needs of larger-scale production of penicillin.⁷ His effort resulted in the formation of the Committee on Medical Research in the summer of 1942. One of its main purposes was streamlining the production, synthesis, and clinical investigation of penicillin. Despite all this organizational progress, the production of penicillin remained minuscule. All available supplies were reserved for the war effort, creating a desperate need for the "Wonder Drug" domestically.⁸

The War Production Board realized the importance of penicillin and decided to focus on its large-scale production in 1943.⁹ On October 8, 1943, George Robinson and James Wallace, working in the Singer Laboratory at Allegheny General Hospital in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, reported a new method of growing penicillium.¹⁰ This consisted of placing gauze saturated with penicillium mold in an agar-filled petri dish and allowing it to grow for four to five days. Their method of treatment focused on caring for infections on top of the skin, such as cuts or abrasions, where a gauze pad could be directly applied. Robinson and Wallace's innovation became a turning point

in overcoming domestic production restrictions, but even though medical research discovered a way to produce penicillin, the amount that was being created was still very small and reserved for war casualties.¹¹

Robinson and Wallace's method was Dr. Julius Vogel's foundation for the experiments he did to create "kitchen" penicillin in his home. Vogel located the platinum loop-holder that he obtained in medical school, contacted his friend Dr. Robinson on October 11, 1943, and asked for a sample of his penicillium.¹² He received the sample the next day and by the evening of October 13 Vogel was already creating penicillin in his kitchen.

Over the next several months, the Vogel family became completely involved in making penicillin for use in Beaver County steel mills. Dr. Vogel's wife, Eunice, even agreed to do the agar production and petri-dish sterilization. Jules trained her to culture the penicillium as well, and soon Eunice was the penicillin assistant at the Vogel home on Davidson Street in Aliquippa.¹³

Julius Vogel had been born on November 23, 1901, in the Grant Avenue/Millvale section of Pittsburgh. He was the ninth of eleven children of German immigrants Kaspar and Adelinde Pfaff Vogel, who ran a large slaughterhouse and butcher store in that neighborhood. After attending his Catholic parish school for eight years, he graduated from Millvale High School in 1919.¹⁴ Julius was a stern man who had survived a life-threatening infection in his right knee as a child. That infection could have probably been treated successfully with penicillin, but at the turn of the century no penicillin existed. Vogel was bedridden as a child for several months as the infection, osteomyelitis, ate away at the bone on his right knee. As a result, Vogel was left with a right leg that was several inches shorter than his left and had a frozen knee joint. He had to walk by throwing out the leg from the hip and would appear to sway up and down because of the difference in leg length. Throughout his life, he remained very sensitive to his deformity and talked of childhood taunts in school of "peg-leg."¹⁵ Vogel's reports of using penicillin would focus on the healing powers of the drug for superficial infections—much like the one that had started the infectious process that had crippled him as a child. His research notes would also comment on the fact that the treatment prevented a disabling result. His work stressed the avoidance of the kind of disability he had struggled with for his whole life.¹⁶

Julius Vogel graduated from the University of Pittsburgh in June 1923 with a degree in bacteriology. He continued his education at the University of Pittsburgh Medical School and became initiated into the honor medical society,

Phi Beta Pi, before receiving his medical doctorate in 1927.¹⁷ After completing his internship at St. Francis Hospital in Pittsburgh, Vogel started a private general medical practice at 353 Franklin Avenue in Aliquippa late in 1928.¹⁸

In 1905 the Jones and Laughlin Steel Corporation (J&L Steel) built a newer and larger plant near the town of Woodlawn (later Aliquippa) in Beaver County close to the Aliquippa Rail Stop. This site on the Ohio River became the location of the J&L Aliquippa Works.¹⁹ The J&L Corporation, which began by producing iron, switched to steel in 1886; the transition from iron to steel led to an increase in factory-related accidents with the introduction of the required new equipment.²⁰

Before 1909, steel companies would contract with private medical practitioners in communities near the mills. Typically, the method of payment would be through the steelworker's personal pay. In 1909 this system changed when U.S. Steel decided to contract with physicians and nurses in steel towns to become employees under the supervision of a company-hired chief surgeon. Soon, every steel mill had guidelines to properly equip medical staff and supply dispensaries to treat work-related accidents.²¹ In the 1930s steel corporations searched for physicians who chose to specialize in the new field of industrial medicine. Julius Vogel was one of the first such doctors hired by Jones and Laughlin Steel Corporation's Aliquippa Works.²²

Working conditions for the individuals employed in steel mills were hazardous. This fact had been brought to the attention of the Pennsylvania state legislature as early as 1905. However, only after 1908, when the Pennsylvania state legislature began raising concerns about worker health, did steel mills start to install safety devices. Still, only a tiny decrease in the overall number of work-related accidents occurred.²³

As the physician at the Aliquippa steel mill, Julius Vogel could easily test his homemade penicillin on those of the plant's 10,000 workers who suffered accidents on the job.²⁴ The majority of the twenty-nine workers he treated during the first two weeks experienced marked improvement with the gauze treatment; three cases resulted in "astonishing recoveries." The treatment was done applying 4cm by 4cm gauze pads that were previously growing penicillium in sterile petri dishes. The mold was grown on the surface and at the point that the mold had matured and produced active penicillin; it was placed on top of the superficial infection and then the gauze was held in place with a light, air-permeable gauze wrap. The gauze and all equipment were obtained from Aliquippa's Woodlawn Pharmacy, owned by Dr. Vogel's brother-in-law.²⁵

One of those three “astonishing recovery” cases was a sixteen-year-old boy who suffered a cut and deep infection on his left middle finger. Typical treatment would have been admitting the boy to the hospital for surgical care. However, Vogel drained the finger of pus in his clinic and applied a dressing of his “kitchen” penicillin. The young man made a full recovery. In his report, Vogel stated: “Thus it required but eight days to clear up and heal this finger with a perfect result. Previously acceptable therapy would almost certainly have resulted in an impaired finger.”²⁶

Vogel provided penicillin-impregnated gauze for other steel mills throughout the Beaver Valley for the duration of World War II. On November 11, 1943, at a conference sponsored by the Department of Industrial Research at the University of Pittsburgh, he presented his research on “kitchen” penicillin and its results.²⁷ The department had been established in 1911 by financial giants Andrew W. and Richard B. Mellon to advance scientific research, university education, and commercial technological development.²⁸

While Julius Vogel’s penicillin had its advantages, it also had limitations. It could only be used after it had matured for four to twelve days. This required physicians to plan ahead so that they had a steady supply needed and that the supply was used up before it expired. The second and probably most significant problem was that in its crude state homemade penicillin could only be applied on the surface of the skin.²⁹ The only infections it could treat occurred from surface wounds. “Kitchen” penicillin could not treat infections like septicemia or pneumonia, although it was ideal for injuries typical in manufacturing.³⁰

Once news broke that Dr. Vogel had created penicillin in his kitchen, he started to receive letters from all over the United States as well as England and Mexico asking for his production method. The authors offered to pay him for sharing his method or giving interviews.³¹ But Vogel believed that it was unethical to accept any money for his discovery and would send cultures away for the price of a posted note. At one point *Look* magazine offered Julius A. Vogel a large sum of money if he agreed to let them interview him about creating “kitchen” penicillin.³² He turned this down because he believed that drawing attention to himself for his discovery was unprofessional.

After Julius Vogel’s success in creating usable penicillin in his kitchen he was beset by individuals in the medical field who criticized his work. Prior to “kitchen” penicillin the drug was mainly created in an academic lab and many doctors believed that creating penicillin outside a laboratory was dangerous. They insisted that the only way to create a pure sample was if trained

professionals used strict sterilization procedures. Other criticisms originated from companies with government contracts in mass-producing penicillin for the war. Bacteriologist Dr. Edgar B. Carter insisted that penicillin not grown in absolutely sanitary conditions would become impure and unsuitable for patient use.³³ Carter was employed by Abbott Laboratories, one of twenty-one companies hired by the War Production Board (WPB) to manufacture penicillin on a large scale.³⁴ Carter probably made this claim because Vogel's discovery would seriously affect the government's desire to pay these companies for something that could be easily produced in anyone's home.

So why was Julius A. Vogel's role in creating "kitchen" penicillin significant in addition to that of Robinson and Wallace's, whose method he used? After discovering that his penicillin was successful, Vogel visited George Robinson to show him his case reports. Robinson was intrigued and informed Vogel that it would take him six months to accumulate the amount of clinical data Vogel had obtained in two weeks. While Robinson and Wallace increased the volume of penicillin, they still shared the medical profession's general fear that creating penicillin anywhere outside a laboratory could result in contaminating the culture. Vogel's method proved that clinically useful and pure penicillin required only basic bacteriologic processes; it allowed for mass production on a large scale for the first time.

Dr. Vogel had only a rudimentary grasp of mass-production sterilization procedures. However, he discovered that such measures were unnecessary to grow penicillium mold on gauze in agar plates. Because penicillium is a mold, it is not necessary to create it in a sterile environment. Penicillin had not yet been well studied by the 1940s. While Fleming proved that penicillin had a low toxicity level it was still common procedure to give an individual a dose of the drug every three to four hours.³⁵ Not until 1943 did studies prove that penicillin could have negative side effects if used too often.³⁶ Another significant advantage of Vogel's method was the amount of money needed to create penicillin. Besides a small area, an oven, and a kitchen coffeepot to grow the mold, the product required little expense. Julius A Vogel was able to start producing significant quantities of penicillin for five dollars.³⁷

The introduction of "kitchen" penicillin changed the academic understanding of both the amount of money and skill needed to create what people called the "Wonder Drug." When physicians realized that a sterile environment was not difficult to create, they started to replicate Vogel's process and supply penicillin to nonmilitary patients. The amount of pharmaceutically produced penicillin increased after 1943 when the

United States was producing 21 billion units, virtually all reserved for the war effort. In 1944 that amount jumped to over 1 trillion units. By 1949, just five years after Vogel's discovery, the amount of penicillin produced in the United States was more than 133 trillion units. That is over 6,000 times more than the amount made in 1943.³⁸ Julius A. Vogel brought the hope of affordable and effective treatment of severe, debilitating infections to the common medical practitioner. His discovery of a simple method of producing penicillin prevented many infectious deaths and disfigurements through the United States and the world. His desire to make penicillin as cheap and available as possible is best expressed in the *Industrial Hygiene Association* in November of 1943:

Dare any man say that penicillin is scarce? Certainly money can't buy it, but each and everyone here present can easily produce his own penicillin in his own family kitchen at an initial outlay of less than five dollars, and at a production cost of less than five cents per petri dishful.³⁹

In March of 1959, Julius Vogel's daughter Marilyn had vision problems, and a large tumor, thought to be cancerous, was detected. Vogel took her to the Cleveland Clinic where he knew the anesthesiologist and the pathologist who would assist in her operation. The anesthesiologist allowed him to scrub for his daughter's surgery and sit with him in the operating room. It was quite a messy and tense affair. The pathologist said he would do immediate sections and call Julius Vogel at the hotel that evening. He called and Dr. Vogel and spoke to him: he seemed quite relieved and hung up the phone, saying to his wife, Eunice: "Thank God it [the tumor] is benign." Vogel then immediately fell over in a fatal cardiac arrest. Marilyn's husband, John Ronald Molter, whose father had died in the same manner, knew CPR and tried to resuscitate him. He failed and Julius Vogel was pronounced dead at the scene. Marilyn came out of the anesthesia to find out that her tumor was benign but her father had died.⁴⁰

NOTES

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3. Julius A. Vogel, "Growing Penicillin at Home," Aliquippa, November 10, 1943, 1. Copy of original paper used for his presentation at the Industrial Hygiene Foundation meeting, in the personal possession of Suzanne Vogel-Scibilia.
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8. Vogel, "Growing Penicillin at Home," 1.
9. David Wilson, *In Search of Penicillin* (New York: Random House, 1976), 202.
10. George H. Robinson and James E. Wallace, "An Inoculated Science," October 8, 1943, copy of paper given by Dr. Robinson to Dr. Julius A. Vogel Sr. at presentation, October 8, 1943, in the personal possession of Suzanne Vogel-Scibilia.
11. Vogel, "Growing Penicillin at Home," 2.
12. A device intended to spread bacteria or mold onto some type of growing media.
13. "Aliquippa Doctor 'Manufacturing' Penicillin on Investment of \$5," *Pittsburgh Sun-Telegraph*, November 10, 1943.
14. James Hoffman, Hoffman Family Tree_2010-06-09, <http://trees.ancestry.com/tree/18634560/person/688806742>.
15. Suzanne Vogel, interview with Anthony Julius Scibilia, March 9, April 5, and December 29, 2012 (hereafter Vogel interview).
16. Original patient research records of Julius A. Vogel Sr., October–November 1943, in the personal possession of Suzanne Vogel-Scibilia.
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23. Hazlett, and Hummel, *Industrial Medicine*, 124, 99–100.
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OBITUARY

CHARLES H. GLATFELTER (1924–2013)

Charles H. Glatfelter, former president of the Pennsylvania Historical Association (1986–1988), died on February 6, 2013. He was eighty-eight years old. A lifelong Pennsylvanian, born and raised in the village of Glen Rock in York County, Glatfelter was as rooted in York and Adams county history as it is humanly possible to be. He began haunting the York County archives while still a high school student and wrote his senior thesis on a York County topic at Gettysburg College. After graduating as valedictorian of the class of 1946, Glatfelter entered the Johns Hopkins University, where he studied with such notables as Sidney Painter and C. Vann Woodward. He completed his doctoral dissertation, on German Lutheran and Reformed clergy in the Pennsylvania field, under Charles Barker. At Johns Hopkins Glatfelter roomed with Henry J. Young, with whom he had become acquainted at the York County Historical Society where Young was the first director. With Henry Young he forged a lifelong friendship that

carried through Young's various roles as a public historian and ultimately as a professor of history at Dickinson College.

While still a doctoral candidate Glatfelter accepted an appointment in the Department of Economics at his alma mater. At Gettysburg Charlie pioneered instruction in economic history before accepting appointment in the History Department in 1954.

Charlie had joined the Pennsylvania Historical Association while still a teenager, barely a decade after the Association's founding. He remained a member in good standing for the next seven decades. Charlie's mentor at Gettysburg College, Robert Fortenbaugh, was one of the founders of the Association and later served as its president (1945–48). It meant much to Charlie that Gettysburg College sustained meaningful connections with the PHA through Professor Fortenbaugh and also through his colleague Robert L. Bloom (who served as PHA president from 1969 to 1972), and on into this writer's editorship of *Pennsylvania History* from 1987 to 1994. For his part Charlie was deeply invested in the affairs of the PHA, serving on its executive council for many years in various capacities. In a reflection piece for the seventy-fifth anniversary issue of this journal, John Frantz of the Pennsylvania State University called Charlie one of the "Alexander Hamiltons" of the PHA for his work putting the Association's finances on a more stable basis during his tenure as the Association's treasurer.



Charles H. Glatfelter, 1924–2013.

Despite a heavy teaching load and subsequent service as dean of Gettysburg College (1960–66) at a critical point in his career, Charlie pursued an active scholarly agenda. Although keenly interested in public affairs, with an extraordinary grasp of facts about American presidents and presidencies, Charlie's focus on York and Adams county histories was the gravamen of his scholarly enterprise.

During the 1960s and beyond Charlie produced a steady stream of publications, most of them focused on York and Adams county history. He knew this particular postage stamp of soil better than anyone ever has or likely ever will, his expertise and recall of facts running the gamut from land and estate records to social history, religious history, education, politics, and governance. Several of Glatfelter's articles appeared in this journal. One of his significant publications, on the Pennsylvania Germans, was published as part of the Pennsylvania Historical Association's History Studies series. It is still in print.

Beyond this corpus one must take account of two robust two-volume histories published in the 1980s, one the history Gettysburg College. The second was a substantially revised and expanded version of his doctoral dissertation at Hopkins. *Pastors and People: German Lutheran and Reformed Churches in the Pennsylvania Field* appeared in 1980 and 1981, respectively, through the auspices of the Pennsylvania German Society. In these volumes Glatfelter presented biographies of 250 Lutheran and Reformed pastors, histories of more than 500 congregations, and a narrative history from the origins of the two churches to their establishment as independent organizations.

Reviewers found *Pastors and People* remarkable for the deep research it represented and the sound arguments it made. Writing in *Pennsylvania History*, James Tanis of Bryn Mawr College called the work "monumental," adding that for students of Pennsylvania history it deserved place on a shelf "with a small group of essential studies." Tanis went further, noting that Glatfelter's books "will long remain a central reference volume for anyone interested in colonial life in the Middle Colonies and in eighteenth-century Protestantism, both in America and abroad." Based on the influence that *Pastors and People* has enjoyed in this field of study, Tanis's prediction proved prescient.

Charles Glatfelter made an impact at Gettysburg College on various fronts. He was a rigorous teacher, whose high standards and willingness to go the extra mile to help students reach their potential was legendary. Aside from his labors as dean, he served as chair of his department and chaired virtually

every important committee at the college. He was called on by a series of presidents for counsel and remained willing to meet classes or individual students to discuss local history well into his eighties. In 1987 he received the Lindback Foundation Award for Distinguished Teaching. He retired from his post as Franklin Professor in 1989.

Although he was a much-admired member of the Gettysburg College community, and deeply loyal to his alma mater, Charlie's passion for local history found its greatest and most satisfying outlet in his work at the Adams County Historical Society, which he served as an unpaid executive director from 1959 to 2001. At the Society Charlie organized and grew the collections, wrote memos guiding future researchers, jointly authored studies on everything from church history to land warrants, and answered innumerable reference questions. Given the key to Schmucker Hall on his retirement as executive officer, Charlie made good use of it in the final twelve years of his life, researching and writing pieces that expanded knowledge on a variety of fronts. In one instance, having learned that a state Historical and Museum Commission marker was placed at a location in Seven Valleys, near where he grew up, stating that the first ice cream factory in the world was established there in 1851, Charlie researched the topic and came to the conclusion that it was not so. He published his findings in a well-crafted op-ed piece for the *York Sunday News* in August 2012.

Teacher, scholar, archivist, public historian, lay churchman, and mentor to many, Charles Glatfelter lived an exemplary life. It is pleasing to note that only a month or two before the onset of his final illness he was wheeled through the construction site of the new Seminary Ridge Civil War Museum in the very building where he had served as director of the Adams County Historical Society. Thanks to a million-dollar gift by local physician and historian Dr. Bradley Hoch, the first floor of that museum will be called the "Charles H. Glatfelter Welcome Center." Charlie could have asked for no more apt or satisfying memorialization.

He was predeceased in 2009 by his wife, Miriam Krebs Glatfelter, and is survived by his children, Christina and Philip.

MICHAEL J. BIRKNER
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BOOK REVIEWS

*W*endy Bellion. *Citizen Spectator: Art, Illusion, and Visual Perception in Early National America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011). Pp. xviii, 388. Illustrations, bibliography, index. Cloth, \$45.00.

Wendy Bellion's project in her finely crafted book, *Citizen Spectator: Art, Illusion, and Visual Perception in Early National America*, is to show how pictorial and optical illusions, when considered alongside Enlightenment theories of sensory perception and discernment, shaped notions of American citizenship, representation, and subjectivity. To investigate practices of seeing, Bellion delves into the production and reception of *trompe l'oeil* paintings, optical devices, and popular spectacles of deception created between 1780 and 1830. With a focus on Philadelphia, Bellion considers how illusionistic objects could be politicized and marshaled to help Americans hone their skills of looking. Bellion calls this period the beginning of a "pronounced ideological equation between keen vision and patriotism" in which the ability to discern truth from falsehood in

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the material landscape became a sign of able citizenship (15). Yet, illusionistic objects are rarely stable and straightforward; they can at once reify, contradict, and parody contemporary ideologies of political looking. In exploring how “a cultural dialectic of deceit and discernment” played out in the material culture of illusion, Bellion deftly teases apart the layers of political and social meaning hidden within her chosen objects and demonstrates how illusion can make us self-aware spectators—as much then as now (5).

Bellion builds her six chapters like case studies, around an individual or group of related objects. She presents canonical paintings alongside prints, maps, trade cards, architectural and perspectival drawings, optical instruments, and the illustrations and textual pages of books in a material culture approach that dissolves barriers between fine arts and the vernacular and allows her to demonstrate how issues of vision emerged across a broad visual and material landscape. Bellion employs a diverse array of visual evidence and methodologies. Although she draws extensively on the field of visual culture studies, with its interest in charting the practices of seeing and theories of sight, she also engages with literary studies and embraces contextualization, now essential in social and political history. Her interdisciplinary approach offers a model for integrating the pictorial arts within a framework of material and print culture and illustrates the ways in which our understanding of canonical paintings may be enhanced and even challenged when viewed through new lenses.

In her opening chapter, Bellion introduces readers to Philadelphia’s “culture of visual curiosity” and shows how an awareness of, and interest in, visual perception was pervasive in American society by the mid-eighteenth century. Informed by the Common Sense philosophy of the Scottish Enlightenment, Americans believed in an individual’s ability to train the senses—especially vision—to perceive truth or uncover deception. Natural philosophers, museum proprietors, artists, and itinerant showmen alike used the tools (lecture courses, publications, *trompe l’oeil* paintings, museum installations of optic devices, and theatrical demonstrations of perceptual tricks) to enlighten their fellow citizens on the laws of physics and the possibilities of sight. Through a range of optical devices, such as magic lanterns and optical boxes, Americans engaged in many different ways of looking and thereby practiced discernment. Bellion argues, convincingly, that the diversity of these devices and the different viewing experiences they enabled meant that “no single modality of vision prevailed” in early America. Individuals who attended these optical exhibitions or read about them in newspapers “learned to look in multiple and sometimes contradictory ways” (56).

With this overview of visual theory, Bellion lays the groundwork to examine how various ways of looking influenced artistic production and were implicated in the political process. In chapters 2 and 4, Bellion uses *trompe l'oeil* pictures, Charles Willson Peale's *The Staircase Group*, and Samuel Lewis's less-known watercolor and ink drawing *A Deception*, to demonstrate different ways artists could model discernment. For Peale, the lesson came in the allegories and political references hidden in plain sight: in his sons' poses, emblems, and attributes, and in the symbolic act of displaying the painting in the Philadelphia State House, Peale communicated the importance of perceptual vigilance and the right of Americans to look at and judge their world. Lewis, in contrast, installed original objects (papers attached to a framed letter rack) adjacent to *A Deception*, a *trompe l'oeil* representation of those objects, and invited viewers to exercise their judgment by locating the similarities and differences between the two objects. In both examples, the artists found novel ways to use illusion, imitation, and deception to instruct their audience in the art of spotting misrepresentation.

In the remaining chapters, Bellion changes tack slightly as she considers the ways that visuality can become subjective and at times unpredictable in the hands of artists and showmen. In chapter 3 she re-evaluates the creation, publication, and reception of William and Thomas Birch's collection of prints, *The City of Philadelphia*; in chapter 5 she tells the story of the most popular illusionistic spectacle of the nineteenth century, a mechanical instrument called the Invisible Lady; and in chapter 6 she looks at such *trompe l'oeil* paintings as Francois-Marius Granet's *The Choir at the Capuchin Church in Rome*, Rembrandt Peale's *Patriae Pater*, and Raphaele Peale's *Venus Rising from the Sea—A Deception* to explore shifts in the form and function of pictorial illusion. Through these pictures she engages questions of embodiment, the gendered nature of discernment, voyeurism, and the limits of discernment itself when objects exist beyond sight. Considering the breadth of her material evidence, one may regret that Bellion did not engage with illusionistic decorative arts. Although she rightly views this area as a study unto itself, one might yet wonder how she would contextualize and theorize illusionistic wallpapers or painted furniture, or how expanding her discussion to objects in the domestic realm would allow a deeper exploration of gender and the role women played as discerning spectators of both their public and private worlds.

Citizen Spectator will appeal to a diverse audience. Art historians will appreciate Bellion's fresh and nuanced interpretation of Charles Willson Peale and the impact he and his sons Raphaele and Rubens had on the nation's burgeoning art communities and institutions. As Bellion's evidence is decidedly

regional, scholars of early Philadelphia will welcome her contributions to the political, cultural, and scientific histories of the city; and those with an interest in the national will benefit from her discussion of print culture and the role of literature in spreading these ideologies of vision far beyond the confines of Philadelphia. Finally, with Bellion's focus on the public arena and the intersection of art and vision, *Citizen Spectator* is a welcome addition to the scholarship on early national politics and culture.

AMY HUDSON HENDERSON

Independent Scholar

Philip D. Zimmerman. *Harmony in Wood: Furniture of the Harmony Society* (Ambridge, PA: Published by The Friends of Old Economy Village and distributed by University Press of New England, 2010). Pp. x, 214. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. Cloth, \$65.00.

In this beautifully illustrated and impeccably researched study, Philip Zimmerman breaks exciting new ground in his exploration of Harmonist furniture. Followers of nineteenth-century German mystic and visionary George Rapp, Harmonists have not received the same scholarly attention for their furniture as their utopian contemporaries the Shakers and Zoarites. Like those communities, the Harmonists developed a distinctive style over the first half of the nineteenth century that blended locally available resources, communal needs, and traditional ethnic forms and construction practices. The result is a body of work that is stylistically innovative, fundamentally functional, and often aesthetically pleasing.

Initially founded at Harmonie, about thirty-five miles north of Pittsburgh, in 1804, the Harmonists moved to New Harmony, Indiana, in 1814 and back to Economy, Pennsylvania, in 1824. In time, the community grew to more than eight hundred members and developed a remarkable manufacturing industry. Following Rapp's lead, the community practiced the communal ownership of land and advocated (but did not require) celibacy as they awaited the Second Coming. Zimmerman provides a succinct overview of the community's history, but more attention to the influence of the community's religious beliefs on the productions of the Harmonists would have been helpful. The community closed in 1905, and a little over a decade later the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission purchased six acres of

the site, which is preserved today as Old Economy Village. Not until 1937 would most of the furnishings be sold to the state by John Duss, last trustee of the community, a complicated story that Zimmerman explains in a chapter on the provenance of the collection.

Much documentation for the community as a whole has survived, but little concerns the daily lives of Harmonist artisans. In the absence of written records by or about cabinetmakers, joiners, and turners, Zimmerman has turned to their body of work. He draws primarily from the collections of Old Economy Village and private collections that descended in the families of women and men who left the community as a result of a major schism in 1832. Based on an exhaustive four-year study, Zimmerman discerned distinctive styles, techniques, and practices that help him identify pieces made within the community. These include how the use of materials like tulip poplar or white pine can help date pieces to specific communities; how interior architectural elements like raised panels and turned balustrades reappear in household furniture; which specific types of decoration, like ball-and-cone turnings on chair legs, Harmonist craftsmen preferred; and how certain Germanic construction and design practices persisted through time. *Harmony in Wood* is a masterful example of what material culture can tell us in the absence of the written record.

Those familiar with the forms common to early nineteenth-century rural households will recognize much here. Chairs, blanket chests, tables, and clocks share many similarities with popular furniture forms and styles, although often reflecting distinctive stylistic choices and construction techniques. But Zimmerman also includes several fascinating pieces illustrative of the adaptation, innovation, and imagination of Harmonist artisans. A wardrobe made from a blanket chest illustrates the willingness of Harmonists to recycle old furniture to new purposes. Rather than rebuild the piece, an artisan simply added a set of drawers and cupboard on top of the chest and made the original lid the top, without ever removing the original hinges. An eccentric mahogany-veneered dish cupboard with ornate feet, undulating sides, and a distinct arrangement of doors has no obvious counterpart in American or Germanic design. Instead, it tantalizingly suggests the imagination of an unknown craftsman. Finally, a shadowbox with a delicate carved and painted image of Harmonie, an embodiment of spiritual wisdom found in Harmonist hymns, nestled in a broken pediment reminds us of the religious dimension of Harmonist work. Little evidence suggests what might have hung inside the shadow box or hints at its ultimate significance to its user. This, alas, is

the situation for many pieces in the book. Harmonists rarely signed their work or explained the rationale behind their creations.

Harmony in Wood is the first of a proposed series of scholarly catalogues focused on groups of objects made by Harmonist artisans. If this volume is any indication of the quality of future titles in the series, then historians of decorative arts as well as scholars of history and religion are exceedingly fortunate.

KYLE ROBERTS

Loyola University Chicago

Alan C. Braddock. *Thomas Eakins and the Cultures of Modernity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009). Pp. x, 291. Illustrations, notes bibliography, index. Cloth, \$49.95.

The central concern of Alan Braddock's *Thomas Eakins and the Cultures of Modernity* is how "human difference, diffusion, and artistic nationalism" are present in the oeuvre of Thomas Eakins (2). Braddock argues that Eakins was working as an artist before modern anthropological theories of "culture" emerged, yet it is very much this nascent anthropological understanding of culture that is at the heart of this book and, Braddock argues, at the heart of Eakins's painting practice.

In his introduction, Braddock asks how Eakins may have conceived of culture, particularly in evolutionary terms and as the term applied to nineteenth-century American understandings of race. Braddock begins his discussion of Eakins with the image that is reproduced on the publication's cover, *The Dancing Lesson* (originally *The Negroes*), 1878. The author challenges the assumption of previous Eakins scholarship that the work is a sympathetic depiction of race, not by arguing that it is racist caricature but by suggesting that it is a visual iteration of Eakins's interest in American folk-life figures and an American "type." In making race and culture central concerns of his study of Eakins, Braddock moves away from the nationalistic, biographical, or psychosexual scholarship on Eakins that has defined the field since the work of Eakins's biographer Lloyd Goodrich. While the author wishes to complicate earlier modernist-nationalist scholarship, he is particularly critical of what he calls "whimsical forms of psychological interpretation" (40). With his focus on culture and anthropology, Braddock's work is more

methodologically comparable to the work on nineteenth-century cultures of skepticism of Michael Leja in *Looking Askance: Skepticism and American Art from Eakins to Duchamp* (University of California Press, 2004) than that of other recent Eakins scholars such as Beth Johns, Kathy Foster, Lillian Milroy, and William Homer.

Geographic place is a key structuring component in the book. Chapter 1, “‘Amongst Strangers’: Studies in Character Abroad,” focuses on Eakins’s time as an art student in Paris and southern Spain. Chapter 2, “‘What Kind of People Are There’: Local Color, Cosmopolitanism, and the Limits of Civic Realism,” returns the reader to Eakins’s native Philadelphia. Chapter 3, “‘To Learn Their Ways That I Might Paint Some’: Cowboys, Indians, and Evolutionary Aesthetics,” travels to the Badlands of North Dakota and then back to the newly developed anthropological Free Museum of Science and Art at the University of Pennsylvania. A final coda, “‘Distinctly American Art’: Thomas Eakins, National Genius,” returns to the question raised in the introduction, “‘This Current Confusion’: Thomas Eakins before Cultures,” of Thomas Eakins as an “American” genus, or genius, rooted in Philadelphia soil.

Chapter 1 considers Eakins’s “formative encounter with foreign people and customs as both art student and tourist” (46). In so doing, Braddock intentionally spends his time analyzing often-overlooked student works in the artist’s oeuvre such as *Man in a Turban*, 1866–67, and *Female Model (A Negress)*, ca. 1867–69, that reveal Eakins’s brush with Orientalism under the influence of his teacher Jean-Léon Gérôme. Braddock also fruitfully compares the artist’s *A Street Scene in Seville* to the aforementioned *Dancing Lesson* and argues convincingly that both works delineate folk culture and national character.

Chapter 2 will probably be of most interest to the readers of *Pennsylvania History* because in this chapter Braddock takes an anthropological approach to Eakins’s paintings and illustrations of the cultures of outdoor Philadelphia. The author argues that “by frequently depicting Philadelphia’s environs and inhabitants during the 1870s and early 1880s, Eakins broadly and consistently engaged the period aesthetic of ‘local color’” (101). The term “local color” is taken from a genre of period American literature, which captured American types much as Eakins did Orientalist types in Paris. Here Braddock argues that Eakins created an image of Philadelphia as an exemplar of national American culture for a cosmopolitan audience. It is not entirely clear what the author means by “cosmopolitan.” Does the term equate to international? Braddock’s use of the term “cosmopolitan” is more clearly defined in his work on Henry Ossawa Tanner and “Christian Cosmopolitanism,” and one longs

for this sort of clarity regarding this complicated term in this publication and as it applies to Eakins' audiences. One of the author's most convincing arguments is that with paintings of suburban Philadelphia like *Swimming*, 1885, and his series of paintings of rowers on the Schuylkill and fishing on the Delaware River, Eakins consciously constructed local color rather than just being "rooted" in the soil of America (110). Braddock convinced this reader that the Philadelphia Eakins represented as an ideal, democratic, northern, Arcadian, Republican city was a selective vision that consciously hid environmental degradation, as well as racial and class conflict, in industrial Philadelphia. Braddock's environmental critique is not only fascinating, but also provides one of his strongest arguments that Eakins was not a heroic realist rooted in Philadelphia Quaker Americanism.

Chapter 3 is in many ways the most expansive, and thus less tightly focused chapter in the book, ranging as it does from Eakins's dismissal from the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in 1887 and his retreat to a dude ranch in the Dakotas, to his return to Philadelphia and his involvement in the culture of anthropology and the University of Pennsylvania. As in chapter 1, Braddock concentrates on a series of works overlooked by Eakins scholars: his portraits of some of the anthropologists with whom he was friends. The strongest discussion here is of Eakins's portrait of *Frank Hamilton Cushing*, 1895. Braddock reads the portrait as an embodiment of the changing understanding of culture as moving away from biological determinism and evolution toward the concept that individual societies formed "cultures," as opposed to the Arnoldian nineteenth-century idea of a singular "Culture."

In his conclusion, Braddock turns to Eakins's late portraits as representing the "life and types" in "our country" (216). He looks at Eakins's portraits of Spanish American, Italian American, and African American residents of Philadelphia, with a particular focus on comparing *Portrait of Henry O. Tanner* (ca. 1897) with the Spanish master Velazquez's portrait of his own student of mixed race, Juan de Pareja. Rather than agree wholeheartedly with Eakins's posthumous reputation as *genus Americanus*, Braddock complicates Eakins by calling attention to the artist's complex representations of race, class, environment, and character throughout his international career. This dense art historical study will be of particular interest to students of Philadelphia's environmental, artistic, and anthropological histories.

ANNA O. MARLEY

Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts

Karen M. Johnson-Weiner. *New York Amish: Life in the Plain Communities of the Empire State* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2010). Pp. 240. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. Cloth, \$24.95.

"As long as there is farmland to be had at affordable prices, the Amish and their other plain counterparts will come here to find respite from internal and external difficulties and a safe and productive neighborhood in which to raise their children" (179). Even this providential statement by Karen Johnson-Weiner, made near the end of the her fascinating and much-needed book on the New York Amish, could not have anticipated what has happened in the Empire State over the past few years. Johnson-Weiner's list of twenty-six Old Order settlements (thirteen of which were founded only since 2000) ends with the settlement of Poland in 2007. After a short period in 2008 with no new settlements, Amish expansion into New York exploded at a pace unprecedented during their nearly 300-year history in North America. Four settlements were founded in 2009, six in 2010, another six in 2011, and at least one in 2012. This accounts for about one-third of over fifty new Amish settlements established throughout the United States and Canada during this brief period of time (see David Luthy, "Amish Migration Revisited: 2012," *Family Life* [July 2012]: 19–21).

One might think that growth of this magnitude makes Johnson-Weiner's book prematurely out of date. Quite to the contrary, her book is all the more valuable because it is a scholarly accounting of the Amish push into New York, both in the past and in more recent times. It has a considerable number of positive merits. It provides a condensed, easy-to-read history of the Amish, from their origins in Europe during the early days of the Protestant Reformation to their immigration and development in North America. It describes Amish society and culture in a way that is understandable to the reader who knows little about the Amish, though it does so within the context of the ways that the Amish, through their strong sense of community, have met the challenges of settling in the rural places of New York. It shows the geographic, social, and cultural inner-connectivity of the Amish in New York with the Amish in other states, principally Ohio and Pennsylvania. It accounts for diversity among the Amish by describing how settlements in New York were founded by Amish from different fellowships (somewhat like different denominations among Protestant groups) at these other places. Finally, it specifically

addresses the diversity of New York Amish by deftly organizing the book's content according to various rural regions of New York, with maps showing the points of origin of founding or first families to new settlements in the state.

Of particular note in Johnson-Weiner's book is her description of the Swartzentruber fellowships of Amish. The Swartzentruber Amish groups are among the most conservative of all Amish, and they have a significant presence in New York, especially in St. Lawrence County. Her account of their differences from other Amish is well done, and worth a slow and careful reading by both those who are learning about the Amish for the first time and those whose knowledge of this religiously based, rurally located subculture is more advanced. She is able to explain the key differences between three fellowships of Swartzentruber Amish by contextualizing her narrative within the history of their divisions in other states and their subsequent movements into New York. As well, she accounts for other Amish fellowships that are more conservative than the mainstream Old Order Amish, including groups known as the Troyer Amish and Byler Amish in the far western counties of Cattaraugus and Chautauqua. She successfully describes how the Amish from all the various fellowships maintain their distinctiveness from each other, while at the same time cooperating in a number of significant ways to build and sustain their communities. Furthermore, the author provides for the reader an in-depth accounting of the ways all the various and diverse Amish settlements in New York, both large and small and young and old, deal with the non-Amish world that surrounds them. She demonstrates how subcultural boundaries are kept intact, even as the Amish engage in many forms of economic and social exchange with their non-Amish neighbors.

New York is the "go-to" state for the Amish today, and Johnson-Weiner's book could not have been better timed for publication, even though the list of settlements in appendix A only goes up to 2007 (185–86). I truly hope that Karen Johnson-Weiner is given the opportunity to publish an expanded second edition that accounts for the incredible growth of settlements occurring in recent times, and the ways this illustrates the ability of the Amish to both resist and accommodate change and the influences of contemporary, mainstream American society.

JOSEPH F. DONNERMEYER
The Ohio State University

James McClelland. *The Martinos: A Legacy of Art* (Harrisburg: Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, 2010). Pp. 181. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. Cloth, \$59.95.

In the introduction to *The Martinos: A Legacy of Art*, the author writes, “Students of the art world can name families of artists such as the Peales, the Wyeths and the Calders, but there was another Philadelphia family of artists that does not readily come to mind. Yet the Martinos produced more artists than any of the aforementioned” (vii). The assertion of numbers is certainly true of the Calders, but is more questionable when applied to the Peales and the Wyeths. Coming to questions about national reputation and significance, this comparison becomes even dicier. However, we owe author McClelland a debt of thanks for compiling the first monograph devoted to what he called “this amazing family of artists [that] is very much underrated, under-appreciated, and relatively unknown” (vii).

Central to the story are the seven Martino brothers, all of whom were artists to one degree or another. Two, Antonio and Giovanni, had important regional careers; another brother, Edmund, was lesser known. All the brothers supported themselves working as commercial artists, for a long time in their own family business, Martino Studios, in Philadelphia. Edmund eventually went to work for the Franklin Mint. The Martino Studios, a commercial arts firm, opened in 1926 and was successful enough that business-manager brother Alberto, primarily a photographer, “could be seen driving around town in his Du[e]senberg automobile” (69).

The brothers, born between 1896 and 1915, were the children of an Italian immigrant couple, Carmine and Clementina, who were wed in Philadelphia in 1896. Two daughters were also in the family; one died at age two and the other committed suicide in her twenties. Carmine, a trained stonemason when he emigrated, worked on Bryn Athyn Cathedral and went on to become a foreman. He was prosperous enough to build a substantial three-story stone house for his family at 151 North Gross Street in Philadelphia.

Modestino Francesco Martino (1896–1941), “Frank,” was the eldest of the children and the first to study art, attending the Pennsylvania Museum School of the Industrial Arts (now the University of the Arts). He is also credited with encouraging his brothers to study art as well—warning them that their only alternative was to be stone masons! A successful illustrator, he even had a commission from the *Saturday Evening Post*

for a painting of a buccaneer, done very much in the style of N. C. Wyeth and used inside the magazine. In an article in the *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin* about Martino Studios, Frank (the shortest-lived of the brothers) called himself “the business head of the outfit” and remarked, “I also paint nudes” (135).

In addition to the brothers’ works, McClelland presents pieces by Giovanni’s wife, Eva, and their daughters, Babette (b. 1946) and Nina (b. 1942), as well as the paintings of Antonio’s daughter, Marie Martino Manos. Mention is also made of Antonio Martino Jr., who studied art but gave it up for a career in business, and Carmen Martino, the son of Ernesto, a professional photographer,

Antonio, Giovanni, and Edmund can all be classified as impressionist artists of the group today referred to as “The Pennsylvania Impressionists” or the “New Hope School.” While the brothers all painted in Bucks County, they also painted elsewhere, especially the Manayunk area of Philadelphia. Antonio, the most acclaimed of the artists, was the most prolific and hardest-working of the lot—and the one who did the most paintings of Bucks County scenery. Of the second-generation artists, Marie Martino Manos diverged from family tradition, being especially interested in portraiture and interiors.

From a technical point of view the way in which McClelland has inserted text between the various galleries of illustrations is awkward and occasionally confusing. Very little attempt is made to relate the major players to the national art scene. While we know who the Martinos studied with, other influences are not explored. For example, many of Edward Hopper’s themes are found in Giovanni’s works—and Hopper (1882–1967) taught in Philadelphia for a while and several of his best-known works were done in Philadelphia.

The Martinos: A Legacy of Art is a beautifully illustrated book presenting us with a sense of the talents and ranges of the artists. It would have been more valuable if more paintings in public collections had been included. As it is, most of the paintings illustrated belong to family members and several of the commercial galleries who helped support this publication. A brief genealogical chart of the artists would have been a useful aid for readers of this illuminating and needed book.

IRWIN RICHMAN

The Pennsylvania State University at Harrisburg

William S. Dietrich II. *Eminent Pittsburghers: Profiles of the City's Founding Industrialists* (Lanham, MD: Taylor Trade Publishing, 2011). Pp. viii, 224. Illustrations. Cloth, \$24.95.

How often in the history of writing history has a wealthy industrialist and philanthropist written about the lives of other wealthy industrialists-turned-philanthropists? That is precisely what we have in William Dietrich's *Eminent Pittsburghers*. It is estimated that the author of this book gave \$265 million to Carnegie Mellon University and another \$125 million to the University of Pittsburgh. It is fair to say that Dietrich knows his subject. Not surprisingly, the author harbors a celebratory attitude toward entrepreneurial industrialism and, of course, capitalism. To his credit, however, Dietrich does not hesitate to cite the obvious weaknesses of his fellow Pittsburghers, stories known to almost anyone who has studied American history. The biographical profiles presented are very readable. The writing might be described as breezy and chatty.

The first profile focuses on Andrew Carnegie, the feisty and energetic little Scotsman who rose to prominence with the help of Tom Scott of the Pennsylvania Railroad. Scott, incidentally, might be one of the most important Pennsylvanians not known to the general public. Carnegie is generally associated with the consolidation of not only the steel industry, but also the bridge-building industry that is a logical outgrowth of iron and steel production. His name will also always be associated with the lockout at Homestead in 1892, even though he was out of the country at the time.

Carnegie's charitable giving focused on the creation of Carnegie Tech and over 3,000 libraries that were also social centers. He donated 8,000 church organs and from time to time pontificated on stewardship. The steel baron also created the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace at The Hague. Noted biographer Joseph Wall, Dietrich, and others are all left with the same question: Did Carnegie's philanthropy outweigh the glitches and shortcomings of his prolific business career?

H. J. Heinz seems a bit out of place in this collection that obviously favors steel and heavy industry. However, Heinz keenly understood, as an aspiring businessman in the Gilded Age, the plight of the overworked housewife who had not yet been blessed with modern labor-saving devices. In addition to endless cleaning, washing, and sewing, there was laborious food preparation. Heinz grew up helping his father with a brick kiln and a large family garden. As early as the Civil War years, the family garnered a few thousand dollars annually selling their excess produce. As the business grew, the young entrepreneur

saw an opportunity to do more than simply can or preserve food; he envisioned processing fruits and vegetables in a factory. Heinz determined to guarantee high quality through contracts with growers provided with his own select seeds. His goal included spotless factories that would place fruits and vegetables in clear bottles so that consumers could plainly see the product. Accordingly, a cadre of small Heinz factories flourished in the 1870s and 1880s.

Heinz had a strong interest in advertising, beginning with horses and wagons bearing the company logo to make his products known. Over time the advertising grew more sophisticated and included renting hillsides and ultimately substantial space at the Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893. "Heinz's 57 Varieties" would go on to become one of America's most-recognized slogans.

Heinz's intense commitment to quality and cleanliness made him a natural ally in the push to create the Pure Food and Drug Act shortly after the turn of the century. Heinz intuitively understood that the battle against adulterated food would be endless. He might also have appreciated the fact that federal legislation could obliterate some marginal competitors.

The food baron's charitable interests were essentially merged with his ally John Wanamaker in America's Sunday School movement, a crusade that initially grew out of the horrors of the Industrial Revolution and endeavored to provide moral guidance and a better life for children.

George Westinghouse is presented with an emphasis on his creative genius, and Dietrich ranks him just behind Thomas Edison as an inventor. The general reader may not recall how dangerous and accident-prone the early railroads were, and therefore not appreciate the importance of the Westinghouse air brake in advancing safety. Prior to this patent in 1869, and many additions to the patent through 1873, brakemen had to work brakes manually on each car by turning a wheel, and many were crushed to death between two cars. The air brake was sufficient to guarantee his place in history.

Westinghouse made truly extraordinary contributions in the history of energy and electric power. He was one of the early drillers for natural gas, and this included drilling in his own back yard. His vision also included the creation of the Niagara Falls power plant in upstate New York. Perhaps Westinghouse's greatest contribution to the advancement of modern American technology was the introduction of alternating current (AC) and a distribution system under the stewardship of Western Electric in 1886. Prior to this, obviously, there was only direct current (DC), which was less efficient

and generally more dangerous. Indeed, perhaps after Edison, this is truly one of our great inventors.

For those readers who would like to know more, there is the George Westinghouse museum in Wilmerding, Pennsylvania; however, there are no foundations as the inventor left everything to his children. Surprisingly, Dietrich notes that there were no Westinghouse papers left behind to consult.

Perhaps the most tragic story in the collection of profiles is that of Andrew Mellon, who achieved so much and yet managed to be so miserable, assuming we can trust the recent biography by David Cannadine. The Mellon family clearly cut a wide swath through the banking industry in Pittsburgh, to say nothing of their achievements in creating Alcoa Aluminum and Gulf Oil. When the family oil business was being strangled by a transportation monopoly, the Mellons built a 271-mile pipeline from Pittsburgh to Marcus Hook; obviously they were movers and shakers of the first order.

Beyond business triumphs, Andrew Mellon is best remembered for not only his eleven years as secretary of the Treasury but for his extraordinary influence in the role, leading some to say: "Secretary Mellon had three presidents serve under him, Harding, Coolidge, and Hoover." Dietrich repeats the thought that Mellon was the most distinguished secretary of the Treasury since Alexander Hamilton. In many respects Mellon set the ideological tone for the Republican 1920s.

His personal life was marred by a nasty divorce that generated a lot of vicious newspaper publicity, particularly from a Philadelphia newspaper that portrayed Mellon as a heartless millionaire. His somber and dour personality made it quite clear that he could never make a serious run for the presidency, though some had mentioned his name in that context. Later in life the Justice Department sued Mellon for underpayment of taxes. Andrew Mellon was a candidate for the most miserable/successful man in Pittsburgh or anywhere else. His obsession with business matters apparently left little time for other considerations.

The profiles continue with Henry Clay Frick, arch-demon of the Homestead Strike, whose career was aided by his connections with the Mellon family; "Smilin' Charlie Schwab" who became president of Carnegie Steel in 1897 and was credited with making the Homestead steel plant profitable; Michael Late Benedum, the leader in Pittsburgh oil who won the title "king of the wildcatters"; George C. Marshall, commander-in-chief of the Allied forces in World War II, known to some as the finest soldier America ever produced; Mayor David L. Lawrence, arguably the most successful politician to come

out of the Pittsburgh area; Thomas Detre, renowned for his work in health care; and, finally, Richard P. Simmons, a modern steel baron.

Author William Dietrich has carried out his mission of celebrating famous Pittsburghers, with an emphasis on the steel industry. There is considerable merit in this work, and yet just how this book might be put to use in an academic setting remains an open question.

THOMAS R. WINPENNY

Elizabethtown College

Matthew F. Delmont. *The Nicest Kids in Town: American Bandstand, Rock 'n' Roll, and the Struggle for Civil Rights in 1950s Philadelphia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012). Pp. xi, 294. Illustrations, notes, index. Cloth, \$65.00.

More than fifty years have elapsed since the popular television program *American Bandstand* first appeared in homes across the United States, and still mere mention of the show continues to conjure images of teenagers, black and white, boppin' to the sounds of emerging musical talents from Jackie Wilson to Dusty Springfield. This very image, and the potent memory of a racially integrated youth demographic dancing together in harmony, Matthew F. Delmont argues in *The Nicest Kids in Town: American Bandstand, Rock 'n' Roll, and the Struggle for Civil Rights in 1950s Philadelphia*, is precisely the problem. Contrary to the recollections of *Bandstand's* celebrated host, Dick Clark, whose praise of the show as a powerful force resisting segregationist pressures is often cited in popular histories of the program, Delmont argues that the reality of 1950s Philadelphia was considerably more complex. As Delmont states, "Rather than being a fully integrated program that welcomed black youth, *American Bandstand* continued to discriminate against black teens throughout the show's Philadelphia years" (2). Simply, *American Bandstand* was hardly the bastion of racial integration Clark purported it to be.

This argument, Delmont admits early on in *The Nicest Kids in Town*, is not one he expected to make. Envisioning his work as contributing to the burgeoning scholarship on civil rights in the North by providing an exemplar of resistance in the face of entrenched segregation, Delmont instead found the cultural icon *American Bandstand* to be a battleground on which the struggle over civil rights was fought.¹ Not only was Dick Clark incorrect in his

remembering of the *Bandstand* of the 1950s, he grossly overstated *Bandstand*'s place within American civil rights history. That Dick Clark should offer an overly rosy picture of *Bandstand* as a racially progressive program is not particularly surprising. Not only the legacy of *Bandstand* but Clark's own legacy lay at stake. What is most interesting, and where Delmont places much of his focus, is in considering the alternatives. And, Delmont shows, there were alternatives. There was nothing "inevitable" about *Bandstand*'s segregation.

Drawing upon an impressive array of sources that range from newspapers and meeting minutes to memorabilia and original oral histories, Delmont crafts an argument that engages interdisciplinary issues of race, policy, media, and memory. In so doing, Delmont positions *Bandstand* in conversation with its surroundings, compelling his readers to consider the program as a reflection of "defensive localism" (12) in the Philadelphia housing market (chapter 1), an outgrowth of the documented growing postwar consumerist ethos (chapter 2), and a site where the integrationist rhetoric of the school system, appropriated from the Philadelphia Fellowship Commission, hardly aligned with the realities confronted by Philadelphians (chapter 3). In sum, Delmont argues, "*Bandstand* helped to normalize the racist attitudes and policies that limited black access to housing, education, and public accommodations" (49). As such, *Bandstand* contributed to a Philadelphia that could distance itself from the racial problems confronting cities more visibly in the South.

Ultimately, Delmont argues, *American Bandstand* was no better than any other Philadelphia institution. *Bandstand* buckled under social and commercial pressures, reproducing what "sold"—or, more accurately, what wealthy, white male executives presumed would sell. They may have included black teens in their vision for the consuming demographic, but representationally black teens were excluded from *Bandstand*'s regular programming. The *Mitch Thomas Show*, which receives attention in a fascinating chapter 5, was "the only television program that represented Philadelphia's black rock and roll fans" (134). *Bandstand* encouraged teens to imagine themselves as part of a cohesive national collective, a visual extension of Benedict Anderson's "imagined community," Delmont argues. However, that community, while a great boon to Italian American teenagers hailing from largely working-class homes in South Philadelphia who comprised a sizable contingent of the show's "regulars," was inaccessible to black teens. Clark's claims to have integrated *Bandstand* might be understood as his recollection of the diversity of performers, but that would be a very generous assessment. *American Bandstand*'s place in American civil rights history is rather tenuous. Was new territory truly

being charted by this show? The answer Delmont provides is a resounding and compelling no.

The Nicest Kids in Town is an important contribution to the existing and growing historiographies of postwar Philadelphia and civil rights in the North. Where Delmont's work presents opportunities for further exploration is in its examination of popular culture and memory. In chapter 8, "Still Boppin' on *Bandstand*," Delmont considers the narratives of race relations in two contemporary representations of the program, NBC's *American Dreams* and the *Bandstand*-like show represented in the movie *Hairspray*. Although Delmont uses these two texts to bolster the argument he has built carefully in the preceding chapters, his analysis reads as a largely isolated critique of these two texts, as opposed to a rich opportunity to think through the ways in which memory of *Bandstand* has been negotiated. Given that Delmont has created a companion website to the book where individuals can write in with their memories of *Bandstand* (<http://scalar.usc.edu/nehvectors/nicest-kids/index>) and considering the array of sources from which he draws, the tools exist to consider the contests and negotiations involved in understanding the past more fully. Taken together, Delmont's book and website offer a wealth of material that future scholars will surely examine with great interest and excitement.

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NOTE

1. For examples of recent work on civil rights in the North, see Thomas J. Sugrue, *Sweet Land of Liberty: The Forgotten Struggle for Civil Rights in the North* (New York: Random House, 2008); Matthew J. Countryman, *Up South: Civil Rights and Black Power in Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005); and Martha Biondi, *To Stand and Fight: The Struggle for Civil Rights in Postwar New York City* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003).

Edgar Sandoval. *The New Face of Small-Town America: Snapshots of Latino Life in Allentown, Pennsylvania* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2010). Pp. xi, 152. Appendix, index. Cloth, \$29.95.

Edgar Sandoval begins his latest book by relating the story of Nerivonne Sanchez, a fifteen-year-old Puerto Rican on the verge of celebrating

her *quinceañera*. Part cotillion, part religious ceremony, the *quinceañera* is a centuries-old ritual that marks a girl's passage into womanhood in some Hispanic and Latino cultures. In times past, the *quinceañera* served as a public declaration that the celebrant was eligible for marriage, though that function has diminished greatly with changing cultural mores and attitudes toward age and gender. The story of Nerivonne and the larger Sanchez family sets the stage for what could have been a worthwhile examination of the adaptations and integrations of long-standing cultural and national traditions in new contexts among Hispanic and Latino populations in the United States. What follows instead, however, is what this volume's subtitle suggests. There are no in-depth examinations of the social forces or structures that inform Latino populations' transnational movements, settlements, or recreations of cultural rituals in places like Allentown offered here. Rather, Sandoval provides only glimpses—snapshots indeed—into the existences of Latino populations living in this postindustrial town. While Sandoval offers the uninitiated a look into some of the social issues recent immigrants and long-term residents confront on a regular basis, scholars and students of Hispanic and Latino populations looking to deepen their research and studies will likely be left wanting.

Sandoval spreads his snapshots over thirty-one brief essays of about three to five pages each. In addition to Nerivonne and the Sanchezes, readers meet within these portraits the principal of a charter school, public school teachers and students in English as a Second Language (ESL) classes, various laborers and workers of different stripes, television and other media personalities from Spanish-language programming, and several other individuals trying to do the best for themselves and their families against some difficult conditions. On one hand, Sandoval provides a service by showing how immigrants from different parts of Latin America and the Caribbean eke out an existence in unfamiliar lands. Yet, his treatment of that existence suffers from the use of the term "Latino" as customarily deployed in most mass-media outlets. Sandoval applies "Latino" somewhat uncritically throughout the book with a seeming presumption that all Spanish-speakers from Latin America and the Caribbean ascribe to a single identity bound by language, socioeconomic status, or both. Striving to portray a pan-ethnic identity in this way ultimately diminishes the overall value of this work.

While the casual reader may gain some insights into the social, political, and cultural lives of these new immigrants settling in an unlikely port of entry rather than a more traditional site like New York, Chicago,

Los Angeles, or Miami, scholars interested in an in-depth analysis of these immigrants' socialization, political engagement, or culture will likely be frustrated, particularly by the book's organization. The essays appear in no discernible pattern. A piece about education is followed by one about news broadcasting, which is followed by one about migrant laborers, and then by one about housing ordinances. Essays addressing these kinds of issues appear at different points throughout the book, but without any linkages to the other related pieces. Themes around which Sandoval could have arranged his essays include familial and social connections, popular media, schools and education, and the politics of housing. Such organizational schemas would have facilitated the development of a larger synthesis of ethnic identity formation and its role in Allentown's Latinos' efforts to advocate for improved educational opportunities, reformed housing policies, and greater access to and representation in Spanish-language newspapers and television broadcasts.

The shortcomings highlighted here could be forgiven. Sandoval is a journalist and not a social scientist, after all. Sandoval even could be forgiven for claiming as he does to be doing the work of an anthropologist, even as he writes like a journalist (viii). What complicates this, however, is Sandoval's simultaneous admission to violating the standards and practices of his chosen profession. "In journalism school, I was taught not to get too close to sources. . . . In the end, I learned that journalism rules don't always apply when you write about everyday folks," he states, explaining why he ingratiated himself to the Sanchez family and, by extension, Allentown's other Latino residents. "That got me a little close to them," Sandoval continues, "but in the end, that only made my piece better." Unfortunately, this reads as a self-serving rationalization that obviates any objectivity Sandoval may have maintained toward his subjects. "Besides, I was not the only one receiving warm affection from the Sanchezes," he concludes, noting that a local insurance salesman also attended Nerivonne's quinceañera (6–7).

The New Face of Small-Town America ultimately is an interesting look into the existence of Latino populations in new settlement areas and would be a perfectly serviceable addition to a reading list for an introductory undergraduate course on contemporary Latino issues. Professional historians and other researchers, however, are not likely to find many new interpretations of those issues.

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BOOKS RECEIVED

The current editors regret that due to several turnovers in all of the editorial positions of *Pennsylvania History* in recent years, the journal has been unable to review all of the works received in a timely manner. The failure to do so is in no way reflective of these books, however, and we now want to acknowledge receipt of and draw our readers' attention to the following monographs:

John Laurence Busch. *Steam Coffin: Captain Moses Rogers and the Steamship Savannah Break the Barrier* (N.p.: Hodos Historia, 2010). Pp. 736. Cloth, \$35.00. Story of the first steamship to cross the Atlantic and its captain.

Cynthia G. Falk. *Architecture and Artifacts of the Pennsylvania Germans: Constructing Identity in Early America* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2008). Pp. xiv, 242. Illustrations, notes, appendices, index. Cloth, \$48.95. Study of how the Germans used material culture to preserve their ethnic identity.

Michael Fellman. *Views from the Dark Side of American History* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2011). Pp. 154. Paper, \$22.50. Essays summarize much of the life work of the late Michael Fellman (1943–2012), distinguished historian who taught at Simon Fraser University. He emphasizes the brutality of the Civil War, deflates the godlike image of Robert E. Lee per-

petuated by many scholars, and compares the treatment of American slaves with Jews under Nazi rule.

Sally F. Griffith. *Liberalizing the Mind: Two Centuries of Liberal Education at Franklin and Marshall College* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2010). Pp. x, 502. Illustrations, notes, appendices, index. Cloth, \$64.95. An institution founded in 1787 in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, as the Franklin Academy to educate ethnically German students developed into one of the nation's foremost liberal arts colleges. This lively, comprehensive history covers events including the college's role in the Civil War and student unrest of the 1960s.

Renée Jacobs. *Slow Burn: A Photodocument of Centralia, Pennsylvania* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2010. Originally published by University of Pennsylvania Press, 1986). Pp. xxi, 151. Illustrations. Paper, \$35.00. Haunting photographs of the Pennsylvania coal town whose underground fire, burning since 1962, has caused almost all its residents to relocate.

Suzanne Martinson with Jane Citron and Robert Sendall. *The Fallingwater Cookbook: Elsie Henderson's Recipes and Memories* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2008). Pp. xiii, 190. Illustrations, index. Cloth, \$29.95. Entertaining stories of life at the Kaufmann family mansion, Fallingwater, designed by Frank Lloyd Wright, along with recipes used by the family's long-time cook.

Shaun O'Boyle. *Modern Ruins: Portraits of Place in the Mid-Atlantic Region* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2010). Pp. xii, 105. Illustrations. \$42.95. Beautifully photographed abandoned prisons and mental health institutions, steel production facilities, coal-mining and processing facilities, and a weapons arsenal in Pennsylvania. Essays on their meeting by Geoff Manaugh, Curt Miner, Kenneth Warren, Kenneth Wolensky, and Thomas Lewis offer social and historical contexts for the sites documented in the book.

Melvin I. Urofsky. *Louis D. Brandeis: A Life* (New York: Schocken Books, 2009). Pp. xiii, 953. Illustrations, notes, index. Paper, \$24.95. Monumental biography of labor lawyer, advisor to President Wilson, Zionist, and first Jewish Supreme Court Justice.

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